

Oklahoma Conference of Churches

Theological Statement on Environment

What We Believe

“The earth is the Lord’s and all that is in it,” declares Psalm 24. To God, all creation, “everything God had made,” is “very good” (Genesis 1:31). Created “in the image of God” (Genesis 1:27), humanity is given a special charge by God: to “till and keep” the garden of God’s creation (Genesis 2:15). We are not owners but stewards of God’s good earth, “tenants” of what belongs to God (Leviticus 25:23). Jesus exhorts us to be students of the created order, to consider “the birds of the air” and the “lilies of the field” and “from the fig tree learn its lesson” (Matthew 6:25-30; 24:32).

Why We Believe It

We are stewards of God’s creation—the soil, water, air, plants and creatures. As stewards, we are responsible for the ways in which we use and abuse it. The Tar Creek site near Picher in northeast Oklahoma stands as a stark reminder of what happens when we fail in our responsibility. Care for the earth and for the environment is an issue of faith and morality. We are part of a global community facing urgent threats to our one and only home that must sustain all of us, as well as future generations.

We should meet these stewardship duties through acts of loving care and respect. Care for the earth is a duty of our faith traditions and a sign of our concern for all people. We have a moral obligation to protect the planet on which we live—to respect God’s creation, to ensure a safe and hospitable environment for all human beings, and to seek to live in harmony with all creation. We all have a responsibility to place a high priority on changes in economic, political, social, and technological lifestyles to support a more ecologically equitable and sustainable world leading to a higher quality of life for all of God’s creation.

What We Advocate

- Energy conservation measures and the development of alternative, renewable, and clean-energy resources.
- Measures that assist the cleanup of polluted air, water, and soil; support for policies that develop and test safe alternatives to chemicals used for growing, processing, and preserving food.
- Policies that serve to: reduce and control the creation of harmful industrial, agricultural and municipal byproducts and waste; facilitate the safe processing and disposal of toxic waste, while moving toward its elimination; and provide for and encourage appropriate recycling.
- Measures designed to maintain and restore natural ecosystems.
- Measures which seriously address global climate change.
- Measures to eliminate human-induced seismicity from wastewater injection wells.
- Addressing these critical issues: water quality and conservation; energy conservation and clean energy alternatives; wildlife and wild spaces conservation; soil conservation; air quality; urban sprawl; and recycling.