Climate Change

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

For the creation waits with eager longing for the revealing of the children of God;
for the creation was subjected to futility, not of its own will but by the will of the one who
subjected it, in hope that the creation itself will be set free from its bondage of decay
and will obtain the freedom of the glory of the children of God.
—Romans 8:20–21

Climate change is causing grave suffering in many parts of the world. Such suffering includes,
but is not limited to: deaths due to extreme weather events, greater food and water insecurity,
displacement of peoples, extinction of plant and animal life and certain traditional cultures and the
threat of ecological catastrophe and major human rights crises. Its impacts fall disproportionately
on developing countries and poor persons within all countries, further exacerbating the effect of
historic discrimination and denial of human rights. Studies indicate 300,000 people a year, who
have done almost nothing to contribute to the problem, are already dying due to the effects of
global warming.

Climate change refers to a change of climate that is attributed directly or indirectly to human activity
that alters the composition of the global atmosphere and that is in addition to natural variability
observed over comparable time periods.* Global warming is “largely the result of emissions of
carbon dioxide and other greenhouse gases from human activities including industrial processes,
fossil fuel combustion and in changes in land use, such as deforestation.”** The United States has
5 percent of the world’s population, and it accounts for 25 percent of the world’s carbon dioxide
emissions. But the main causes of climate change are rooted in the structure of national and global
economies with overdependence on fossil fuels, unsustainable consumption levels and inequalities
in which women in already disadvantaged communities and nations bear a disproportionate burden
of the negative effects relative to their contribution to the problem.

Our Vision
The work of reconciliation and building of beloved community involves working for climate justice
that reenvisions policies that promote real reductions in emissions, national and international
dialogue and agreement that promote democratically controlled steps for mitigation and adaptation
in communities already affected by climate change and the development of a human rights
framework to protect present and future generations and all of God’s creation. United Methodist
Women is creating new resources and programs so that members can participate in this important
work at the intersection of our everyday life together.
**United Methodist Policy**

The United Methodist Church will strive for a global sense of community to help achieve social, economic, and ecological justice for all of creation” (Resolution 1023, “Environmental Justice for a Sustainable Future,” *The Book of Resolutions of the United Methodist Church 2012*).

**United Methodist Women’s Policy on Climate Change**

Caring for God’s Creation, 2011, “Codify reductions of greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions that are sufficient to reduce atmospheric levels of GHG to below 350 parts per million (ppm).”

**What United Methodist Women Members Can Do**

Invite your conference to participate in the Be Just. Be Green. initiative: www.unitedmethodistwomen.org/environment. This includes:

- Host green and just events. In the 13 steps to sustainability, best practices from green and just consultants help guide conferences, districts and local United Methodist Women groups to build infrastructure that is both just and green.

- Contact your jurisdictional guide. Jurisdictional guides are ready to help your conference establish both a baseline and steps forward in these best practices. See: www.unitedmethodistwomen.org/sustainability-guides.

- Become a Be Just. Be Green. advocate and receive periodic updates on the work of the national office and action alerts for policy analysis and action. See: www.unitedmethodistwomen.org/sustainability-advocate.

- Promote and contribute to the United Methodist Women Carbon Fund. This is the very first carbon fund for women, by women, and is a part of the need in the economic transition from unsustainability and injustice to a more just and sustainable economy. See: www.unitedmethodistwomen.org/carbonfund.

For more information, contact the Office of Economic and Environmental Justice: Kathleen Stone at kstone@unitedmethodistwomen.org

*From the United Nations Framework on Climate Change.*

Quotes from *The Book of Resolutions of The United Methodist Church 2012* copyright © 2012 by The United Methodist Publishing House. Used by permission.