

## **Creation Care Ministry Team**

In mid-August 2011, it was announced to the Extended Cabinet that a new ministry in Holston was dropping the proverbial pebble into the water and beginning to sow seeds. This is Holston Conference Creation Care Ministry. What is Creation Care? It's not just hugging a tree and worshipping the earth. It is how we as Christians, and particularly as United Methodists, must return to being better environmental stewards to God's entire creation and not the dominating masters we have become. Creation Care connects to everything and everyone in our Father's world and also connects within our Four Areas of Focus from the United Methodist Bishops' latest Call to Action.

In September and primarily November 2011, Creation Care Ministry sponsored four conference-wide Creation Care Workshops (September at Emory and Henry and November in Knoxville, Cleveland, and Wytheville) with the Rev. Pat Watkins, Church and Community Worker and Director of Caretakers for God's Creation in the Virginia Conference. He is the only Creation Care missionary in the General Board of Global Ministries. The workshops sparked great interest with those who attended to teach others that "going green" is no longer a fad; it is an absolute must for us, for Christ's church, and for our future generations.

What is on the horizon for Holston Creation Care? We want to hear your stories on how you're implementing Creation Care within your church. Have you added recycling bins? Would you consider creating a community garden on church property, having special Earth Day service on Sunday, April 22<sup>nd</sup>, sponsoring a week-long "Go Green for God" event and culminating with a Creation service followed by a potluck using more local and healthier foods? We want to hear, share, and most of all CONNECT. Let your district superintendents know you're interested in being a part of this ministry.

There is even more exciting news about Creation Care! On Saturday, January 28, 2012, Holston was one of 14 conferences to participate in creating a strategic visioning plan for Creation Care to be implemented within the entire United Methodist Church, hopefully by the end of 2014. Holston will be involved!

The pebble has been dropped and the seed is now taking root in Holston. As Harriet Jane Olsen, Deputy General Secretary for the Women's Division stated, "Green is the new black. But it's much more than a fashion statement; it is a faith statement. May we as God's children and as His stewards be found to be faithful."

~ Brenda Riggle Haymore, Chair, Creation Care