

*The earth is the Lord's and all that is in it,
the world, and those who live in it.*

Psalm 24:1

April

Stewards of the Earth:

Environmental Stewardship



God created the earth and all that is in it and declared it good. God's creation is marked by wondrous complexity, interdependence and beauty. Human beings are called by God to care for the earth respectfully for its own sake and so that present and future generations may live on it and enjoy its fruits. The gifts of creation and the responsibility of stewardship were given to all of humanity, so that all might have enough and no one would have more than is needed and God's justice would prevail.¹

We can see that the earth has not been well cared for. Water, air, and land are polluted. Animals, plants and human beings, especially people of color, are endan-

gered. We have not shared the fruits of creation justly. Our lifestyles are not sustainable. "Sustainable living is living so that the earth can continue to provide for the needs of all its inhabitants – not just the human – beyond our own lifetimes into the future."²

As centers of hope and transformation, local churches are called to the work of "tiqqun 'olam" (repair of the world), to be agents of the whole world experiencing the emerging restoration of creation to God's intended shalom.³

SUGGESTED LEADERS/PARTNERS:

Stewardship, Social Action/Mission and Christian Education ministries.

IDEAS FOR LEADERS:

(Resource Websites and links: www.ucc.org/stewardship and www.ucc.org/justice)

● **Continue the sermon series** with “Caretakers of God’s Garden” (or another title).

● **Prepare to celebrate** International Earth Day (in March) and U.S. Earth Day (in April) using resources from “earthday” Websites:

www.earthsite.org – official international site
www.earthday.net – U.S. Earthday Network. Includes:
 “Religious Earth Day in a Box” pdf
www.earthday.gov
www.kidsdomain.com/holiday/earthday

● **Engage teens** with the “Creation” chapter in *Way to Live*.

● **Take five steps** toward an environmentally friendly church with the National Council of Churches Eco-Justice Program (see www.ncccojustice.org/grbuildingsteps.html) or using:

www.churchesgogreen.org
www.greenfaith.org
www.sustainable.org

● **Consider** if your church property can serve as a paper recycling site (see www.paperretriever.com).

● **Schedule movie nights** on this theme at church or in homes. View “An Inconvenient Truth” by Nobel Prize winner, Al Gore (www.eco-justice.org for discussion guide), or “Brother Sun, Sister Moon.”

● **Do a book study** using *Life Abundant: Rethinking Theology and Economy for a Planet in Peril* by Sallie McFague (free study guide at www.augsburgfortress.org) or the UCC’s *Toxic Wastes and Race* and *Toxic Wastes and Race at Twenty: 1987-2007*.

***“We do not inherit the earth from our ancestors;
 we borrow it from our children.”***

Native American Proverb

***Modern technology
 Owes ecology
 An apology.***

Alan M. Eddison

1 From www.webofcreation.org/ncc/covcong.html.

2 Laura Dunham, *Graceful Living* (Indianapolis: Ecumenical Stewardship Center), 10.

3 Richard D. Weis, *Practical Stewardship through a Biblical Lens* presentation, Spring 2005.