

# Living it Out: 13 Steps to Sustainability

Accompanies webinar at <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=gF1r9SOBCq0>

VISUAL CONTENT	AUDIO CONTENT
<p style="text-align: center;"><b>Welcome</b></p>  <p style="text-align: center;">Kathleen Stone UMW Office of Environmental and Economic Justice: Christian Social Action</p> 	<p>Welcome to this introductory webinar on the 13 steps to sustainability. As you know, because you're coming to this webinar, UMW has created a program by which we can together challenge ourselves into living new ways for the sake of the earth and her peoples.</p>
<p style="text-align: center;"><b>13 Steps to Sustainability</b></p>  	<p>This is a program that can be as challenging or as simple as people, a unit, a conference, a jurisdiction can handle, but it's a program that no matter at what level people absorb it, will take extraordinary spiritual commitment. The program is called "13 Steps to Sustainability" and is meant to influence and change the infrastructures, the planning, the things we care about in our actual meeting practices of the many, many meetings that UMW hold across the country – as you may know, we have a lot of meetings.</p> <p>With a membership of 800,000 women – all meeting somewhere somehow – Influencing these meetings is to influence not only the sustainability of the meeting itself, but filters into habits that women can take to their homes and their workplaces. This multiplies the effect. What we do at Church in our infrastructures is extraordinarily important.</p> <p>United Methodist Women believe that sustainability is all about choosing life, choosing care, choosing love.</p> <p>It is about living wisely, justly and joyfully in each decision we make so that all of us may live with dignity to our full potential, now and for generations to come.</p> <p>One of our Bible studies in the program which you can find online is a study on this passage of scripture at the bottom of this slide. As you may or may not know, Moses had just retold the history of the Israelite people, and throughout the Book of Deuteronomy repeats over and over warning 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.</p>

He told them as long as they made sure these two principles (Love God and Love neighbor) were part of everything they were about, it would go well for them and their grandchildren. We agree, don't we?



Choosing meetings to be about justice is not a strange concept for UMW. In fact none of our 13 steps are foreign; many of our events and their leadership have found themselves working at these principles for many, many years, this program is just organizing them into a program that we can follow across the organization and helping us measure our progress:

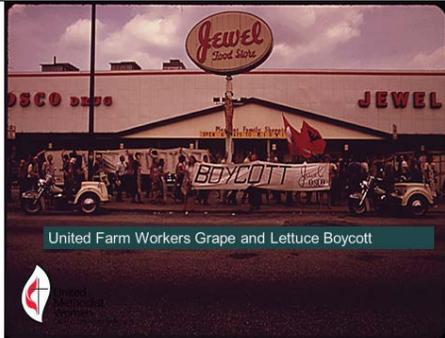
Let me share just a few blips of history here when our ways of meeting and what we did when we met in the infrastructure of those meetings, was the courageous model that we're hoping we'll continue to develop.

In 1939, the various branches of the Methodist Church came together to form a single church –One price of that merger was the segregation of black Methodists into the Central Jurisdiction. In the face of this overt segregation, the Women's Division adopted a policy in 1941 of "holding its meeting only in places where all members of its group can be entertained without any form of racial discrimination."

In 1942, the first National Assembly of the Methodist Women's Division was to be held in St. Louis, MO. When black women were denied access to hotels, the Assembly was moved to Columbus Ohio, with guarantees of hotel access.

Where we hold our meetings makes a huge difference.

Photo: [edu.lva.virginia.gov/online\\_classroom/shaping\\_the\\_constitution/doc/jim\\_crow\\_sign\\_set](http://edu.lva.virginia.gov/online_classroom/shaping_the_constitution/doc/jim_crow_sign_set)



In 1965, Filipino American grape harvesters in the US asked Cesar Chavez and the National Farm Workers Association to help them achieve justice on the job. They were seeking better wages and working and housing conditions. Chavez took the invitation and helped grow a strong, non-violent national protest. The Board of Church & Society had called United Methodists to support for the boycott. Many local congregations with UMW support became "grape free zones." In 1970, the boycott ended when the farm workers succeeded in getting better pay, benefits and protections on the job.

From something as simple and profound as deciding what food to serve -- or not -- in any church meal, United Methodist Women helped gain greater dignity and rights for marginalized workers in the U.S.

Photo: Paul Sequeira, photographer; National Archives and Records Administration, EPA. Found at: [commons.wikimedia.org](https://commons.wikimedia.org)

No industry has been more affected by environmental and social movements, in such a short time, or on such a wide scale, as the pulp and paper manufacturing. Environmental movements have had a profound influence on the paper industry since the mid-1980s.



Quote from David A. Sonnenfeld  
Assistant Professor of Sociology,  
Washington State University, in Social Movements and Ecological  
Modernization: The Transformation of Pulp and Paper manufacturing, 1999

In 1997, Women’s Division directors voted unanimously that the Division use only chlorine-free paper products. The recommendation arose out of mounting evidence of the connection between dioxin contamination caused in the paper bleaching process and various severe health problems in children and women – like breast cancer.

United Methodist Women mounted a massive national campaign to educate UMWs and urge companies to stock chlorine-free paper. **Response** magazine switched to c-f paper. UMW also became the first religious group to join the Chlorine-Free Products Association, encouraging chlorine-free paper producers by demonstrating a growing demand for their products. Within 3 years, UMW received international “Sacred Gift to the Planet award” for this education and corporate responsibility effort. Now, chlorine free paper products are more widely available.

From something as simple and profound as paying attention to what kind of paper meeting materials are printed on, UMW helped spur greater national awareness of the connections between environmental contamination and human health – and helped grow a greener industry!

**13 Steps to Sustainability**

- Accessibility
- Affordability
- Carbon Footprint
- Health Food & Beverages
- Just Economic Opportunities
- Local Solidarity
- Multigenerational inclusion
- Paper Use
- Racial Justice
- Toxin Reduction
- Waste Reduction
- Water Use
- Well-being of Participants



The 13 Steps to sustainability are about making the kind of decisions IN OUR planning that really undergird and make possible the implementation of our values.

With some of the best consultants in the country, we have enumerated 13 historically agreed to principles of UMW which promote true sustainability. With each of those 13 Principles, we determined certain practices that best embody those principals. Some of those practices are measureable. And so we’ve created a measurement survey so that we can keep track of our own growth as an organization in the enactment of all 13 principles.

When fully enacted as a key programmatic and planning goal in every meeting, we truly recognize the earth is the sustainer and provider of our life together and in her care is an indication of our just distribution of her resources and real care for her communities.

**Facts & Figures**

- In the U.S. 70% of toxic zones are home to people of color.



Let’s share a bit more what understandings we hope will be undergirded by our definitions of sustainability.

Extraction, Production, Waste. The air, water and land affected by these processes disproportionately negatively affects the health and wellbeing of people of color. Yet, the stuff extracted and produced economically benefits the lives of others. When placed in urban industrialized zones, the government calls them overtly “sacrifice zones.”

Photo: Kathleen Stone

## Facts & Figures

- Rural areas are also threatened.



When we place extraction, production, pipelines or waste facilities in rural areas of the country, we compromise not only our food production, but our water and the biodiversity we need to clean and maintain the environment we live within. The notion of “nobody” lives there and its “empty” ready for some industry or toxic dump– is not an appropriate notion if we want to continue to have clean air to breathe and water to drink. In addition, many of the rural areas still considered for mining and power plants are often lands which were designated by treaty to be in the control of indigenous communities. Subsistence fishing, foraging and hunting is compromised as the animals absorb the toxins from these places. Indigenous peoples get sick and their cultural expressions are severely compromised.

Photo: Kathleen Stone

## Facts & Figures

- Migration and Refugees increase



We saw, first hand, how during Hurricane Katrina, Hurricane Sandy, that people living in urban areas who already faced economic injustices were last to be rescued and their homes are still in disrepair. They had to move. Around the world, when faced with environmental disasters, droughts and floods, super storms, their communities of support are destroyed and many must move to feed children and find a place to live. This is creating more and more migration and refugees the world over.

Interestingly, at the same time, countries that receive migrants and refugees on their borders seem to universally clamp down on those same people. Yet others are benefitting from the drivers of climate.

Photo: Paul Jeffrey

## Why incorporate practices of Sustainability?

- Love and CARE rather than reinforcing the injustice inherent in our disposable culture.
- Prioritize the honoring of God's handiwork in the whole of this diverse Creation.
- Restore health to the earth and her communities



Our hope is that by practicing these 13 steps, we are able to do the following:

- We will inevitably learn to love more intentionally! By recognizing that habits formed by our particular ways of life are currently reinforcing injustice and inequity and reinforcing the disposability of some people for the privileges of others, we learn anew the value of simplicity and of care through our consumer behaviors and through our work together. This is a determined commitment to more just and equitable ways. This is Love!
- We also learn, relearn, and prioritize the practices that honor and love God's whole work in the Creation. This is Love!

And when we do this?

We restore health to the earth and her communities, preventing future harm and preserving natural resources, species, cultures, languages and ecosystems for future generations! This is Love!

### Why this program?

- Help one another forward
- Inspire one another
- Measure our progress!
- New understanding of mission.



The simple intention of this program is to help one another and inspire one another to greater Love!

We can inspire one another to renew our intentions, commitment and actions for this work.

We are a community of women, no matter our distance from one another, and through that community we can support one another so in a time when we need to change or we want to try something new, we don't have to recreate the wheel but can share our insights, best practices and information with each other!

And when we do this, the program has an actual measurement tool so we can honestly see how were doing (knowing how hard all of this is!) Lots of grace. Lots of expectations.

We also are developing a new understanding of mission. It's not just about giving money, but it's also about the lifestyle choices we are making with our expenditures that can better care for the earth and her communities.

So, let's get going on the specifics: How do we see ourselves moving forward into this program? What are the tools and the approaches?

### What are the approaches?

1. Start with your own context:



We start from your context. We know that each conference, each district, each unit has its own way of working, its own strengths and its own challenges. For instance, this conference determined to have a zero waste meeting and so they set up an exhibit to share what that means. Some conference settings, however, have no ability to recycle. Therefore, they start from a different place. Others have significant financial concerns and so start from a different set of challenges. Others might be doing great on accessibility, making sure that people who are hearing challenged have a sign interpreter, but maybe they are at a loss with the invitation and supporting the leadership of young women. So, celebrate the things you've done well on and see which of the 13 steps you might need to work at in a systemic way. Sometimes having someone to talk to about these steps can help.

Photo: Used with permission of Rocky Mountain Conference United Methodist Women

### Jurisdictional Guides are available



That's why we've pulled together, trained and given many opportunities for learning to our 13 steps to Sustainability Jurisdictional Guides:

Your jurisdictional guides are waiting for you to call them. They are consultants, cheerleaders, gracious advocates and beaters of the bushes!! They see more than one conference and sometimes that can help move us on from stuck places; We will soon have another south central and southeast guide!

As these guides are asked by you to come to different meetings and present this program, their job is to connect all of you so that you'll have a strong and stronger network in the conferences on this work.

Photos provided by guides



Another invaluable and somewhat overwhelming tool is the website!

So, let's show you what's on the website: As you move into the environmental justice program pages of the website, you'll find some amazing resources.

You'll find two ways into the program – one way is a practical approach, another is a principled approach. You'll find our listing of our jurisdictional guides; an EPA carbon footprint calculator for your own personal use, our Carbon fund initiative and some other new and resources, and you'll find a bible study on the right hand side of the page. And some introductory materials (where you found this webinar located!)

Let's start with looking at our principled approach to the 13 steps to sustainability. Here you can see the page of our website that incorporates a principled approach to accomplishing the steps in front of us.

Here is the principle of waste reduction found on the website. And here is the way each of the principles is outlined on the web. We have the principle and the goal of that principle at the top.

Then we have in-depth "how to do it" right underneath.

Under that are resources that can further help you do what needs to happen. And under that is some UMC policy that backs up our work on this particular principle.

On the right hand top of the page on almost all principles is a video or a visual of some sort to help educate yourself and your cohorts and other fellow UMW about this principle.

Under that is a PDF form of the webpage so that you can print out (if you have to!) and inform others of these steps.

Under that are the questions that you will be asked when you choose to do the UMW 13 steps to sustainability survey – a survey that we hope you'll begin to tackle after each and every event.

Finally, you can link directly to the survey after you have intentionally put into place the kinds of things that need to be put into place for the sake of building a healing, restorative, loving community.

### Practical Planning Guide



Another way in is the Practical Planning Guide for Sustainable Meetings approach.

In the Practical Planning guide, you can find a table of contents which shares some of the ways that UMW DO already organize their meetings and so if someone is in charge of childcare, they can read that section and upswing organized action or inform that these steps are already taken! Or, what about centerpieces that don't end up in the landfill? Again, here you go. Or if you want to see the entire measurement survey all in one place, go to the end of this document and you can find it there.

<p style="text-align: center;"><b>Measure.</b></p> 	<p>I do want to share with you a bit more detail about our UMW 13 Steps to Sustainability Survey. This is a grace, realistically analyzed, asking for nothing but honesty, accountability tool which will help us measure our progress across the country.</p> <p>This measurement survey tool is meant not to be a test an event or its planners at all! It's to help us all tell a story together about our efforts and a way to see our own improvement as we continue down this journey. It's a way to see where our challenges are and where we might need tools to help us through those challenges.</p> <p>The survey uses the principles and measures each principle so it is helpful to have gone to the website, seen the questions that will be asked and think about how you might implement that which will be measured BEFORE you determine to fill it out. You are able to skip principles you didn't work on but were asking that you fill this survey out every time you have an event; were hoping to see #1. A growth in the number of meetings that are attending to filling out a portion of the survey and #2. A growth in the number of groups that are attending to each of the principles.</p>
	<p>Following this program is not an overnight thing. We know that it will take some time to reorient ourselves from accomplishing an event to the long term setting up of groups of people who are ready to work at these principles enough to make sure they're attended to at <i>each meeting</i>. This means doing what UMW do best. Organizing for the task. And it will take time for those in charge of an event to receive the help they could use to really undergird work they care about but may not have gotten around to. There's no room for either aggression or defensiveness, self-righteousness or guilt in this program. It's a grace filled but accountability program that we know will be filled with love and tenderness one for the other but also for all those lives were affecting negatively when we don't attend to these kinds of things.</p>
<p style="text-align: center;"><b>UMW sustainability</b></p> 	<p>One more story: At a recent LDD a woman shared this story: Every Wednesday, she said, "I feed 85 children in our church basement that wouldn't have a meal except that we feed them. I'm on a shoestring budget. How, on earth, am I going to switch from Styrofoam? It's the cheapest way to serve yet I know that the garbage is the worst thing for children – and maybe even the children I serve!"</p> <p>This is where we come in as a district and a conference. Wouldn't it be amazing to tend to this concern? To do it from a place of care and love? Knowing what pressures this community is under to support this sister by providing the dishes and the dishwashers? I'm sure she's also dealing with multiplicity of other pressures – old boilers, chemical laced soil, and old windows. What an amazing thing it would be to think in new ways not only about oneself but to listen to each other's concerns and be awake and aware with generosity to back up the changes we need to make.</p>

### 13 Steps to Sustainability

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Waste Reduction  
Water Use  
Well-being of Participants



So there you have it.

- Jurisdictional Guides for the journey.
- Resources on the website:  
[www.unitedmethodistwomen.org/sustainability](http://www.unitedmethodistwomen.org/sustainability)
- A way to connect with one another and with our progress through a measurement survey.

This program is not intended to judge ANYONE; everyone is working too hard. Recently I was presenting this program to a group where women were working so hard in the kitchen, but they had used all disposable, non-compostable utensils, plates, and cups. There is NO way, I would judge. Gently encourage. Know the hard road we're on together. Make decisions (which are sometimes not perfect.) But let's together organize best practices, AND encourage us with stories and efforts from across the country which help us understand one another, help one another and move one another down the pathway we need to be on for the sake of ourselves and future generations!

**All of us are in this together.** Remember, that there have been very few in our lives that have taught us these things. And there are many influences that are teaching us to buy, buy, and buy at the cheapest, cheapest, and cheapest.

And those with the least economic leeway, who consume the least resources, and struggle with the many toxins in their neighborhood, are often relegated to eating from, drinking from, breathing, walking upon the most toxic of environments. And very little is teaching any of us how to stand with women and children in these zones who are recipients of more wealthy neighborhoods' waste and the poisons in our extraction and production. This is an incredible program where we can deepen our listening to one another's contexts and hear the struggles and be together in them.

Of course, we know that when we begin talking about a new approach, principles, changes to our comfort levels, we can understand that 80% of people will say it's impossible! So, We start with baby steps.

There are 13 principles which seem like an impossible list, but the program is set up to be step by step.



United  
Methodist  
Women

FAITH • HOPE • LOVE IN ACTION