

session 2:

THE FOOTPRINTS OF FOSSIL FUELS

Appalachia has long been known as Coal Country. At the height of the area's coal boom, big mining companies would move into small towns, bringing the promise of jobs with them. Unfortunately, most of the profits were kept by larger corporations from outside the region. Local jobs would only last until the coal vein ran dry, at which point the company would move on to another place, leaving many towns devastated socially and economically.

The book of Ezekiel looks forward to a day when devastated towns would be rebuilt in Israel.

Read Ezekiel 36:33-36

In Ezekiel's time, many towns had been devastated by foreign invaders, who destroyed fertile land and ruined economic systems while exiling the Israelite people. Ezekiel's vision describes God restoring the towns to become rich and vibrant once again.

Questions to Consider:

- Why would God want to restore land to fertility?
- Why would God want to restore ruined economies?
- Why would God want to restore towns to vibrant life?





Towns built on fossil fuel economies are famous for going boom and bust, quickly moving from vibrant life to economic devastation, as outside companies show little concern for local people or environments. Around Southeast Ohio, the environmental impact of fossil fuels can be seen in ghost towns as well as streams with acid mine drainage. But the biggest footprint of fossil fuels is the effect they have on global warming.

Watch *The Footprints of Fossil Fuels*

www.westohioumc.org/footprintstudy



In Southeast Ohio, what could make the extraction of fossil fuels unsustainable for the environment? For the economy? For the community?

Social Principle of the UMC

The United Methodist Church seeks to decrease the footprints of fossil fuels, saying, "The whole earth is God's good creation and as such has inherent value. We are aware that the current utilization of energy resources threatens this creation at its very foundation. As members of The United Methodist Church we are committed to approaching creation, energy production, and especially creation's resources in a responsible, careful and economic way. We call upon all to take measures to save energy. Everybody should adapt his or her lifestyle to the average consumption of energy that respects the limits of the planet earth. We encourage persons to limit CO2 emissions toward the goal of one tonne per person annually. We strongly advocate for the priority of the development of renewable energies. The deposits of carbon, oil, and gas resources are limited and their continuous utilization accelerates global warming."

- *The Natural World > Energy Resources Utilization*

Why would God care about developing renewable energies?



Located in Athens, Ohio, Third Sun Solar is a registered B-Corp - a private business dedicated to benefitting the world through environmental sustainability along with building up local communities. We spoke to Third Sun's owners, Michelle and Geoff Greenfield.

Watch *Changing the Climate with Michelle & Geoff Greenfield*

www.westhioumc.org/footprintstudy

Compared to fossil fuels, what could make solar energy more sustainable for the environment? For the economy? For the community?



Change the Climate

Here are a few ideas of ways to reduce your use of fossil fuels, taken from *A Non-Expert's Guide to Living More Sustainably*.

- Use LED, halogen, or CFL bulbs
- Turn the thermostat up a few degrees in summer and down a few degrees in winter.
- Use curtains or blinds to help keep the cold or heat out.
- Wash your clothes in cold water.
- Ask your power company about switching to renewable energy sources.
- Research whether financing a solar system might cost the same as what you're currently paying for electricity!



When it comes to limiting your use of fossil fuels, what is one change you would be willing to make in your personal life? In your church? In your community? Are there any other ideas you would add?

Learn More

Learn more about renewable energy!

- Watch the Third Sun highlight video
- Read the full version of *A Non-Expert's Guide to Living More Sustainably*
- Visit thirdsunsolar.com and ruralaction.org

