

# Missional Justice

*A Newsletter of the Social Justice & Mission Ministry*

## Simple Living & Gratitude

### THE CHURCH'S PERSPECTIVE ON SIMPLICITY, GRATITUDE, AND MINDFULNESS IN CONSUMPTION

#### Book of Social Principles (UMC) 2008-2012:

- 160. I. The Natural World, B) Energy Resources Utilization
- 160. I. The Natural World, D) Global Climate Stewardship
- 162. III. The Social Community, K) Population
- 162. III. The Social Community, P) Rural Life
- 162. III. The Social Community, Q) Sustainable Agriculture
- 163. IV. The Economic Community, C) Work and Leisure
- 163. IV. The Economic Community, D) Consumption
- 163. IV. The Economic Community, E) Poverty
- 163. IV. The Economic Community, H) Family Farms
- 163. IV. The Economic Community, I) Corporate Responsibility
- 165. VI. The World Community, A) Nations and Cultures
- 165. VI. The World Community, B) National Power and Responsibility
- 166. VII. Our Social Creed

#### Book of Resolutions 2008-2012

- 160. I. The Natural World, Resolution 1002. U.S. Energy Policy and United Methodist Responsibility
- 160. I. The Natural World, Resolution 1023. Environmental Justice for a Sustainable Future
- 160. I. The Natural World, Resolution 1026. Environmental Stewardship
- 160. I. The Natural World, Resolution 1027. God's Creation and the Church
- 160. I. The Natural World, Resolution 1030. Recycling and the Use of Recycled Products
- 160. I. The Natural World, Resolution 1031. Resolution on Global Warming
- 161. II. The Nurturing Community, Resolution 2106. Spiritual Unity in Human Diversity
- 163. IV. The Economic Community, Resolution 4022. United Methodist Church Use of Fair Trade Coffee and Other Fair Trade Products
- 165. VI. The World Community, Resolution 6092. Justice, Peace, and the Integrity of Creation
- 165. VI. The World Community, Resolution 8002. A Commitment of Unity in Mission and Ministry



### WEIGHING THE ISSUE A SEASON OF GRATITUDE naomi sea young wittstruck leadership development minister

November is a month where gratitude becomes a more natural component of our collective consciousness as it fleetingly overtakes the cultural mores of individualism, greed, and consumerism that often permeate our daily lives. Although the North American holiday of Thanksgiving was founded on a situation of grave injustice, the holiday in a re-framed and re-claimed context can become an opportunity for all of us to move into a space of grace, humility, gratitude, mindfulness, and intentionality in critically assessing our consumption; evaluating how we can live more simply; and considering innovative and just ways that we can share and distribute the resources that we have with others, both near and far. A season committed to observing and celebrating the grace and presence of God at work in our lives, relationships, and the created order can provide us with a small glimpse of an eschatological context of shalom in the midst of continued realities of systematic oppression, injustice, and brokenness. ■

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#### Iowa Annual Conference of The United Methodist Church

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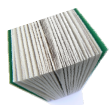
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## reading resources

*Living in Gratitude: A Journey That Will Change Your Life*  
by Angeles Arrien

*A Life of Being, Having, and Doing Enough*  
by Wayne Muller

*The Compassionate Life: Walking the Path of Kindness*  
by Marc Ian Barasch

*If the Church Were Christian: Rediscovering the Values of Jesus*  
by Philip Gulley

*The Way of Simplicity: The Cistercian Tradition*  
by Esther De Waal

*The Heart of Simple Living: 7 Paths to a Better Life*  
by Wanda Urbanska

*Everyday Simplicity: A Practical Guide to Spiritual Growth*  
by Robert J. Wicks

*Living Life as a Thank You: The Transformative Power of Daily Gratitude*  
by Nina Lesowitz and Mary Beth Sammons

*The Art of Simplicity: Living Life by the Essentials of the Heart*  
by Candy Paull

*The Holy Way: Practices for a Simple Life*  
by Paula Huston

*A Thankful Life: How Gratitude Brings Hope and Healing to Our Lives*  
by Carole Lewis



## films

“Babette’s Feast” (1987)

## PUTTING FAITH INTO ACTION AT YOUR LOCAL CHURCH

- Lead a book study and discussion with your Sunday school class or a small group at your church on the topic areas of simplicity and gratitude and discuss ways to live out simplicity and reduce consumption in everyday life.
- Hold a congregational “freecycle” event at your church, where people from the congregation donate gentle-used or new items that can be given away to people in the broader community who may be able to utilize the items and resources provided.
- Create a congregational covenant to simple living and a reduction of personal, familial, and communal over-consumption, consumerism, and carbon consumption for a given amount of time and integrate prayer, communal discernment, discussion and resource materials that can be shared in all Sunday school and church groups and integrate the covenant in worship and preaching.
- Sign-up to donate time and people power to volunteer projects in your local community or to one of our Annual Conference United Methodist -affiliated extension ministries (or other non-profit organizations) as a congregation, Sunday school class, confirmation class, or small group to live out God’s grace and gratitude by giving to others and forming intentional and long-term relationships and partnerships with people and organizations outside the walls of the church.
- Organize a Sunday school class or Wednesday evening time to gather people from your church together to write cards or notes of appreciation to leaders in your church and community who are intentionally working to make positive impact on mission and social justice ministries and to make a difference in the world. Consider hosting a gratitude event to honor and thank those leaders and celebrate the ministry that they are doing in the church and community. ■



## other articles

“Tis a Gift to Be Simple”  
by Johnathan Taplin  
<http://www.sojo.net/magazine/2005/05/tis-gift-be-simple>

“A Season of Generosity and Gratitude”  
by Walter Brueggemann  
<http://www.sojo.net/magazine/2010/07/season-generosity-and-gratitude?page=show>

“Make a Gratitude Adjustment: Feeling thankful is one key to happiness, so count your blessings for a boost”  
By Lauren Aaronson  
<http://www.psychologytoday.com/articles/200602/make-gratitude-adjustment>

“The Many Advantages of Simple Living”  
by Dave Wann  
<http://www.motherearthnews.com/nature-community/simple-living-zw0z10zphe.aspx>

### Additional Resources: Websites:

<http://www.simpleliving.org>  
<http://www.simplelivingtv.net>  
<http://www.christiansimpleliving.org>  
<http://www.sustainablelivingmagazine.org>  
<http://www.slowfoodusa.org>  
<http://www.spiritualityandpractice.com>  
<http://www.storyofstuff.com>  
<http://www.tenthousandvillages.com>  
<http://www.freecycle.com>  
<http://iowaip.org>