

JANUARY 2021

# ENLIGHTENED

Reflections on the United Methodist Social Principles  
by the Young Adult Bible Study of the CCUMC

## The United Methodist Church on Climate Change

BY ALETA DAM

"One manifestation of our neglect, selfishness, and pride is our sinful disregard for creation that has given rise to the injustice of climate change" ~ Climate Change and the Church's Response 2016 Book of Resolutions, #1035

This month our newsletter is focused on Climate Change. Although it would be impossible to include all aspects and intricacies of this important issue, we hope to provide a glimpse into the facts and some useful advice on how we all can do our part to help protect the Earth! Do you know what the church thinks about this subject? The UMC believes that a relationship with God's creation and a ministry of caring for the earth is an important part of being a United Methodist. Here is an excerpt from the United Methodist Social Principles from the Book of Discipline: "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." Being responsible means making sure we are educated when it comes to our planet. On Netflix, there is an excellent documentary, 'Kiss the Ground', which highlights the importance of our soil. Other documentaries available on streaming platforms are 'A Plastic Ocean', 'Food, Inc' and 'Our Planet'. We are pleased that our church calls us to do all that is in our power to care for the earth!



## Fast Facts

**2010 TO 2019 WAS THE WARMEST DECADE EVER RECORDED LEADING TO MASSIVE WILDFIRES, HURRICANES, DROUGHTS, AND OTHER CLIMATE DISASTERS ACROSS CONTINENTS**

**GLOBAL EMISSIONS OF CARBON DIOXIDE HAVE INCREASED BY ALMOST 50% SINCE 1990**

**11% OF ALL GLOBAL GREEN HOUSE EMISSIONS CAUSED BY HUMANS ARE DUE TO DEFORESTATION**

**NATURAL CLIMATE SOLUTIONS SUCH AS RESTORING DEGRADED FORESTS COULD CREATE AS MANY AS 39 JOBS PER MILLION DOLLARS SPENT —**



# Plastic Pollution

BY JOE DUPONT AND KAYLA PEREZ-KILMONIS

As 2020 comes to a close, many of us have been challenged in ways we never thought possible, but, through it all, we have grown to be stronger, more resilient, and more appreciative of the little things that this pandemic took away from us. In 2021, we ask you to continue that path of growth on a larger scale that could impact the earth for generations to come. Environmental activism takes many different shapes, but what we chose to touch on in this piece is the impact plastics have on the environment and how you can help make a difference to reduce waste.

To give you a little bit of a history lesson on plastic production, as of 2015, worldwide plastic production hit an all-time high of 338 million metric tonnes annually and only continues to rise. Plastic production is expected to DOUBLE by the year 2050 and to make matters worse, more than half of the plastics ever produced have been produced in the last 15 years! As of 2015, only 20% of plastic was recycled, 25% incinerated and the remaining 55% discarded. At first glance you may be thinking, those numbers aren't THAT bad, but those are worldwide figures. Here in the US, we are only recycling 8% of the plastic we use while being the second-largest producer of plastic in the world at 38 million metric tonnes in 2015. That means the majority of our plastics end up in landfills or as litter that may never deteriorate with a small portion being incinerated. The major problem with landfills is that it does not create a suitable environment for any waste to degrade, let alone plastic. Given ideal circumstances, that styrofoam cup that holds your beloved hot medium dark roast with cream and 2 Splenda takes 500 years to fully decompose. Put it in a landfill and it may be there until the end of time due to the composition of plastic being very resistant to decomposing and the fact landfills offer less than ideal conditions for this to take place.

The piece that is the most mind-blowing to us is the fact that nearly 8 million metric tonnes of plastic ends up in our waterways around the world and eventually into our oceans. Of that 8 million, only a few hundred thousand metric tonnes are found floating in the ocean, leaving us with the "missing plastic problem." Scientists are still working to determine if this is a result of plastics being broken down into the sediment found on the ocean floor, washed up and buried on our shoreline, or ingested by our sea creatures. Whichever way you spin it, plastics ending up in our oceans are harmful to our fish, our shorelines, and our future generations. So what do we ask of you? We ask for your support and help in preventing this problem from escalating further and impacting the future generations who want to enjoy the wonders of this beautiful Earth that we call home.

Some simple, yet effective, ways of reducing plastic pollution include:

- Sorting recyclables from household trash and using reusable shopping bags
- Grab yourself some reusable straws and keep it handy when you grab a bite to eat
- Stop buying plastic water bottles, use a water filtration system and a refillable bottle
- Buy second hand items, they aren't packaged in plastics
- Talk to your local government about banning the use of plastic bags
- Bring refillable coffee cups to coffee shop
- Pick up litter, it only takes a second to stop it from entering our water ways

References: <https://www.plasticpollutioncoalition.org><https://thisisplastics.com/plastics-101/how-are-plastics-made/><https://ourworldindata.org/plastic-pollution><https://www.nationalgeographic.com/environment/habitats/plastic-pollution/#close>

## Fast Facts Cont.

**3.2 BILLION PEOPLE ARE IMPACTED BY LAND DEGRADATION WORLDWIDE**

**800 MILLION PEOPLE ARE CURRENTLY VULNERABLE TO CLIMATE CHANGE IMPACTS SUCH AS FLOODS, HEAT WAVES, EXTREME WEATHER EVENTS AND SEA LEVEL RISE**

### References

<https://www.conservation.org/stories/11-climate-change-facts-you-need-to-know>

<https://climate.nasa.gov/evidence/>  
<https://www.un.org/en/sections/issues-depth/climate-change/>

**"As Christ calls us to love our neighbors, we have a moral obligation to stand with our neighbors in frontline communities in Africa, the Philippines, small island states in the South Pacific and native communities in the United States who are bearing the brunt of climate impacts. The United Methodist Church is committed to ministries that address both the impacts and root causes of the climate crisis"**

UMC ON CLIMATE JUSTICE



# 10 Easy Things You Can Do For The Planet Every Day

ADAPTED FROM "KISS THE GROUND MOVIE" INSTAGRAM POST

1. Start a garden - Have you been wanting to get your hands in the dirt and try growing something of your own? Start your own garden! It doesn't have to be fancy or even big -- start small and see what sprouts.
2. Recycle - Recycling helps reduce the amount of garbage in landfills.
3. Compost - Create your own compost bin at home or take your food scraps to a local farm.
4. Volunteer - Do you want to learn firsthand how to farm or how to support organizations you're passionate about? Volunteer!
5. Share - Helping to spread the word about climate change is an important way to keep this movement alive.
6. Buy Mindfully - We vote with our dollars, so spending as mindfully as we can - from food, to clothing, to goods and services, is a fantastic way to support local farmers and organizations that are committed to sustainability.
7. Eliminate single-use plastic as much as possible.
8. Get Educated - We are forever students, and learning about our planet is no exception. Commit to getting more educated on local farmers, indigenous change makers and organizations who are standing for the health of our humanity, and the health of our planet.
9. Eliminate chemicals in our waterways - Swap out harsh chemicals in your home or office for non-toxic cleaning options, to help prevent toxic chemicals from entering our waterways.
10. Bike, walk, carpool - Getting outside isn't just good for your health, exploring other ways to travel is just another small way to support our climate.

Reference: Instagram (@kissthegroundmovie)

## Further Reading

WHERE TO FIND OUT MORE ABOUT CLIMATE CHANGE

1. How to Reduce Your Carbon Footprint - Article in the New York Times <https://www.nytimes.com/guides/year-of-living-better/how-to-reduce-your-carbon-footprint>
2. United Nations Sustainable Development Goals <https://www.undp.org/content/undp/en/home/sustainable-development-goals.html>
3. Conservation International <https://www.conservation.org/priorities/protecting-nature-to-halt-climate-catastrophe>
4. UMW on Climate Justice <https://www.unitedmethodistwomen.org/climate-justice>
5. United Methodist Church <https://www.umcjustice.org/what-we-care-about/environmental-justice/climate-justice>

We are happy to hear feedback from our church family! Are you enjoying the newsletter, do you have any ideas for a section for us to include? Please let us know!

"But ask the beasts, and they will teach you; the birds of the heavens, and they will tell you; or speak to the earth, and it will teach you; and the fish of the sea will declare you. Who among all these does not know that the hand of the Lord has done this? In his hand is the life of every living thing and the breath of all mankind "

JOB 12: 7-10

## January is:

- SLAVERY AND HUMAN TRAFFICKING PREVENTION MONTH
- NATIONAL MENTORING MONTH
- CERVICAL HEALTH AWARENESS MONTH
- NATIONAL BLOOD DONOR MONTH

Please keep all those individuals and families affected by these in your thoughts and prayers throughout the month.