

Romans 12

We who are many are one body in Christ.

Produced by the General Board of Discipleship of The United Methodist Church to communicate effective principles and practices demonstrated by congregations that are actively making disciples of Jesus Christ for the transformation of the world.

These congregations are marked by:

- Clarity around the mission and vision of the congregation.
- Practice of spiritual disciplines, both corporately and individually.
- Nurture of growth in discipleship through mutual support and accountability.
- Cultivation of intentional and mutual relationships with the most vulnerable—the poor, children, the imprisoned, the powerless.
- Consistent concern for inviting people into relationship with Jesus Christ, combined with wise practices for initiating them into the Body of Christ.
- Connectional relationships that facilitate participation in God's mission of global transformation.
- Shared clergy and lay leadership.

The Green Team

In many churches the word *stewardship* is used most frequently when talking about the yearly financial campaign. The Belmont United Methodist Church Green Team in Nashville, Tennessee understands that stewardship is much broader than how we use financial resources. The team describes itself as “a group of individuals taking action within the church to actively stimulate change within the congregation and community to reduce our carbon footprint and take a more positive role in stewardship of the environment.”

Green Team members developed a website to encourage the congregation and community to reduce its carbon footprint, to share encouraging stories, and to connect environmental issues to Christian stewardship. Throughout the year they sponsor forums on topics such as “Gardening in God’s Creation” and “Faith and Food ” which are designed to help people put their faith into action.

This year the Green Team is encouraging the congregation to participate in the “Ten Commitments,” suggestions developed by a neighboring congregation to remind people of the many ways to become a better steward of God’s creation. The ten commitments include:

1. Reduce my carbon footprint by 10% this year.
2. Volunteer to work 10 hours in environmental stewardship.
3. Plant 10 trees or have 10 trees planted.
4. Compost kitchen scraps and yard waste.
5. Eat 10 meals a month that contain locally grown food.
6. Change 10 incandescent bulbs to compact fluorescent bulbs.
7. Read a book on environmental stewardship.
8. Talk with 10 people about the importance of caring for creation.
9. Cancel 10 unwanted mail-order catalogs.
10. Make a list of 10 new ways to reduce, reuse, or recycle.

Some Questions for Discussion

- How does your congregation help people connect world issues to faithful action in their daily lives?
- Are there people in your congregation who have passion around a particular area of community or global transformation? How can the church nurture that passion so that it results in action?
- What commitments is your congregation willing to make to be more faithful stewards of the environment?

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