

A Way Forward for Creation Care

We believe that care of the earth is an urgent moral, theological, spiritual issue of our time.

We believe that we are living during a kairos time in which God calls us to act while the window is still open for averting even greater damage to the earth and all that is in it.

We believe that our faith is instructed by biblical texts that remind us: the earth is the Lord's and all that is in it; that we are to till and tend; we are to do justice, love kindness and walk humbly with the Lord; we are to love God with all our heart, soul, mind and strength and to love our neighbor as ourselves.

We believe that the Creator God loves the whole of Creation and, as God loves, we are called to love.

We believe that God so loves the world that God came to us in Christ to be our Savior.

We believe that God did not send the Son into the world to condemn the world, but in order that world might be saved through him.

We believe that the Church is called to witness its faith in God the Creator, Redeemer and Sustainer who calls us into the work of reconciliation, so that peace and justice may be manifested throughout God's creation.

We believe the above statements are true. Yet we also know that we can feel overwhelmed by the task at hand and do not know where or how to begin. We know the forces of evil and darkness are strong, making us feel that whatever we might do is too little in the face of the enormity of the problem. We can become discouraged, depressed and defeated before we start. Such is the power of evil. However, in Christ's name we pray for strength, grace and a way forward to act on faith and to stand with God in acts of love and caring for creation.

We believe that God is with us and calls us out of crippling fear and into empowering hope.

We believe that faith and hope are treasures not to be buried out of fear, but rather are a means which strengthen and lead us into action.

We believe as people of faith, that every action has its beginning in prayer and then moves forward to do the work of Christ in the world.

We believe our actions need to flow out of four keys areas as we live the faith: worship, education, stewardship and witnessing. We offer the following, not as solutions, but as a beginning in a way forward for creation care:

Worship -

That in our daily prayers we give thanks for the wonder of creation and ask God's guidance in honoring God by honoring God's good creation.

That in our Lord's Day Worship we weave creation care into liturgy via hymns, prayers of confession, prayers of petition, thanksgiving and sermons being mindful of the many references to the earth in the scripture and their use in preaching.

Education:

That In our education programs we engage in learning more about what the Scripture has to say in words of hope and of challenge and that we be open to earth care in our study, discussion, planning and practice.

Stewardship (Caring & Conservation)

That we examine our current use of energy and seek to reduce our use of fossil fuels as we practice conservation in the various areas of our life.

Witness:

That we lift up our voices and promote those things that manifest our faith in God and our desire to protect the earth, thus honoring God, the earth and all that is in it.

Therefore, as members of the Peacemaking Task Force of Albany Presbytery we recommend the following actions:

- That the Albany Presbytery affirm, by voice vote, the above statements.
- That the Presbytery of Albany be mindful of the various statements and writings produced by the General Assemblies of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) and seek to live in the spirit of the continuing work of Creation Care. For further information see www.pcusa.org/earth-care-congregations
- That in our life as the Presbytery of Albany, we witness to the importance of Creation Care by regularly folding into the work of the Presbytery Worship, Education, Stewardship and Witness that strengthens and supports the work of Creation Care recognizing the urgency and importance that we engage in timely action now.
- That the Presbytery and its churches and members be open and supportive of community organizations working for Creation Care and that we seek and support ecumenical and interfaith linkages for the larger work of the people of God.
- That the Presbytery of Albany encourage our churches and members to lift up prayers and actions which reflect love of God, love of neighbor and love of the earth, which is God's good creation, and thereby honor God the Creator, Redeemer and Sustainer.

Respectfully submitted,

The Peacemaking Task Force of Albany Presbytery