

# The Creation Collective

at Hennepin Avenue United Methodist Church

Amidst the many social and ecological crises of our time, we believe that Christian communities are called to engage in deeper reflection and venture bolder action to support the just healing of creation for the flourishing of all. In partnership with Garrett Theological Seminary and the [Center for Ecological Regeneration](#), we're committed to drawing on theological, ethical, scientific, and practical ecological resources as we seek to live into a hopeful vision of congregational and personal action in a climate changed world.

## Shared Assumptions

There are six core assumptions that undergird our shared work:

1. **Planetary Crises:** The realization that global society faces a set of widespread, overlapping planetary crises (e.g. biodiversity collapse, climate change, land, air, and water degradation).
2. **Intersectional Injustices:** The recognition that, although these crises ultimately threaten the wellbeing of all humans, they especially bear upon those already suffering from economic exploitation, racism, hetero-sexism, age discrimination, ableism, settler colonialism, and related forms of social inequity.
3. **Deep Transition:** The awareness that the times call for deep transition, creative imagination, and bold action toward a more life-sustaining and just future, requiring courageous experimentation with new models of seminary education, congregational life, social organization, political and economic life, and more.
4. **Religion, Theology, & Spirituality:** An understanding that, although organized Christianity has contributed to the many crises we face, the world's religious, theological, and spiritual traditions, including those connected to United Methodism, contain vital resources to support, motivate, and guide the work of deep transition.
5. **Collaboration:** An appreciation that addressing the depth and breadth of the ecological crises we face requires organized, intersectional, and collaborative approaches, both locally rooted in particular regions and globally connected through ecumenical, interfaith, and public networks of mutual support.
6. **Place-Based:** A conviction that the work of deep transition, though requiring wide-spread, collaborative efforts worldwide, is best grounded in particular places/regions and tied to the unique geographies, histories, cultural traditions, institutions, wisdoms, and imagined futures of those places/regions.

## **Where Are We?**

Hennepin Avenue United Methodist Church is located in an area of geographical *confluence* between the Mississippi and Minnesota rivers and *convergence* between the Great Lakes and Great Plains bioregions, uniting boreal forest, oak savannah, temperate hardwood forest, and prairie ecosystems. The native Dakota know the land to be a place of creation, where earth, sky, waters, and peoples meet in giving birth, making peace, and renewing sacred commitments.

## **Who Are We?**

As a congregation of the United Methodist Church, Hennepin Avenue is rooted in a theological tradition centered on the promise of spiritual rebirth through the regenerating powers of the Holy Spirit, a striving to follow Jesus in loving God and neighbor in the whole of life, and an active, inclusive hope for all people and creation. Historically at Hennepin, these faith convictions have manifested in strong commitments to Christian education for all ages, outward-facing ministries with marginalized communities, social justice advocacy, and courageous acts of witness within the denomination and broader society. The church exists at a site where multiple forms of transportation have long converged, making it an ideal location for gatherings, conferences, and other connectional events. In addition to being well-situated, Hennepin is also a well-resourced and well-networked congregation, with members who live and work throughout the Twin Cities and who contribute a wealth of personal, institutional, and professional assets available to be organized for broad collective impact.

## **What Is Our Aim?**

Out of this, Hennepin Avenue embraces its vocation as a “Cathedral for All Creation,” bringing together and supporting various denominational, ecumenical/interfaith, and public efforts for the just healing of the world. As a meeting place of confluent social, cultural, and educational systems, in a region ripe with diverse environmental assets, wisdoms, and efforts, Hennepin is a model and catalyst for regenerative convergences that flow inward for deep congregational change and outward for widespread systemic transformation.

## **How Are We Organized?**

*The Creation Collective* at Hennepin organizes resources, facilitates planning, and builds capacity and community in support of the congregation’s vocation as a “Cathedral for All Creation.” *The Collective* meets to steward and ensure implementation of the church’s mission for regenerative ministry and is organized around multiple *Bee Hives* of collaborative action. Each *Bee Hive* is intentional about accessing resources from and

adding value to denominational, ecumenical/interfaith, and public/political networks, while also engaging church staff and committee leaders for congregation-wide integration and coordination of its regenerative ministries.

## **Bee Hives**

**Buildings & Energy** - e.g. Energy Audit, Net Zero, Solar Panels, Geothermal, Wind Turbines, EV Stations, Encourage Biking, Public Transportation, & Carpooling, Waste & Recycling, LEED Certification

**Land Use** – e.g. Holistic, Regenerative Planning and Permaculture Design for Campus, fruit trees, annual vegetables, native grasses and flowers, rain gardens, Indigenous Garden (partner with native knowledge keepers), Public Art, Gardens at Emma Norton, Emerson Village, and Bimosedaa

**Food & Agriculture** – e.g. Church Meals, Church Supported Agriculture, Land Stewardship Project, Field Trips to Area Sustainable Farms and Gardens, Education @ Agricultural Production & Healthy/Just Eating, Farmers Market, Composting

**Worship & Spirituality** – e.g. Sunday Morning Worship, Wild Church Gatherings, Earth-Based Liturgy, Ritual, and Festivity, Native Ceremony, Equinox and Solstice Celebrations, Bodily-Elemental-Earthy-Engaged-Participatory Worship

**Christian Education & Formation** – e.g. Children, Youth, and Adult Education, Equipping Staff, Public and Neighborhood Events (e.g. speakers, workshops, conferences, etc.), Website Hub/Communications, Land & Labor Acknowledgement, Empowering Individual Members to make Lifestyle/Household Changes, Informal Education (e.g. signage, posters, website), Church Library

**Political Advocacy, Organizing, & Outreach** – e.g. Voter Registration, Public Policy Awareness and Advocacy, Letter-Writing, Environmental Justice + Intersectional Environmentalism, Direct Action and Protest, Neighbor to Neighbor Conversations, Connections with Local Community, Fact-Checking, Divestment Campaigns