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Cal-Nev Climate Justice Ministries

November 2024 Newsletter

“Climate justice through faith-inspired connection, education, advocacy, and action”

Giving Thanks



Let us remember to give thanks in all things as the apostle Paul said, in 1 Thessalonians 5:18 (CEB), *Give thanks in every situation because this is God’s will for you in Christ Jesus.*

We live in a beautiful world and for that I give thanks. The photo above was taken on a walk that I took in [Orwell Country Park](#) in Ipswich in early November 2020 when I was living in the UK through the COVID pandemic. While it was a difficult time, there was still lots to be thankful for, and the scenery was ever-changing and always stunning.

This Fall, I am thankful for all of you and the work that you do. I know that sometimes it seems never ending and often disappointing. But let’s celebrate the little things and remember that God will never leave us nor forsake us, and that through it all God loves each one of us. If you want some ideas for things to be thankful for in relation to your climate justice work, then [checkout this great list in the United Methodist Creation Justice November Tips](#) that also bids us to turn our thankful attitude into action — for which, others will also be giving thanks.

You will find articles in this newsletter about

- [The latest United Nations’ predictions](#) for global warming and COP29.

- [Fossil Fuel divestment](#) and the progress made on the recommendation passed at ACS 2024.
- [Reducing the use of plastic](#) in our lives and in our local churches as per the General Conference resolution.
- [Stories of hope](#) — textile recycling in California and the first national marine sanctuary proposed by Indigenous peoples in the United States.

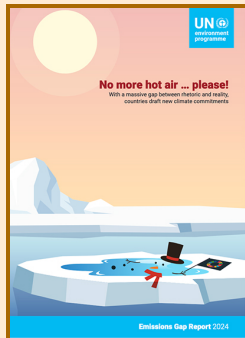
Blessings and a Happy Thanksgiving,

Rev. Joan Pell

Chair, California-Nevada Climate Justice Ministries Task Force

Education

United Nations Warning



Current climate policies will result in global warming of more than 3°C by the end of the century, according to the United Nations Emissions Gap report released on October 24. The report is the 15th edition in a series that brings together many of the world's top climate scientists to look at future trends in greenhouse gas emissions and provide potential solutions to the challenge of global warming.

In a [video message](#) about the report, UN Secretary General António Guterres said:

The message of today's Emissions Gap report is clear, we are tittering on a planetary tight rope, either leaders bridge the emissions gap, or we plunge headlong into climate disaster with the poorest and most vulnerable suffering the most. This report shows annual greenhouse gas emissions at an all-time high rising 1.3% last year, they must fall 9% each year to 2030 to limit global temperature rise to 1.5°C and avoid the very worst of climate change. Current policies are taking us towards a catastrophic 3.1°C temperature rise by the end of the century. As this report rightly puts it, people and planet cannot afford more hot air.

The upcoming United Nations Climate Conference COP29 must drive progress in two ways. First, COP29 starts the clock for countries to deliver New National Climate action plans by next year. Second, finance will be front and center at COP29; developing countries urgently need serious support to accelerate the transition to clean energy and deal with the violent weather they are already facing. COP29 must agree to a new Finance goal. We're out of time. Closing the Emissions Gap means closing the ambition gap, the implementation gap, the finance gap, starting at COP29.

United Nations Emissions Gap Report

COP29 - Investing in a livable planet for all



The 29th Conference of the Parties to the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (COP29), will take place from November 11 to 22 in Baku, Azerbaijan. This will be a pivotal opportunity to accelerate action to tackle the climate crisis. Watch/read your favorite news sources for update reports during that time.

COP29

Advocacy

California-Nevada Starts Planning Fossil Fuel Divestment Summit

To reduce greenhouse gas emissions and global warming, we must urgently reduce our reliance on fossil fuels. While that requires state, national and international changes, as individuals, churches and the conference, we can divest from fossil fuels. As we do so, we withdraw our financial and ethical support and make it possible to

shift our investments toward goods and services that can us move towards policies that offer a just and clean energy future.



As many of you know, the Cal-Nevada Climate Justice Ministries Task Force submitted a Recommendation on fossil fuel divestment that passed at the June 2024 Annual Conference Session.

It called for our Conference to identify and begin to reduce fossil fuels from Conference investment portfolios while collaborating with agencies and interested groups on how to move forward with divestment in a smart and informed way. This recommendation calls for the [Conference Council on Finance and Administration](#) (CF&A) to host a summit “to uphold best practices for investment management,” to “identify sound financial strategies to screen out fossil fuels from our conference investment portfolios,” and to present a report and recommendations to the 2025 Annual Conference.

The actions called for by this Recommendation are moving forward. The Conference Board of Pensions is gradually moving money from Wespeth’s US Equity Fund to its low-carbon Social Values Equity Fund. The returns are comparable. A date has not yet been set for the Summit, but it is tentatively planned for February or March, 2025.

Our Climate Justice Ministries Task Force has started a Climate Finance working group, led by Sharon Delgado, to assist CF&A in planning for this Summit. If you would like to serve for a limited time on this working group, please let us know.

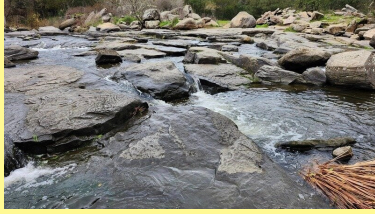
For an article on fossil fuel divestment from Fossil Free UMC, see the link below.

Recommendation with Background & Rationale

“It’s Time to Phase Out Fossil Fuels”

Article submitted by task force member [Rev. Sharon Delgado](#).

Sacred Ground



[Rev. Laurie Bayen](#), one of our task force members, has become involved in an effort to change the name of Santa Rosa's Flat Rock Park, one of the "hidden gem" locations on the [Sacred Ground tour](#), and to change the offensive wording on the "historical" marker at that site, in order to honor the Southern Pomo tribe which maintained a village there up until the time of contact with Spanish missionaries.

Click below if you would like to sign this petition to change the name of Flat Rock Park to Bitá-Kom-tara..

Sign the Petition

Action

Use of Plastic

Everywhere we look in our culture you will find plastic. However, one place where you will not find plastic is in the Bible! One of the resolutions that passed at General Conference in May 2024 was this one on the **Use of Plastic**. It says:

The United Methodist Church resolves

1. that for all church activities of local, annual, central, jurisdictional, and General Conference bodies, a twofold strategy of avoiding (avoiding plastic where possible, replacing single-use plastic items such as dishes, coffee cups, or bags with items made of recyclable, preferably naturally occurring material) and reducing (e.g., using dishes that can be washed and reused) is to be pursued;

2. that all delegates commit to personal action of the same kind, modeling a change in behavior for the sake of environmental protection.

[Creation Justice Ministries](#), formerly the National Council of Churches Eco-Justice Program, has a new resource called *Real Faith in a Synthetic World: Plastic Jesus* that can help you get started in rethinking your relationship to plastic.



This resource is designed to help congregations think more deeply about the ways that plastics impact our lives and God's creation. It is also intended to equip people of faith to take actions to address this epidemic in faithful and practical ways.

Download this resource to find stories of individuals and communities making a positive impact, sermon starters to spark meaningful discussions in your church, worship resources to unite in prayer and reflection, and actionable steps to address the plastic crisis in your life, community and, our world.

Real Faith in a Synthetic World: Plastic Jesus

Connection

Establishing a Local Church Contact Person

What can we do to be in loving relationship with the earth? Many of us find ourselves overwhelmed by the dire circumstances of the climate crisis. Where can we find hope? If we, the church, the ones who believe that God said “this creation is good,” can be in deeper relationship with nature, perhaps our lives, the lives of our churches, and the lives of future generations, can be changed. We are called to be a UMC

community focused on creation care. Different individuals – and different congregations – may focus on this in different ways. We want to be in communication with you!

CA-NV clergy, Liza Klein, Judith Pruess-Mellow, and Laurie Bayen, are in a subgroup of the Conference Climate Justice Ministry Task Force focused on Congregational Engagement. They have discussed a number of ideas amongst themselves around this effort, and their goal now is to identify at least one contact person for every congregation for the purpose of receiving communications and networking. Ideal persons might be outdoors enthusiasts, gardeners, social justice activists, participants in small study groups, photographers or “green team” members. If you or someone you know might consider serving as this contact person, please contact Liza by clicking on the link below.

Email Rev. Dr. Liza H. Klein

Be a Force for Change

[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 the article linked below (also emailed out in October), 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.

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

And some good news!

To inspire us when climate justice work can seem like a never-ending time of bad news, here are a couple of recent California success stories found in [the Optimist](#)

[Daily](#), an open-source library of solutions news stories.

Textile Recycling

The United States has seen an alarming growth in textile waste. Since 1960, the volume of discarded clothing and household textiles has increased tenfold, reaching more than 17 million tons by 2018. Surprisingly, 85 percent of textiles wind up in landfills, where they generate methane gas and release hazardous chemicals into the environment. Although over 95 percent of these materials—including textiles, yarns, and zippers—are recyclable, only a small percentage are ever reused.

California's new [Responsible Textile Recovery Act](#) (SB 707) seeks to address this issue by moving the responsibility for textile recycling from consumers to manufacturers. Under this measure, which passed on September 28, manufacturers of garments, beds, towels, and other textiles must establish and support a statewide system for reusing, mending, and recycling their products. This landmark legislation aims to establish a more sustainable, circular economy for textiles.

[Read the full Optimist Daily article on the Responsible Textile Recovery Act](#)

Offshore Marine Sanctuary

The proposal for the Chumash Heritage National Marine Sanctuary marks a big step in protecting California's coastline. This sanctuary, which spans more than 116 miles of the state's central coast, will become the third largest of its kind in the United States, and it will be California's first national marine sanctuary designation in more than three decades. The process just reached a major milestone with the release of the Final Environmental Impact Statement (FEIS), which details the proposed sanctuary's environmental, economic, and social implications. The National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA) intends to establish the sanctuary, which will include 4,543 square miles of offshore and coastal seas along California's picturesque coastline.

"This is a huge moment for the Chumash People and all who have tirelessly supported our campaign over the years," said Violet Sage Walker, Northern Chumash Tribal Council chairperson. It will be the first national marine sanctuary proposed by Indigenous peoples in the United States, marking a watershed moment for Indigenous communities nationwide.

Read the full Optimist Daily article on the Offshore Marine Sanctuary

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“Climate Justice through faith-inspired connection, education, advocacy and action”

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