

Fall 2020 | Presbyterian Hunger Program | pcusa.org/hunger

Sustainability and Earth Care

The Lord's Prayer Liturgy

From Limestone Presbyterian Church, "The Lord's Prayer and Creation Care: A Litany of Confession," written by the Revs. Bruce and Carolyn Gillette.

Loving God, we remember that Jesus taught us to pray saying, "Our Father ..." You created us, you made this world, and you called your Creation very good. Yet, often we forget that you are our loving

Jesus told us that you are "... in heaven ..."

Parent who continues to bless your world.

Yet, we fail to live in awe of you. We take you for granted, and we don't see the awesome beauty of the world you have made. We pray, "Hallowed be your name..." We confess that our reverence for you does not always lead us to care reverently for your earth, sky and sea.

We pray, "Your kingdom come, your will be done, on earth as it is in heaven..."

We confess that we often put our own interests first — exploiting your Creation and living for our own convenience and self-interest.

We pray, "Give us today our daily bread." We confess that we consume more than our share of the world's resources, while billions go hungry every day and your whole Creation suffers.

We pray, "Forgive us our sins as we forgive those who sin against us."

We confess that we see these words only in spiritual terms, while the Bible is filled with teachings about economic justice and Creation care. We pray, "Save us from the time of trial." Help us to resist the temptations of spending more, using more, acquiring more and wasting more.

We pray, "Deliver us from evil..." Free us from greed and self-centeredness that separate us from you and others.

We pray, "For the kingdom, the power and the glory are yours now and forever."

Help us to know that in caring for your wonderful world, we are working for your kingdom, being good stewards of your creative power and giving you glory.

We pray, "Amen."

We end our prayers with "Amen," a word that means "let it be so." We know we can be faithful disciples by your grace. Amen!

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Sustainable Living & Earth Care Concerns

Rebecca Barnes, coordinator for Presbyterian Hunger Program

This year has had a series of radical shocks that have changed life as we knew it before. In January there was uncontrollable fire in Australia at the magnitude we hadn't seen before. Soon afterward our world was turned upside down because of a global health crisis — one that is likely related to imbalances created from humans impinging on natural habitats. Meanwhile, floods and cyclones and other natural disasters continue to hit communities. As always, vulnerable populations endure the hardest impacts from all of these events.

Our PHP Eco-Journey blog over these past few months has explored the environmental rollbacks during this COVID-19 time, the need for sabbath, the global impact of deforestation, the links between disasters and climate change, and many other connections between hunger, poverty and the environment. Our health and well-being as human communities is intricately tied to the health and well-being of our ecological systems and other creatures. Hunger and poverty are deeply tied to environmental injustices. Sustainable living and earth care activities are necessary in and of themselves, and they are also a necessary part of social justice and anti-hunger ministry.

When we act in the world as humans connected to and dependent on God's Creation, we can prevent harm and participate in healing. If we respond with humility and caution, seeking right guidance for our appropriate posture and place as humans in the world, lives can be saved.

May God guide us, grant us courage for these times, and ground us in compassion as we go forth to live sustainably and care for the earth and all people.

From climate change to a global pandemic, there are lessons to be learned about taking scientists seriously and having strong public policies in place that protect populations. There are reasons to choose limitations on our lifestyles and consumption in order to protect other people — now and in future generations. This is true in the global pandemic, and it is true for climate change. We know that caution, preparedness, and community-focused policies go a long way in mitigating the worst effects of any disaster.

Ancestors of faith often have stories of waking up with radically different lives —

from Sarah having a baby in her old age, to Joseph being sold by his brothers, to Paul's conversion. How do we pray and work for the world God desires to be birthed out of this new situation? How do we let uncertainty and hardship change us and our world?

Our call is to transform ourselves and our communities so that we come through this year and its catastrophes stronger and better than before. We cannot and should not want to return to things "as usual." Instead, what possibilities for new collaboration, connection and healing are possible? What injustices have been laid bare so that we can see more clearly the things that must be put right in our cities and regions and world? How can people of faith contribute hope and strength to movements for equity, diversity, inclusion and a healing earth?

From Earth Care Congregations to Eco-Palms, from Creation Care Sunday to Food Week of Action, from alternative gift-giving to sabbath-keeping, may we explore how we might embrace a life that lives rightly with God's Creation. May God guide us, grant us courage for these times, and ground us in compassion as we go forth to live sustainably and care for the earth and all people.

PHP Staff

Rebecca Barnes, Coordinator Rebecca.barnes@pcusa.org

Andrew Kang Bartlett, National Hunger & CBCO Andrew.kangbartlett@pcusa.org

Jennifer Evans, Managing Editor, Mission Specialist Jennifer.evans@pcusa.org

Jessica Maudlin,

Sustainable Living and Earth Care Concerns Jessica.maudlin@pcusa.org

Valéry Nodem, International Hunger Valery.nodem@pcusa.org Jenny Oldham, Administrative Assistant Jenny.oldham@pcusa.org

Eileen Schuhmann, International Mission Specialist Eileen.schuhmann@pcusa.org

The Sacred Connection Between Black Women and the Earth

Christian Brooks, representative for domestic issues, PC(USA)'s Office of Public Witness

In Rooted in the Earth: Reclaiming the African American Environmental Heritage, Rev. Dr. Diane Glave describes the relationship between African Americans and the environment as "the interconnectedness of the human, spiritual, and environmental realm... harm toward or care for one necessarily affected the others." Environmentalism is a personal issue for Black people, especially Black women. For centuries, Black women have held a sacred and spiritual connection with the environment. The environment has served as a source of provision, a place of worship, and a means of escape from bondage. Unity with the earth has always been an essential aspect of the Black woman's experience.

Often, when we think of environmentalism, the first image that comes to mind is not of a person of African descent. Yet, historically, African women were explorers and caretakers of the earth, and many still are today. They cultivated the earth to grow food and walked the land to gather water and fuel. They used their knowledge of environmental resources to make medicine for the sick and elderly and supply nutritional balance for children. Through these societal responsibilities, Black women developed a deep relationship with the earth and a divine understanding of its role in protecting and sustaining life.

This intimate bond with nature was passed down from generation to generation. It endured the middle passage and manifested itself as a tool for survival for many enslaved Africans. Nature served as a covering for enslaved Africans, allowing them to engage in uninhibited worship. They gathered in hush harbors to preach, pray, sing, shout, and truly commune with God.

Nature also served as an avenue for escape. Harriet Tubman, like many Black women before her, had an intimate ancestral



Harriet Tubman, circa 1911. Photographer unknown. Library of Congress CALL NUMBER: Illus. in JK1881 .N357 sec. 16, No. 9 NAWSA Coll [Rare Book RR]

connection with nature. God spoke to her through the earth. It was through this sacred bond with nature that she was able to survive the woods, navigate waterways, overcome treacherous landscapes, and use the stars as a guide to freedom. Tubman made 19 trips to the South and escorted over 300 enslaved persons to freedom.

In recent years, this sacred bond has been disrupted due to unequal access to natural resources and the current ecological state of many Black communities in America. Low-income Black neighborhoods are disproportionately burdened with air toxins as well as a host of other environmental injustices. Every day, Black women stand on the front lines of the environmental justice movement fighting for the right to exist in unpolluted spaces. These women recognize the importance of the quality of spaces around them and how it impacts daily life.

Rev. Dr. Angela Cowser, Presbyterian minister, sociologist, and Associate Dean

of Black Church Studies at Louisville Theological Seminary, has lived into this understanding. Rev. Dr. Cowser has a holistic view of the environment, seeing societies as a construction of the human imagination for the earth. This construction has strategically placed some people in a position of safety and privilege with access to clean air, clean water, beautiful parks, etc.; while others, typically poor people and people of color, have been subjected to the dangers of living in poisoned spaces and spaces prone to natural disasters. Rev. Dr. Cowser urges the church that it is our job to work at local, congregational, and governmental levels to reimagine these landscapes to be equitable for all.

Through the Black woman's experience, we see humanity's tie with the earth. The earth is essential in sustaining life for us all. As we continue to advocate to protect the earth, Rev. Dr. Cowser reminds us, as the church, of our collective call and responsibility to ensure everyone has equitable access to the earth and human resources.

Blessing the Butterflies: Churchville Presbyterian Cares for Creation

Jessica Maudlin, associate for Sustainable Living & Earth Care Concerns, PHP



Members of Churchville Presbyterian during their Fall Heritage/Family Festival, during which they celebrated the 200th Anniversary of their sanctuary.

Butterflies are God's confetti, thrown upon the Earth in celebration of ... love.

– K. D'Angelo

In 2010, 10 PC(USA) congregations became the first Earth Care Congregations. The goal of the program is to inspire churches to care for God's earth in a holistic way, through integrating earth care into all of church life. To become a certified Earth Care Congregation, churches must affirm an Earth Care Pledge that integrates environmental practices and thinking into all facets of their church life and complete activities in the fields of worship, education, facilities and outreach. The third area, facilities, includes a commitment that **"in our buildings and on our grounds, we will use energy efficiently, conserve resources and share what we have in**

abundance so that God's holy Creation will be sustainable for all life and future generations."

One way that many Earth Care Congregations have chosen to honor this part of the pledge is by establishing various wildlife habitats on church grounds. Churchville Presbyterian Church in Churchville, Maryland, first certified in 2017, has done that by creating a pollinator garden, which has helped support the monarch butterfly. The power of these pollinator gardens is multifaceted in that they provide monarchs with food, shelter from harsh weather and predators, and a place to raise their young.

Threats to Survival

According to the National Geographic Society, while the monarch hasn't yet been added to the Endangered Species List, the species is in decline, facing a number of threats. They report that western monarchs have declined by more than 99% since the 1980s while eastern monarchs have declined by an estimated 80%.

The pollinator garden, like the one planted by Churchville Presbyterian Church, provides a solution to one problem that is contributing to monarch decline. Milkweed is the only place that monarchs will lay their eggs and the only food that caterpillars will eat. It used to grow in and around agricultural crops, but the removal of milkweed from fields in recent years, as well as the increased use of herbicides, has significantly reduced the amount of available milkweed.

Climate change is also a threat to the livelihood of monarchs. Like many of God's creatures, they are very sensitive to temperature and weather changes. Climate change impacts biological processes that inform when monarchs reproduce and migrate, and it creates more extreme weather events — if it is too hot or too cold, monarchs will die.

Creating Refuge

There are currently also many largerscale efforts to protect the habitat, better manage land for pollinators, replenish milkweed, raise awareness and gather new *continued on p.8*



Churchville Presbyterian used their Fall Heritage/Family Festival to do butterfly education in a way that was multigenerational. During the event they were able to tag six, wild-caught Monarchs from their Pollinators Garden.



2020 Earth Care Congregations

The Presbyterian Hunger Program is pleased to announce the certification of 264 Earth Care Congregations for 2020. This includes 45 churches achieving their first year of certification and 45 churches achieving 10 or more years of certification.

Sustainable Living & Earth Care Concerns

How we impact the earth, care for the earth, and hold our responsibility to steward the earth.

In 2002, Enough for Everyone was born of collaborative work across ministry areas to focus on the big picture of our economic lives and moving beyond what our dollars do in the offering plate, to considering what our dollars do in the marketplace. In 2012, the work of Environmental Ministries, which focused on inspiring and equipping congregations and presbyteries to work for ecojustice for all of God's Earth, became a part of the Presbyterian Hunger Program.

Since economy issues often lead to environmental issues, in 2017 Enough for Everyone and Environmental Ministries combined into what we call Sustainable Living & Earth Care Concerns. Sustainable Living & Earth Care Concerns accompanies Presbyterians reflecting on and living out economic and environmental decisions as an extension of their faith and values.



How do we care for people and all Creation?

We Investigate

environmental and economic inequities through:

- resources like the Just Living series, Considering our Treasure
- connecting with a presbytery Hunger Action Advocate
- stewardship

We Equip

Presbyterians to make informed, faithful choices through:

- study/reflection-action trips
- Earth Day Sunday worship materials, Treading Lightly for Lent daily reflection-action calendar
- Blessed Tomorrow Ambassador training

We Embody

practices that bring about active transformation through:

- Climate Care Challenge
- Fair Trade Coffee Project, Eco-Palms and the
- Global Marketplace
- becoming an Earth Care Congregation

Blessing the Butterflies, continued from p.4

scientific evidence to better understand monarchs. Fawn Palmer, a member of Churchville's Earth Care Team who has been a botanist for 40 years and who is also an environmental educator and Monarch Watch tagger, has been an advocate for the butterflies for many years.

With her leadership, Churchville used their Fall Heritage/Family Festival to offer butterfly education. The event included the presence of Master Gardener volunteers and a Soil Conservation Service county representative, who provided interactive games for visitors to learn about butterflies. The event also included a volunteer children's storyteller dressed up as a fantasy monarch. They were able to tag six wildcaught monarchs from their Pollinators Garden during the festival. The highlight of the day, though, was a special butterfly blessing from their pastor. (See sidebar.)

Palmer shares, "We released a tagged monarch from the open palm of a young girl. We all waved and said, 'Adios.' I felt greatly moved by this ceremony."

Replicating Refuge

Congregations and individuals have the power to heal the earth and care for Creation in a variety of ways.

Planting your own pollinator garden is one of many ways to do this for endangered butterflies and bees. The Fish and Wildlife Service (fws.gov/midwest/ news/PollinatorGarden.html) and the National Wildlife Foundation (blog.nwf. org/2015/02/saving-monarchs) both have some great online resources for making sure that you can find the correct native plants for your area.

If your congregation's garden is already playing host to monarch butterflies, in these times of social distancing, something akin to Churchville's Butterfly Blessing would be great to include in an online service outside, blessing the butterflies that begin their migrations south in August.



"Butterfly Blessing"

In the Sierra Nevada Mountains of central Mexico, monarch butterflies hibernate (aestivate) from October to March. In the spring, they leave Mexico and head north to Canada. Except the monarchs we have here in Maryland are not the same ones that left Mexico back in the spring. These butterflies are the great-grandchildren of those butterflies.

They leave Mexico. They lay eggs. The eggs become caterpillars. The caterpillars become butterflies, and the process continues until that last generation is transformed. Then, it somehow knows it's time to turn south for the winter.

The monarchs we have here are anxious to get on the road because they have some 2,440 miles yet to travel. They have already put in several hundred.

Butterflies have often been a symbol of faith. Just like monarchs go through various transformations and rebirth in their journey home, so do we. We are not the same people we were when we first cried out at our birth. We are changed and reformed. With each new transformation, God makes us into a new being. By the time we make it Home with God, we will be new Creations — beautiful and fit for the Kingdom of God.

So, we don't want to delay these monarchs for long. We want to visit with them briefly, thank them for their beauty, tell them we admire their courage, then ask God to bless them on their journey ahead. Let us do just that:

God of all Creation, your beauty carries on all around us. We can feel the breeze. We can hear the birds. We can feel the coolness of a waterfall. We can smell the harvesting of hay in the fall and take in the rich scent of soil in the spring. But, often your Creation carries on silently without our notice and without our permission.

We stop to honor the beauty and the fortitude of these monarch butterflies. They desire nothing more than to find their way back home, regardless of their location and despite the barriers in their way. May this world be painted with their color and filled with their sacred pride.

Bless these monarchs with safe travel.

Bless us all with the wisdom to protect them.

May we have the same instinct to follow your will as readily as they do.

In the name of Christ, the Creator of Life and the Renewer of Souls.

Amen.

- Blessing by the Rev. Dr. Stephen R. Melton Churchville Presbyterian Church



www.pcusa.org/hunger

GENERAL ASSEMBLY POLICY MANY PREPARED BY ACS WP RESTORING CREATION FOR ECOLOGY AND JUSTICE (1990) HAZARDOUS WASTE, RACE, AND THE ENVIRONMENT (1995) HOPE FOR A GLOBAL FUTURE: TOWARD JUST AND SUSTAINABLE HUMAN DEVELOPMENT (1996) OVERTURE: ON CLIMATE CHANGE AND THE PERSISTENCE OF ITS CAUSES (1999) THE POWER TO TO CHANGE (2008) GUIDE TO GOING CARBON NEUTRAL (2008) TAX JUSTICE (2014) PCUSA COLLABORATIVE AGENDA ON ENVIRONMENTAL STEWARDSHIP (2016) "CARING FOR GOD'S CREATION" G 1.0304 (2016) THE PRECAUTIONARY PRINCIPLE (2018) OVERTURE: THE EARTH IS THE LORD'S, NOT OURS TO RUIN (2018) BRIEF STATEMENT OF FAITH (1991) OVERTURE: ON RESPONDING TO ENVIRONMENTAL RACISM AND TO PROMOTE ENVIRONMENTAL JUSTICE (2018)

PRESBYTERIAN MISSION AGENCY PEACEMAKING CONFERENCE - MAKING PEACE WITH THE EARTH (1990) FIRST ENVIRONMENTAL PEACEMAKING TRIP - TO THE AMAZON (1993) FIVE YEARS AFTER RESTORING CREATION CONSULTATION(1995) GHOST RANCH- FIRST NATIONAL CONFERENCE OF PRESBYTERIANS FOR EARTH CARE AND INITIAL TRAINING FOR STEWARD OF CREATION ENABLERS (1995) ENVIRONMENTAL JUSTICE OFFICE (1988) ENOUGH FOR EVERYONE (2000) CHURCH AND SOCIETY: WHILE THE EARTH REMAINS (1990), ECO JUSTICE (1996), ENERGY IN GOD'S WORLD (2004) CF INDUSTRIES SHAREHOLDER RESOLUTION ON SUSTAINABILITY REPORTING PASSED 69% OUTSTANDING SHARES (2013) EARTH CARE CONGREGATIONS (2010) MRTI METRIC GUIDELINES FOR SHAREHOLDER ENGAGEMENT (2018)

OFFICE OF THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY CARBON OFFSETS FOR GENERAL ASSEMBLY (POST 1995) RECYCLING AT GENERAL ASSEMBLY PC-BIZ FOR GENERAL ASSEMBLY - PAPER REDUCTION (2006)

PRESBYTERIAN FOUNDATION LOAN FOR SOLAR PROJECT IN PALESTINE (2015-2016) FOSSIL FUEL FREE INVESTMENT OPTIONS - COMMON FUND (2016) NEW COVENANT FUNDS ADOPTED ENVIRONMENTAL, SOCIAL AND GOVERNANCE POSITIVE SCREENING (2014) ALLOCATED \$7MILLION TO CLEAN ENERGY INVESTMENTS IN THE ENDOWMENT FUND (2016)

BOARD OF PENSIONS FOSSIL FUEL-FREE PAX GLOBAL ENVIRONMENTAL FUND ADDED TO RETIREMENT PLAN INVESTMENT OPTION (2017) BALANCED INVESTMENT PORTFOLIO FUNDED FOSSIL FUEL FREE GLOBAL EQUITY PORTFOLIO WITH IMPAX WITH \$100MILLION (2017)

PRESBYTERIAN PUBLISHING 101 WAYS TO HELP THE EARTH (1990) CHERISHING GOD'S CREATION (1998) 50 WAYS TO HELP SAVE THE EARTH, REBECCA BARNES (2008) AND THE LEAVES OF THE TREE ARE FOR THE HEALING OF THE NATIONS (1997) THE THOUGHTFUL CHRISTIAN DOWNLOADABLE STUDIES (2009) GOD OF EARTH, KRISTIN SWENSON (2016) DEVELOPING A GREEN ACTION PLAN FOR YOUR CONGREGATION (2010)

INHABITING EDEN, PATRICIA TULL (2013) PRESBYTERIAN INVESTMENT AND LOAN

RESTORING CREATION LOAN (2015)



Solution of the PC(USA)

Presbyterian Hunger Program (PHP)

The PC(USA)'s environmental work (Sustainable Living & Earth Care Concerns) is currently a part of the Presbyterian Hunger Program. PHP works to inspire and equip congregations and presbyteries to work for eco-justice for all of God's earth. PHP produces, promotes and distributes faith-based environmental resources for individuals, congregations and presbyteries. This office also oversees the Earth Care Congregations program (see more below) as part of the denomination's Sustainable Living & Earth Care Concerns work. Learn more at www.pcusa.org/environment.

Earth Care Congregation (ECC) Certification

Earth Care Congregations are congregations that have committed to the "Earth Care Pledge" and have accomplished a specific number of actions toward caring for God's earth in four categories: worship, education, facilities and outreach. Congregations earning 25 points in each of the four categories are certified as Earth Care Congregations through the Presbyterian Hunger Program. A Guide to Greening Presbyterian Churches provides congregations with worksheets, resources and instructions for becoming an Earth Care Congregation. To download the guide and learn more about the ECC certification, visit www.pcusa.org/ earthcarecongregations.

Presbyterians for Earth Care (PEC)

Presbyterians for Earth Care invites individuals and congregations to participate in the growing earth care movement within the PC(USA). PEC is a national eco-justice network that is dedicated to environmental wholeness with social justice, seeking to be a prophetic voice for substantive change in the Church and in the world. Since 1995, PEC has equipped Presbyterians with worship and devotional information, connections through biannual conferences, and support of young adults in the Eco-Stewards program. They've produced numerous overtures for the General Assembly to create Presbyterian policies that care for Creation. They've also produced monthly and seasonal newsletters with book reviews, art and other resources. More information about PEC is available at www.presbyearthcare.org, and you can become a member there too.

The Eco-Stewards Program

The Eco-Stewards Program seeks to educate, train and inspire young adults (ages 20-30) in the ways of eco-stewardship within the wider context of Christian faith. The program shares roots in and draws partial support from the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.), Presbyterians for Earth Care, and the Presbyterian Camp and Conference Association. The overarching goal of this grassroots initiative is to help young adults connect and share their passions for faith and environmental stewardship through participation in place-based learning programs that explore how faith communities are responding to environmental challenges. Learn more at https://ecostewardsprogram.wordpress. com/

Fossil Free PCUSA (FFPCUSA)

Fossil Free PCUSA is a grassroots organization in the PC(USA) made up of members and friends of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.). Their work is specifically rooted in a moral response to the urgency of climate change through activism and organizing. Since 2012, they have responded to a biblical call to care for God's good Creation by calling on the denomination to divest from the fossil fuel industry. In addition, the organization works with other Presbyterian-related organizations to reduce dependency on fossil fuels by individuals, congregations, presbyteries and synods. For more information about divestment from fossil fuel options in the denomination, visit www.fossilfreepcusa. org/about-1/current-projects. To join in the organizing work of FFPCUSA, email forcreation@fossilfreepcusa.org.

Office of Faith-Based Investing and Corporate Engagement

Mission Responsibility Through Investment (MRTI) was created in recognition of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.)'s unique opportunity to advance its mission faithfully and creatively through the financial resources entrusted to it. MRTI implements the General Assembly's policies on socially responsible investing (also called faith-based investing) by engaging corporations in which the PC(USA) owns stock. The General Assembly's investment policy identifies specific concerns that MRTI is to promote, such as the pursuit of peace; racial, social and economic justice; environmental responsibility; and securing women's rights. MRTI prioritizes issues on these concerns from requests by ecumenical partners, mid councils and congregations. Learn more at www.pcusa.org/mrti.

Presbyterians for Carbon Pricing NOW!

A team of Presbyterians affiliated with Citizens' Climate Lobby is working on the Carbon Dividend Act. The 223rd General Assembly (2018) determined that one faithful action our Church can take in addressing climate change is to support carbon fee and dividend policies because they offer a just and effective way forward to avert the worst of climate chaos, rapidly reduce greenhouse gas emissions, and transition us to a clean energy future. Learn more at www.presbyterianmission.



org/eco-journey/2018/07/27/generalassembly-policy-on-carbon-pricing.

Presbyterian Association on Science, Technology and the Christian Faith

PASTCF aims to resource its congregations in the science, technology and faith conversation. In addition to written resources, they also provide workshops and trainings to congregations. Learn more at www.pastcf.org.

The 2020 Food Week of Action is Coming!

Hopeful Harvest is the theme of this year's Oct. 11–18 Food Week of Action. Hopeful Harvest relies on strong support for family farmers, fishers and other producers, ecologically sound agriculture and food sovereignty. As people around the world struggle with vulnerable food supply chains, many realize the critical importance of a more resilient agriculture that also treats workers well and cools the planet. This year's Food Week will highlight groups — and initiatives you can support — that are building a more just and sustainable food-farm system. As always, Food Week of Action includes the two Sundays surrounding World Food Day (Oct. 16). Visit www.pcusa.org/foodweek to learn more.



Celebrating 20 Years of Joining Hands!

In 2020, the Joining Hands initiative of the Presbyterian Hunger Program is celebrating 20 years of challenging global systems that generate hunger, poverty and injustice. Learn how Joining Hands is making an impact!

www.presbyterianmission.org/together-justice/20-year-joining-hands



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