



Stewardship of Creation

August 8, 2018

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On September 11, when the Presbytery gathers at Kettle Moraine Presbyterian Church, we will continue to explore our theme of stewardship. We've already looked at stewardship of the gospel and what it means to be a risk-taking Presbytery; we also considered stewardship of our gifts with a series of workshops designed to build our capacity as leaders. Risk-taking for the sake of the gospel and collaborative leadership were two of the three core values you identified through the Holy Cow! assessment, and we tried to honor that in our Presbytery Gatherings.

Our next Gathering's theme will give us a chance to renew our commitment to the first vocation given by God to humans: stewardship of creation. To those of us whose livelihood depends on the productivity of the land, this may seem second nature. But, we've also seen changes in our environment and climate that pose new challenges.

In 2005, I visited China and was shocked by the pollution. Mid-afternoon, as we were returning to Shanghai from a day of touring, I remarked to my husband how bright red the moon was. He corrected me: I was looking at the sun, not the moon. The sun was so enshrouded with smog that I could look straight at it. In lively conversations, when family members have protested that we shouldn't impose environmental controls on U.S. industry because we need to keep up with places like China, I remember that day in Shanghai. I also remember pollution in Mexico City, in Nairobi, and in my hometown of Denver.

- **Forest fires** have doubled in the western U.S. over the last 35 years due to the 2.5°F increase in temperature caused by climate change.
- Warmer winters lead to more pests that attack and kill trees, and dead trees are the perfect tinder for **wildfires**.
- Since the 1970's, the number of category 4 and 5 **hurricanes** has doubled.



I long for economic prosperity based on care for creation, not its destruction.

Our denomination has committed itself to this stewardship: "Earth-keeping today means insisting on sustainability – the ongoing capacity of natural and social systems to thrive together – which requires human beings to practice wise, humble, responsible stewardship, after the model of servanthood that we have in Jesus." (1990 policy "Restoring Creating for Ecology and Justice).

The speaker for our education hour on September 11, Dr. Calvin DeWitt, understands the integration of faith and science as we develop solutions for long-term sustainability of our planet. A professor at the University of Wisconsin, he has given major addresses at more than 100 North American colleges and universities and worldwide through travels to China, Korea, India, Indonesia, Malaysia, Russia, Ecuador, the Dominican Republic, Mexico, and the United Kingdom. His book, *Earthwise: A Guide to*

Hopeful Creation Care, brings together scripture and ecology to form a theological basis for creation care in a way that gives us hope and encourages us to take practical steps.

He will lead a walk during the pre-Gathering time to help us appreciate our immediate surroundings. You will want to set aside extra time before the Gathering for this walk.

In our meeting, Wauwatosa Presbyterian Church will share about its journey to become an Earth Care Congregation and why it was important to them to take this step. We will have handouts for those who may want to do the same.

We also invite each congregation to bring a display of how you are caring for creation. Perhaps your ministry is a community vegetable garden or a butterfly garden. Do you plant trees? Do you support ecological or environmental projects or mission co-workers with this ministry? Have you “gone green” by eliminating Styrofoam or adding solar panels? We will have table space for a poster board or other display and encourage you to share what you’re doing, so we can all be inspired.

In the meanwhile, please consider some of the ideas below from the Presbyterian Hunger Program.

WHAT CAN WE DO?

- Commit yourself to personal climate justice actions-- eating organic and local food, reducing energy use, investing in renewables, or getting an energy audit.
- Examine environmental justice in your area at scorecard.goodguide.com.
- Learn about grassroots Presbyterian Fossil Free PC(USA), corporate engagement efforts with the elected MRTI committee, and environmental investment options with Presbyterian Foundation.
- Encourage your church to become an Earth Care Congregation or to go carbon neutral at pcusa.org/climate.
- Support Joining Hands partners in global work at pcusa.org/joininghands.
- Pray every week for people in areas of the world affected by climate change.
- Contribute to Presbyterian Disaster Assistance for immediate relief and Presbyterian Hunger Program for long-term, root cause work for sustainability and resiliency.