



# On Becoming Free from Plastic Pollution

OVERTURE TO THE 226<sup>TH</sup> GENERAL ASSEMBLY (2024)



# On Becoming Free from Plastic Pollution

- ▶ Resolution of Witness passed by 2023 United Church of Christ General Synod
  - ▶ (Equivalent to our General Assembly)

## Free from Plastic Pollution A Resolution of Witness

1 **TEXT OF THE RESOLUTION**

2

3 **WHEREAS** the scriptures (Genesis 1:1-2:6, Psalm 24:1, Isaiah 24:3-6, Jeremiah 4:23-26) hold us  
4 responsible for the way we co-live and use God's creation, the Earth, and

5

6 **WHEREAS** plastics resist degrading for hundreds of years, and they break down into microplastic beads;  
7 and animals, birds, fish, and humans consume microplastics<sup>1</sup> to the detriment of their health, and

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9 **WHEREAS** United Church of Christ General Synods have passed environmental resolutions The Earth is  
10 the Lord's<sup>2</sup> (2017), The Use of Plastic Foam<sup>3</sup> (2019), and The Rights of Nature<sup>4</sup> (2021), and

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12 **WHEREAS** plastic pollution is an environmental justice concern of the UCC,<sup>5</sup> and

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14 **WHEREAS** plastic pollution disproportionately impacts vulnerable communities, including low  
15 income people and people of color, and must be addressed from production to waste,<sup>6</sup> and

16

17 **WHEREAS** plastic pollution from heavy chemical solvents that impact the health and well





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## ▶ Top Level Recommendations (1)

1. Encourage all our settings to commit to changing from a disposable culture to a reusable, sustainable one.
2. Encourage education within our congregations and in our communities to advocate for alternatives to single use plastics, whether through mitigation efforts and campaigns or by supporting local and state bans on single use plastics, and
3. Encourage all settings of the Church to determine the best pathway forward for strategies and actions to mitigate plastic pollution, using as examples the following resources: ...



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## ► Top Level Recommendations (2)

4. Reduce the use of single-use plastics and packaging.
5. Commend all settings of the church to join in possible opportunities for participation in addressing plastic pollution including to: ...
6. Acknowledge that accommodations in expectations need to be made for certain impacted groups such as those who are disabled or unhoused.
7. Encourage people in all settings to speak truth to the public square against plastic pollution of our planet.





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## ► Rationale (1) Background

1. The 222nd General Assembly overwhelmingly agreed that “caring for God’s creation” should be part of our constitution
2. In 2023, our sisters and brothers in the UCC General Synod passed the overture “Free from Plastic Pollution: A Resolution of Witness”. We overture the 226th General Assembly to join them
3. The PC(USA) General Assembly has affirmed that creation care is a fundamental part of who we are as Presbyterians:
  1. *In Genesis 2:15, God places Adam in the garden “to serve it and to preserve it” (Dr. William P. Brown, Columbia Theological Seminary)*




## ► Rationale (2) God's People Cry Out

4. Water from disposable water bottles contains about 240,000 nanoparticles per liter.
5. Plastics in our bodies can have serious impacts on our health and inhaled or ingested plastics have been correlated with lung inflammation, shortness of breath, a higher risk of lung cancer, stroke, and cardiovascular disease.
6. These impacts disproportionately fall on vulnerable and disadvantaged communities.



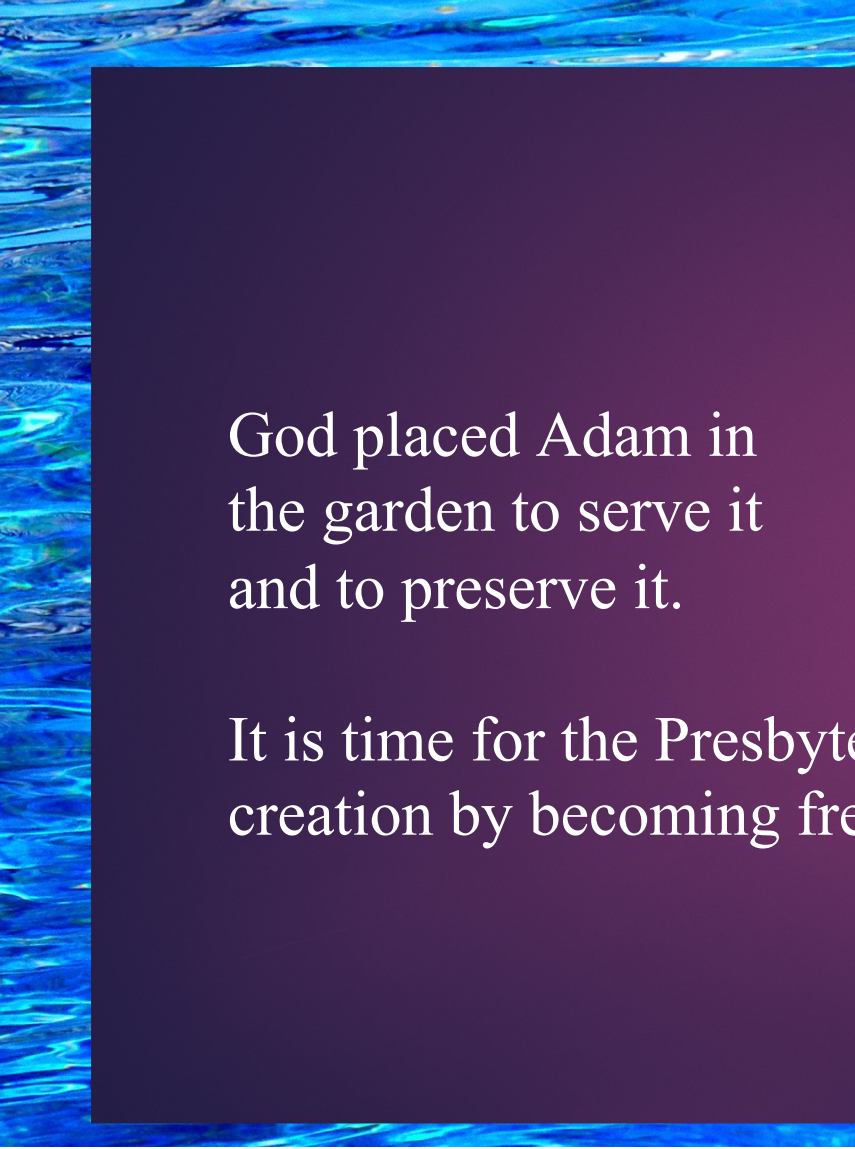


## ▶ Rationale (3) The Earth Cries Out

7. 430 million tons of plastic is produced yearly
  8. 11 billion metric tons of plastic produced in the last century, surpassing the biomass of all animals on earth.
  9. Think that your plastic is being recycled? Think again. Despite efforts to convince people recycling is effective, only 9% of the plastic ever produced has been recycled, and 19% has been incinerated.
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God placed Adam in  
the garden to serve it  
and to preserve it.



It is time for the Presbyterian Church (USA) to preserve  
creation by becoming free from plastic pollution.