

July 20: New Directions in Creation Care: Living into Our United Methodist Calling

Jonathan Brake, Eco-Mission and Creation Care Coordinator, Western North Carolina Conference, United Methodist Church, Elder in Full Connection

Rev. Jonathan Brake brings over 25 years of dedicated ministry experience as an ordained elder in the Western NC Conference of the United Methodist Church. His journey into creation care began in 2016 when he was selected as an inaugural participant in the Global Ministries EarthKeepers program, launching a transformative path toward environmental stewardship leadership.

Rev. Brake founded the Creation Care Ministry of the Western NC Conference in 2017 and helped organize the United Methodist Creation Justice Movement in 2018. He served as program manager for environmental sustainability at the UMC General Board of Global Ministries from 2022 until joining the WNCC staff as Eco-Missions and Creation Care Coordinator on July 1st.

Rev. Brake and his wife make their home in Hickory, NC, where they practice their environmental values by transforming their backyard into a certified wildlife habitat, creating a "backyard national park" that serves as a living example of creation care in action

"New Directions in Creation Care: Living into Our United Methodist Calling"

Join Rev. Jonathan Brake for an inspiring exploration of the United Methodist Church's renewed commitment to creation care and environmental justice. At the 2024 UMC General Conference in Charlotte, historic language about Creation Care and Justice was officially added to the UM Social Principles, Book of Discipline, and Book of Resolutions—marking a pivotal moment in our denomination's environmental witness. Most notable was the change of the title of the first section, from “The Natural World” to “Community of all Creation.” This revision reflects a theological shift recognizing humans as part of creation, not separate from it. The document calls on Christians to adopt sustainable and just practices taking direct actions to mitigate climate change, overdevelopment, and the use of unsustainable resources. The Revised Social Principles adopted at the 2024 conference aim to help us address the most relevant, complex social concerns throughout the world, being inclusive, and establish the church’s position on these issues.

This interactive session will:

- Unpack the new denominational language and discover what it means for us
- Explore practical opportunities for our congregation to engage in creation care ministry
- Learn how the Western NC Conference Creation Care Ministry is equipping churches with resources, training, and support
- Discover actionable steps our church can take to become better stewards of God's creation

Whether you're passionate about environmental issues or simply curious about this emerging area of ministry, this class offers concrete ways to connect faith with environmental action. Come ready to be inspired and equipped to help our congregation live into this vital calling to care for the earth and seek justice for all creation.