



WOMEN'S HISTORY MONTH

Women Taking the Lead to Save Our Planet

“By acquainting ourselves with subjects in natural philosophy, we enter into a kind of association with nature’s works, and unite in the general concert of her extensive choir. By thus acquainting and familiarizing ourselves with the works of nature, we become as it were a member of her family, a participant in her felicities; but while we remain ignorant, we are like strangers and sojourners in a foreign land, unknowing and unknown.”

John Wesley, A Survey of the Wisdom of God in the Creation, 1:viii.

For the 2009 Women’s History Month project, the General Commission on the Status and Role of Women honors women who have taken the lead in the environmental or green movement. We are offering resources that feature United Methodist women who take the responsibility for this earth seriously and work earnestly to show us how to live out that responsibility.

As we rethink how we live, we understand more and more that taking care of the earth and reversing some of the damage our civilization has done to the earth is inextricably connected to our commitment to God. It’s more than changing light bulbs, switching from paper and plastic to reusable bags, and recycling. It is recognizing that God has entrusted us with the world’s resources with the condition that we use them according to God’s directions and to God’s glory.

“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. Economic, political, social, and technological developments have increased our human numbers, and lengthened and enriched our lives... Therefore, let us recognize the responsibility of the church and its members to place a high priority on changes in economic, political, social, and technological lifestyles to support a more ecologically equitable and sustainable world leading to a higher quality of life for all of God’s creation.” (*United Methodist Social Principles Paragraph 160 Book of Discipline 2004*)



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“The United Methodist Church has a great history of social action. The church already has so many powerful statements about our need to care for God’s creation. My hope is that this spirit trickles down to individual congregations, and that people would see that the church, as a body of faith, needs to be involved. And that it’s not an exclusion to the social action, it’s about justice for people who are affected by environmental segregation, and being open to the beauty of God in the world. Being a connectional church we have an opportunity to make changes on a really large scale.”

—Dr. Katy Hinman, executive director
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Power and Light

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Quiz: TRUE OR FALSE

1. Heating something in the microwave uses less energy that heating it in a conventional oven.
2. A cell phone is considered hazardous waste.
3. Sixty-five percent of the trash in America comes from businesses.
4. The clothes dryer is the second biggest energy-consuming appliance in a typical U.S. household.
5. China consumes more energy than the United States.

Answers

1. TRUE Microwave ovens are approximately 75 percent more energy efficient than a conventional oven.
2. TRUE Cell phones contain toxic metals such as arsenic, beryllium, cadmium, copper and nickel and must not be disposed of in traditional trash receptacles. Cell phones should be recycled.
3. FALSE Sixty-five percent comes from residences; 35 percent comes from schools and commercial locations, such as hospitals and businesses.
4. TRUE It’s second only to the refrigerator.
5. FALSE The US consumes far more energy than any other country, more than China and Russia combined. The US represents five percent of the world’s population, but consumes 23 percent of the world’s resources.

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This resource was produced by The General Commission on the Status and Role of Women (GCSRW), which was established by The United Methodist Church in 1972 to advocate the full inclusion of women in the life of the denomination and to monitor the Church at all levels for gender bias. The Commission offers training at district, annual conference and churchwide events on organizing and empowering women to find their voices and ministries in the Church; works with bishops, superintendents and other church leaders to understand and eradicate institutional sexism; and educates church laity and clergy on dealing with professional sexual misconduct. For more information and resources, visit www.gcsr-w.org, or call (312) 346-4900.



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