

Dear Fellow Members & Friends,

This week I pondered how to follow up with you on the Earth Day  
“Plant a Tree“ campaign, and a poem from my school days came to mind:

TREES by Joyce Kilmer

I think that I shall never see  
A poem lovely as a tree.

A tree whose hungry mouth is prest  
Against the earth’s sweet flowing breast;

A tree that looks at God all day,  
And lifts her leafy arms to pray;

A tree that may in summer wear  
A nest of robins in her hair;

Upon whose bosom snow has lain;  
Who intimately lives with rain.

Poems are made by fools like me,  
But only God can make a tree.

What a profound statement of *faith*, do you recall it?

Here’s why it has stuck with me all these years. I don’t know exactly which grade it was, but I do remember that it was a spring assignment that required each student to stand in front of class and recite it from memory; just as we also were required to do with President Abraham Lincoln’s Gettysburg Address. Perhaps you also may remember when those two assignments were given thinking, oh no, not in front of the class!?! But then upon completing the assignment feeling really pleased with your success.

Which leads me to report to you that our UCC Ministry of Environmental Justice really needs our help to reach the 50,000 trees planted goal for Climate Action so that when the goal is reached we will feel pleased that we did our part to insure success! Since there’s a ways to go to reach that goal let me review some information from the UCC website on why planting trees is so vital in taking action for our climate change crisis. This paragraph is from an article written by Connie Larkman, UCC Managing Editor and News Director and entitled, “Celebrate Love of Creation by Planting Trees for Earth Day”:

“Trees produce oxygen as they absorb carbon dioxide, reducing the overall concentration of greenhouse gases in the atmosphere. They intercept airborne particulates and help reduce smog. Trees also provide a number of benefits to our

communities. Planted around a home, they reduce energy use, provide shade and act as natural air conditioners. According to the California-based nonprofit Canopy, the evaporation from a single tree can produce the cooling effect of 10 room-size, residential air conditioners operating 20 hours a day.”

Last week I suggested that you consider planting a tree or trees and let me know, or visit the UCC website to look at the options to participate. Today, I call your attention to these options again in hope that, if you haven’t already, that you’ll consider taking action because the trees planted count on the UCC website is 8,787 and the partnering organization, Interfaith Power and Light’s trees planted count is 15,891; so you can see there is a way to go to meet the goal of 50,000.

1. Arbor Day Foundation: For \$1 a tree the Arbor Day Foundation will plant numerous trees on your behalf in a national park. Fires, diseases, and insects have taken their toll on natural settings. Your donation will help to rebuild these areas.
2. UCC Global Ministries: For \$12 a tree, the Organization of African Instituted Churches in Kenya will plant trees on your behalf in areas identified as priority regions for reforestation in East Africa.
3. UCC Global Ministries: For \$12 a tree, Theological Education by Extension in Zambia will train new Climate Ambassadors who will plant trees on your behalf in communities across Zambia.
4. UCC Global Ministries: For \$20 a tree, the YMCA/YWCA of Palestine will plant an olive tree and place your name on a plaque as part of an effort where trees have been the target of Israeli military attacks.
5. Interfaith Power and Light: Plant your own tree or trees or work with another organization of your choosing to plant trees, then click the button here to report how many trees you planted.

Thank you for considering this Climate Action and please contact me if you participate so I may include our number of participants and the number of trees in a report to you when the goal of 50,000 trees planted is reached.

I’m sure many of you remember Henry John Deutschendorf, Jr., better known by his stage name, John Denver. I’m also sure that a flood of his many hit songs come to mind. I invite you to enjoy singing, playing, listening or watching a video of some of those this week, but I also want to highlight another song John wrote called  
“Earth Day Every Day (Celebrate)”

“Celebrate morning  
The cry of a loon on a lake in the night  
the dreams that are born in the dawn’s early light  
Celebrate morning  
Celebrate living  
The laughter that sings in the heart of a child  
The freedom that cries at the call of the wild  
Celebrate living  
Celebrate evening  
The stars that appear in the loss of the sun  
Whispering winds, we are one, we are one  
Celebrate earth day, every day  
Celebrate earth day, every day  
Celebrate land and sea  
Celebrate you and me  
Celebrate earth day, every day.”

You’ll find a video online and please remember to celebrate Earth Day every day  
and take good care!

Bob