

## **NEW UNITED METHODIST MINISTRY OF CARING FOR GOD’S CREATION FORMED**

On Saturday, January 28, 2012, over thirty United Methodists from throughout the country gathered at St. Matthew’s United Methodist Church in Annandale, Virginia, just outside Washington D.C., to found a denomination wide ministry of caring for God’s creation.

Caretakers of God’s Creation, a ministry of the Virginia Conference, hosted over 30 persons who attended physically and many more who joined by web-based video conferencing on Ustream from throughout the country. United Methodist Annual Conferences represented were Florida, North Georgia, Virginia, Upper New York, Kansas East, Baltimore-Washington, Missouri, Susquehanna, West Michigan, Holston, Kentucky, Tennessee, Iowa, and New Jersey.

Caretakers of God’s Creation, under the leadership of Rev. Pat Watkins, has been serving the Virginia Conference for the past three years. Rev. Watkins is the first Church and Community Worker in the nation assigned to a mission to raise the awareness of United Methodists, and all people, as to the relationship between one’s faith and responsibility to care for God’s creation. Caretakers of God’s Creation carries out its mission by equipping and empowering congregations and individuals to live out their faith in relationship to God and God’s creation by protecting and healing God’s earth.

The attendees at St. Matthew’s UMC confirmed that United Methodism world-wide would benefit from a denomination wide Caretakers of God’s Creation organization to raise awareness and promote action on behalf of God’s creation. The attendees discussed the possible goals, operational structure and resources required to make this



effort a success, with a specific focus on the next three years.

The group authorized a Steering Committee to be formed by Rev. Watkins with plans to meet in the immediate future to move forward toward the goals outlined in the daylong meeting.

Rev. Watkins stated:

Based on the amazing energy and enthusiasm from all over the country, the time seems to be right for the United Methodist Church to form a denominational organization of caring for God's creation.

Several Annual Conferences and individuals from around the connection are already hard at work expressing their Christian faith, their United Methodist theology, and their Wesleyan heritage by engaging in a mission to God's creation.

We believe that by bringing together so many incredibly talented scientists, theologians, advocates and passionate Christians all around the world, we will not only advance the cause of God's creation, we will contribute to the revitalization of the church as well.



Rev. Pat Watkins

A mission to God's creation already has and will continue to give the church a sense of relevance for so many people out there for whom the church has lost importance in their lives. God created an amazing place and called it "very good!" The time has come for us to declare God's creation "very good" as well.

Please keep us in your prayers as we seek God's guidance for this exciting new vision for the church.