



Creation Care Ministry

Stockton, Missouri

THE UNITED METHODIST CHURCH

Creation Care Ministry Vision 2024

Shared with congregation during worship, April 21, 2024

Cheryl Y. Marcum, Creation Care Ministry Leader

Pastor Daniel asked me to share our Creation Care Ministry vision.

God's word inspires our vision: we boldly execute the divine vocation God gave us, we tend and keep God's good creation.

In the first book in the Old Testament, Genesis, God's word is very clear. I made you in my image to tend and **keep**, to nurture and enhance, the work of my hands, my creation, that which I love. The key word is "**keep**," from the Hebrew word, **shamar**, which means, "**guard, protect, preserve, keep watch, have charge of.**" From the beginning, God put us in charge of protecting and preserving his good creation.

In 2009, The Council of Bishops of the United Methodist Church wrote, "God's creation is in crisis. This beautiful natural world is a loving gift from God, the Creator of all things seen and unseen. God has entrusted its care to all of us, but we have turned our backs on God and on our responsibilities. Our neglect, selfishness, and pride have fostered environmental degradation. Despite the ways we all contribute to these problems, God still invites each one of us to participate in the work of renewal. We must begin the work of renewing creation by being renewed in our own hearts and minds. We cannot help the world until we change our way of being in it."

Prior to our Administrative Board approving our Creation Care Ministry in 2013, God's word inspired us to re-imagine our discipleship journey. A banner hangs on the wall in our Family Life Center to share our creation care ministry vision from 10 years ago. It is titled "Re-Imagine our Discipleship Journey." The picture shows our second annual Dead Electronics Recycling Drive. Around that time, several in our church family studied N.T. Wright's book, *Surprised by Hope, Rethinking Heaven, the Resurrection, and the Mission of the Church*. N. T. Wright inspired the words at the bottom of the banner.

I see Creation Care Ministry as the conscience of the church that focuses all of us on our delegation by God to shamar. I see this ministry guiding our church family to purposefully

change our way of being in the world, to make “creation-respecting” choices that make right our relationships with God, with creation, and with our neighbors.

Yesterday was our 11th annual Electronics and Appliances Recycling Drive. It honored God’s good creation by making it easy for members of our community to recycle tons of materials. Recycling is just one creation-respecting practice that gets visibility.

Our vision becomes reality as more and more people in our church family adopt more and more creation-respecting practices in our daily lives and influence others to do likewise. We conserve resources, we transition from fossil fuels to renewable energy, and we recycle as acts of discipleship. We purposefully make lifestyle choices to do our part to tend and keep God’s good creation. We resolve to examine our lifestyles and identify additional ways we can change our way of being in the world. This often means replacing culturally-acceptable, environmentally irresponsible habits with creation-respecting choices.

Our vision becomes reality when all who enter see that we Disciples practice shamar. We take seriously the divine vocation God gave us, take care of, tend and keep my good creation. We want members of our community to see that our lifestyle choices reflect respect for God’s good creation, that we routinely make decisions about what to buy and consume in order to protect God’s good creation as a top priority.

The Lord God took the man and put him in the garden of Eden to dress and keep it. Our vision. Let’s boldly execute the divine vocation God gave us, tend and keep God’s good creation.