

1 Document: 700.05  
2 Name: Creation Care Advocate Resolution  
3 Author(s): Harriette Cross and Richard Alton  
4 CCFA Action:  
5 Legislation Section:  
6

7 Action:  
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9 **That every local church be encouraged to name at least one Creation Care Advocate who will**  
10 **strengthen the church’s existing green actions, and**  
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12 **Advocate for creation care to be lifted up in all areas of ministry and mission**, including  
13 preaching, liturgy, communications, education, outreach, administration and advocacy so that  
14 the church will become an increasingly effective witness of loving God and neighbor.  
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16 **That these actions are to be communicated as an idea exchange and inspiration** throughout  
17 the connection. They can be reported at charge conference and should be celebrated locally, in  
18 the annual conference, and beyond.  
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20 **That the Northern Illinois Annual Conference will record the names of the Creation Care**  
21 **Advocates in the Lay Portal and assist these leaders with resources and mentors**, as needed.  
22 See Examples for Action below.  
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25 RATIONALE:  
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27 **Scripture** proclaims God created all – from Earth’s hospitable atmosphere, mighty seas,  
28 abundant forests and other plants to nutrient-rich soil, from majestic whales to the tiniest  
29 microbes and all sentient and non-sentient beings in between; Scripture also proclaims God  
30 called humans to be caretakers of creation (Genesis 1-2). Jesus declared the Greatest  
31 Commandments are to love God and to love neighbor, especially the most vulnerable (Luke  
32 10:25-37). Persons living in poverty, persons of color, and indigenous people in this country and  
33 throughout the world are harmed first and most by the degradation of creation, and these same  
34 groups have the fewest resources to recover from that harm. Care for creation is clearly a matter  
35 of justice. Creation, including all people, is already or will be affected by the current and coming  
36 level of danger from climate change and its consequences that intersect with multiple  
37 expressions of injustice. It follows that loving God, the Creator, means loving God’s Creation  
38 and that loving neighbors in distress requires stopping harm and righting wrongs, in other  
39 words, working for justice.  
40

41 **Tradition** for United Methodists includes John Wesley’s Three Simple Rules for living  
42 faithfully: First, do no harm; second, do all the good you can; and third, stay in love with God.  
43 Our proposed 2020 Social Principles begin with “The Community of All Creation,” outlining  
44 the care and justice work that is needed in the midst of the crises upon crises that are adversely  
45 affecting God’s creation and our neighbors. The 2009 Pastoral Letter of the Council of Bishops of  
46 The United Methodist Church, *God’s Renewed Creation: Call to Hope and Action*, pledges  
47 leadership in addressing the work of renewal. The 2016 *Book of Discipline* (Paragraph 254)

1 includes an Earth Advocacy ministry group as a way “to fulfill the mission of the local church.”  
2 It follows that the church provides both a mandate and guidance for doing what is needed.

3  
4 **Reason** is a God-given gift. Our reasoning capabilities are informed by modern scientific  
5 research and practices. The scientific community has given clear warning that creation is under  
6 tremendous strain due to the poisoning of air, water, and land; habitat destruction; the  
7 unsustainable consumption of earth’s finite resources; and the rapidly accelerating extinction of  
8 species. Scientists have sounded the alarm of catastrophic harm to creation if global warming  
9 and associated climate change are not halted and reversed. They point to how rising  
10 temperatures have already intensified wildfires, hurricanes, drought, and sea-level rise  
11 throughout the world with devastating impacts. Our reasoning capabilities are also informed by  
12 the examples of indigenous peoples whose traditional wisdom and practices honor living in  
13 harmony with nature. It follows that, globally, humans have the capacity for understanding the  
14 damage and danger and for stopping or mitigating the effects. Individuals and congregations  
15 have access to trustworthy knowledge and the reasoning ability to discern what is needed and  
16 how to carry out plans in their local situations.

17  
18 **Experience** is honored by United Methodists as a way of recognizing lifetime gains of  
19 knowledge, understanding, perspectives, and practices of individuals, which they all bring to  
20 the work before them. Functioning as a team, they become stronger in their efforts (Ecclesiastes  
21 4:12). Experience is also honored as the varied ways in which humans encounter God. For many  
22 people that meeting is through God’s gift of the natural world. It follows that a group of people  
23 who care about creation and justice, working together can use their wisdom and passion to  
24 create faithful and meaningful experiences that help others love God and neighbor.

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26 On June 4, 2018 the Northern Illinois Conference passed resolution 700.01 “Advance our Care  
27 for the Earth” to encourage churches to form Green Teams, conduct energy audits and to  
28 eliminate use of Styrofoam plastics. In five years many of our churches have not responded to  
29 this encouragement. The Net Zero Strategy task force recommends that a leader from each  
30 church be named in the Lay Portal to receive materials and coaching.

## 31 32 **EXAMPLES OF ACTIONS**

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34 **Resources** may include the monthly newsletter, website, and Creation Justice Tips from the  
35 United Methodist Creation Justice Movement ([umcreationjustice.org](http://umcreationjustice.org)) and the attached listing of  
36 examples from “What Churches Are Doing” in addition to others from the general church.

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38 **Mentors** may choose to use the SMARTIE planning tool below in addition to their own skills  
39 and tools.

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42 This listing is to encourage Creation Care Advocates with ideas of what a church can do, to give  
43 the group a starting point. It is not exhaustive. The gifts and graces of the team members and  
44 the local context, needs, and opportunities will be the ultimate inspiration for what they *can* do.

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47 **Worshiping**

- 1 • Praying every Sunday on behalf of God’s Creation
- 2 • Hosting a prayer vigil focused on creation care
- 3 • Observing Earth Day (April 22)
- 4 • Creating an outdoor worship service
- 5 • Putting together a Lenten calendar with actions that connect to faith
- 6 • Writing elements of liturgy focused on creation care
- 7 • Providing a prayer for the whole congregation to pray for a specified time
- 8 • Incorporating personal testimony related to creation care and faith
- 9 • Integrating creation care and justice in sermons and liturgy

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### 11 Educating

- 12 • Facilitating regular nature experience events for various age groups and groupings,  
13 including walks in the woods, wildflower walks, “I spy” challenges, trip to a beach or  
14 waterway, a zoo, and so on to help people love and learn to protect creation
- 15 • Leading a Bible study and programs on creation care
- 16 • Hosting a watch party for a film and discussion related to creation care
- 17 • Writing a resolution for the congregation to consider, which will start a conversation;  
18 adopting it will give direction to the church
- 19 • Inviting people from a local congregation largely with members from a different race to  
20 learn about how they experience creation justice or injustice
- 21 • Asking Sunday school classes to schedule speakers or follow a curriculum related to  
22 creation care
- 23 • Arranging for speakers with environmental expertise, especially about local issues, to  
24 speak to church groups
- 25 • Adding “green space” to their websites, with a focus on what the church is doing for  
26 creation care
- 27 • Engaging children in recycling conversations through collecting broken and used  
28 crayons, which are made of petroleum and would otherwise go into a landfill, and  
29 recycling them through Crazy Crayons ([crazycrayons.com](http://crazycrayons.com)) into new, fun crayons and  
30 then helping to “close the loop” through purchasing the recycled product, which enables  
31 the company to stay in business
- 32 • Encouraging clergy and congregational members to participate in the Lay Servant  
33 course, *Loving People and Planet in the Name of God*, which is resourced by Discipleship  
34 Ministries.
- 35 • Identifying and funding one or more members to become a United Methodist  
36 EarthKeeper, trained and certified by Global Ministries

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### 38 Practicing

- 39 • Deciding to stop mowing a section of the property, allowing it to go wild for the  
40 pollinators and local wildlife
- 41 • Stopping the use of Styrofoam and plastic plates and cups for meals

- 1 • Encouraging meatless dishes for potlucks; providing copies of recipes
- 2 • Setting up a compost system for food waste after meals or events
- 3 • Establishing a compost site for members and neighbors to use
- 4 • Including Creation Justice Tips in newsletters and bulletins
- 5 • Adding a focus on creation actions on the church website
- 6 • Installing a rain barrel system for watering
- 7 • Being more conscious of water use and practicing water conservation
- 8 • Placing recycling bins where needed and visible
- 9 • Touring the building and grounds to identify potential energy-efficiency projects,  
10 including caulking leaking windows, changing to LED lighting, adding motion-sensor  
11 lights and smart thermostats
- 12 • Taking steps toward renewable and just energy sources (solar, geothermal, wind) to  
13 minimize fossil fuel usage that contributes to climate change
- 14 • Purchasing bamboo toilet tissue with no plastic wrapping
- 15 • Adding a bicycle rack to encourage reducing emissions
- 16 • Preparing a pizza garden by planting the ingredients, such as oregano, tomatoes,  
17 jalapeño peppers, banana peppers, mushrooms, basil, and thyme, and then having a  
18 pizza party celebration featuring the homegrown ingredients
- 19 • Creating a rain garden
- 20 • Adding new trees to the church property
- 21 • Landscaping for a neighbor whose home is being rebuilt after a tornado
- 22 • Choosing native plants for butterflies and other pollinators
- 23 • Developing a community garden with vegetables and flowers to give away to both those  
24 near the church, those who come to help, and to local organizations that provide food in  
25 the community
- 26 • Adopting a nearby road or stream and picking up the litter and other trash as part of a  
27 one-day event or a regular practice; then advocating for change
- 28 • Hosting a recycle day event in the church parking lot
- 29 • Going through items that are no longer in use and stuffed in church closets and  
30 recycling or donating for reuse
- 31 • Arranging a collection of items that would otherwise be sent to the landfill and sending  
32 them instead to an alternative service, such as ReTold (fabric), Terracycle (numerous  
33 items), prescription drugs (police departments), for example
- 34 • Learning from and working with the conference Green Team
- 35 • Finding out from other churches what they are doing, learning from their experiences,  
36 and possibly joining their efforts
- 37 • Seeking support and possible funding from the annual conference

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### 39 Speaking Up

- 40 • Encouraging planning groups to use the lens of creation care
- 41 • Researching an issue, identifying the change-makers, and communicating with them

- 1 • Informing the congregation on local issues related to creation care and encouraging
- 2 them to communicate their values to the appropriate decisionmakers
- 3 • Putting together a letter-writing or calling advocacy event around a local issue
- 4 • Preparing a resolution for the annual conference agenda
- 5 • Making available reusables, such as mugs, shopping bags, or T-shirts, printed with a
- 6 creation care or justice message
- 7 • Inviting another nearby church to join in and work together on creation care efforts
- 8 • Making a list of sustainability decisions to use as criteria in planning events
- 9 • Writing “letters to the editor” about an issue

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11 Signatures:

12 NIC Net Zero Task Force: Rev. Harriette Cross and Richard Alton

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14 The Creation Justice Annual Conference Support Team, Model Resolutions sub-team, Rev.  
15 Richenda Fairhurst (Pacific Northwest Annual Conference) and Mr. Bob Downs (West Ohio  
16 Annual Conference.

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