



Presbyterian Mission

**Presbyterian Ministry at the United Nations**

# Study & Devotional Guide



**SUSTAINABLE  
DEVELOPMENT GOALS**





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# Presbyterian Ministry at the United Nations

## SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT GOALS



Dear Reader:

I'm so glad you've decided to learn about the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) and the ways our church, the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) and our partners are working around the world to create a more just and sustainable future. The SDGs came out of global consultations with governments, civil society institutions and people like you and me. The 17 SDGs with their 169 targets were approved by the governments of the world in September 2015.

As we at the Presbyterian Ministry at the United Nations of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) started examining the Goals and their targets for achievement, we realized that this is work that the Church has been engaged in for centuries. From eradication of hunger and poverty to treating the earth with respect, our church has been working to achieve these Goals since before their existence!

This resource will give you a snapshot into each of the Goals, some of their targets and the way the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) and our global partners are working to achieve this sustainable development agenda. Accompanying each fact sheet is a biblical reflection from staff reflecting on the goal and examining it through the lens of Mathew 25.

This resource could not have been achieved without the hard work of Simon Doong, a PC (USA) Young Adult Volunteer who spent a year with the Presbyterian Ministry at the United Nations focusing on sustainable development and the work of the Church.

Each of the SDGs are highlighted here with the work of the PC(USA) and our partners. The online resource contains hyperlinks for more information and our printed resources contains a bibliography with that same information. It is truly remarkable the work our church is doing around the world. I hope you are as excited about these ministries as I am.

I invite you to study and pray with us and engage your local and national leaders to focus their work on achieving these SDGs. May God bless our call to serve each other in grace, love and peace.

In Christ,


A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Ryan D. Smith". The signature is written in a cursive style.

Ryan D. Smith  
Director, Presbyterian Ministry at the United Nations



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## Targets

- Eradicate extreme poverty for all people everywhere
- Reduce at least by half the proportion of men, women and children of all ages living in poverty
- Implement nationally appropriate social protection systems and measures for all
- Ensure that all men and women, have equal rights to economic resources, access to basic services, ownership and control over land and property, and financial services
- Build the resilience of the poor; reduce their exposure and vulnerability to climate-related extreme events and disasters

## SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT GOALS

### Relevant Church Efforts & Partnerships Around the World

Florida— 90% of the state’s tomato growers are part of PC(USA)’s partner the Coalition of Immokalee Workers Fair Food Program, ensuring humane wages and working conditions for the workers.

Sierra Leone & Liberia — Three PC(USA) agencies trained over 10,000 people in 45 communities in self-reliant food production, micro credit management, and disaster preparedness and mitigation through the West Africa Initiative.

Sri Lanka — Presbyterian Hunger Program supports the Praja Abhilasha network to prevent land grabbing and protect the poor’s land rights.

### Get Involved!

Advocate for fair wages, worker, and land rights.

Analyze root causes of poverty on a Presbyterian Hunger Program Action Trip.

Apply for a Presbyterian Self-Development of People Grant to support your community’s economic empowerment efforts.

Support the Presbyterian Ministry at the United Nations’ advocacy in the international community.

“For I was hungry and you gave me food, I was thirsty and you gave me something to drink, I was a stranger and you welcomed me, I was naked and you gave me clothing, I was sick and you took care of me, I was in prison and you visited me.” Matthew 25: 35-36

## Employment: A Path Out of Poverty

Baltimore based United Workers Association (UWA) is a human rights organization led by low wage workers fighting to secure freedom from poverty and other human rights. Baltimore's Inner Harbor has an area of great economic wealth and prosperity due to tourism but is surrounded by severe poverty throughout the inner city. The businesses in and around the Harbor employ low wage workers and have systematically kept their wages low and the working conditions poor. The primary goal of this project is to improve working conditions through organizing and education. With a \$20,000 grant from National Self-Development of People, the 500+ low-wage worker's organization initiated a project focused on raising the minimum wage of day laborers and to change the perception that day laborers are lazy, drug addicted, or panhandlers.

Baltimore Presbytery's SDOP Committee has also previously provided \$14,000 to The Human Rights Zone project of Inner Harbor-United Workers. The workers have conducted trainings through street theater where new members have been recruited and leaders identified. Street theater topics include Freedom from Poverty and Right to Work with Dignity.

Some of UWA's victories include an increase in wages from less than the minimum wage at the time to \$13 an hour. Workers took the lead in organizing with fellow workers to secure a union contract. As one project member has shared "everyone is worthy of dignity and respect."

Matthew 25:31-46 reminds us "Just as you did it to one of the least of these . . . , you did it to me." The Bible is particularly concerned about "the least of these". God walks alongside the poor and disenfranchised in their human struggles and invites you to do likewise.

***Gracious God, we pray for communities where there is poverty and injustice, we pray for the oppressed and the disadvantaged that they may find help in their time of need. We ask that you help us in extending compassion and justice to those in need. In the name of Jesus Christ. Amen.***

***Margaret Mwale  
Associate for Community Development and Constituent Relations  
Presbyterian Self-Development of People***





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## Targets

- End hunger and ensure access by all people to safe, nutritious, and sufficient food all year round
- End all forms of malnutrition
- Double the agricultural productivity and incomes of small-scale food producers
- Ensure sustainable food production systems and implement resilient agricultural practice
- Maintain the genetic diversity of seeds, cultivated plants and farmed and domesticated animals and their related wild species

## SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT GOALS

### Relevant Church Efforts & Partnerships Around the World

India— Presbyterian Hunger Program supports the CHETHANA campaign, which advocates against the proliferation of genetically modified seeds, educates people on risks of GMO seed use, and promotes native seed use in farming.

Sierra Leone & Liberia — Three PC(USA) agencies trained over 10,000 people in 45 communities in sustainable farming of cassava, groundnuts, and rice.

South Sudan — Presbyterian Disaster Assistance partnered with the Foods Resource Bank (FRB) to fund a food security project in Uror, and provided \$100,000 in emergency relief funds for the distribution of food and emergency relief items in Juba and Bentui.

United Nations—The Presbyterian Ministry at the UN advocates to end world hunger by being a member of the Food and Hunger Working Group.

### Get Involved!

Apply for a Presbyterian Hunger Program grant to rebuild your local food economy and sovereignty.

Become a Hunger Action Congregation.

Support the Presbyterian Ministry at the United Nations' advocacy on hunger in the global arena.

Transform your church's kitchen into a community/soup kitchen.

“...Truly I tell you, just as you did it to one of the least of these who are members of my family, you did it to me...” Matthew 25: 40



## Seeds of Life

Since time immemorial, farmers around the world have fed the world by planting seeds of life. After the harvest season, their production was usually divided in 3 parts: One eaten by their families; another one sold for money or traded for goods, and the last part was selected and stored for the next planting season. Selecting and storing seeds was a central piece in regulating life, and also ensured and secured families' future. The Bible tells the story of Isaac who rather than eating his seeds during famine time sowed it, and the same year reaped a hundredfold. He became rich, and his wealth continued to grow until he became very wealthy.

In India, farmers used to grow many varieties of minor millets and pulses which are drought resistant; these had a dominant place in their food system. The introduction of the Green Revolution in the 1960s came with an increased use of chemical fertilizers and agro-chemicals, and increased use of hybridized seeds. Subsequently, farmers lost native varieties of seeds and crop diversity that had been essential against drought, floods and other calamities associated with climate. Naturally this also led to consequent crop loss. Seeds are not just one input, but the key input that determines all other inputs down the line. Hence, complete dependency on company supplied seeds have correspondingly forced farmers to go in for costly farm inputs often supplied by the same companies. It has not only increased farming cost, but also the risk of crop loss, land degradation and the pollution of land, water and food. Millions of farmers find themselves caught up in a spiral of crop loss, debt, ill, health and suicide. Mono-cropping and cash-cropping further eroded the base of farming and the food and nutrition security of the people. Today, most of these millets have disappeared from the food system, and farmers mostly grow monocrops.

Partners like Chethana in India are working to reclaim native seeds, traditional farming practices, and culture while at the same time working to make farming an economically viable means of livelihood for thousands of farmers. Chethana celebrates that seed-saving — and revitalized cultural and traditional practices of relating to seeds and farming — are helping to ensure fewer people go hungry. We are honored to walk alongside and learn from them.

*God of love, bless the earth that produces the food we need for our sustenance. Bless the efforts of people around the world who work to preserve their cultural heritage, their seeds of life, and help reduce hunger in your kingdom.*

*Valery Nodem  
Associate for International Hunger Concerns  
Presbyterian Hunger Program*



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### 3 GOOD HEALTH AND WELL-BEING



#### Targets

- Reduce the global maternal mortality ratio to less than 70 per 100,000 live births
- End preventable deaths of newborns and children under 5 years of age
- End the epidemics of AIDS, tuberculosis, malaria and neglected tropical diseases
- Reduce by one third premature mortality from non-communicable diseases
- Ensure universal access to sexual and reproductive health-care services
- Substantially reduce the number of deaths and illnesses from hazardous chemicals and air, water and soil pollution and contamination

### SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT GOALS

#### Relevant Church Efforts & Partnerships Around the World

International — Presbyterian Women partners with the 1,000 days campaign, holding 1,000 conversations to discuss the importance of maternal and child nutrition for child development between a woman's pregnancy and her child's second birthday.

Lesotho, South Africa, Zimbabwe — Presbyterian World Mission supported PC(USA) partner EMPACT Africa to train pastors in building AIDS stigma-free faith communities with the assistance of mission co-worker Janet Guyer.

Malawi — PC(USA) partner Church of Central Africa Presbyterian's Livingstonia Synod AIDS Program (LISAP) rescued more than 300 girls from child marriage and helped outlaw the practice, thereby reducing young girls' risk of contracting HIV.

Peru — Presbyterian Hunger Program's Joining Hands Against Hunger network supports Red Uniendo Manos Peru's advocacy for a health care program for people, especially pregnant women and children, with over-exposure to lead and other toxic elements.

United States — Presbyterian AIDS Network helped organize a National Faith HIV & AIDS Awareness Day to rally US faith communities to stand against stigma and raise awareness on HIV/AIDS.

#### Get Involved!

Advocate for continued federal funding for Health programs and HIV prevention.

Become a HIV and AIDS competent church.

Support the Presbyterian Ministry at the UN's international advocacy.

**“Cure the sick, raise the dead, cleanse the lepers, cast out demons. You received without payment; give without payment.” Matthew 10:8**

## Healthy Compassion

In the Gospel of Luke, he describes Jesus' healing ministry with a keen eye of a physician. Streams of people flock to Jesus desperate for care for themselves or their loved ones as he travels to nearby cities and villages. Luke reports, *"Jesus cured many people of diseases, plagues, and evil spirits, and had given sight to many who were blind."* (Luke 7:21) Specifically mentioned are the Centurion's servant, the raising of the widow's only son in Nain, the woman who suffered from a chronic blood disease, and Jairus's daughter, Tabitha. They sought Jesus' help when all else had failed. When asked by John the Baptist's disciples if he was the one they have been waiting for, he says, *"Go and tell John what you have seen and heard: the blind receive their sight, the lame walk, the lepers are cleansed, the deaf hear, the dead are raised, the poor have good news brought to them."* (Luke 7:21-22) Jesus was doing the redemptive work of God's kingdom.

The miracles of modern medicine have eradicated diseases like polio and small pox, reduced cases of tuberculosis, malaria, infant mortality and mothers dying in childbirth worldwide. Major advances have been made, but more is needed to meet the goal of SDG #3 is to "ensure healthy lives and promote well-being for all at all ages."

Jesus healed the sick with compassion. *"Do not weep,"* he told the widow whose son had died. As followers of Christ, we can follow in his footsteps (Luke 10:9) to be co-workers and partners so that good health and well-being is made available to our sisters and brothers here at home and around the world.

*Healing God, we pray knowing that your healing continues from the Centurion's servant to the guidance of healer's hands today. We pray that your grace that healed the sick will also heal the sickness in our world today. We pray for the suffering, the healers, the technology and the laws which heal through your Spirit. May we feel your presence and know your mercy. Amen.*

*Ryan D. Smith  
Director & Representative to the United Nations  
Presbyterian Ministry at the United Nations*





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## Targets

- Ensure that all girls and boys complete free, equitable and quality primary and secondary education
- Ensure that all girls and boys have access to quality early childhood development, care and preprimary education
- Ensure equal access for all women and men to affordable and quality technical, vocational and tertiary education
- Substantially increase the number of youth and adults who have relevant skills for employment
- Eliminate gender disparities in education and ensure equal access to education for the vulnerable, including persons with disabilities, indigenous peoples and vulnerable children
- Ensure that all youth and a substantial proportion of adults achieve literacy and numeracy

## SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT GOALS

### Relevant Church Efforts & Partnerships Around the World

**Madagascar**— Mission co-worker Jan Heckler helps PC(USA) partner the Church of Jesus Christ of Madagascar (FJKM) implement an Evidence-Based Method of Instruction program into FJKM’s nation-wide school system, helping improve student scores on cumulative exams by up to one-third of prior scores.

**New Jersey**—Presbyterian Self-Development of People partner the Asbury Park-Statewide Education Organizing Committee provides Spanish and Creole translators for parents to enable parents to advocate for improved schools, relations with administrators, better opportunities for their children.

**Palestine** — Presbyterian Hunger Program supports the Atfaluna Society for Deaf Children’s income generating apprenticeship program, teaching 12 deaf and marginalized individuals to produce and market Palestinian crafts.

**Syria** — Presbyterian Disaster Assistance supports the National Evangelical Synod of Syria and Lebanon (NESSL)’s project for 5 schools for 350 refugee children.

**United States**—As part of PC(USA)’s Educate a Child Initiative to improve education for one million children around the world, Presbyterian Women organizes the May Together in Action Days, focused on improving children’s literacy.

### Get Involved!

**Educate** a child by holding a reading event during Presbyterian Women’s May Together in Action Days.

**Join** the Educate a Child Initiative.

**Support** the Presbyterian Ministry at the United Nations’ advocacy in the international community.

“Ask, and it will be given you; search, and you will find; knock, and the door will be opened for you .”

## Quality Education Also Means Child Advocacy

Quality education is about ensuring that all children have access to qualified teachers and equitable access to resources. Quality education also means that children have access to curriculum that exposes them to arts and humanities as well as prepares them for employment and further study. Having said those things, it is equally important that we recognize that quality education must also include child advocacy. If children do not eat, they find it difficult to learn, if children are safe, they find it difficult to learn, if children are not embraced, they find it difficult to learn.

Matthew 25 implores us to see Jesus in the plight of the poor and the oppressed, and as we are called to recognize Jesus' face in these places of struggle and desolation, we are also called to be aware that these faces are also the faces of children. We are called to recognize Jesus in the faces of children who are both sick in Flint and Peru from poisoned water. The faces of children who peer out at us from behind bars in jails, unfortunate victims of the school-to-prison pipeline, where according to Equal Justice Initiative, some 10,000 children are housed in adult jails and prisons on any given day in America. We are called to see the Jesus in faces of children who know about abject poverty, hunger, homelessness, sex-trafficking and abuse far too well. Matthew 25 takes seriously both the importance of recognizing "the least of these," as well as acting on their behalf through direct service and advocacy. As God's people, the Matthew 25 text also reminds us of the importance of koinonia which means that Christ calls us to live in committed relationships with all people in both our local and global community.

***Creator God, you have entrusted to us the earth and all that is in it and have called us to a wise stewardship of a good creation. Remind us of our calling to be good stewards of children – all children. Clear our minds of the pervasive rhetoric that would have us view our children as cogs in the wheel of commerce or as products to be turned out, rather than as your precious and good gifts. Stir us from the apathy that keeps us from reframing the conversation about education to one that names our young as your children, created in your image to serve in your joy. Amen.\****

***Alonzo Johnson  
Coordinator  
Presbyterian Committee on the Self-Development of People***



\*from Loving Our Neighbors: Equity and Quality in Public Education (K-12)



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### Targets

- End all forms of discrimination against all women and girls everywhere
- Eliminate all forms of violence against all women and girls, including trafficking and other types of exploitation
- Recognize and value unpaid care and domestic work through the provision of public services, Infrastructure and social protection policies
- Ensure women’s full and effective participation and equal opportunities for leadership at all levels of decision making
- Ensure universal access to sexual and reproductive health and reproductive rights

## SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT GOALS

### Relevant Church Efforts & Partnerships Around the World

Madagascar— Presbyterian World Mission accompanies the Church of Jesus Christ in Madagascar (FJKM), as it provides support to Malagasy women stuck in abusive labor contracts as guest workers in other countries, advocates to stop sexual violence and human trafficking, and ministers to survivors of sexual exploitation.

Missouri—Presbyterian Women supports the Women’s Crisis Center of Taney County which provides shelter, support and advocacy for victims of domestic violence and sexual assault.

Uganda—Presbyterian Hunger Program supports Nature for Life Conservation Initiatives (NALCOI)’s project to improve women’s food security, income, and access to and control over agricultural inputs and outputs by engaging 160 rural women in practices of sustainable agriculture.

United Nations—The Presbyterian Ministry at the UN brings a PC(USA) delegation to the UN Commission on the Status of Women, which helps shape global standards on gender equality and empowerment of women.

### Get Involved!

Come to the UN Commission on the Status of Women with the Presbyterian Ministry at the United Nations.

Follow Presbyterian Women’s guide to Actions for Women’s Empowerment.

Support the Presbyterian Ministry at the United Nations’ advocacy on gender justice in the global arena.

“Blessed are those who hunger and thirst for righteousness, for they will be filled.” Matthew 5:6

## A Modern Prayer for Gender Justice

We cry out to you with our sister Hagar, **calling you by name-praying for your protective hand to be upon us and those we love.**

We quake in fear with our unnamed sister in Judges, **knowing that so many women's bodies are controlled by others while their lives are protected by none.**

We reach out to try to shield our sisters Tamar, Bathsheba, Dinah, and all who are raped, **we seek to protect their bodies and guard their names from cruel and needless shaming.**

We weep with our sisters in exile, **for as they mourned their lost children on the banks of Babylon, we too know mourning and the pain of displacement.**

We challenge the powers like our sister from Syro-Phoenicia, **creatively working to get what we need, standing in opposition to those who stop us from providing.**

We resist prejudice and murder our sisters Shiprah and Puah, **standing up against the powerful few, saying no to laws based on the –isms of the culture.**

We reach out and insist on being seen like our unnamed sister who bled for 12 years, **advocating for the healthcare that we deserve.**

We recognize the divine within the other like our sister Elizabeth, **we bless our sisters and provide space for them to grow and develop in comfort and safety**

We use our great wisdom like our sister Deborah, **we lead from the front lines, not sending people into battles we wouldn't go with them into.**

***We are created by one God, creator, redeemer and the breath of holy fire in this world, in whose womb we were all formed. We praise you, God, for your abundant creation and pray for the time when women are safe, free, and have equal access to the wonders of your world.***

*Beth Olker  
Associate for Gender and Racial Justice  
Women's Leadership Development and Justice Ministries*





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### 6 CLEAN WATER AND SANITATION



#### Targets

- Achieve universal and equitable access to safe and affordable drinking water for all
- Achieve access to adequate and equitable sanitation and hygiene for all and end open defecation
- Improve water quality by reducing pollution, eliminating dumping and minimizing release of hazardous chemicals
- Substantially increase water-use efficiency
- Implement integrated water resources management at all levels
- Expand cooperation to developing countries in water- and sanitation-related activities
- Protect and restore water-related ecosystems

### SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT GOALS

#### Relevant Church Efforts & Partnerships Around the World

India—Presbyterian Hunger Program supports the Diocesan Charitable Trust's project to construct 30 toilets in rural villages in the Khammam district of southern India's Telangana state so women can avoid open defecation and protect their privacy.

International—PC(USA) program the Living Waters for the World (LWW) has installed water purification systems in over 800 sites in 25 countries throughout the world.

Michigan—Presbyterian Disaster Assistance supports the Presbytery of Lake Huron's efforts to provide safe drinking water and water filters to communities in Flint affected by high levels of toxic lead in the city water supply.

Philippines—Presbyterian World Mission, through co-worker Cobbie Palm, supports the Silliman Water Ministry, which helps communities to develop sustainable water sources and provides emergency water supplies when vulnerable water systems fail.

#### Get Involved!

Partner with Living Waters for the World.

Protect water resources as a Christian steward of water.

Support the Presbyterian Ministry at the United Nations' advocacy in the international community.

“And whoever gives even a cup of cold water to one of these little ones in the name of a disciple—truly I tell you, none of these will lose their reward.” Matthew 10:42



## Cups Always Full

Ibrahim is the pastor of the Presbyterian Church in Aleppo, Syria. Several years ago, during a season of bombardment, the church was destroyed when the rebels broke out the back walls to shell government forces from within the sanctuary. The congregation was forced to move to another safer location, meeting in a small 5th floor walk-up apartment. The church was eventually rebuilt in a more religiously and politically mixed neighborhood.

When the new church opened, they had a well drilled on the property to provide clean water since the city continued to be besieged and electricity, water, fuel were not available. The water from the church's well is being given free of charge to all neighbors, regardless of affiliation. One night, fuel for the generator ran out, and the pastor and a church member determined to go searching the next morning, to find gas.

But early in the morning, the elder reported that he had seen the Muslim service station owner from down the street messing with the generator. Both of them feared that the man had put sand into the tank, and they were filled with rage. Had they not served everyone who came? How could this stranger be so ugly? But when he checked, the generator was fueled and operational. Shaken, he went to speak with the owner to arrange payment for the fuel. The man said-- *I have not known about the church and Christians, I did not see why you were here. But day by day I have watched the people of Aleppo come here to your church to wait in line for water, and no one, regardless of religion, was turned away. So I filled your generator's tank, and as long as I have fuel, you will have water.*

*Loving God, we pray that all who thirst, shall receive water. Not simply physical water, but living water that remind us that you are always with us. Amen.*

Laurie Kraus  
Director  
Presbyterian Disaster Assistance



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### Targets

- Ensure universal access to affordable, reliable and modern energy services
- Increase substantially the share of renewable energy in the global energy mix
- Double the global rate of improvement in energy efficiency
- Enhance international cooperation to facilitate access to clean energy research and technology
- Expand infrastructure and upgrade technology for supplying modern and sustainable energy services for all in developing countries

## SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT GOALS

### Relevant Church Efforts & Partnerships Around the World

Democratic Republic of Congo— Presbyterian World Mission helped Interchurch Medical Assistance to provide efficient, smokeless stoves, which are good for the environment and reduce health problems, to every household in the village of Mpoko in the Kasai Province with the assistance of mission co-worker Inge Sthreshley.

Nicaragua—Presbyterian Hunger Program supports Asociación Fénix's project to improve the community water system of 55 families living in El Balsamo by using solar energy and to reforest the water supply areas with native species.

United States—Over 200 PC(USA) congregations have become certified Presbyterian Earthcare Congregations, caring for God's earth through worship, education, outreach, and making their facilities more sustainable.

United States— PC(USA)'s Mission Responsibility Through Investment (MRTI) committee submitted a shareholder resolution to the Phillips 66 Corporation, which owns 25 percent of the Dakota Access Pipeline, regarding environmental and human rights concerns for the pipeline's construction.

### Get Involved!

Apply for a Restoring Creation Loan to improve your church's energy efficiency and decrease its carbon footprint.

Become an Earth Care Congregation.

Support the Presbyterian Ministry at the United Nations' advocacy in the international community.

**“In the same way, let your light shine before others, so that they may see your good works and give glory to your Father in heaven. “ Matthew 5:16**

## Universal Energy Accessibility

When thinking about affordable and clean energy, it brings to mind what a “just transition” from fossil fuels means for people around the world. Matthew 25 reminds us: *“Truly I tell you, whatever you did not do for one of the least of these, you did not do for me.”*

Is it “just” if only the wealthiest can afford electric vehicles and to supply their own energy through solar panels? How can we ensure, as people of faith, that a transition away from fossil fuel energy takes into account those who only recently were granted access to fossil-fuel powered electricity?

Sustainable Development Goal #7 reminds us to ensure universal access to affordable, reliable and modern energy services. Universal access. Access for everyone, including the *“least of these”* and not just those who can afford it.

Achieving Goal #7 will require cooperation across sectors – from governments to non-profits, individuals to faith-based groups. Transitioning an entire global economy away from demanding fossil fuels to one demanding primarily alternative energy sources is necessary for preserving God’s Creation. It’s imperative no one is left behind in the process.

*Gracious God, we ask you to guide us and give us strength as we work toward a just transition to clean energy sources. This season of change and action requires your love and guidance, as we move toward a more sustainable future. Please help us as we strive to protect what you lovingly created. In the name of our Creator, Sustainer, and Redeemer we pray, Amen.*

*Katie Carter*

*Associate for Research, Policy and Information*

*The Office of Faith-Based Investing and Corporate Engagement*



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### 8 DECENT WORK AND ECONOMIC GROWTH



#### Targets

- Sustain per capita economic growth, at least 7 per cent gross domestic product growth per annum in the least developed countries
- Achieve full and productive employment and decent work for all women and men
- Achieve higher levels of economic productivity through diversification, technological upgrading and innovation
- Eradicate forced labour, modern slavery, human trafficking, and child labour, including use of child soldiers
- Protect labour rights and promote safe and secure working environments for all workers
- Substantially reduce the proportion of youth not in employment, education or training
- End child labour in all its forms

## SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT GOALS

### Relevant Church Efforts & Partnerships Around the World

International—Presbyterian Ministry at the United Nations coordinates the Red Hand Campaign, delivering over 300,000 red hand prints from Presbyterians to world leaders to proclaim that children should not be used as soldiers.

Maryland—Presbyterian Self-Development of People supports the United Workers Association’s projects to improve working conditions through education and organizing, to raise the minimum wage of day laborers, and change the perception that day laborers are lazy, drug addicted, or mentally ill.

South Africa — Presbyterian Hunger Program supports the Stellenbosch Agroecology Academy’s nationally accredited, youth development programme training 20 unemployed youth in organic food production and sustainable food system entrepreneurship.

Southeast United States of America—PC(USA) partner the Coalition of Immokalee Workers’ Anti-Slavery Program has uncovered, investigated, and assisted in the prosecution of numerous multi-state, multi-worker farm slavery operations across the Southeastern U.S., helping liberate over 1,200 workers held against their will.

Washington, DC— The PC(USA) Office of Public Witness partners with Interfaith for Worker Justice and Good Jobs Nation to advocate to the President and Congress for decent, living wages and worker justice.

### Get Involved!

Advocate for fair worker wages and rights in the food industry through Presbyterian Hunger Program’s Campaign for Fair Food.

Join the Red Hand Campaign against the use of child soldiers.

Support the Presbyterian Ministry at the United Nations’ advocacy in the international community.

“In everything do to others as you would have them do to you; for this is the law and the prophets.”

Matthew 7:12

## Equal Work for Equal Pay

*“Woe to him who builds his house by unrighteousness, and his upper rooms by injustice, who makes his neighbor serve him for nothing and does not give him his wages.”*

(Jeremiah 22:13)

*“Now to the one who works, his wages are not counted as a gift but as his due.”*

(1 Timothy 5:18)

The Bible is consistent in its adherence to the fact that not only are laborers worthy of their wages but that it is the responsibility of business to compensate workers fairly. References abound in both the Old and New Testaments (Leviticus 19:13, Jeremiah 22:13, Romans 4:4, 1 Timothy 5:18 and James 5:4). Jesus told his disciples that *“the laborer deserves to be paid.”* (Luke 10:7). He tells a parable where workers are paid more than their due denoting the generosity of God which we are to emulate (Matthew 10:1-16).

One of the lessons of the Christian faith is the dignity of hard work combined with a commitment to justice for workers. Far too many Americans must work two to three jobs simply to make enough money to get by even while their companies are profitable. Far too many mothers and fathers around the world don't have meaningful or productive work to perform and others have their work stolen by forced labor.

People of faith must partner together to challenge any theologies which reject a person's right to fair and living wages. To deny a person just pay is an affront to a God who calls us to generosity and equal distribution of wealth.

***Most gracious God, you have provided the means by which every human being may have the opportunity to work with dignity and self-worth. Bless all who wish to work find labor which is fair, just and equitable. Give employers the heart of God to provide wages which enable their employees to feel valuable knowing that they are worthy of fair pay. In Jesus name. Amen.***

*Jimmie Hawkins  
Director  
The Office of Public Witness*



**SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT GOALS**





Presbyterian Mission

## Presbyterian Ministry at the United Nations

### 9 INDUSTRY, INNOVATION AND INFRASTRUCTURE



#### Targets

- Develop quality, reliable, sustainable and resilient infrastructure to support economic development and human well-being
- Promote inclusive and sustainable industrialization
- Significantly raise industry's share of employment and gross domestic product
- Increase the access of small-scale industrial and other enterprises to financial services
- Upgrade infrastructure and industries to make them sustainable, with increased resource-use efficiency and adoption of environmentally sound technologies
- Increase access to information and communications technology
- Enhance scientific research and technological capability of industrial sectors

## SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT GOALS

### Relevant Church Efforts & Partnerships Around the World

Cameroon—Presbyterian Hunger Program supports the Environmental Governance Institute's project in Nguti to provide coaching to a smallholders farmers' cooperative of the palm oil industry in legal contract drafting and negotiation, and identification of potential joint venture partners, to prevent farmers from entering into contracts with agro-companies with unfavorable terms and reduce reliance on predatory agro-industrials.

Michigan—Presbyterian Self-Development of People supports We the People of Detroit's project to provide short term water supplies for members to avert a public health crisis, to restore water to affected and high-risk members, and to implement policy to ensure fresh clean water is delivered to low income residents at an affordable cost.

International—PC(USA)'s Mission Responsibility Through Investment partners with the Interfaith Center on Corporate Responsibility and Ceres to advocate to corporations for the adoption of sustainable energy, technology, and practices.

International—The Presbyterian Ministry at the United Nations supports policies for the development of rail-based public transportation and urban planning, and increasing the quality of the USA's transportation and energy infrastructure.

### Get Involved!

Invest in companies based on faith-based, environmentally conscious investment principles for your stock portfolio.

Support the Presbyterian Ministry at the United Nations' advocacy in the international arena.

Upgrade your church's infrastructure with a Restoring Creation Loan to improve your church's energy efficiency.

"Therefore everyone who hears these words of mine and puts them into practice is like a wise man who built his house on the rock." Matthew 7:24

## Systems to Serve All

The role of and economics in religion is often misunderstood, and is therefore perhaps not as widely discussed as some other issues. However, if one looks closely at the Christian Bible as well as other religious texts, it is impossible to miss the importance placed on economic and financial matters. In order for any human community to flourish there must be an economic system that functions and serves all members of the community. John Calvin understood well the role of industry and innovation in his context of Reformation-era Geneva. He saw the need for a delicate balance between economic growth and social justice. Calvin thought that when industry and innovation were in their proper role in society, they served as a “providential link between human beings—the product of their work together.” However, if out of balance, they created inequality that was disproportionately experienced by the poor and vulnerable.

To achieve SDG #9 – all development of sustainable industry, innovation and infrastructure must be understood to be in the right relationship with all members of the community including what Matthew 25:40 refers to as “*the least of these.*” The policies of both governments as well as large corporations will need to be carefully thought through in order to support the building of resilient infrastructure and to keep up with technological innovation. Importantly, this sustainable development must ensure that ecological resources are not being exploited, and human workers are not being excluded, so that all can enjoy the fruits of industrial innovation.

*Holy God, Creator of the Universe, we believe that all things belong to you. Help us remember our role as stewards of the world you created, and to care for one another in the way your son, Jesus Christ, taught us to do. Amen.*

*Rob Fohr  
Director*

*The Office of Faith-Based Investing and Corporate Engagement*



**SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT GOALS**





Presbyterian Mission

# Presbyterian Ministry at the United Nations



## Targets

- Progressively achieve & sustain income growth of the bottom 40 per cent of the population at a rate higher than the national average
- Empower & promote the social, economic & political inclusion of all, irrespective of age, sex, disability, race, ethnicity, origin, religion or economic or other status
- Ensure equal opportunity & reduce inequalities of outcome, including by eliminating discriminatory laws
- Adopt fiscal, wage & social protection policies, & progressively achieve greater equality
- Enhance representation & voice for developing countries in decision-making in global international economic & financial institutions
- Facilitate orderly, safe, regular & responsible migration & mobility of people

## SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT GOALS

### Relevant Church Efforts & Partnerships Around the World

Jordan—PC(USA) partner the Middle East Council of Churches provides assistance to Syrian and Iraqi refugees in Jordan and promotes inclusion of all between the refugee population and Jordanian citizens.

International—The Presbyterian Ministry at the United Nations advocates for equal opportunities for all in the Commission on the Status of Women, the Commission on Social Development, and the Commission on Population and Development at the United Nations.

United States—The PC(USA)'s We Choose Welcome campaign provides resources for congregations to express personal and corporate commitment to welcome refugees and immigrants into our communities.

United States—The PC(USA) Freedom Rising initiative aims to address issues that particularly affect African-American males including high unemployment, mass incarceration, and substance abuse in the cities of Baltimore, Charlotte, Cleveland, Pittsburgh and New York City.

### Get Involved!

Advocate for minority voting rights and equal voting access.

Choose to welcome refugees and immigrants to your community.

Empower and respect others by using inclusive language.

Join the Freedom Rising Initiative.

Support the Presbyterian Ministry at the United Nations' advocacy in the international community.

“...[You] have neglected the weightier matters of the law: justice and mercy and faith. It is these you ought to have practiced without neglecting the others.” Matthew 23:23



## Tithes for Equality

*“Woe to you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! For you tithe mint, dill, and cummin, and have neglected the weightier matters of the law: justice and mercy and faith. It is these you ought to have practiced without neglecting the others.” (Matthew 23:23)*

As is so often the case, the woes of the Pharisees hit right at the soft spot for me and the congregation I’m a part of. We too focus on the small, the minutia, and the legalistic while neglecting the grave, the traumatic, the grief, and the desperate that is all around us.

I love the way this text gives us a tangible, physical feeling of how we miss the point when weighing what matters most to God. In one of our hands, we hold a pinch of cumin, some sprigs of mint and a bit of crushed dill. And in the other hand – all the weighty matters of the law: justice for unarmed black people at the hands of law enforcement, mercy in a system of codified, racialized mass imprisonment, holding on to our faithfulness in deeply trying times of dis-establishment, de-centering, and displacement. I can feel my arms slump at the disparity.

It seems that the Pharisees long ago, and congregations like the one I worship in, are pretty adept at meeting the letter of the law, while willfully ignoring the Spirit that animates and inspires it.

I wonder what our offering plate would look like if instead of a carefully measured tithe of our smallest platitudes, it would be heaped with our congregation’s best, most creative, most generous efforts to join in God’s work in our neighborhood. I wonder what overflowing justice and mercy and faith what do in our city, instead of our strained and stretched and scarce charity. When we can begin to really listen to Jesus’s spirit in these words—I wonder what ‘reduced inequalities’ might look like then.

*God of mercy, justice, and faith – help us look honestly at our hands, and see how much we can do with them, with your help. Stir in us the scales of your justice, the compassion of your mercy, and faithfulness in you to see it through. Amen*

*Richard Williams  
Coordinator  
Young Adult Volunteers*



**SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT GOALS**





Presbyterian Mission

## Presbyterian Ministry at the United Nations



### Targets

- Ensure access for all to adequate, safe & affordable housing and basic services and upgrade slums
- Provide access to safe, affordable, accessible & sustainable transport systems for all
- Enhance inclusive & sustainable urbanization & capacity for participatory, integrated & sustainable human settlement planning and management
- Reduce the number of deaths & people affected & decrease economic losses caused by disasters
- Reduce the adverse per capita environmental impact of cities
- Provide universal access to safe, inclusive and accessible, green & public spaces
- Substantially increase the number of cities & settlements adopting & implementing policies towards inclusion, resource efficiency, mitigation & adaptation to climate change

## SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT GOALS

### Relevant Church Efforts & Partnerships Around the World

International— The Presbyterian Ministry at the United Nations advocates within the UN system for safe and reliable public transportation systems around the world.

New York—Presbyterian Self-Development of People supports Rockaway Wildfire, a community organization created after Superstorm Sandy that trains community members to advocate for equal opportunities for affordable housing, employment, and job training, as well as the use of green, resilient technologies to prepare for future climate crises.

Syria—Presbyterian Disaster Assistance supports Water, Sanitation, and Hygiene (WASH) projects to improve basic water services in refugee settlements by repairing wells and water systems, renovating sanitation facilities, and installing water filters.

### Get Involved!

Consider PC(USA)'s support of a systemic shift to rail-based public transportation and urban planning, and increasing the quality of the USA's transportation and energy infrastructure.

Help your congregation practically and spiritually prepare and respond to a disaster.

Support the Presbyterian Ministry at the United Nations' advocacy in the international community.

**“Blessed are the poor in spirit, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven.” Matthew 5:3**

## Sustainable Cities, Safe Cities

Populations in cities have been growing and not necessarily for good reasons. People are forced to migrate from rural areas for employment opportunities or as climate change refugees or for the misuse of resources by companies that hurt water and land resources. I moved from rural Maryland to Philadelphia and now New York City for access to higher education and employment. And, as I've noticed, no city is alike. Each has unique features when it comes to neighborhoods, approaches to public transportation, and public artwork.

When we take a step back and read what Scriptures say of cities, it seems to be positive. Cain, after killing Abel, takes refuge in the first city (Genesis 4:13-17), or in Revelation, the New Heavens and New Earth includes a New Jerusalem (Revelation 21:1-2). With these bookend examples, it's easy to wonder, "What though are we supposed to do now?"

It is answered in the story Jesus shares in Matthew 25. Jesus said about the righteous, *"for I was hungry and you gave me food, I was thirsty and you gave me something to drink, I was a stranger and you welcomed me, I was naked and you gave me clothing, I was sick and you took care of me, I was in prison and you visited me"* (25:35-36).

Jesus' words lend themselves to how we should approach cities today and in the future. We should be asking ourselves: Are cities spaces of welcome or of division? Is public transportation connecting people not only to areas of shopping, but also to hospitals and supermarkets? Are neighborhoods safe and do they have green space?

Focusing on the SDG of Sustainable Cities and Communities is one way we might be able to think through how cities may be more accommodating to the influx of new people. Hopefully, cities can not only be on the defensive side, but actively move toward being inclusive, sustainable, safe, and affordable for all.

*O God,*

*May we be bold in imagination to create spaces of welcome and hospitality in our cities. Amen.*

*Timothy Wotring*

*Young Adult Volunteers Site Coordinator: New York City  
Presbytery of New York City*



SUSTAINABLE  
DEVELOPMENT GOALS





Presbyterian Mission

# Presbyterian Ministry at the United Nations



## Targets

- Implement the 10-year framework of programs on sustainable consumption and production
- Achieve the sustainable management and efficient use of natural resources
- Halve per capita global food waste at the retail and consumer levels and reduce food losses along production and supply chains, including post-harvest losses
- Substantially reduce waste generation through prevention, reduction, recycling and reuse
- Encourage companies to adopt sustainable practices and to integrate sustainability information into their reporting cycle
- Achieve the environmentally sound management of chemicals and all wastes throughout their life cycle

## SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT GOALS

### Relevant Church Efforts & Partnerships Around the World

**International** — PC(USA)'s Mission Responsibility Through Investment (MRTI) committee, along with 33 other faith-based investors, successfully filed a proposal to Exxon Mobil to assess its climate change risks and align its production processes with the 2015 Paris Climate Agreement to help keep global temperature rise to 2 degrees Celsius or less over the next 15 years.

**International**—PC(USA)'s Global Marketplace program promotes the sale of Fair Trade products created by marginalized small producers using materials from sustainably managed sources and renewable energy technologies to have the least overall impact on the environment.

**United States**—Over 200 PC(USA) congregations have become certified Presbyterian Earthcare Congregations, caring for God's earth through worship, education, outreach, and making their facilities more sustainable.

### Get Involved!

**Apply** for a Restoring Creation Loan to improve your church's energy efficiency and decrease its carbon footprint.

**Become** an Earth Care Congregation, caring for God's earth through worship, education, outreach, and improved facilities.

**Host** a Global Marketplace and support the purchase of Fair Trade products.

**Invest** in companies based on faith-based, environmentally conscious investment principles for your stock portfolio.

**Support** the Presbyterian Ministry at the United Nations' advocacy in the international community.

"Therefore I tell you, do not worry about your life, what you will eat or what you will drink, or about your body, what you will wear. Is not life more than food, and the body more than clothing?" Matthew 6:25

## A Responsible Society

In the Gospel of Luke, 3: 3-6, 10-11, John the Baptist comes before Jesus, quoting the prophet Isaiah on preparing the way of the Lord, when *“the valleys will be filled and the mountains and hills made low.”* Responding to John’s call to repentance and baptism, the people ask what they should do. John replies, *“if you have two coats, give one to the person who has none, and if you have food, do the same.”*

This is a picture of equalization, through which we can imagine that one should “hire the lower and lower the higher,” bringing salaries and wages closer together, and closer to a norm of sufficiency. If you have enough coat and enough food, you should share. This could be extended to work itself, especially in places where work is the primary entitlement to compensation and hence, to the ability to consume.

Production should not be driven by lure of infinite consumption or accumulation, but by an awareness that we are to prepare a society where we can recognize the coming of the messiah. To the extent that we are part of the body of Christ, our work or production is a response to God and our consumption guided by God’s infinite generosity.

In the social witness and teaching of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.), we share in the ecumenical norms of a just, participatory, and sustainable society where there can be enough for all. One of the earliest World Council of Churches’ formulations was the image not simply of personal responsibility, but of “the responsible society.” Stating US Christian social goals similar to the Sustainable Development Goals goes back to the 1908 Social Creed, updated in 2008, and still echoing John’s prophetic edge.

*God of Justice and Love, Actual equality scares us. We know you see through our persons and possessions. Help us to be productive in bearing good fruit, and not being showy weeds. In the Spirit of your Living Christ, Amen.*

*Christian Iosso  
Coordinator  
Advisory Committee on Social Witness Policy*



Presbyterian Mission  
**Presbyterian Ministry  
at the United Nations**

**SUSTAINABLE  
DEVELOPMENT GOALS**





Presbyterian Mission

## Presbyterian Ministry at the United Nations



### Targets

- Strengthen resilience and adaptive capacity to climate-related hazards and natural disasters in all countries
- Integrate climate change measures into national policies, strategies and planning
- Improve education, awareness-raising and human and institutional capacity on climate change mitigation, adaptation, impact reduction and early warning

## SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT GOALS

### Relevant Church Efforts & Partnerships Around the World

**International**—Through accreditation at the United Nations, PC(USA) sends representatives to the Conference on Parties (COP) to the United Nations' Convention on Climate Change every year to learn and advocate on climate change policies and their affect on vulnerable populations.

**Philippines** — PC(USA) partner Silliman University and Divinity School builds “calamity resilient” classrooms and churches out of shipping containers, which are waterproof and capable of withstanding a magnitude 8.1 earthquake.

**United States**—Presbyterian Disaster Assistance trains congregations and presbyteries in disaster preparedness and caring for communities affected by crisis.

**United States**— PC(USA)'s Mission Responsibility Through Investment (MRTI) committee successfully filed a proposal for CF Industries, a fertilizer company, to develop and publish a sustainability report focusing on risks posed by global climate change.

### Get Involved!

**Apply** for a Restoring Creation Loan to improve your church's energy efficiency and decrease its carbon footprint.

**Become** an Earth Care Congregation, caring for God's earth through worship, education, outreach, and improved facilities.

**Help** your congregation practically and spiritually prepare and respond to a disaster.

**Support** the Presbyterian Ministry at the United Nations' advocacy in the global arena.

**"For where two or three are gathered in my name, I am there among them." Mathew 18:20**

## Caring for God's Creation

All creation is made by God, thus building a movement for climate justice is in the Lord's service. Toward this end, we are called to take prophetic action when faced with the realities of climate change to protect our communities and honor the sacredness entrusted to us. In order to challenge the powerful dominions and rulers to do what is right in God's eyes, we must forge strong bonds between one another to act in unison and demonstrate the power of God's love.

These actions can take many forms. From the hyper local to global scale, from the mountains to the seas, each action large and small serves to protect some element created by God. In prayerful response to the knowledge of God's care for creation, congregations can join forces with other groups to make this change. Congregations can reduce their impact on the environment by changing infrastructure in church buildings, planning in case of disasters, supporting national and global advocacy, and enacting outreach and education.

Because all things were created through and for God, we are required not only care for the natural world, but to care for the people in our communities. Right now, the devastation of climate change is borne primarily by those already on the margins; women of color in the Global South are most likely to be displaced and become climate refugees. In this way, climate justice cannot be separated from gender justice or economic justice. As we work to usher in the kingdom of God, we must take care to transform all elements of society that cause harm.

Taking heart in the love God has for each and every individual as part of an intertwining creation, Presbyterians can assess their current community efforts to pursue climate action and to restore harmony in the world formed by God's hands.

*Bring your spirit to those gathered here today to help us bring climate justice to the world. Guide us with your strength and wisdom to make the world better, safer, more just and more merciful in response to greed and destruction. Help us change our ways to care for your creation. When we fail to care for your creation and instead allow chaos and pain, empower us through your love to act toward justice. Help us remember those who need your care most as we all face the fallout of our greed. May we hold our governments accountable and lead our churches to follow your way. Continue to bless and keep us on this journey toward justice for your creation and continue to hold the world in your own hands. In Jesus' name, Amen.*

*Nora Leccese*

*Associate for Domestic Poverty and Environmental Issues  
The Office of Public Witness*



**SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT GOALS**





Presbyterian Mission

## Presbyterian Ministry at the United Nations



### Targets

- Sustainably manage & protect marine & coastal ecosystems, strengthen their resilience, & take action for their restoration
- Effectively regulate harvesting & end overfishing, illegal, unreported & unregulated fishing & destructive fishing practices
- Prohibit certain forms of fisheries subsidies which contribute to overcapacity, overfishing, & illegal, unreported & unregulated fishing
- Conserve at least 10% of coastal & marine areas
- Minimize & address impacts of ocean acidification
- Prevent & significantly reduce marine pollution of all kinds, including marine debris and nutrient pollution
- Increase economic benefits to Small Island developing & least developed countries from the sustainable use of marine resources, including through sustainable management of fisheries, aquaculture & tourism

## SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT GOALS

### Relevant Church Efforts & Partnerships Around the World

**Bolivia**—Presbyterian Hunger Program supports the Asociación Bolivianos por la Vida (UMAVIDA)'s "Freshwater is Eternal Life" campaign in Oruro to develop advocacy actions for the passing of a Water Law to protect water resource use from mining exploitation, avoid more natural disasters, and allow farmers to rejuvenate the water.

**International**—PC(USA) supports agrarian and aquatic reform programs promoting governance structures based on the 'Voluntary Guidelines for Land and Natural Resources Tenure' from the UN Committee on World Food Security to provide secure access for communities to land, forestry and fisheries and reduce corporate impact on land and water.

**United States**—The 216th PC(USA) (2004) General Assembly approved a recommendation by the Advisory Committee on Social Witness Policy (ACSWP) to prioritize the preservation of declining in-stream species of plants and animals over other in-stream and out-of-stream users where water resources are limited.

**United States**—PC(USA) supports the Environmental Protection Agency and the Clean Air Act, as a means to reduce dangerous, toxic pollutants in the nation's air, land and water.

### Get Involved!

**Become** an Earth Care Congregation, caring for God's earth through worship, education, outreach, and improved facilities.

**Protect** water resources as a Christian steward of water.

**Study** PC(USA)'s recommendations on preserving water resources.

**Support** the Presbyterian Ministry at the United Nations' advocacy in the global arena.

"But he answered, "It is written, 'One does not live by bread alone, but by every word that comes from the mouth of God.'" Matthew 4:4



## Living Waters

All may appear well on the surface, but a recent headline indicates that our oceans are ailing. “Global warming is killing the Great Barrier Reef.” The rise in water temperature is acidifying the oceans killing delicate corals reefs that are home to thousands of marine species. Plastic debris is injuring and killing fish, birds, and marine animals.

The psalmists depict waters as a vibrant strength — in awe of its power and beauty, movement in dance and song, clapping, whirling and dancing — praising and glorifying God. (Psalm 98) In the creation story God created all things, the birds of the air and the fish of the sea, to live together. We have an image of exquisite beauty and danger teeming with life, all connected to one another. What affects the ocean affects us. This rich life sustains us as we draw on it for source of food and nourishment.

SDG #14 targets aim to manage and protect marine and coastal ecosystems, and to reduce and prevent marine pollution as measured by floating plastic debris by 2025. One simple way we can work towards healthy living oceans is by reducing the use of and recycling plastics, so it does not end up in our waters. Unless we become better caretakers, the waters will turn into stagnant pools devoid of life. Time has come when we are called to tend to the living waters that nourish life for all God’s creatures, for we are all God’s.

*God, giver of lifegiving waters, maker of the sea and all that is in them, we thank you for this precious gift of life beneath the waters that sustain our earthly home. May we care for your creation with the love with which you have created all your creatures. Help us to be good stewards of water. Amen.*

*Sue Rheem  
Mission Specialist  
Presbyterian Ministry at the United Nations*



Presbyterian Mission  
**Presbyterian Ministry  
at the United Nations**

**SUSTAINABLE  
DEVELOPMENT GOALS**





Presbyterian Mission

## Presbyterian Ministry at the United Nations



### Targets

- Ensure the conservation, restoration & sustainable use of terrestrial & inland freshwater ecosystems
- Promote sustainable management of all types of forests, halt deforestation, restore degraded forests & substantially increase afforestation & reforestation
- Introduce measures to prevent the introduction & reduce the impact of invasive alien species
- Integrate ecosystem & biodiversity values into national & local planning, development processes, poverty reduction strategies & accounts
- Combat desertification, restore degraded land & soil
- Ensure the conservation of mountain ecosystems, including their biodiversity

## SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT GOALS

### Relevant Church Efforts & Partnerships Around the World

**El Salvador**—Presbyterian Hunger Program supports the Red Uniendo Manos de El Salvador (RUMES) national and international advocacy to ban the use of toxic agrochemicals in the monoculture of sugar cane in El Salvador.

**International**—PC(USA) supports agrarian and aquatic reform programs promoting governance structures based on the ‘Voluntary Guidelines for Land and Natural Resources Tenure’ from the UN Committee on World Food Security to provide secure access for communities to land, forestry and fisheries and reduce corporate impact on land and water.

**New Mexico**—Presbyterian Self-Development of People supports the Multicultural Alliance for a Safe Environment (MASE), a project to stop the uranium mining that contaminates the land, air, and groundwater, and causes health problems in the Albuquerque community; and to bring those responsible to exert reclamation efforts such as covering or removing contaminated soil.

**Nicaragua**—PC(USA) partner the Council of Protestant Churches of Nicaragua (CEPAD) provides training and education to farmers and community members on new water and soil conservation techniques, crop rotation, drought tolerant crop varieties, and introducing organic fertilizers and pesticides.

### Get Involved!

**Apply** for a Restoring Creation Loan to improve your church’s energy efficiency and decrease its carbon footprint.

**Become** an Earth Care Congregation, caring for God’s earth through worship, education, outreach, and improved facilities.

**Support** the Presbyterian Ministry at the United Nations’ advocacy on gender justice in the global arena.

“But he answered, “It is written: ‘People do not live on bread alone, but on every word that comes from the mouth of God.’” Matthew 4:4

## Caring For The Land And People Who Work The Land

How do we live faithfully on the land so that it flourishes while also providing sustenance to the human communities that depend on it? This “life on land” SDG calls us to conserve resources, sustainably manage land, protect from invasive species, and restore biodiversity. When we work for these things, we work for the good of both natural systems and of vulnerable human communities as well.

We live in a strange time when people who work the land are some of the hungriest people in God’s creation. Farming communities, who are closest to the land and should be receiving its great blessings, are often the most vulnerable communities in the world. As people of faith, we have a roll to play in making sure that human activities on the land are good for the land—but also fair and just to all God’s children.

Treatment of people goes hand in hand with treatment of the land. For instance, the words of Jesus’ “*I was hungry and you gave me food*” (Matthew 25:35), call on us to go beyond an oversimplified alleviation of hunger. Taken in context of the broader biblical passage, Jesus is encouraging us to care holistically for people and the world—taking into concern a broad host of interlocking concerns. To truly answer Jesus’ call, we are called to feed the hungry but also to remove the societal and environmental obstacles that keep people who work the land hungry. While we empower people we also help to ensure that food is grown, harvested, processed and served in a way that is good for the land itself and its long-term sustainability.

Farmers are hungry in some cases because they have been driven to produce more for the market than for feeding their families. Others may be in debt to seed or farm companies. And in other scenarios around the world, farmers may not be able to prove title to their ancestral land and they lose their land and livelihoods. Farmers are among the best care-takers of our land and should be reaping the richness of their work from the land, rather than paying the price of society’s disconnection from and exploitation of the land. We are called to address the injustices farmers face, if we are to live life on land faithfully.

*Dear God who created and loves and calls this world good,  
Help us to learn from family farmers and to embrace the true value of the land so that we may restore your beautiful creation as we also protect human dignity and livelihoods. In the name of the one who called us to feed the hungry we pray, Amen.*

*Rebecca Barnes  
Coordinator  
Presbyterian Hunger Program*





Presbyterian Mission

# Presbyterian Ministry at the United Nations

## 16 PEACE, JUSTICE AND STRONG INSTITUTIONS



### Targets

- Significantly reduce all forms of violence & related death rates everywhere
- End abuse, exploitation, trafficking & all violence against & torture of children
- Promote the rule of law at the national & international levels & ensure equal access to justice for all
- Reduce illicit financial & arms flows, combat all forms of organized crime
- Substantially reduce corruption & bribery in all their forms
- Develop effective, accountable & transparent institutions at all levels
- Ensure responsive, inclusive, participatory & representative decision-making at all levels
- Broaden & strengthen the participation of developing countries in the institutions of global governance
- Provide legal identity for all, including birth registration
- Ensure public access to information & protect fundamental freedoms

## SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT GOALS

### Relevant Church Efforts & Partnerships Around the World

**California**—Presbyterian Self-Development of People supports Migrant in Partnership with Filipino Community Center’s efforts to train, educate, and empower Filipino migrant workers to organize and advocate for themselves in response to exploitative labor trafficking and build a robust anti-trafficking campaign.

**Columbia**—Presbyterian Peace Fellowship organizes accompaniment delegations to visit PC(USA) partner the Presbyterian Church of Colombia (IPC), which was instrumental in helping negotiate the peace agreement between the Colombian government and the Revolutionary Armed Forces of Colombia (FARC) guerrilla group and continues advocating for peace.

**International**—The Presbyterian Ministry at the UN engages the UN Security Council to improve the UN’s ability to preserve international peace and security, bringing the voice of PC(USA) and its partners to the international community.

**International**—The Presbyterian Peacemaking Program brings International Peacemakers, leaders from PC(USA) partner denominations and partner organizations around the world, to PC(USA) churches to discuss their work on issues of poverty, peace, and reconciliation.

### Get Involved!

**Advocate** to US members of Congress through the Office Of Public Witness’ Action Alerts.

**Contact** the PC(USA) Human Trafficking Roundtable to learn how to take action to end exploitation and trafficking of children.

**Give** to the Peace and Global Witness Offering.

**Support** the Presbyterian Ministry at the United Nations’ advocacy in the international community.

“Blessed are the peacemakers, for they will be called children of God.” Matthew 5:9

## The Church As a Movement

*"...I was in prison and you visited me."*

(Matthew 25:36)

I've been a part of conversations recently about the church as both an institution and a movement. Those of us who work within the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) are well aware of our institutional nature. It is hard, given the way our particular denomination is put together, not to primarily manifest the sensibilities of church structure and order. But every once in a while we sort of surprise ourselves, we break free from the way we've always done things to do a new thing. Put another way, we allow ourselves to be reforming and not just reformed.

It happened in St. Louis at the 223rd meeting of our General Assembly. The church moved, literally, marching the body of Christ out the Convention Center doors and into the streets. Led by our Stated Clerk and newly-elected Co-Moderators, the Assembly marched itself and its \$54,000 offering to the City Justice Center. There it didn't only visit those in prison, it posted bail for them, securing release for dozens of low-level offenders held captive in a criminal justice system that demands exorbitant cash-bail for their release.

But the church's movement didn't stop there. We also demonstrated our strength as an institution in responding to a number of peace and justice concerns. We rejected the racist nationalism expressed in recent years and called Americans to "honest patriotism." We condemned U.S. border policies and strengthened the church's prophetic call to end gun violence. We called for an immediate moratorium on the imposition of the death penalty. We affirmed the full dignity, humanity and gifts of people of all gender identities and sexual orientations. We supported the precautionary principle and religious freedoms without discrimination. We called for specific steps to peace in Nicaragua, broader work for justice in Central America, an end to the blockade of Gaza, the clear rejection of anti-BDS legislation and continued efforts to bring Israelis and Palestinians together peacefully.

Granted, SDG#16 has some lofty targets. But in 2018 the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) showed that it's up to the challenge. We can be among the many strong institutions that move our world down the path to accomplishing these targets. We've got great institutional momentum, if you will, and 12 years to get there.

***O God, grant us the patience to see your will be done. People all over the world are frustrated, yearning for peace and justice. May we all be peacemakers, willing to listen to you and to each other. Amen.***

*Carl Horton*

*Coordinator*

*Presbyterian Peacemaking Program*



Presbyterian Mission  
**Presbyterian Ministry  
at the United Nations**

**SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT GOALS**





Presbyterian Mission

# Presbyterian Ministry at the United Nations

## 17 PARTNERSHIPS FOR THE GOALS



### Targets

- Strengthen domestic resource mobilization, including through international support to developing countries, to improve domestic capacity for tax & other revenue collection
- Mobilize additional financial resources for developing countries from multiple sources
- Promote the development, transfer, dissemination & diffusion of environmentally sound technologies to developing countries on favorable terms
- Enhance international support for implementing effective & targeted capacity-building in developing countries to support national plans to implement the sustainable development goals
- Respect each country's policy space & leadership to establish & implement policies for poverty eradication and sustainable development
- Enhance the global partnership for sustainable development, complemented by multi-stakeholder partnerships that mobilize and share knowledge, expertise, technology and financial resources, to support the achievement of the sustainable development goals in all countries

## SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT GOALS

### Relevant Church Efforts & Partnerships Around the World

Democratic Republic of Congo—PC(USA) congregations and mission co-workers engage in mission partnership with the Congolese Presbyterian Church (CPC) building schools in West Kasai; PC(USA) provides financial resources, the (CPC) provides construction expertise and oversight and the beneficiary village provides work-site help and ongoing maintenance.

International— The Presbyterian Ministry at the United Nations incorporates PC(USA) policy and mission partner input into advocacy efforts on issues of poverty and inequality at the UN General Assembly, Security Council, and Economic and Social Council.

International—PC(USA) partner Partners For Just Trade builds partnerships between producers living in extreme poverty and consumers in North America by promoting the sale of fair trade products made by artisans receiving fair wages and working conditions.

United States—The PC(USA) Office of Public Witness provides action alerts for Presbyterians to stay engaged and advocate to the US Congress on issues of injustice and climate change affecting PC(USA) congregations and partners around the world.

### Get Involved!

Advocate to US members of Congress through the Office Of Public Witness' Action Alerts.

Support the Presbyterian Ministry at the United Nations' advocacy in the international community.

“For where two or three gather in my name, there am I with them.” Matthew 18:20

## Fruitful Partnerships

One of the most remarkable elements of the Sustainable Development Goals is that they are universally applicable to all countries and assume that there is room for improvement by both developed and developing nations. Goal 17 drives this point home by emphasizing partnership. It implies that all countries and peoples have value and something to offer in multi-stakeholder partnerships aimed to enhance the sharing of resources, technology, and information. This mirrors the Christian concept that we are all created in the image of God, and must recognize the dignity, value, and gifts that each of us brings to the table. Partnership is not simply one group giving and another receiving. It is a relationship where all parties both give and receive, listen and speak.

Reflecting on Jesus' message in Matthew 25:40: *"Truly I tell you, whatever you did not do for one of the least of these, you did not do for me,"* we are reminded to help in all times and in all ways. We all are in need of help. We are best equipped to help each other and tackle universal problems such as climate change and poverty by being faithful stewards and partners to one another.

The PC(USA) exemplifies partnership in how it walks alongside its global partners. The partner shares insights on the realities they face on the ground and how God is at work in their communities, while the PC(USA) provides spiritual and sometimes financial support. One fruit of this partnership is the PC(USA)'s advocacy at the United Nations and in Washington, DC, which incorporates the partners' input and perspective. I pray that the church continues to be an example of partnership in the world.

The PC(USA) recognizes that it can learn about faith and God from its partners, who live and operate in a very different context from our church. In partnership, faith can be strengthened. Then faithful advocacy can be done.

***Dear God,***

***We are all blessed by your grace and love. May we be examples of your love through the relationships we form with one another, built on mutual understanding, and working towards a world that is open and loving. Amen.***

*Simon Doong  
Young Adult Volunteer  
Presbyterian Ministry at the United Nations*



Presbyterian Mission  
**Presbyterian Ministry  
at the United Nations**

**SUSTAINABLE  
DEVELOPMENT GOALS**

**17 PARTNERSHIPS  
FOR THE GOALS**



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**This entire resource can be downloaded at [pcusa.org/sustainable-development-goals/](http://pcusa.org/sustainable-development-goals/).**

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