

Carbon Footprint

Objective

All event arrangements are made with energy use in mind. Event plans strive to minimize the amount of energy used on an event's behalf, especially from fossil fuels. Meetings favor use of renewable energy when possible.

How Tos

Minimizing Transportation's Carbon Footprint

- Choose an event location that minimizes transportation distance for the greatest number of participants.
- If your event is in a relatively large city, choose a location that offers good local public transportation options and one with good intercity bus and train connections. Select a facility that produces and/or uses a significant amount of renewable energy. Here are two good websites for your research
 - www.instituteforenergyresearch.org/renewable-mandates
 - www.energy.gov/maps/renewable-energy-production-state
- Car-pooling and ride-sharing arrangements are easy to make, encouraged and facilitated.
- Where it makes sense, consider renting a bus or van to transport large numbers of participants rather than having people drive. See if an electric, hybrid or biodiesel fuel powered bus or van is available. Similarly, if renting a car, request an alternative energy model.
- In outreach, publicity and registration materials, encourage low-carbon footprint transportation options.

Minimizing Event Venue's Footprint

- Choose an event location that is willing to cooperate with United Methodist Women's commitment to measure our events' carbon footprint across the organization. Our goal is to reduce our per attendee greenhouse emissions.
- Select a city venue that is producing a significant amount of renewable energy. To find this out:
 - www.instituteforenergyresearch.org/renewable-mandates
 - www.energy.gov/maps/renewable-energy-production-state
- Evaluate and select accommodations and event facilities with energy-efficient measures in place, including waste, water, lighting, toxins and food and beverage.
- Arrange for more "climate-friendly" thermostat temperatures—less air-conditioning in warmer weather and less heat in cooler times.



- If using an AV company, request energy-efficient equipment and energy saving practices.

Minimizing Food and Waste Footprint

- If food is involved, plan a low-carbon footprint menu. This involves eating lower on the food chain (no red meat, more vegetarian and vegan meals, no food ingredients air-freighted long distances).
- Where food is served, arrange for unused food to be donated and food waste to be composted.
- Do not serve individual bottles of water, and use bulk containers for condiments

Women's Carbon Fund Contributions

- Calculate and tabulate participants' transportation carbon footprint and make a contribution to our United Methodist Women Women's Carbon fund to continue to fund women's participation in reducing carbon emissions throughout the world.
- Be sure to offer participants the opportunity to contribute to the United Methodist Women Women's Carbon Fund in order to help our mission giving directly address greenhouse gas emissions.
- Perhaps build a small contribution directly into the registration fee for those who can afford it (\$3-5) to help bring forth the important transformation we need into renewable energy and sustainability—this will jumpstart our work in this vital area.

Program

- Build in some carbon footprint education into your program: Make announcements to encourage the actions you need to be energy smart and workshops, Bible study, meal table tent cards, etc., that raise awareness and inspire action.

Helpful Resources

For a basic introduction on what causes greenhouse gas emissions and the most effective actions we can take to reduce them, read the book *Cooler, Smarter: Practical Steps for Low-carbon Living* by the Union of Concerned Scientists (Island Press, 2011). Their website includes a downloadable list of the Top 10 Things You Can Do to Lower Your Footprint: www.ucsusa.org/assets/documents/global_warming/Cooler-Smarter-Top-Ten-List.pdf.

For more details on what you can do individually and with your United Methodist Women unit, church and conference, see United Methodist Women's website: www.unitedmethodistwomen.org/what-we-do/service-and-advocacy/mission-focus-issues/environmental-justice.

The EPA tracks trends and provides helpful explanations of what is happening in laypeople's terms at: www.epa.gov/climatechange/science/indicators/download.html.

The United Methodist Women Women's Carbon Fund accepts donations for climate adaptation, mitigation and advocacy projects run by women.

Fast Facts

If 10 percent of our membership used a reusable water bottle every day instead of a paper cup one time a day, we would save enough energy every year to power a home for 565 years.

If 10 percent of our membership attending United Methodist Women events an average of three times per year brought a reusable water bottle to events, in one year we'd save enough energy to run a household for 47 years.

If 800,000 women across the country choose chicken instead of beef for one meal, we would save 200,000,000 gallons of water!

Source: MeetGreen

If 10 percent of our membership, or 80,000 women, across the country attending United Methodist Women events on average three times per year reused their paper coffee cup one time at each of those events, we would save 190,000 lbs. of greenhouse gases from the atmosphere!

Source: MeetGreen

► *Did you consider that being "energy smart" may also help you lower costs for your event? For example, you wouldn't need to buy paper plates, paper cups, even utensils if everyone brought her or his own. Carpooling and using less energy also make economic sense. This can be the case by paying special attention to location, transportation and food arrangements, for example.*

Glossary

Carbon: A naturally occurring element in our environment.

Carbon dioxide (CO₂): A colorless, odorless, incombustible gas formed during respiration, combustion and organic decomposition.

Carbon dioxide equivalent (CO₂e): This term takes into account that different greenhouse gases have different levels of potency and converts their total global warming impact to an equivalent mass of CO₂, making it easier to discuss and compare overall emissions.

Carbon offset: When an individual, organization or company produces greenhouse gases as a result of something it does (e.g., someone flies on a plane), it can purchase an “offset” or engage in an action itself to compensate for the amount of greenhouse gas it produced. An “offset” is an action that reduces the amount of greenhouse gas in the air. One example is planting a tree that will absorb carbon dioxide.

Climate change: Any long-term significant shift in the average weather of a region or the planet, as measured by changes in average temperature, precipitation and wind patterns. According to the World Meteorological Organization, in order to apply this term, the change has to be evident for at least three decades.

Greenhouse gases: Several different chemical compounds contribute to global warming and climate change. Some, like water vapor, are important for helping to regulate the temperature of the earth and making our planet livable. However, human-induced climate change that scientists have determined is threatening the planet is attributed to our production of these greenhouse gases: carbon dioxide, methane, nitrous oxide, ozone and chlorofluorocarbons. Carbon dioxide is the most common.

Renewable energy: Renewable energy is generally defined as energy that comes from resources that are continually replenished on a human timescale such as sunlight, wind, rain, tides, waves and geothermal heat.

Policy Foundation

The Book of Discipline. “The Natural World” (§160), Social Principles

The Book of Resolutions: #1001 “Energy Policy Statement,” #1002 “U.S. Energy Policy and United Methodist Responsibility,” #1003 “Nuclear Safety in the United States,” #1021 “Cease Mountaintop Removal Coal Mining,” #1023 “Environmental Justice for a Sustainable Future,” #1025 “Environmental Racism,” #1026 “Environmental Stewardship,” #1027 “God’s Creation and the Church,” #1031 “Resolution on Global Warming.”