



LEADER'S GUIDE

CLIMATE JUSTICE
A CALL TO HOPE AND ACTION

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Climate Justice: A Call to Hope and Action Leader's Guide
by Anna Rhee

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United Methodist Women

PURPOSE

The organized unit of United Methodist Women shall be a community of women whose purpose is to know God and to experience freedom as whole persons through Jesus Christ; to develop a creative, supportive fellowship; and to expand concepts of mission through participation in the global ministries of the church.

The Vision

Turning faith, hope and love into action on behalf of women, children and youth around the world.

Living the Vision

We provide opportunities and resources to grow spiritually, become more deeply rooted in Christ and put faith into action.

We are organized for growth, with flexible structures leading to effective witness and action.

We equip women and girls around the world to be leaders in communities, agencies, workplaces, governments and churches.

We work for justice through compassionate service and advocacy to change unfair policies and systems.

We provide educational experiences that lead to personal change in order to transform the world.

Contents

Introduction for Study Leaders	5
SESSION 1: God’s Creation: A Biblical Understanding (CHAPTERS 1–2).....	9
SESSION 2: Climate Change: A Historical Perspective (CHAPTERS 3–4).....	20
SESSION 3: Climate Justice: The Earth and God’s People Cry Out (CHAPTERS 5–6).....	25
SESSION 4: Commitment and Action (CHAPTERS 7–8).....	32
About the Author	38
Appendix A: Carbon Dioxide (CO ₂) and Greenhouse Gas (GHG) Emission Comparisons	39
Appendix B: United Methodist Women Climate Justice Partners	40

Introduction for Study Leaders

Climate change is here, and it's only going to get worse. We are faced every day with issues related to climate change. The news covers stories about incredible weather disturbances all over the globe. We hear about droughts, floods, hurricanes, tornadoes, and areas with warmer or colder temperatures than expected. Our religious and civic leaders talk about their concerns regarding the impact of climate change. International organizations work to bring nations to agreements to reduce the human activities that contribute to climate change while they address the catastrophic consequences of major weather events, food shortages, disease outbreaks, and displacement. Those who are already economically vulnerable are disproportionately affected by climate change. Climate justice seeks to address that inequity while determining how to address climate change.

This study focuses on climate change through the lens of justice. It is based on the belief that climate change is real and that all of God's creation is suffering. And it is based on the fact that those who have benefitted the least from the current economic system are those who are suffering the most from the ways it continues to change our common climate.

Things to know about climate change:

1. Climate change refers to a long-term shift in weather conditions. It is measured by changes in a variety of climate indicators (e.g., temperature, precipitation, wind) including both changes in average and extreme conditions. Climate change can be the result of natural processes and/or human activity.
2. Over most of earth's history, natural processes have been responsible for periods of climate change. The earth's climate has changed throughout its history, long before human activity could have played a role. For example, the planet has swung between cold glacial periods or ice ages, and warm interglacial periods over the last few million years. Changes in the past can be explained by natural factors such as changes in the earth's orbit, in the sun's intensity, in the amount of explosive volcanic activity, by changes to the surface of the earth, and farther back in time, to the position of the continents. Of these, only changes in the sun's intensity and volcanic activity are relevant on century timescales.
3. According to 98 percent of scientists invested in climate change, human activity has now become the main cause of recent climate change. The strong global warming observed since the mid-twentieth century has been largely attributed to human influences on the climate. Global warming refers to the observed long-term rise in global average surface temperature and is one manifestation of climate change. The rate of global warming over the last half of the twentieth century was about twice that for the whole century. This human influence results primarily from burning fossil fuels such as coal, oil, and natural gas, which are involved in almost every aspect of the twenty-first century economy. Burning these fuels generates carbon dioxide, a greenhouse gas. Land use changes, such as

deforestation and conversion of land to industrial agriculture, have also contributed carbon dioxide to the atmosphere. Methane is another greenhouse gas. Humans have contributed to methane in the atmosphere through landfills, extraction of natural gas, and the livestock industry.

4. Global warming is primarily attributed to the enhancement of the natural greenhouse gas effect. Greenhouse gases are so named because they reduce heat loss from earth to outer space. In this respect, they act in a way that is similar to a greenhouse, creating warmer conditions than if these gases were not present. Atmospheric concentrations of key greenhouse gases such as carbon dioxide, methane, nitrous oxide, and ozone have risen substantially as a result of human activity. This has enhanced or intensified the natural greenhouse effect.
5. Climate change is a warming trend, not just a warming cycle. Global temperature naturally varies up and down from year to year and decade to decade. Natural climate variability will continue to have an influence on the state of the climate over short time periods, but superimposed on these natural fluctuations is a long-term trend toward global warming. In order to detect climate change—a long-term trend—above the “noise” of natural climate variability, it is important to look at data records over an extended period of time. When the record of global average surface temperature over the past one hundred years or so is examined, a long-term global warming of about 0.8 degrees Celsius is observed.
6. Climate change affects communities all over the world. Climate change is projected to cause changes in average conditions and in extreme weather events. Increases in droughts, heavy rains, floods, and severe storms can be very disruptive for society and are among the potential impacts of most concern. Rising sea levels also affect coastal areas, along which human communities are concentrated in many regions. Changes in temperature and precipitation will affect natural habitats and managed ones, with impacts on agriculture and food supplies of particular concern to a growing human population. There will be opportunities as well as risks associated with climate change, but in balance, impacts are expected to become increasingly negative as global average surface temperature becomes warmer. The impoverished are and will continue to be disproportionately affected.
7. In the United States, industries that contribute the most to climate change are often located physically in areas called “sacrifice zones.” Sacrifice zones bear disproportionate environmental and health burdens of our current economy and are often home to people of color. The people living in these zones benefit the least from these industries and often experience living standards that use very little energy. Surface pollutants from energy-intensive industries, and those industries that produce the energy needed to fuel all of our homes, greatly affect the health of these communities. Asthma, cancer, reproductive issues, and developmental disorders are just a few of the health impacts. Around the world, it is also true that those who contribute the least to climate change—those whose food comes from the small fields that they farm or those who walk for water or those who are in impoverished flood zones—suffer disproportionately from the greenhouse gas-intensive industries that primarily profit others.

8. Individuals, organizations, and the international community can make a difference in dealing with climate change. We must act. Measures to reduce greenhouse gas emissions are essential to slowing the rate of climate change. Raising awareness of the issues surrounding climate change can make a significant difference.¹

Through this study, participants will deepen their understanding of climate change. They will learn about the justice concerns raised by the effects of climate change in their communities and around the world. They will also learn about how their own actions contribute to climate change. Finally, they will make commitments to share their knowledge and be intentional about reducing their contributions to climate change and helping those who suffer the effects of climate change. We also hope those who use this study will think about how the church might make an impact through advocacy, acts of sustainability, and acts of solidarity by partnering with some of the most affected communities. In this way we address the justice concerns deeply embedded in this issue.

As a study leader, you have an important role in guiding participants through the material in the main study resource, *Climate Justice: A Call to Hope and Action*, edited by Pat Watkins, using this study guide and other supporting resources.

LEADING THE STUDY

Your preparations to lead this study are key to a successful class! Give yourself enough time to read each chapter of the main text carefully, marking the places you want to highlight in the sessions. Increase your knowledge of climate change with the additional resources at the end of this leader's guide. There is a plethora of information about climate change. Look for reputable sources to give yourself a broad and deep understanding of the issues related to climate change and their impact on people and communities in the United States and around the world. Also, research what the church, communities, and governments are doing to reduce the impact of climate change. You will want to select a range of resources to support your preparations and to use in the classroom. Consider printed and online resources as well as videos.

The Climate Change and Environmental Justice area of the United Methodist Women's website is full of useful resources and tools. These are easily accessible to you and to participants: www.unitedmethodistwomen.org/environment.

Create a library of resources that you can display in your classroom and encourage your participants to use them during the study. The April 2016 issue of **response** magazine also focuses on climate justice.

Make copies of handouts you want to include in each session. Some suggestions are included in this guide. You may find other information that you want to share with your students. Check for copyrights and any needed permissions before making copies and sharing videos.

Collect supplies to help your presentations in the classroom. Here's a list of items that you may find useful:

- Bibles
- Devices to connect to the Internet and to show videos. Find out ahead of time if your classroom will have WiFi.
- Easel
- Index cards in different colors and sizes
- Markers
- Masking tape or painter's tape
- Newsprint
- Push pins
- Roll of long paper for timeline
- Scissors
- *The United Methodist Hymnal*, *The Faith We Sing*, Global Praise songbooks, and other songbooks
- Transparent adhesive tape

If you are able to communicate in advance with participants, let them know what they can do to prepare for the study. Ask them to read *Climate Justice: A Call to Hope and Action* before coming to class. Get them thinking about assignments. Give them some additional resources to read or watch. Encourage them to jump in and learn as much as they can about climate change!

If possible, visit your classroom before your sessions begin. Work out the plans for how you want the furniture to be arranged. Make sure you have enough tables and chairs. Check for wall space to hang newsprint and signs. Locate the electrical outlets. Figure out where you want to place your resources and materials.

1. Adapted from Government of Canada, *Canada's Action on Climate Change*, "Top 10 Things You Can Do to Help," modified November 30, 2015, <http://climatechange.gc.ca/default.asp?lang=En&n=D27052CE-1>.

SESSION 1

God's Creation: A Biblical Understanding

CHAPTERS 1 AND 2

LEADER PREPARATION

- Confirm that your classroom has an easel with newsprint, markers, and masking tape.
- Prepare a worship center that includes a Bible, globe or image of the earth, and a candle.
- Use a table to display resources for this study. (Invite participants to review them during class time.)
- Print short quotes and Bible verses from the study or other resources that shed light on the issues of climate justice (see suggestions below). Post the verses and quotes on the walls around the room. Make them large enough that they can be read from a distance.
- Decorate the room with images, artwork, pieces of nature, news articles, and other items that bring forth issues of this study.
- Set up the room to watch a video. You will need an Internet connection and equipment to show an online video.
- Write “Discovery and Discussion” questions on newsprint. Or, type them in advance and print copies to hand out.
- If possible, communicate with the participants in your class that they should read Chapters 1 and 2 of *Climate Justice* before the first session. Be aware that some participants may not be prepared.

SUGGESTED QUOTES FROM CHAPTER 1

“Then the Lord God formed man from the dust of the ground, and breathed into his nostrils the breath of life; and the man became a living being.” Genesis 2:7

“The Lord God took the man and put him in the garden of Eden to till it and keep it.”
Genesis 2:15

“Cursed is the ground because of you; in toil you shall eat of it all the days of your life; thorns and thistles it shall bring forth for you; and you shall eat the plants of the field.” Genesis 3:17b–18

He named him Noah, saying, “Out of the ground that the Lord has cursed this one shall bring us relief from our work and from the toil of our hands.” Genesis 5:29

“I have set my bow in the clouds, and it shall be a sign of the covenant between me and the earth.” Genesis 9:13

“The land shall not be sold in perpetuity, for the land is mine.” Leviticus 25:23

“The earth is the Lord’s and all that is in it, the world, and those who live in it.” Psalm 24:1

“When you reap your harvest in your field and forget a sheaf in the field, you shall not go back to get it; it shall be left for the alien, the orphan, and the widow, so that the Lord your God may bless you in all your undertakings.” Deuteronomy 24:19

“Hear the word of the Lord, O people of Israel; for the Lord has an indictment against the inhabitants of the land. There is no faithfulness or loyalty, and no knowledge of God in the land. Swearing, lying, and murder, and stealing and adultery break out; bloodshed follows bloodshed. Therefore the land mourns, and all who live in it languish; together with the wild animals and the birds of the air, even the fish of the sea are perishing.” Hosea 4:1–3

“He was in the beginning with God. All things came into being through him, and without him not one thing came into being.” John 1:2–3

“For in him all the fullness of God was pleased to dwell, and through him God was pleased to reconcile to himself all things, whether on earth or in heaven, by making peace through the blood of his cross.” Colossians 1:19–20

“Anthropocentrism, the refusal to understand ourselves as but one part of a larger created whole, is the central sin. Alienation from nature, symbolized in the expulsion from the garden, is the necessary consequence.” Norman Wirzba¹

“I used to think the top environmental problems facing the world were global warming, environmental degradation, and ecosystem collapse, and that we scientists could fix those problems with enough science, but I was wrong. The real problem is not those three items but greed, selfishness, and apathy. And for that we need a spiritual and cultural transformation. And we scientists don’t know how to do that. We need your help.” Gus Speth²

SUGGESTED QUOTES FROM CHAPTER 2

“From your lofty abode you water the mountains; the earth is satisfied with the fruit of your work. You cause the grass to grow for the cattle, and plants for people to use, to bring forth food from the

earth. . . . The trees of the Lord are watered abundantly, the cedars of Lebanon that he planted. In them the birds build their nests; the stork has its home in the fir trees. . . . O Lord, how manifold are your works! In wisdom you have made them all; the earth is full of your creatures!” Psalm 104:13–14, 16–17, 24a

“Victims of climate change are the new face of the poor, the widow and the stranger that are especially loved and cared for by God (Deuteronomy 10:17–18). When creation is threatened in this way, churches are called to speak out and act as an expression of their commitment to life, justice and peace.” World Council of Churches³

“To work toward climate justice, we have to reread the creation stories. Let us read them as stories that tell us how we as human beings are part of the whole, interwoven in the circles of life, dependent upon the grace and creativity of God who made heaven and earth and all of us.” Rosemarie Wenner, *Climate Justice*, Chapter 2

“[Christ] is now the life of everything that lives in any kind or degree. He is the source of the lowest species of life, that of vegetables; as being the source of all the motion on which vegetation depends. He is the fountain of the life of animals, the power by which the heart beats, and the circulating juices flow. He is the fountain of all the life that man possesses in common with other animals.” John Wesley⁴

“As people in the tradition of John Wesley, we understand reconciliation and renewal to be part of the process of salvation that is already under way. We are not hemmed in to a fallen world. Rather, we are part of a divine unfolding process to which we must contribute. As we faithfully respond to God’s grace and call to action, the Holy Spirit guides us in this renewal. With a resurrection spirit, we look forward to the renewal of the whole creation and commit ourselves to that vision. We pray that God will accept and use our lives and resources that we rededicate to a ministry of peace, justice, and hope to overcome poverty and disease, environmental degradation, and the proliferation of weapons and violence.” United Methodist Bishops⁵

“We are now God’s stewards. We are indebted to him for all we have. . . . A steward is not at liberty to use what is lodged in his hand as he pleases but as his master pleases. . . . He is not the owner of any of these things but barely entrusted with them by another. . . . Now this is exactly the case of everyone with relation to God. We are not at liberty to use what God has lodged in our hands as we please, but as God pleases, who alone is the possessor of heaven and earth and the Lord of every creature.” John Wesley⁶

“It is time to practice not only personal holiness and social holiness, but also environmental holiness.” Rosemarie Wenner, *Climate Justice*, Chapter 2

WELCOME AND INTRODUCTIONS (30 minutes)

Invite participants to look around the room at the quotes and Bible verses posted on the walls and note one that resonates with them. Ask them to introduce themselves, share their quote, and explain why this selection is meaningful to them in relation to climate justice.

Introduce yourself and share your leadership style for this class. Lead into a discussion about expectations. Prepare two pieces of newsprint with the headings “Why This Class” and “Ground Rules.” Ask participants to share their responses to the following questions:

- Why did you select this class?
- What do you hope to learn?
- What environmental justice concerns and experiences do you bring?
- What does your faith as a Christian have to do with climate justice?

Record the responses on the newsprint. Look back over their answers and note where participant expectations coincide with the study. If there are items on the list that will not be covered, note those, too. If anything arises that needs to be addressed with individual participants, invite them to speak with you after class.

Ask participants to share one expectation about how they will interact with each other during the group’s time together. Write their responses on the “Ground Rules” newsprint.

This should be a list of how you and participants will treat one another and the subject matter throughout your time together. Once assembled, ask if there’s anything missing. Confirm that everyone is in agreement and will abide by the list. Note that items can be added later, if needed.

After everyone has shared, review the list, emphasizing items that are especially important to a successful class. Explain that while you are the leader/facilitator, everyone brings leadership and knowledge to the class. Emphasize participation, mutual respect, and confidentiality as the keys to a safe space in which together the group can explore a very complex topic.

OPENING WORSHIP (10 minutes)

Responsive reading from Psalm 104 together with the hymn: “All Creatures of Our God and King,” *The United Methodist Hymnal*, no. 62.⁷ Either project the litany (below) or make copies for everyone to read.

Leader: Bless the Lord, O my soul. O Lord my God, you are very great! You make springs gush forth in the valleys. They flow between the hills, giving drink to every wild animal. The

wild asses quench their thirst. By the streams the birds of the air have their habitation. They sing among the branches.

Congregation Speaks: All creatures of our God and King. Lift up your voice and with us sing. O praise ye! Alleluia!

Leader: You cause the grass to grow for the cattle, and plants for the people to use, to bring forth food from the earth, and wine to gladden the human heart, oil to make the face shine, and bread to strengthen the human heart.

Congregation Speaks: O brother sun with golden beam. O sister moon with silver gleam. O praise ye! O praise ye!

Leader: The trees of the Lord are watered abundantly, the cedars of Lebanon that he planted. In them the birds build their nests; the stork has its home in the fir trees.

All Sing:

All creatures of our God and King

Lift up your voice and with us sing

O praise ye! Alleluia!

O brother sun with golden beam,

O sister moon with silver gleam!

O praise ye! O praise ye!

Alleluia! Alleluia! Alleluia!

Leader: The high mountains are for the wild goats; the rocks are a refuge for the badgers. You have made the moon to mark the season; the sun knows its time for setting.

Congregation Speaks: O brother wind, air, clouds, and rain, by which all creatures ye sustain. O praise ye! Alleluia!

Leader: You make darkness, and it is night, when all the animals of the forest come creeping out. The young lions roar for their prey, seeking their food from God.

Congregation Speaks: Thou rising morn, in praise rejoice, ye lights of evening, find a voice! O praise ye! O praise ye!

Leader: When the sun rises, they withdraw and lie down in their dens. People go out to their work and to their labor until the evening.

All Sing:

**O brother wind, air, clouds, and rain,
by which all creatures ye sustain.**

O praise ye! Alleluia!

**Thou rising morn, in praise rejoice,
ye lights of evening, find a voice!**

O praise ye! O praise ye!

Alleluia! Alleluia! Alleluia!

Leader: O Lord, how manifold are your works! In wisdom you have made them all. The earth is full of your creatures. Yonder is the sea, great and wide. Creeping things innumerable are there, living things both small and great

**Congregation Speaks: Let all things their Creator bless. And worship God in humbleness.
O praise ye! Alleluia!**

Leader: There go the ships and Leviathan that you formed to sport in it. These all look to you to give them their food in due season. When you give to them, they gather it up. When you open your hand, they are filled with good things.

Congregation Speaks: Praise, praise the Father, praise the Son. And praise the Spirit, Three in One. O praise ye! O praise ye!

Leader: When you hide your face, they are dismayed. When you take away their breath, they die and return to their dust. When you send forth your spirit, they are created, and you renew the face of the ground.

All Sing:

**Let all things their Creator bless,
And worship God in humbleness**

O praise ye! Alleluia!

**Praise, praise the Father, praise the Son,
and praise the Spirit, Three in One!**

O praise ye! O praise ye!

Alleluia! Alleluia! Alleluia!

PRAYER

O God, we have gathered here—dedicated followers of Jesus Christ, sinners redeemed by your grace, your servant people—because we feel called. We hear the groans of creation. We hear the cries of your people. We feel the call to justice. We have a sense that the issues before us are complicated and complex. And, yet, our Christian mandate is clear. Care for the earth and care for one another. You have prepared the way. Guide us to understanding and compassion. Amen.

DISCOVERY AND DISCUSSION (30 minutes)

Refer participants to Chapter 1 of *Climate Justice* in which the author discusses the biblical theology of creation care. Divide into small groups of four or five members per group. Assign each group one of the following discussions. Ask them to designate a recorder/reporter. Give them time parameters. You may wish to write the questions on newsprint or on a slide ahead of time.

1. Consider this passage: “Then the Lord God formed man from the dust of the ground, and breathed into his nostrils the breath of life; and the man became a living being.” Genesis 2:7

By virtue of the fact that we exist as living, breathing human beings, we have a relationship with the earth because we were created out of it and we have a relationship with God because we breathe the very breath of the one who created, not only all of us, but all of creation. How are these relationships, with God and the earth, connected in your own life? Discuss.

If you see yourself in a relationship with God’s creation, give an example or two of how you live out that relationship.

In the Garden of Eden story, what was the vocation that God assigned to Adam? (To farm the garden and take care of it.) How does God’s command to farm and care for the garden translate into your life as a Christian today?

2. In both the Garden of Eden story and the Cain and Abel story, human disobedience had negative consequences for the land and our relationship with it.

In Adam and Eve’s case their disobedience resulted in a curse on the land. “Cursed is the ground because of you; in pain you will eat from it every day of your life. Weeds and thistles will grow for you, even as you eat the plants of the field” Genesis 3:17b–18.

In Cain’s case, his disobedience resulted in a separation from the very land that he knew and loved, which then even resulted in a perception on Cain’s part that he was also separated from God. God said to Cain as a result of the murder of Abel,

“And now you are cursed from the ground, which has opened its mouth to receive your brother’s blood from your hand. When you till the ground, it will no longer yield to you its strength; you will be a fugitive and a wanderer on the earth.” Cain said to the Lord, “My punishment is greater than I can bear! Today you have driven me away from the soil, and I shall be hidden from your face; I shall be a fugitive and a wanderer on the earth, and anyone who meets me may kill me” (Genesis 4:11–14).

For Cain, to lose his relationship with the land was to be hidden from God! He could not have one without the other; they were so interconnected.

Discuss the ways your relationships with God and the earth are interconnected. If you lost one, how might that effect the other?

Could that explain part of the problem; that we compartmentalize our relationship with God as one of personal salvation and do not connect it at all with our relationship with God’s creation?

What are the consequences of compartmentalization? Would you call this disobedience? Why or why not?

The point of these passages is how to live life within the context of the garden and how to be in right relationship with God, each other, and the earth itself. Things can go terribly wrong but there is room for redemption.

3. What did Noah's father say on the day Noah was born? "Out of the ground that the Lord has cursed this one shall bring us relief from our work and from the toil of our hands" (Genesis 5:29). Lamech was hopeful that his son would be the one who could reverse the curse that God placed on the land due to the disobedience of Adam and Cain. At the end of the Noah story, God made a covenant, not just with Noah and his family, but also with every living creature on the ark and with the earth itself. If God is so in love with the earth and the creatures of it so as to make a covenant with them, then as people of God, we also have to make a covenant with the earth.

How does your life reflect this covenant between God and the earth? How should the church express this covenant? As a group write a creation care statement for the church that reflects God's covenant with the earth.

4. Hosea witnessed the connection between our relationship with God and each other, and the consequences of those relationships for the earth itself.

Hear the word of the Lord, O people of Israel;

for the Lord has an indictment against the inhabitants of the land.

There is no faithfulness or loyalty,
and no knowledge of God in the land.

Swearing, lying, and murder,
and stealing and adultery break out;
bloodshed follows bloodshed.

Therefore the land mourns,
and all who live in it languish;
together with the wild animals
and the birds of the air,
even the fish of the sea are perishing.

—Hosea 4:1–3

What elements of Hosea's words relate to how you see the issues in our day? Discuss.

If the earth today is "sick" could this be a symptom of problems in our relationships with each other and God? How might the church use this passage in conjunction with what's happening today to contribute to solutions?

5. The writer of John's Gospel seems to believe Jesus was present with God at creation. "He was in the beginning with God. All things came into being through him, and without him not one thing came into being." John 1:2–3.

Paul believed Jesus to be the redeemer not just of humanity, but also of all creation. “For in him all the fullness of God was pleased to dwell, and through him God was pleased to reconcile to himself all things, whether on earth or in heaven, by making peace through the blood of his cross” Colossians 1:19–20.

If, in fact, the whole Christ event has something to do with more than just our own personal salvation, i.e., with the creation of all that exists and the redemption of all that exists, what does this imply about your understanding of Christian discipleship?

SMALL GROUP REPORTS (20 minutes)

Invite each group to share summaries of their discussions. Make notes on newsprint.

Point out the common themes from their reports and transition into a large group discussion.

ISSUE EXPLORATION (30 minutes)

In 2009, the bishops of The United Methodist Church released “God’s Renewed Creation: Call to Hope and Action.” Chapter 2 of *Climate Justice* emphasizes the bishops’ renewed commitment to a biblical model of climate justice. “God’s Renewed Creation” addresses three interrelated focus areas of mission for the church—pandemic poverty and disease, environmental degradation and climate change, and a world awash with weapons and violence.

In Chapter 2, Rosemarie Wenner refers several times to “God’s Renewed Creation.” Watch this presentation that summarizes this document: www.youtube.com/watch?v=wRZmewufKoI.⁸

Stay in one group and discuss the following:

- Why do the bishops connect poverty, disease, environmental degradation, and the proliferation of violence?
- How do you see them connected?
- Do you believe we need to understand the interconnections of these issue areas in order to be as effective as we possibly can be in mission?
- What would the mission of the church look like if we were to embrace these connections?
- How does this understanding of these interconnections affect how we understand climate change and our role in providing solutions?
- What does the “renewal of the whole creation” mean? What would a renewed creation look like?

Draw a picture or write a poem about your vision of a renewed creation.

How would you define environmental holiness? What does holiness have to do with the environment? How do you incorporate environmental holiness in your personal life? How can the church incorporate environmental holiness in its life?

Ask one participant to read the following quote by John Wesley:

“We are now God’s stewards. We are indebted to him for all we have.... A steward is not at liberty to use what is lodged in his hand as he please but as his master pleases.... He is not the owner of any of these things but barely entrusted with them by another...Now this is exactly the case of everyone with relation to God. We are not at liberty to use what God has lodged in our hands as we please, but as God pleases, who alone is the possessor of heaven and earth and the Lord of every creature.”⁹

- According to Wesley, who owns creation?
- If we were to really believe God is the owner of creation and we are stewards as Wesley defines stewardship, how would that change how we interact with the earth?
- Would we continue to exploit it to gain wealth at the expense of the earth itself and many of the creatures and people who live on the earth? Or would we treat it with more respect?
- How can the church utilize a Wesleyan understanding of stewardship to raise the awareness of United Methodists of our responsibility to treat the earth as if it really belongs to God, not us?

The Bible, our founder John Wesley, and our United Methodist bishops all call us to examine and re-examine our lives and the life of the church in light of our relationships with God, each other, and the earth. We cannot separate ourselves from God’s creation. We cannot separate nature from civilization. We’re all in this together.

CLOSING PRAYER (unison)

(From “God’s Renewed Creation” from Chapter 2 of *Climate Justice*.)

“May God’s grace purify our reason, strengthen our will, and guide our action. May the love of God, the peace of Christ, and the power of the Holy Spirit be among you, everywhere and always, so that you may be a blessing to all creation and to all the children of God, making peace, nurturing and practicing hope, choosing life and coming to life eternal. Amen.”

ASSIGNMENTS

- Read/review Chapters 3 and 4 of *Climate Justice*.
- Make notes on the section titled, “Climate Change and the Pursuit of Happiness,” to prepare for an exercise in the next session.
- As you walk around, intentionally stop to notice the natural world around you. Find a small item of nature that means something to you in this moment. Bring it with you to the next class.

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1. Norman Wirzba, *The Paradise of God* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2003), 133–134.
 2. Duane Elgin, “Why Climate Change Requires a Consciousness Change,” *Huffpost Healthy Living*, The Huffington Post, updated August 20, 2011, www.huffingtonpost.com/duane-elgin/climate-change-consciousness_b_879581.html.
 3. “Minute on Climate Justice,” World Council of Churches, 10th Assembly, October 30–November 8, 2014, Busan, Republic of Korea, www.oikoumene.org/en/resources/documents/assembly/2013-busan/adopted-documents-statements/minute-on-climate-justice.
 4. John Wesley, Sermon 77 “Spiritual Worship,” in *The Sermons of John Wesley*, General Board of Global Ministries of The United Methodist Church, www.umcmission.org/Find-Resources/John-Wesley-Sermons/Sermon-77-Spiritual-Worship, II:3.
 5. United Methodist Council of Bishops, “God’s Renewed Creation: Call to Hope and Action,” Pastoral Letter, 2009, <http://hopeandaction.org/main/wp-content/uploads/2010/03/Pastoral-Letter-Eng-Handout-2-col.pdf>.
 6. John Welsey, Sermon 51, “The Good Steward” in *The Sermons of John Wesley*, General Board of Global Ministries of The United Methodist Church, www.umcmission.org/Find-Resources/John-Wesley-Sermons/Sermon-51-The-Good-Steward, I:1.
 7. Inspired by Steve Brown, Worship Ideas You Can Use, “All Creatures of Our God and King/Psalm 104,” June 29, 2008, <https://sjbrown58.wordpress.com/2008/06/29/all-creatures-of-our-god-and-king-psalm-104>.
 8. “God’s Renewed Creation: Pastoral Letter from the Bishops of The United Methodist Church,” YouTube video, 09:28, posted by “DebraS3786,” March 29, 2010, www.youtube.com/watch?v=wRZmewufKol.
 9. John Wesley, Sermon 51, “The Good Steward,” I:1.

SESSION 2

Climate Change: A Historical Perspective

CHAPTERS 3 AND 4

LEADER PREPARATION

Confirm that your classroom has all the items from the first session including the worship center and newsprint hanging on the walls showing small group work.

- Set up the room to watch a video. You will need an Internet connection and equipment to show an online video.
- Organize your room with chairs around tables, if possible.
- Place blank paper and colored pencils, crayons, or markers at each table.
- Place a long sheet of paper for the timeline on the wall. Mark on it four separate epochs: Time of Discovery, Beginnings of Industrialization, Rapid Industrialization, Globalization.
- Bring in supplies for making a “Happiness Machine.”*
- Make copies for each person to take the data from Appendix A home to review at the end of this session.

**You can be creative in how you choose to represent the Happiness Machine. One suggestion is to decorate a medium-sized cardboard box. Using construction paper, cut out a happy face and an unhappy face. Attach one face to each side of the box. Cut a slot in the box on the happy face side. Ask each participant in the “happy” group to write on sheets of paper all of the things that make them unhappy, one unhappy thing per sheet of paper. Then feed the papers into the slot on the side of the box, thus resulting in happiness for those in the “happy” group. The leader will then reach into the box and ball up each piece of paper and then dump out all the pieces of paper on the “unhappy” group, thus causing them to be unhappy.*

OPENING WORSHIP (20 minutes)

Welcome participants back.

Invite participants to offer their item from nature that they brought to the worship center. Ask each one to share why they chose to bring this item in ten words or less, a scripture it reminds them of,

and its connection to climate change/justice. (*Share these directions with the class and give them a couple minutes to think about what they want to say.*) Then give thanks for all the items that God has provided.

DISCOVERY AND ACTIVITY (30 minutes)

In Chapter 3, I. Malik Saafir lays out a vision for what part the church could play to transform the inequities of climate justice to relationships of reconciliation and peace. The church has historically recognized that the ways in which we treat each other, particularly the ways in which we abuse each other, are fundamentally religious issues, and given the connections between our relationships with each other and our relationship with the earth, it stands to reason that the ways we abuse God's creation also constitute a religious issue.

He relates a story about happiness and unhappiness in which the ways people treat each other have very definite consequences on how we treat the earth. Happiness for some necessarily means unhappiness for others and for the earth. Happiness for all has to be the goal.

Take five minutes and read the section "Climate Change and the Pursuit of Happiness."

Build a Happiness Machine (this can be done in advance by the leader to save time) that gets fed the unwanted feelings of those who are "happy" and disposes dross onto an unhappy group.

Divide the class into two groups; one will play the role of the happy people and the other group, the role of the unhappy people. Ask the happy people to list their unwanted feelings, one item per sheet of paper, that they then feed into the happiness machine, resulting in the restoration of their happiness (or at least their perceived happiness). Have the unhappy people make a list of the dross that got dumped on them due to the happy people trying to achieve happiness.

Ask the unhappy people to share their feelings of unhappiness with the happy people; then ask the happy people if knowledge of the unhappy people's feelings will make a difference in terms of the lifestyles of the happy people.

If the mission of the church includes the alleviation of human suffering, and if human suffering is happening, in part, due to the lifestyles of those of us in developed countries that contribute to climate change, then how should the mission of the church change in order for us to permanently alleviate human suffering?

For example, a poor young mother in Mozambique struggles to provide food for her family because the agricultural cycles have been disrupted by climate change. Is our mission to simply send her a bag of rice, or to work to change our own lifestyles in order to minimize the climate disruptions caused by climate change so that her life will be disrupted as little as possible? Or both? Discuss.

ISSUE EXPLORATION (20 minutes)

Chapter 4 of the study explains the reasons for climate *injustice*. The author, Jacqueline Patterson, explores the connections between industrialization, globalization, and climate change.

ACTIVITY 1: TIMELINE

Post the timeline on a side wall of the room with the following time designations on it.

1. The “discovery” of the “new” world of resources! (15th–17th centuries).
2. The growth of Industrialization (18th century) through the conversion of fossil fuels into energy.
3. The rapid growth of industrialization (post–Civil War into the 19th and 20th centuries).
4. Globalization, defined as the intensification of resource extraction and production through energy industrialization and its impact around the world (19th–21st centuries).

NOTE: These are not distinct time periods; there will be some overlap.

Patterson says that focusing only on building wealth is one of the “givens” in the current global economy. (*Leader: Write the following on a flip chart.*)

Mono-focus on wealth building:

- denies human rights to some in the name of the economy,
- creates winners and losers, and
- builds rules and policies in which some countries and some peoples within all countries are locked out while others have the opportunity to benefit in the name of the economy.

Discuss what you know from history that undergirds these claims in the time of “discovery,” industrialization, intensifying industrialization (post–Civil War), and the time of globalization. List on the timeline under each period of history the major events and the major players that fueled the economy of that period of time. Who were the winners and the losers? Who were considered undeserving of human rights protections? What human rights were denied in the process?

Patterson also says that our current economic system does the following to peoples and the environment for economic gain. (*Leader: Write the following on the flip chart.*)

- Institutes high-risk environmental processes including drilling, extracting, and transporting concentrations of highly toxic oil and gas.
- Creates economic dependency on the defiling of land; blowing off mountain tops; poisoning soil, air, and water; making small rural communities unlivable; and depriving indigenous peoples of treaty rights.

- Concentrates toxic production and waste in communities where people of color work, live, pray, and play.

Do you know stories that validate these claims? If so, share with the class.

DEEPENING CONNECTIONS (30 minutes)

Find the place on the timeline where your family found themselves in the “new” world of the colonies or the United States or, if you’re Native American, confronted with the “new” world of European understandings. Mark the timeline. Share these stories in small groups of three to four people. After several minutes, ask for a few volunteers to share their stories with the class.

- What drew your family to the “new” world, and what pushed them out of the “old” world?
- What position did your family play in “developing” our current economic model?
- The author also talks about the recent movements of advocacy like the Occupy movement and Climate March. How have you been a part of advocacy for climate justice locally or nationally?

Patterson criticizes the church for failing to work for the systemic changes needed to truly help “the least of these,” meaning those who have borne the brunt of the ways we’ve developed since the time of discovery. Ask class participants:

- What structural and systemic changes must be attended to in order to bring transformation and justice to those historically and presently marginalized from the benefits of industrialization? How does this connect with environmental and climate injustice?
- What are some of the barriers that prevent systemic change with regard to environmental injustice in low-income communities and communities of color?

Show the video put together at the Climate Justice March in 2014. Listen to what some frontline communities are asking for (www.youtube.com/watch?v=njAeLLTEUEo).¹

- What are climate justice activists working on the frontlines calling for?
- What do the anger, tears, and frustrations of the communities facing such consequences to their health and well-being do to you? Do you resist more? Do you hear it more? Do you want to run away? Do you want to find out more? Do you want to test their truth?
- How can the church engage with communities that are at the frontlines of these extraordinary concerns?

CLOSING (20 minutes)

In small groups, using Patterson’s vision of buen vivir or Saafir’s final story of the Happiness Machine, create a “new” sense of what defines a world that would value everyone’s happiness and well-being. Write your ending to the story. Put the church in the vision. How should the church respond?

CLOSING PRAYER

Ask someone in the group to pray for the awareness to deepen and create more commitment to the work of justice and sustainability. (*Leader: Ask someone privately ahead of time and not in front of the whole group to respect individual wishes.*)

Alternatively use the following prayer:

FOR COURAGE TO DO JUSTICE

O Lord,
open my eyes that I may see the needs of others;
open my ears that I may hear their cries;
open my heart so that they need not be without succor;
let me not be afraid to defend the weak because of the anger of the strong;
nor afraid to defend the poor because of the anger of the rich.
Show me where love and hope and faith are needed,
and use me to bring them to those places.
And so open my eyes and my ears
that I may this coming day be able to do some work of peace for thee. Amen.

Alan Paton, South Africa, *The United Methodist Hymnal*, no 456.

Credit: Alan Paton, South Africa © 1968, 1982 Seabury Press Inc.

ASSIGNMENTS

- Read/review Chapters 5 and 6 of *Climate Justice*.
- Measure your carbon footprint using this tool: www.epa.gov/climatechange/ghgemissions/ind-calculator.html.
- Review the table of carbon dioxide and greenhouse gas emission comparisons from Appendix A (handout).

1. “Voices of the People’s Climate March—Climate Justice Alliance,” YouTube video, 4:41, posted by Our Power, September 30, 2014, <https://youtu.be/njAeLLTEUEo>.

SESSION 3

Climate Change: The Earth and God's People Cry Out

CHAPTERS 5 AND 6

LEADER PREPARATION

- Confirm that your classroom has all the items from the first session including the worship center and newsprint hanging on the walls showing small group work.
- Set up the room to watch a video. You will need an Internet connection and equipment to show an online video.
- Measure your carbon footprint using the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency's tool (www.epa.gov/climatechange/ghgemissions/ind-calculator.html). Be prepared to share your carbon footprint with the class since everyone may not have all of the information they need to complete the survey for this session.
- Assign readers for the opening worship.

OPENING WORSHIP (20 minutes)

PRAYER¹

Leader: God in the Spirit revealed in Jesus Christ calls us by grace to be renewed in the image of our Creator, that we may be one in divine love for the world.

Today is the day God cares for the integrity of creation, wills the healing and wholeness of all life, weeps at the plunder of earth's goodness.

All: And so shall we.

Leader: Today is the day God embraces all hues of humanity, delights in diversity and difference, favors solidarity transforming strangers into friends.

All: And so shall we.

Leader: Today is the day God cries with the masses of starving people, despises growing disparity between rich and poor, demands justice for workers in the marketplace.

All: And so shall we.

Leader: Today is the day God deplores violence in our homes and streets, rebukes the world's warring madness, humbles the powerful and lifts up the lowly.

All: And so shall we.

Leader: Today is the day God calls for nations and peoples to live in peace, celebrates where justice and mercy embrace, exults when the wolf grazes with the lamb.

All: And so shall we.

Leader: Today is the day God brings good news to the poor, proclaims release to the captives, gives sight to the blind, and sets the oppressed free.

All: And so shall we.

All: Amen.

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SCRIPTURE

Luke 12:13–21

(Invite a volunteer to read aloud.)

Facilitate a reflection and open group discussion about the scripture passage in the context of climate change and climate justice. You may choose to use some or all of the questions below in small groups, or you may have each table discuss one question.

- What does this scripture have to do with climate change?
- What is the relationship between your/my/our lifestyle and climate change?
- What could happen if we lived with a higher awareness of our interconnectedness and the impact of our lifestyles on others?
- What would happen if we redefined our treasures?
- How can this teaching of Jesus alleviate the effects of climate change?
- Living a simple life, as Jesus suggests, may well be necessary in order to do something about climate change. Why is this so hard?
- If we had paid attention to this passage all along, would we even have the problems of climate change that we have today?

ISSUE EXPLORATION (20 minutes)

The table in Appendix A was supplied to increase your knowledge of global emissions and the different dimensions of it. Are there any comments, questions, surprises, etc., in reaction to the homework?

Chapters 5 and 6 of *Climate Justice* describe the consequences of climate injustice on the earth and humans, both individuals and communities. Community awareness and advocacy are critically important to call attention to the suffering of people and the natural environment surrounding them.

Chapter 5 of *Climate Justice* begins with lists of rules to live by. Write these lists on newsprint and post them in the class.

RULES FROM CALABASH CAYE

1. Check your pants for scorpions before putting them on in the morning.
2. Catch only the fish you want to eat, the day you want to eat it because refrigeration is in short supply.
3. Turn off porch lights at night during sea turtle breeding season so that the sea turtle hatchlings would not be distracted and disoriented by the artificial light.
4. Take short showers, just once a day.

SALLIE MCFAGUE'S GOD'S HOUSE RULES

1. Take only your share,
2. Clean up after yourselves,
3. Keep the house in good repair for future housemates.

JOHN WESLEY'S THREE SIMPLE RULES

1. Do no harm.
2. Do good.
3. Attend upon the ordinances of God or, stay in love with God.

What if we took these rules seriously, and what if we took them seriously not only for ourselves, and each other, but also *for all of God's creation*? What would it look like, and how would it allow us to do even less harm, even more good, and be in an even better relationship with God?

As a class, create a set of rules the church should live by, taking God's creation into consideration.

Consider what Dottie Yunger writes about a theology of creation:

“I believe our current attitudes toward creation come from a misunderstanding and misuse of the creation stories, an ignorance of ecological themes in other books of the Hebrew Bible, theology based on outdated science, and science based on flawed theology. This has resulted in justifying the domination and exploitation of creation for humanity’s purposes.”

Do you agree? Why or why not? How can the church raise our theological awareness of the connection between faith and care for God’s creation?

DISCOVER AND DISCUSS (20 minutes)

Invite a volunteer to read aloud the story “For a Cup of Soup” at the beginning of Chapter 6 in *Climate Justice*. As you listen to the story, think about the following basic human rights:

- health,
- nutrition,
- livelihood,
- housing, and
- sanitation.

Invite another volunteer to read aloud the first three paragraphs of “The Sin of a Profit-Driven Economy: Why Must the Poor Suffer?” in Chapter 6 of *Climate Justice*. (*Leader: Please ask someone ahead of time to give the reader time to prepare.*)

What impact does climate change have on the basic human rights of people around the world? Who are the people who are suffering due to climate change? What are their demographics? How are they suffering? How can the church alleviate their suffering?

GENDER AND CLIMATE CHANGE: WHAT IS THE CONNECTION?

(15 minutes)

Impacts of climate change, such as drought, floods, extreme weather events, and reduced food and water security, affect women and men differently, with the poorest being the most vulnerable. Seventy percent of the world’s poor are women. Even though women are therefore disproportionately affected, at the same time they play a crucial role in climate change adaptation and mitigation actions. It is increasingly evident that involving both women and men of all economic levels in all decision-making processes on climate action is a significant factor in meeting the climate challenge.

Women are predominantly responsible for food production, household water supply, and energy consumption for heating and cooking. As climate change impacts increase, these tasks are becoming more difficult. However, women have knowledge and coping strategies that give them a practical understanding of innovation and skills to adapt to changing environmental realities as well as to contribute to the solution. These strategies to deal with climate variability are still a largely untapped resource. Additionally, women are often faced with difficulties when it comes to the general accessibility of financial resources, capacity-building activities, and technologies. This often stands in the way of women's empowerment in general and their role in relation to climate change adaptation and mitigation in particular. Women also tend to be underrepresented in the decision-making on climate change at all levels. This severely limits their ability to contribute and implement solutions and apply their expertise.²

CLASS DISCUSSION

Discuss the following:

- Why is it important to include everyone at the table in order to come up with solutions to environmental issues?
- How can the church contribute to engaging those who suffer the most and those who are left out of the conversations?
- How can United Methodist Women empower women around the world to be included and to be a part of the solution?

VIDEO (45 minutes)

Watch the video “Can’t Stop the Water,”³ www.cantstopthewater/umw. It is approximately 30 minutes. If time is running short, stop the video in time to include class discussion. This video illustrates the intersection of drivers of climate change, race, class, impoverishment, indigenous peoples, and human rights.

Community awareness and advocacy are critically important in calling attention to the suffering of people and the natural environment surrounding them.

Given the injustices faced by the community of Jean Charles, what role should they have in being a part of the solution? How could a local United Methodist Church on the Isle de Jean Charles contribute to the solution for this community?

Thinking of this illustration and the sessions so far, along with your biblical knowledge, begin to make a list of what constitutes justice.

Write “Justice is...” on newsprint. Invite the group to share the definitions they’ve come up with so far.

CLOSING⁴

All: Our Father in heaven, hallowed be your name.

Leader: We approach your holiness with empty stomachs, opening our hearts to the people here in the United States and around the world who have this feeling every day. May your kingdom come and unite us in faith. Turn the tables to inspire our imagination for change. Reveal your truth to us, replacing our ignorance and greed with justice and mercy.

All: May your will be done on earth as it is in heaven.

Leader: Let your love enter our hearts, our communities, our nation, and give us joy in our work as we share the abundance of your creation.

All: Give each of us this day, our daily bread.

Leader: Nourish everyone, everywhere—in rural areas, in cities, towns, farms and reserves, those who rely on food aid in refugee camps, in food banks or soup kitchens.

All: Forgive us our trespasses.

Leader: We lament our disconnectedness. We tune out the injustice around us and forget the dispossessed, those displaced by natural disaster, the hungry used as an instrument of war, the fertile soil lost to pollution, landmines, flooding or drought, the loss of indigenous knowledge and of species.

All: Just as we forgive those who trespass against us teach us mercy.

Leader: In a world where the rules benefit the rich but create suffering for the poor, teach us to be forgiving and compassionate without losing our sense of urgency for change.

All: Lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil.

Leader: Guide those who set prices, regulate markets, and who control land at a time when competition for the earth’s resources threatens the ethics of those who plant, process, transport, prepare and serve food in the world.

All: For yours is the kingdom, the power and the glory forever and ever.

Leader: We acknowledge you as the ultimate authority over leaders and citizens of all nations. Instruct those who have earthly powers to submit to your will, to do justly, and to love mercy. Generous and holy God, inspire us with your love. Challenge us with your truth, and empower us with your strength to build a world without hunger.

All: Amen.

Credit: Canadian Foodgrains Bank.

ASSIGNMENT

Read Chapters 7 and 8 of *Climate Justice*.

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1. "A Companion Litany to Our Social Creed," United Methodist Communications, The United Methodist Church, accessed October 14, 2014, www.umc.org/what-we-believe/our-social-creed.
 2. "Gender and Climate Change," United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change, accessed on December 1, 2014, http://unfccc.int/gender_and_climate_change/items/7516.php.
 3. "Can't Stop the Water," www.cantstopthewater/umw.
 4. "Fast for Change Resource Kit 2008," Canadian Foodgrains Bank: A Christian Response to Hunger, http://foodgrainsbank.ca/worship_resources.aspx.

SESSION 4

Commitment and Action

CHAPTERS 7 AND 8

LEADER PREPARATION

Confirm that your classroom has all the items from the first session including the worship center and newsprint hanging on the walls showing small group work.

- Set up the room to watch a video. You will need an Internet connection and equipment to show an online video.
- Prepare materials for small group strategy discussions on how to make a difference.
- Focus your preparations for this session on moving class participants toward action commitments. One of the end goals of this session is for class participants to address climate justice through action commitments that will create paradigm and culture shifts in their own lives, their communities, churches, and even in the world.

OPENING WORSHIP (15 minutes)

I call heaven and earth to witness against you today,
that I have set before you
life and death, blessings and curses.
Choose life so that you and your descendants may live.
—Deuteronomy 30:19

Ask a volunteer to read each of the following paragraphs:

Reader 1: Intriguingly, Moses had just retold the history of the Israelite people, and throughout the Book of Deuteronomy repeats over and over warnings and cautions about their need to remember the God who had brought them up from the land of slavery. He repeats over and over that the Israelites must Love the Lord their God with all their heart, mind, and strength and Love their neighbors as themselves. He warns the Israelites that when they cross over into the “promised land” of Israel from the wilderness, they will be tempted to forget the sustenance that God has been for them in their poverty. He retells their history in deep ways—the water from the rock, the hoarfrost from heaven—and warns them that when they enter the Promised Land, they might begin to consume too much, and will, if they’re not careful, create idols. He told them as long as they

made sure that these two principles (Love God and Love neighbor) were part of everything they were about, it would go well for them and their grandchildren.¹

Reader 2: It's tempting to separate out concern for the environment from concern for social justice, or for preaching the gospel to all nations, but in fact all of those things are connected by the fundamental fact of human relationships — all people are dependent on the earth, on each other, and on God for everything they need to live. Our role in all of the relationships that we are involved in is to demonstrate, live, and proclaim the gospel; to be God's agents of redemption on the earth; to model a new humanity.

What does this look like? Jesus summarizes God's will like this: "Love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your mind" (Matthew 22:37). As in the parable of the Good Samaritan, we are called to love our neighbors by taking care of their bodies as well as their souls, which requires us to take care of the earth, with which we are all interconnected.

Environmental destruction has consequences for people both around the world (it is the poorest and most vulnerable who are most at risk from environmental devastation) and down the generations: The call to love our neighbor extends to our children and grandchildren, and on into the future.²

SONG

"We Utter Our Cry," *The United Methodist Hymnal*, no. 439

PRAYER

Psalm 143:7–8

DISCOVERY AND DISCUSSION (45 minutes)

In Chapter 7, the author presents three value paradigms in need of transformation. (*Leader: Write the following on newsprint.*)

1. Financial profit is imperative to living the good life, as is a growth economy.
2. We are independent from one another and can make our own choices.
3. Efficiency is critical to the good life.

What biblical concepts/stories might we replace these value paradigms with?

Show the video "Sisters on the Planet: Carteret Islands":

www.youtube.com/watch?v=0XDHMgqlcEU³

Ask participants to think about the following questions during the video:

- What do you notice about the people of the Carteret Islands that makes for a good life?
- What role did the church play when the good life was compromised for this community?
- Have participants share their thoughts and feelings after the video.

In Chapter 8, Sharon Delgado states: “The transition to a world of climate justice will require a huge cultural shift, extending into the world’s political and economic systems. It will take a reordering of values, priorities, and public policies at every decision-making level.” (*Leader: Read this quote to the class.*)

- Do you agree? Why or why not?
- Referring to the three value paradigms on newsprint, how were they prevalent in creating the injustices the people of the Carteret Islands were faced with?
- In contrast, what were the values displayed by the church that accepted five families onto the church property? How is that church being in mission?
- What values must we have to address the climate injustices that are growing all around the world?

Delgado also writes: “Creating a cultural shift involves a widespread transformation of attitudes, values, and lifestyles. This is no small task, but our churches are uniquely situated to help bring this about. Our bishops have spoken on these issues. Our General Conference has spoken out over the years, and will continue to speak. Their statements are prophetic and clear. Our challenge is to translate these statements into action and bring them to life.” (*Leader: Read this quote to the class.*)

How do you see the church as being “uniquely situated” to accomplish the transformation we need?

Look at the unique tools that the author brought to our attention in Chapter 7, including:

- Presence in almost every community
- A gospel understanding of fellowship
- Worship and scripture that’s transformative
- Church property
- Church money/budgets

- The ability to make right relationships and invite those who have suffered injustices to share their wisdom, especially including:
 - Indigenous peoples
 - Women
 - Affected communities

Which of these assets did the church use in the video?

Given the global nature of The United Methodist Church, make a list of additional assets the church possesses that can bring smart, appropriate solutions to the problems of climate change.

Delgado goes on to say: “We can begin by taking the first steps on this journey into leadership in our own local units of United Methodist Women, in our own congregations, and in our own annual conferences. We can begin to form creation care ministry teams, by inviting people to join together for prayer, study, and action on the issues of climate justice, with the help of this book or other denominational resources. In this way, we begin the process of changing attitudes, values, and lifestyles in our churches and contribute to the cultural shift that is required.”

Another tool that specifically addresses both social and environmental injustices is the United Methodist Women 13 Steps to Sustainability: www.unitedmethodistwomen.org/sustainability. These thirteen steps help us with our personal and corporate meeting behaviors, influencing venues, vendors, and behaviors through step-by-step implementation AND a measurement survey.

CLASS ACTIVITY

Pretend that your Mission u class has become a creation care ministry team for your annual conference or a “be just be green team” in your United Methodist Women unit, district, conference, or jurisdiction. Using the resources listed in Chapter 8, both within the connection of The United Methodist Church and outside of the church, create a vision for transformation from climate injustice toward climate justice to be implemented by such a team. If your annual conference/United Methodist Women conference leadership were to assemble such a team, who would be on it and what could the team do to engage United Methodists in your annual conference and beyond in effecting such a cultural shift in the world?

Then, ask yourselves, “Why don’t we just go ahead and form an annual conference team?” And then make a commitment to a first step.

TOWARD ACTION COMMITMENTS (60 minutes)

Climate justice is so immense—the issues are so large. How do we start to transform systems to really reflect the values that we say we hold?

Kathy Jetnil-Kijiner, a 26-year-old poet from the Marshall Islands, addressed the opening ceremony of the United Nations (UN) Secretary General’s Climate Summit on September 23, 2014. Talk about an immense job! The political, personal, economic, and social power in that forum are unmatched. Yet, Jetnil-Kijiner was selected from among over 500 civil society candidates in an open, global nomination process conducted by the UN Non-Governmental Liaison Service.

Jetnil-Kijiner performed a poem entitled “Dear Matafele Peinem,” written to her daughter. The poem received a standing ovation. Jetnil-Kijiner is also a teacher, journalist, and founder of the environmental nongovernmental organization, Jo-Jikum.

Watch this beautiful, moving rendition of the poem set to music and pictures:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?t=45&v=DJuRjy9k7GA>⁴

None of us are in this struggle alone. There are people all over this planet already tackling the considerable challenge of climate injustice. You need only be faithful. You will never do it on your own. You need the church. The church needs you. And you need the communities who are motivated by their vulnerability to think through what needs to be done and to be an extraordinary voice of urgent wisdom for such a day as this.

From everything you’ve learned and taken in, what challenges do you personally face to be a part of this transformation? Choose a first step you will take today: one phone call, one meeting, one convening, one prayer, one step to help the church have the vision and practices it needs to be in this fight for the life of baby Matafele, Jamil, Abioye, Sung-hee, Miyoka, Luciano, and Tupak. What might be your first step, today? Write it down. Fold it up. Put it in your wallet or your purse.

Then choose one giant leap that you will make within the next year. Write it down on another piece of paper to remind you how you see yourself being involved in the transformation of the world with respect to climate justice. Don’t think only of your local United Methodist Women group or church. Think beyond to your district, annual conference, jurisdiction, and even the denomination itself. You are a leader in the church! How will you exercise your leadership to solve the problems of climate change? Take this paper with you as well.

Share the steps you will take in small groups. How will you hold each other accountable and how can you help each other to succeed?

CLOSING

Highlight the commitments of the class. Ask for volunteers to share what they intend to do. Have a prayer, giving thanks for all of the commitments and asking that God's wisdom, determination, and blessing be upon each participant as he or she becomes a witness to the grace of Jesus Christ as together we respond to God's call to care for God's creation.

Sending Forth

Go forth into the world in peace;
be of good courage;
hold fast that which is good;
render to no one evil for evil;
strengthen the fainthearted;
support the weak;
help the afflicted;
honour everyone;
love and serve the Lord,
rejoicing in the power of the Holy Spirit;
and the blessing of God almighty,
the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit,
be among you and remain with you always. Amen.
—Cf. 1 Thessalonians 5:13–22

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1. "Choose Life: A Bible Study on Sustainability," United Methodist Women, accessed February 10, 2015, www.unitedmethodistwomen.org/what-we-do/spiritual-growth/bible-studies/choose-life.
 2. "Christianity, Climate Change and Sustainable Living: Five Bible Studies," Jubilee Centre in partnership with Tearfund (Cambridge: Jubilee Centre, 2008), accessed November 14, 2014, 17, <http://jubilee-centre.org/wp-content/uploads/2014/02/Christianity-Climate-Change-and-Sustainable-Living-Bible-Studies.pdf>.
 3. "Sisters on the Planet: Carteret Islands," YouTube Video, 8:18, posted by OXFAM New Zealand, April 26, 2009, www.youtube.com/watch?v=0XDHMgqlcEU.
 4. Jetnil-Kijiner wrote and performed the poem to her daughter entitled "Dear Mastafele Peinem." Jetnil-Kijiner is also a teacher, journalist, and founder of the environmental nongovernmental organization, Jo-Jikum. <https://www.youtube.com/watch?t=45&v=DJuRjy9k7GA>.

About the Author

Anna Rhee is a consultant and executive coach based in the Washington, D.C., area. She has deep roots in the faith-based advocacy community, particularly The United Methodist Church and the larger ecumenical community. She began her first position at the General Board of Church and Society, United Methodist Church, in 1984. Following that she served as the executive secretary for Public Policy in the Women's Division's Washington Office, General Board of Global Ministries, United Methodist Church. Through her 14 years of service in offices of The United Methodist Church, Anna researched legislative initiatives in relationship to positions of the UMC, designed and conducted advocacy activities, and organized and trained grassroots advocates through Schools of Christian Mission and other national training programs of United Methodist Women.

As the director of religious affairs at the Children's Defense Fund (CDF) in Washington, D.C., she was responsible for the planning and resource production for the annual National Observance of Children's Sabbaths. She was the first director of the annual Ecumenical Advocacy Days for Global Peace with Justice and the first coordinator for the US Ecumenical Accompaniment Programme in Palestine and Israel. In 2009, she served as a short-term consultant to the Washington Office of the Presbyterian Church (USA) covering health care reform and environmental justice. Her work focuses primarily on engaging the religious community to act on issues of justice and peace.

She is a graduate of Wesleyan University in Middletown, Connecticut, and lives in Burtonsville, Maryland.

APPENDIX A

Carbon Dioxide (CO₂) and Greenhouse Gas (GHG) Emission Comparisons

	China	Russia	India	US
2013 Kilotons CO ₂	10,281,178.02	1,803,249.09	2,071,514.36	5,297,581.2
2012 Kilotons GHG	12,454,710.61	2,803,398.49	3,002,894.93	6,343,840.51
2012 Per capita GHG	9.04	19.58	2.43	19.98
2013 Kilograms CO ₂ per \$1,000 Gross Domestic Product	229.03	507.84	139.74	334.43
2010 Percent of Global Emissions	21.97	5.11	5.44	13.19
Change in GHG Kilotons per capita (1990–2012)	5.57	-4.38	0.77	-4.23

All data is from: <http://edgar.jrc.ec.europa.eu/>
Emission Data from Global Atmospheric Research

APPENDIX B

United Methodist Women Climate Justice Partners

The following are United Methodist Women partners who are engaged in climate justice work. As you develop your climate justice ministry, you may want to reach out to one or more of these partners, especially if they are local to you, to possibly volunteer or provide financial support.

NATIONAL MISSION INSTITUTIONS

1. Atlantic Street Center, Seattle, WA

www.atlanticstreet.org

Formed a group called “Xtreme Green,” which focuses on educating urban youth on environmental issues by having them participate in a wide range of activities. Participants plan and implement community service projects as well as volunteer with local environmental organizations.

2. Camp Aldersgate, Inc., Little Rock, AR

www.campaldersgate.net

The Commons Building at Camp Aldersgate is Leadership in Energy & Environmental Design–certified (LEED) and staff members are intentional in practicing responsible stewardship of the environment such as recycling, reusing, and minimizing the use of paper.

3. Dulac Community Center, Dulac, LA

www.dulaccommunitycenter.org

Dulac Community Center sits approximately 30 miles from the Gulf of Mexico in the heart of Louisiana’s vulnerable wetlands. Hurricane threats are greater each year as coastal land loss rapidly increases. The center has developed an environmental awareness campaign to educate the community and supporters on how they can help preserve the delicate community.

4. Friendly Center, Toledo, OH

www.friendly-center.org

Solar panels were installed and the center currently uses solar energy.

5. Hattie B. Cooper Community Center, Roxbury, MA

www.cooperctr.org

Neighborhood-driven environmental justice initiative that identifies and advocates for greater utilization and increased enjoyment of Roxbury’s nature amenities, including parks and fields and green spaces, to empower and support the rights of children, families, and other community members to live, play, and work in a safe and healthier community.

6. Lessie Bates Davis Neighborhood House, East St. Louis, IL

www.lessiebatesdavis.org

The center is one of the partners in a program called Neighborhood Faith-Based Housing, which builds houses for low-income families in the East St. Louis community. The project has a commitment to build green high-energy houses.

8. Neighborhood House, Wilmington, DE

<http://neighborhoodhse.org>

Offers a weatherization program, which installs energy-efficient improvements in the houses of low-income persons to maximize energy savings and improve the health and safety of people in their homes.

OFFICE OF DEACONESS AND HOME MISSIONERS

Home Missioner Jeff Murrell

Christian Environmental Stewardship: teaching stewardship by word and deed to individuals and churches in accordance with spiritual environmental concepts and theories centering on Genesis 2:15. Ministry emphasis consists of environmental and energy audits and how to become better stewards of God’s creation here on earth.

Deaconess Pat Hoerth

Turtle Rock Farm: A Center for Sustainability, Spirituality, and Healing offers retreats and workshops on the Oklahoma prairie and in an urban farm community in Oklahoma City. Offerings include both sustainable practices and getting to know the natural world of which we humans are a part: www.turtlerockfarmretreat.com.

INTERNATIONAL MINISTRIES

Partners with others working in environmental development projects, climate change awareness, and advocacy around the world.

Giving to Climate Justice Work

To give to United Methodist Women partners working toward climate justice you can use one of the following two numbers. United Methodist Women members are encouraged to give through regular giving channels and note the funds that are for the Carbon Fund. You can also send a check directly to the national office. Please make the check payable to “United Methodist Women” with the project name and number in the memo section:

CO₂ Emissions Reduction—3021326A

This directly supports programs that help people reduce their carbon dioxide emissions around the world to gain energy efficiency.

Climate and Energy Advocacy Initiatives—3021326B

This supports communities in their adaptation to climate change through education, advocacy, and frontline communities projects.