

# Creation Care

***“Our task is nothing less than to join God in preserving, renewing and fulfilling the creation.”***

-1991 Annual Conference Statement, Creation: Called to Care

God’s Creation needs our attention. We are called by God to care for God’s people and planet. The biblical witness makes this call clear – that while we are inhabitants of this world, the world belongs to God. (Isaiah 65, Colossians 1:15-20). Thus we must view how we interact with God’s Creation in this light – as interactions with creatures that belong to God.

## Global Climate Change

Global climate change, or shifts in the global climate patterns, has drastically sped up in the last 50 years. Human impacts through fossil fuel consumption and carbon dioxide (CO<sub>2</sub>) release are causing rapid change. Changes in rainfall, flood, drought, and temperatures will make access to adequate food and clean water even more difficult. Many people will be forced out of their homes and off their land as through increases in extreme weather patterns. In many regions of the world people are already in conflict over arable land; as food and water become scarce, conflict will arise as people fight to get basic necessities.



***“In the beginning God created the heavens and the earth.”***  
- Genesis 1:1

## Energy Use Impacts in the United States (U.S.)

Americans are using a significant part of the harmful energy causing rapid climate change. We produce 25% of the total carbon dioxide emissions for the world, even as we make up about 4% of the world’s total population. The largest culprits of pollution are coal and gasoline. Together they produce 4 billion tons of CO<sub>2</sub> annually in the U.S.

## Energy and Poverty

Harmful CO<sub>2</sub> emissions are also exponentially more damaging to low-income families. According to a United Church of Christ report on Race and Toxic Waste, people of color more often live and work in unhealthy, polluted environments than white people. Upper and middle class neighborhoods are neighborhoods often avoid sewage treatment, toxic dumping, or nuclear waste near their communities. Additionally, families earning less than \$10,000 a year pay up to 69% of their paycheck on energy costs according to the US News and World Report. Energy policy needs to shift from toxic, expensive sources non-renewable sources that are healthy for all people.

## Mountain Top Removal (MTR)

Reckless practices such as MTR destroy precious eco-systems. Entire habitats are being destroyed due to MTR dumping of toxic debris, and deforestation. Toxic chemical slurry is leached into the water supply. The Environmental Protection Agency estimates that 2,200 square miles of forests will be eliminated by 2010, and that 700 miles of stream had already been lost since 2001. This makes the water unsafe for drinking or bathing for community residents and endangers the species living in the streams.

The people living near MTR not only deal with contaminated water supplies, but also severely depressed home values because of the unsafe water and depressed job markets because of dependence on machines instead of human labor. Mining jobs have decreased by 29%. Therefore MTR robs the Appalachian region of immense wealth, while citizens remain some of the most impoverished in the U.S.

## Public Land and Water Use

The U.S. network of public lands embodies the ideals of community and preservation of the landscapes and wildlife entrusted in our care. The 623 million acres of public lands offer spiritual renewal and escape from daily life. However they are endangered by

***“The Lord God took the man and put him in the garden to till it and to keep it.” - Genesis 2:15***

irresponsible oil, gas, and mineral mining, urban and suburban sprawl, and irresponsible grazing practices. In western region of the U.S. more than half of the land is held in public trust offering recreation, grazing, agriculture, cultural activities, and extraction of resources. However,

faithful management of the land is vital. Being responsible stewards of God’s creation we should work to ensure life and balance in caring for public lands.

## Environmental Health

Products we use everyday impact our health, and the health of God’s Creation. Despite the Toxic Substances Control Act of 1976 the Environmental Protection Agency has only tested 200 of the 82,000 chemicals registered for use in the U.S. Exposure to bisphenol-a (BPA), lead, and phthalates and other chemicals in our containers, toys, pipes, homes, and buildings are linked to such ailments as asthma, cardiovascular disease, obesity, early childhood puberty, infertility, and cancer. Chemicals in cosmetics and fragrance have been linked to cancer, reproductive challenges, and early childhood puberty in girls. Because of these risks, the church urges stronger education efforts about harm chemicals, and an emphasis on organic and eco-friendly products to protect families and the environment. Children and women are especially susceptible to these risks.

## Steps You Can Take:

### Personally:

- Change 5 light bulbs in your most-used light fixtures with ENERGY STAR bulbs.
- Recycle and buy recycled products and items that can be repaired or reused.
- Compost food and yard waste to reduce garbage in landfills and CO2 emissions.

### Congregationally

- Use eco-friendly detergents to wash dishes and cloths.
- Recycle all worship bulletins.
- Go Car-free for a Sunday. Bike, walk, or carpool to church.
- Hold a worship service on Earth Day to celebrate creation.
- Encourage local, seasonal food for celebrations and potlucks.
- Start a community garden or youth green club.
- Host a community event celebrating Creation Care.
- Go on a field trip to a forest, lake, etc. to enjoy God’s creation together.
- Install solar panels on the roof.

For more information on these programs and others visit [www.brethren.org/peace](http://www.brethren.org/peace) or email Jordan Blevins at [jblevins@brethren.org](mailto:jblevins@brethren.org).