

CREATION CARE

Martha Lyle Ford, Ann Cover, and Daniel Joranco

Creation care begins in Genesis where God artfully crafts the universe in ways that nourish and connect every component part, even opposites — light, dark, water, soil, heavenly bodies, plants, animals — before finally setting humans in this sumptuous garden to tend to creation life. It was clear early on that if you push in on any part of creation, it will poosh out somewhere else. Overstepping the limits God sets for us has devastating impacts for both humanity and the earth. Witnesses to creation care continue in the Psalms and the prophets where mountains sing and forests applaud at righteous faithfulness and worship. Jesus understood that salvation extends to the creation, “For God so loved the ‘cosmos’ that He sent . . .” Paul knew the “whole creation waits with eager longing for the arrival of the sons and daughters of God” in order to undo the ways we humans have dragged down the creation with all our unfaithfulness. The Book of Revelation culminates in the arrival of the new creation heralding the new age where God reigns, leaves of trees heal, and nourishing relationships of every kind are restored. Our Creation Care ministry grows out of Scripture and those who dare follow this Word.

We are grateful to our emerging TWK Conference for its early support and encouragement, especially with its attention to excellent communication resources that have served us well at the beginning. Each TWK Conference newsletter has included pertinent Creation Care information and event schedules. We trust you will come to count on that trustworthy information we will help to provide and edit.

The blended conference that has arisen out of the legacy Tennessee and Memphis conferences has allowed us to combine resources and successes from our various geographies to strengthen our Creation Care witness:

- We have spent this first year getting acquainted with and learning to trust many of the faithful witnesses from both sides of the Tennessee River, working hard to understand the methods our neighboring United Methodists have used in service to Creation Care.
- Ann Cover and Martha Lyle Ford provide excellent leadership in their local regions and also for us at the TWK Conference level. Daniel Joranco serves as our ministry director and connects us to the national church’s Creation Care ministry, often by leading national events here in Nashville. Paul Slentz, Tom Smedley, and Gregory Waldrop offer financial oversight to our shared work.
- Lakeshore Camp hosted a retreat for our early conversations; Lakeshore, Beersheba Springs, and Cedar Crest with their Creation Care focus and curriculum are excellent partners in our work.
- Other identified partners include trustees of local churches and conference properties as well as the many leaders in disaster relief across the conference who are eager to build back in sustainable and just ways.
- We continue to support Creation Care witnesses throughout the TWK Conference who organize Creation Care committees in local churches or who recycle and renovate in ways attentive to Creation Care insights.
- Our website — creationcaretwkumc.org — offers many exceptional resources for individuals and local churches. Our email address is creation.care@twkumc.org.

Goals for our new year include:

1. To discover all the Creation Care work that is happening within the bounds of our emerging conference and providing support and encouragement for each site. We are budgeting seed money for local projects.
2. To offer national and local resources to our local churches concerning Creation Care.
3. To make connections in each district and with each Wesley Foundation to offer insights and services concerning Creation Care, including devotions, Bible studies, worship resources, best practices, articles, renovation/rebuild checklists, webinars, EarthKeeper training, recycling information, certifications, etc.
4. To organize events throughout the TWK Conference which care for God’s unreplaceable creation.

Like a good jigsaw puzzle, Creation Care is not complete without every piece in its place. How are you called to be a part of this basic work of discipleship we call Creation Care? Contact us with your good ideas and your concerns for the world in which we live and love. If your heart is as our hearts, give us your hand. Take your place within the network of life that restores vibrant relationships and works to redeem the whole of creation.