

The Laity Minute

September 2019

It all started back in the early 1990s. I was in college. And one day it just happened. I became tired of throwing away items which could be recycled. Recycling wasn't really popular at that time, so it was a bit of a stretch for someone to engage in it. I even placed a recycle bin in my dorm for others to use (which they did). And thus, a lifelong habit began.

So here I am 25+ years later doing the same thing. Mom and I take a bag to collect recyclables left on the trails where we hike. Thankfully, the park has a recycle bin so we can dispose of them there. I carry recycle bags to my golf course and gather all I can possibly carry. You should see me sifting through the trash on every hole! It is quite a sight. The golf course does not have a recycle bin, so I am sure the recycle truck that comes to my house wonders how I could possibly consume that much of anything. You may even see me leaving church with plastic forks and cups to be added to my park/golf collection. I know many of you also recycle and are extremely aware of environmental issues we are facing. I can bet you have seen the pitiful pictures of animals and land harmed by these issues in the news.

But, did you know that the Methodist church, including the United Methodist Women are strongly supportive of environmental efforts? Our Book of Discipline, "Social Principles: The Natural World" has a lot to say about the environment. It includes stances regarding water, energy, animals, stewardship, space, food, science/technology and more. I encourage you to access <http://www.umc.org/what-we-believe/the-natural-world> to see additional information.

The UMW advocates for Climate Justice heavily. They recently launched a campaign where you can sign a letter to the Chevron CEO encouraging him to invest in renewable energy. In addition, the UMW has asked Ford to stop efforts to weaken environmental protections.

"We understand climate justice not simply as an environmental or economic concern but rather as a deep ethical and spiritual concern that the church must address so that abundant life is insured for our children and future generations." – Book of Resolutions of the UMC, #1035 "Climate Change and the Church's Response"

You can also find numerous Biblical references to environmental protection and related issues. So, what does this mean for us at Centenary? What can we possibly do? Via the UMW website, I took a survey regarding a church's carbon footprint (environmental impact). I submitted our Centenary information as accurately as I could. It basically asked questions about our energy use such as electricity, waste, and goods we consume. The results I received showed we generally do okay, but could use improvement. Where do you think we could improve our footprint as a congregation? Could we somehow decrease our printing of newsletters, bulletins or other materials? Could we compost? Are we using single use plastics too often? Are we recycling everything we can?

I realize recycling can be a bit inconvenient at times. However, as the church, we have to ask ourselves about the bigger picture. Scripture tells us we have a responsibility to take care of creation. We are even a part of a church that has made it a priority. And that, is something that is certainly not wasteful.

Peace!

Kelly