

The Green Church Initiative Covenant  
of the  
Virginia Conference  
of the  
United Methodist Church

“All creation is the Lord’s, and we are responsible for the ways in which we use and abuse it. Water, air, soil, minerals, energy resources, plants, animal life, and space are to be valued and conserved because they are God’s creation and not solely because they are useful to human beings. God has granted us stewardship of creation. We should meet these stewardship duties through acts of loving care and respect. Economic, political, social, and technological developments have increased our human numbers, and lengthened and enriched our lives. However, these developments have led to regional defoliation, dramatic extinction of species, massive human suffering, overpopulation, and misuse and overconsumption of natural and nonrenewable resources, particularly by industrialized societies. This continued course of action jeopardizes the natural heritage that God has entrusted to all generations. Therefore, let us recognize the responsibility of the church and its members to place a high priority on changes in economic, political, social, and technological lifestyles to support a more ecologically equitable and sustainable world leading to a higher quality of life for all of God’s creation.”  
(United Methodist Social Principles Paragraph 160 *Book of Discipline 2004*)

The United Methodist Church realizes and affirms the responsibility of every United Methodist to care for God’s creation. We are called to participate not only in the redemption of individuals and all of humanity, but in the healing of creation itself. Therefore, ministries that encourage care for God’s creation are significant in our mission as United Methodists.

In order to carry out this calling, the members of this congregation, as represented by our Administrative Council, affirm the importance of healing and defending God’s creation to our mission as a local congregation. We promise to be engaged in this ministry in the following ways:

### I. Worship

In worship, we will celebrate God’s grace, glory and beauty in creation and will declare that, “The Earth is the Lord’s and the fullness thereof!” (Psalm 104) We will make the connection between our faith and our role as a member of the community of God’s creation. Our worship will motivate us to seek God’s reign on earth by cherishing, protecting and healing creation.

### II. Learning and Teaching

We will seek opportunities for ourselves and our children to learn more about God’s creation and our role in it. Through the use of Scripture, experience, reason, and tradition, we will come to appreciate the interconnectedness and interdependency of all the different aspects of God’s creation, such as plants, people, other animals, rivers, oceans and mountains. In our studies, we will expect to become aware of the awesome beauty and wonder of God’s creation, the threats posed by human beings to the survival of the planet, ways in which we can participate in its restoration and changes we can make to our lifestyles to prevent further degradation and depletion of earth’s resources.

### III. Lifestyle

We will reflect, both in our individual and congregational way of life, respect and care for God’s creation. We will commit to making changes in our lives that will enable future generations to experience, as we have, the fullness of creation.

IV. Community, National and Global Involvement

We will look for signs of creation’s groaning (Romans 8:22) in our own community and take the necessary steps to alleviate its suffering. In our community, the nation and world we will witness to and participate in God’s ongoing work of creation by supporting public efforts and policies that protect and restore the damaged earth. We will open our hearts to God’s people around the world who have been adversely affected by our greed. As United Methodists we have embraced God’s people around the world as our mission. We will broaden that mission to include other parts of God’s creation as well.

This covenant will be reviewed annually to assess the previous year’s work and to consider other ways in which we can participate in God’s redemption of creation.

Signed by the pastor, the administrative council/board chairperson, the chairperson of the mission committee and the chairperson of the trustees.

\_\_\_\_\_  
Name of Church/District

\_\_\_\_\_  
Mission Committee Chair

\_\_\_\_\_  
Pastor

\_\_\_\_\_  
Trustees Chair

\_\_\_\_\_  
Administrative Council Chair

Please return a signed copy of this form to:  
Jaydee Hanson  
VA Conference Caretakers of God’s Creation  
3600 N. Rockingham St  
Arlington, VA 22213

Or email to [Jaydeehanson@gmail.com](mailto:Jaydeehanson@gmail.com)

(A great resource to help you get started is the *Greening Congregations Handbook*, available for you to order from [www.earthministry.org](http://www.earthministry.org).)