



St. Andrew UMC

Environmental Policy

Caring for God's Creation

Rationale for Creation Care:

In April of 2021, the national United Methodist Church (UMC) responded to the climate crisis by pledging “to achieve net-zero emissions by 2050 across ministries, facilities, operations, and investments.” The national UMC also committed to leveraging the gifts of our connection by “putting equity and justice at the center as we build a net-zero emission economy by 2050.”

The importance of our role in environmental stewardship is referenced in two guiding documents. It is stated in the Book of Discipline's very first Social Principle on how we are to engage in the world and turn our values into action as United Methodists.

Secondly, it's cited in the Book of Resolutions #1033 which calls on us to participate in God's healing of creation. Caring for God's creation is one of the most fundamental things we are called to do, and St. Andrew understands the critical role we play in the community by stressing the importance of creation care and energy justice. As stated in Genesis 2:15, “God appointed us to bear his image and entrusted this world to our care.”

Our Pledge:

St. Andrew accepts this stewardship entrusted to us and commits to care for God's earth and all creation when making decisions about church operations, initiatives and events.

Our Commitment:

St. Andrew is dedicated to supporting programs, practices and ministries that grow environmental stewardship. Church staff, councils, boards, social action groups and congregants aspire to achieve the following:

1. Continuously explore opportunities to reduce energy and water use, increase electrification, decrease carbon emissions and deploy renewable energy to reach the national UMC goal of being net-zero by 2050. (Lead: Earth Keepers; Support: Facilities, Communications)
2. Purchase environmentally-safe products for indoor and outdoor use. (Lead: Facilities; support: Earth Keepers)
3. Offer educational resources on creation care best practices to church leadership, staff and the community. (Lead: Earth Keepers)
4. Incorporate a reverence for life and a responsibility to care for the earth into worship services and religious education for children and adults. (Lead: Pastoral Staff)
5. Reduce landfill waste by following the steps of refuse, reduce, reuse and recycle. (Lead: Church Staff; Support: Earth Keepers)
6. Work with contractors and vendors to reduce St. Andrew's waste stream. (Lead: Facilities)
7. Post the Creation Care Plan on St. Andrew's website and other appropriate mediums. (Lead: Communications)

Our Process:

Staff and laity assess the impact that our activities, programs and purchases have upon our planet. These include energy and water use, cleaning products, lawn care, paper use, food choices, recycling and waste and transportation. We endeavor to make choices that lessen our impact on the environment.

Staff and laity understand the importance of data, audits and metrics to inform better decision-making around environmental and sustainability practices. Energy Star Portfolio Manager provides the dashboard to understand energy, water, materials and emissions patterns, identify improvement opportunities and celebrate achievements. By extracting usage and cost data from Portfolio Manager, staff and volunteers are able to see monthly performance to sustainability goals. Priorities will be discussed, plans will be developed and sustainability projects will be vetted to make capital investments which are practical, reach a consensus and make financial sense.

In order to keep the Creation Care Plan current and relevant, it is suggested that the following actions take place on a regular basis:

1. Every three to five years third-party bids will be requested and an energy audit will be conducted to obtain an unbiased and comprehensive view of the most significant energy issues and opportunities to address. (Trustees)
(For budgeting, the fee for the Level 2 energy audit conducted in August 2022 was \$10,000.)
2. Every three years the Creation Care Plan will be reviewed, and if necessary, updated to align with St. Andrew's vision and mission. (Lead: Church Council; Support: Earth Keepers)
3. Once a year a sustainability report will be submitted to the Colorado Green Business Network. (Lead: Church staff; Support: Earth Keepers. Administrative burden: 1 hour)
4. On a monthly basis energy, water and waste amounts will be entered into Portfolio Manager. (Lead: Earth Keepers. Administrative burden: 30 minutes.)

It is understood that the continued use of fossil fuels for transportation and for space heating and cooling increases carbon dioxide levels posing a threat to the environment. There will be an ongoing assessment of energy efficiency, beneficial electrification and renewable energy measures to reduce St. Andrew's carbon footprint. Yet we must be pragmatic and reasonable in our decision making and understand that making cleaner energy and sustainability choices comes with a cost – often higher than conventional means. An evaluation of environmental costs and benefits will come with every major proposal review and vendor selection.