ITEM 2026-51: CREATING A CREATION CARE/JUSTICE TASKFORCE

Resolved, That the Horizon Texas Annual Conference of The United Methodist Church will create a conference-level Creation Care/Justice Taskforce as a part of the Care and Healing Team to address climate justice and resilience in the annual conference. This work is a part of the Board of Church and Society's portfolio. The term climate justice reflects the intersection of creation care with healthcare, economic, racial, and all other all other justice issues. This is a follow-up to the "Affirming the Formation of Green Teams in the Horizon Texas Annual Conference" resolution that was passed at the 2025 session of Annual Conference.

The Horizon Texas Annual Conference hereby asserts and recognizes that creation care/environmental stewardship is a faithful and imperative response to the world-wide crisis of environmental degradation. As stewards of Creation, we have failed on our watch to ensure clean water, flourishing wildlife, and a stable climate for current and future generations. We acknowledge our sinfulness and cry out that Creation Care and Justice is and must be a Missional Priority for the church; and

Resolved, That the Horizon Texas Annual Conference understands the work of creation care/environmental justice to be a part of our Missional Priority.

Affirmed by this conference body, with their work empowered by faith as a Missional Priority, the Creation Care/Justice Taskforce will be charged to accomplish these tasks toward a missional, sustainable, and faithful church:

- Recognize the church as the presence of God— "on Earth as it is in heaven," both now and for the future—and develop and advance a vision toward a sustainable, net-zero, resilient church, empowering congregations, districts, and congregational groups to take action consistent with that vision, as well as develop resources for that effort.
- Delineate benchmarks and assume accountability to meet benchmarks that move the conference toward net-zero (a practice of reducing greenhouse gas emissions and/or ensuring that ongoing emissions are balanced by removal of greenhouse gases), sustainable, and environmental justice goals in line with the Wesleyan faith, and in partnership with people and communities most affected by environmental impacts and climate change.
- Pursue just partnerships and community recovery both within the congregation and outside the walls of the church, coordinating and collaborating with the strategic work of anti-racism and restorative justice work already taking place in the conference.

In line with the Missional Priority work of Creation Care and Justice, the Creation Care/Justice Taskforce will work closely with conference budgetary structures toward the funding and achievement of net-zero and sustainable goals—

- Participate in the conference budgeting process to ensure that priorities identified by the Creation Care/Justice Taskforce are integrated into the conference budget and funded at robust levels.
- Identify, apply for, and work to secure new funding sources designated to achieve net-zero, greenhouse gas emissions reduction goals, ensuring that funding is provided to, and available for, local congregations and conference entities working to reduce greenhouse gas emissions in their context.
- Support and encourage the Annual Conference and congregations to divest from emissions-laden investments and practices and toward re-investment in low-carbon, sustainable

alternatives, such as addressing food waste, single-use refuse disposal, electrification, and obtaining energy from clean power sources.

In line with the Book of Discipline (¶ 628.2 2024 Book of Discipline of The United Methodist Church, page 459), the Creation Care/Justice Taskforce, together with the conference Board of Church and Society and the Annual Conference Nominations Committee, hire/appoint/select a Caretaker of God's Creation Coordinator for the conference.

This Coordinator will—

- Serve on the Creation Care/Justice Taskforce as a member.
- Serve with other Caretakers of God's Creation/Green Teams/Creation Care Committees/Creation Justice Ministry Teams across the denomination to contribute to and establish a multiconference network of such groups through the General Board of Church and Society, General Board of Global Missions, Caretakers of God's Creation, The United Methodist Creation Justice Movement, and other appropriate United Methodist bodies.
- "…Be responsible for helping the conference develop programs to become more ecologically sustainable and to address environmental injustices" (as appropriate to Horizon Texas Annual Conference contexts). ¶ 628.2 *2024 Book of Discipline of The United Methodist Church*, page 459.

Resolved, That Conference Creation Care/Justice Taskforce members shall consist of a minimum of ten people who are passionate about gospel of Jesus Christ, creation care and justice, and anti-racism, and that members shall include in addition to others, at least

- 2 youth
- 2 young adults (under age 30)
- 2 clergy
- 2 laity
- 1 conference staff person

Every District should be represented in the membership listed above.

Resolved, That from this Creation Care/Justice Taskforce, sub-groups shall be formed to address these needs:

- Rudder (Steering, Coordinating)
    - To identify and articulate specific goals and benchmarks for success
- Resource development
    - To provide educational, worship, missional and discipleship materials and to serve as a resource to local churches, districts, and the Annual Conference
- Community Outreach, Local Church Engagement, and Missional Listening
    - To build coalition, restoration, and a renewed body of the church
- Budget engagement
    - To identify and pursue designated funding, grant writing, and funds development
- Repair and support anti-racism partnerships
    - To recognize the expertise and leadership of communities impacted by environmental harms
    - To work through a priority anti-racist lens

Submitted by

- Rev. Mel Caraway, Caretaker of God's Creation Coordinator, HTC
- Rev. Phil Dieke, Chair of HTC Board of Church and Society
- Horizon Texas Conference Board of Church and Society
- Horizon Texas Conference United Women in Faith

Supporting Information

What Biblical text(s) informed you in the development of this petition?

- Genesis 1-2
- Psalm 24

How does this petition help further the mission of our Annual Conference to make disciples of Jesus Christ for the transformation of the world? How does it align with the HTC vision and the five strategic priorities?

- In order to make disciples for the transformation of the world, we must have a world to transform. This gives us the tools to work with in the Horizon Texas Conference for care and healing as we work to create a sustainable world.

Provide pertinent references set forth in the 2020/2024 Book of Discipline *or the* 2020/2024 Book of Resolutions *that relate to this petition.*

- Par. 703.9 BOD
- Par. 806.1b(2) BOD
- Par. 628.2 BOD
- Multiple resolutions in 2024 BOR on various aspects of Creation Care/Justice -- Church Land Use, Green Teams, Clean Energy, Net Zero, Solar

How does this item differ from the stated stances set forth in the 2020/2024 Book of Discipline *or the* 2020/2024 Book of Resolutions*?*

- This resolution does not differ in any way from the 2024 Book of Discipline or Book of resolutions.

If applied, what action would be required of the Horizon Texas Annual Conference?

- If adopted, this resolution will provide a tool for the Horizon Texas Annual Conference to fulfill the language of the 2024 BOD and the BOR at the Annual Conference level.
- There are no direct financial implications.

Notes:

When God brought Abraham out of Ur, atmospheric carbon was about 280 ppm. Today's number hovers around 431.32 ppm (as of March 31, 2026). Find today's exact number at The Keeling Curve. Find Net-Zero and emissions reduction resources for faith communities from faith communities:

- From the Church of England PDF—A practical path to net zero carbon: A checklist for your church
- From the Anglican church in Canada—Addressing the questions, What is net zero? and What will it require of me?' a FAQ or a net-zero church,.
- From the Church of Scotland—Net-Zero Strategic Outline

- From The Methodist Church in Britain—not only have they divested from fossil fuels, but also they have a lot of information about how to get to net-zero.

Find help through partnerships with governmental agencies if they still exist:

- EPA's Resources for Congregations, including Energy Star Action Workbook for Congregations.
- DOE's Renew America's Nonprofits
- DOE's Justice 40 Initiative

Connect with the United Methodist Creation Justice Movement for resources on Caretakers of God's Creation, green teams, worship materials and curriculum, Creation Justice Tips, solar initiatives, and current creation justice legislation in the *Book of Discipline* and *Book of Resolutions*, and support for Creation Care and Justice throughout the denomination.