



**GOD'S RENEWED  
CREATION**  
call to hope and action

**A Guide for Group Study**

Based on the Pastoral Letter  
from the Council of Bishops of  
The United Methodist Church titled  
*God's Renewed Creation:  
Call to Hope and Action*

Dear Members of The United Methodist Church:

Greetings to you in the name of the Triune God.

The Council of Bishops of The United Methodist Church commends to you these resources for studying the Pastoral Letter and Foundation Document for *God's Renewed Creation: Call to Hope and Action*. We believe that these resources will enable you to have thoughtful discussions with one another which, by the guidance of the Holy Spirit, may result in changes in your lives, our Church, and the world.

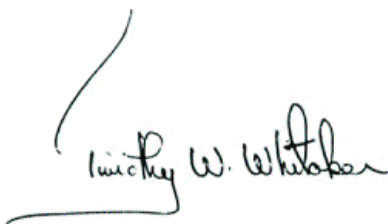
One of our primary responsibilities as bishops is to interpret the apostolic faith as it is expressed in Scripture and tradition both evangelically and prophetically (Book of Discipline, ¶ 414.3). As requested by the General Conference, and on behalf of the whole Church, we have issued our Pastoral Letter and Foundation Document in order to encourage all of us to respond, according to the perspective of our faith in the living God, to the realities threatening our world. We ask that you receive these statements as our service to the Church and use them to explore these issues and shape your practice as disciples of Jesus Christ our Lord.

We are mindful that Christians in other churches around the world are also making statements about our responsibility before our Creator to care for the creation. It is our prayer that our Christian conversation and action will be taken up and used by the Spirit of God as a part of God's plan for the renewal of all creation.

Sincerely,



Bishop Gregory V. Palmer  
President, Council of Bishops



Bishop Timothy W. Whitaker  
Convener, Task Force on *God's Renewed Creation: Call to Hope and Action*

# To the Leader

In the fall of 2009 the Council of Bishops of The United Methodist Church issued a pastoral letter titled “God’s Renewed Creation: Call to Hope and Action.” The bishops asked for the Letter to be read aloud in worship, meetings, and other events during and following Advent.

In addition to the letter, a number of resources including an expanded Foundation Document and a liturgical version of the Letter have been developed to assist congregations as they seek to respond to the bishops’ challenges in “God’s Renewed Creation.” Many of these resources can be found at the web site [www.hopeandaction.org](http://www.hopeandaction.org).

The Pastoral Letter and Foundation document are also available in French, German, Korean, Portuguese, and Spanish at the web site listed above.

The Council of Bishops is also encouraging all congregations to study the Letter and supporting documents more extensively. This six-session guide has been prepared to assist leaders of groups of adults in congregational and other educational settings as they study and develop plans of action. It is appropriate for study groups at any time of the year.

This study is designed to facilitate conversation and action related to the issues raised in the Pastoral Letter. It challenges participants to look at their congregations and communities, and to take actions that will contribute to a healthier and more peaceful planet.

Each session is designed to last about 90 minutes, and includes reflection upon scripture and prayer as well as study and discussion about the Letter. The hymn “We Utter Our Cry” is used throughout the study with a new stanza being added each week. The words of the hymn are powerful and speak to the themes of the Letter. If your group is not comfortable singing, consider using the hymn as a responsive reading.

In each session participants are asked to read short segments of the Letter and Foundation Document. This provides a common basis for further discussion. The session guide suggests that participants read segments silently. Depending upon the learning preferences of your group, you may want to read the section aloud, or intersperse discussion questions between reading shorter sections.

Throughout the study you will use a simple diagram of the three interconnected threats (pandemic poverty and disease, environmental degradation, and proliferation of weapons and violence). You will be adding information to the diagram each session, so make sure the three

interconnected circles are large enough to accommodate these additions.

Another feature of each session is reflection upon one or two of the pledges that the bishops have made in the Letter. As they reflect upon these pledges, the group is encouraged to consider what actions God is calling them to take. As leader you will want to take notes on these discussions so that you can help the group formulate action plans as the study proceeds.

Elements from the liturgical version of the Letter are incorporated into the session worship.

Responsible stewardship of time and resources dictate that this study guide be produced and distributed electronically. Each session includes a one-page leader’s guide and a two-page participant piece. We urge you to use the front and back of the paper as you reproduce the participant piece. Some members of your group may wish to skip the paper version completely and read the participant material on laptops or other electronic readers. For those who find it helpful, the guide can be printed out as a booklet on copy machines that have the capacity to print in booklet style.

The Council of Bishops intends for this study to be used not only in local congregations, but also in other settings such as colleges and seminaries. If you are leading the study in a setting beyond the local church, look for ways to help participants make connections to both the context of the group and their local church. For example, in session two you could encourage participants to write letters to the college president as well as to the bishop. In session three you could calculate the carbon footprint of the campus and develop plans to reduce it.

The Council of Bishops and their task force want to know the results of your study of *God’s Renewed Creation: Call to Hope and Action*. Please register your study effort at [www.hopeandaction.org](http://www.hopeandaction.org) (“Contact Us”) and encourage the participants to complete the survey at [www.surveymonkey.com/s/hopeandaction](http://www.surveymonkey.com/s/hopeandaction) when the study is completed.