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# Cal-Nev Climate Justice Ministries - Do No Harm

*"Climate justice through faith-inspired connection, education, advocacy, and action"*

## Sharing Inspiration

[Rev. Dr. Judith Pruess-Mellow](#) is a member of our Cal-Nev Climate Justice Ministries task force and is serving on the subgroup of our task force looking at local church engagement. She is a retired UM deacon and active at Twin Towers United Methodist Church. In this article below, entitled *Be a Force for Change, Earth Month in Wesleyan Style: Do No Harm*, she describes some of the work that she has been doing, placing it in a Wesleyan context and sharing the questions that she has asked and many resources that she has found to be useful in her work. We hope that some of these questions and resources may be helpful for you as you engage in your local churches.

Ministry is a second career for Rev. Dr. Judith Pruess-Mellow who was ordained in 2001. She was Minister of Visitation at Los Altos UMC from 1995-2005, and Executive Director of Senior New Ways from 2005-2009. She worked for Bristol Hospice as a Chaplain from 2011-2013 and retired in 2013. She is an active member at Twin Towers United Methodist Church in Alameda, preaching, teaching, facilitating book studies, working with Dine and Connect, Climate Justice, and the Alameda Warming Shelter. She writes for the [UM Discipleship Ministries Older Adult Program](#) and also works in the Christ Episcopal Church Alameda Community Garden, harvesting food for the Alameda Food Bank. She teaches "Coming Fully Alive as You Age" and "Writing Your Legacy Story" in the community and on Zoom and is active in the Alameda All Faiths Coalition.

Do you have story that you could share to inspire others? We would like to hear about what you are doing and then share your stories about your church's climate justice

work. Please [email us](#) with your articles about what is happening in your life, your church or your city. Or ask us to call you and we can talk about it.

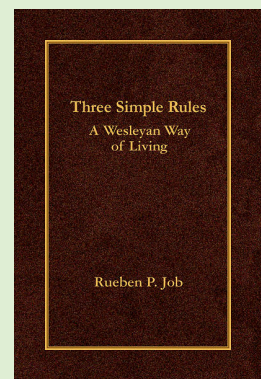
Blessings,

Rev. Joan Pell

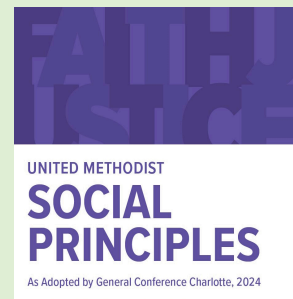
Chair, California-Nevada Climate Justice Ministries Task Force

## Be a Force for Change, Earth Month in Wesleyan Style: Do No Harm

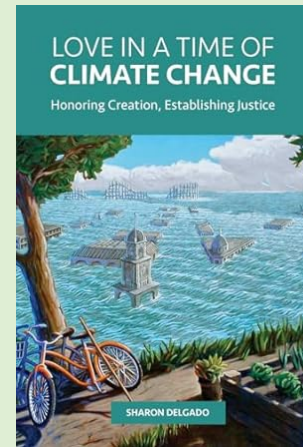
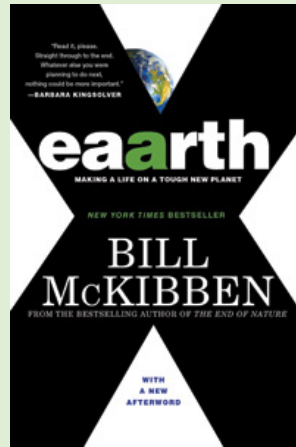
In the [April-May 2024 issue of our Climate Justice Ministries newsletter](#), the first article stated: “God’s new creation that John Wesley anticipated requires that we do no harm, do good, and attend upon all the ordinances of God” (General Rules). The article went on to discuss how Doing No Harm by divesting from fossil fuels will liberate us to do more good and connect with God in more meaningful ways. In the present article the first simple rule, Do No Harm, is the focus. (See Reuben Job's book, [Three Simple Rules](#), Abingdon, 2007). I will consider areas where some United Methodists might be failing at Doing No Harm. We might not even realize it.



Our collective actions and lifestyle choices contribute to climate change, a reality that is doing catastrophic harm to God’s creation. How can we work towards Creation Justice in the hopes that our descendants and all Creation will have a future? (See [The United Methodist Revised Social Principles, Community of All Creation](#) as adopted in 2024. Also, see both the [CA NV Annual Conference Climate Justice Ministries website](#), and the [UM Creation Justice Movement website](#).)



Books written by United Methodists about climate change and the need for healing God's Creation include [Eaarth: Making a Life on a Tough New Planet](#) (that is the correct spelling) by Bill McKibben (Times Books, 2010) and [Love in a Time of Climate Change](#) by Rev. Sharon Delgado (Fortress, 2017).



The [United Methodist Creation Justice Movement](#) provides [monthly tips](#) as a tool to equip church members, families, and individuals to respond to God's call to care for Creation and do justice with our neighbors. You can [sign up for four short monthly video clips](#) to help your congregation recognize God's call in the midst of climate related issues.



A very creative earth healing project is [Sacred Ground](#), a program of the Windsor, CA, UMC which enables you to take virtual tours of 21 different sacred nature places and learn about their flora, fauna, and Indigenous histories. Check it out on [Instagram](#), [Facebook](#), and [Youtube](#) and also the [October 2024 issue of our Climate Justice Ministries newsletter](#).



As you learn about the climate change crisis, consider:

- What lessons have you learned recently about ways to slow down climate change and heal the earth?

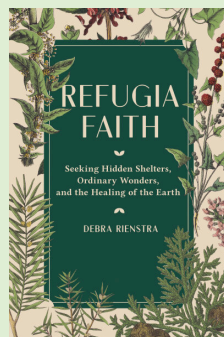
- Is being “in love with nature” an important value to you? Why? Do you remember events from childhood that attest to that?
- Are any of your sacred places in nature? Where are they and why do they feel sacred to you?
- Who has influenced your increasing awareness of climate change and ways we can help heal the earth? How?
- Are you, your friends, or family affected by climate change?
- How does your lifestyle harmonize with the divine natural legacy we see in Jesus’ teachings and parables?
- What part have you played in the over-industrialization, deforestation, plastic overload, and overreliance on fossil fuels?
- How do you feel about the fact that those in the southern hemisphere and low lying countries are already experiencing serious consequences of climate change such as drought and flooding, though many of them have not contributed much to the greenhouse gases causing climate change?
- Do you feel a need for repentance and forgiveness? How might that happen?
- Why do you care about climate change and do you think we can make a difference?

One example of a UMC looking at these questions as a congregation is [Twin Towers United Methodist Church of Alameda](#). On April 28th, 2024, the congregation met after church for a brunch and two hour session covering the topics of **Education, Lifestyle, Civic Engagement, and Compassion**. This seminar had been planned by a joint committee of two small groups which had been studying climate change in the last year. Speakers from the two small groups were featured on each topic and then the entire group broke into five very small groups to answer specific questions within the four topic areas.

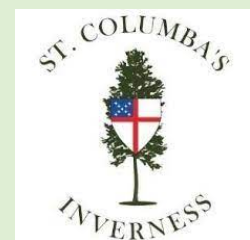


Toward the end of the seminar, we tried to emphasize “Hopes for the Future.” We explored questions such as, Where do you find hope in this situation confronting all of

humanity and creation now? What difference could you make? This might appear to be too challenging to consider. However, our United Methodist tradition and Climate Creation and Climate Justice movements offer many possibilities. Also, many people of other denominations are doing outstanding, hope-producing, harm-reducing work. I highly recommend [\*Saving Us: A Climate Scientist's Case for Hope and Healing in a Divided World\*](#) by Katharine Hayhoe (One Signal, 2021) and [\*Refugia Faith: Seeking Hidden Shelters, Ordinary Wonders, and the Healing of the Earth\*](#) by Debra Rienstra (Fortress, 2022). Pope Francis wrote [\*Laudato Si\*](#) in 2015 and [\*Laudate Deum\*](#) in 2023. Both discuss climate change and its effect on nature and people, especially the poor, but the latter encyclical states even more strongly the urgent need for humans to stop harming Creation. Richard Rohr, a Franciscan priest of the Center for Action and Contemplation, has focused on Creation in a number of his [2024 daily Meditations](#). (See Meditations for weeks beginning [April 21](#), [May 13](#), [June 10](#), and [September 1](#)).

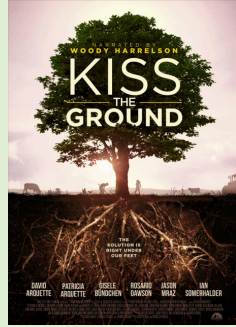
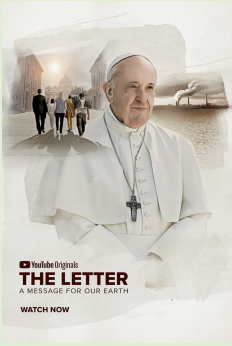


Have you ever wanted to be part of a book or film study group that is looking at climate change and ways of doing no harm/healing the earth? [St. Columba's Episcopal Retreat Center in Inverness, CA](#) offers many such groups throughout the year, mostly on Zoom. Check out their website and the [Council for Ecological Discipleship's Eco News](#).



Other resources on Doing No Harm to Creation are movies and You Tube videos: ["The Letter"](#) (Pope Francis' effort), ["Kiss the Ground"](#) (Netflix), ["Common Ground,"](#) and ["The Week."](#)





Ask yourself,

- How often have I created trash that could have been not only recycled, but better yet, reused, reduced, refused to buy, repaired, restored, regenerated as compost?
- Have you rethought how to live more sustainably, reviewed your needs vs. your wants, and recommitted to stop harming and instead healing the Earth?
- Finally, how can you individually and as part of a congregation invite the Holy Spirit into the process?

Consider this nature oriented “Invitation to the Holy Spirit” (UMH 335):

*“O God, the Holy Spirit, come to us, and among us; come as the wind, and cleanse us; come as the fire, and burn; come as the dew, and refresh; convict, convert, and consecrate many hearts and lives to our great good and to thy greater glory; and this we ask for Jesus Christ’s sake.” Amen.*

Submitted by task force member [Rev. Dr. Judith Pruess-Mellow](#)

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