

Green Notes: Weekly tips for reducing your carbon footprint from First United Methodist's Green Team:

Don't let Big Oil slow-walk the climate crisis!

You arrive in the city, hop in a taxi and quickly realize the driver is taking anything but a direct route. The ride grows increasingly expensive. You feel helpless, maybe a little angry, until at last your destination comes into view.

But what if the taxi's intentionally circuitous route took you somewhere dangerous, or even deadly? Would you demand that the driver stop? Grab the wheel and seek a safe route? Or simply sit back and accept your fate?

It's an alarming scenario, for sure, but an apt metaphor for the ride we've all been taken on in recent years by Big Oil. While greenhouse gases accumulated at record levels and the planet heated to dangerous, already deadly temperatures, multinational energy interests successfully [diverted our attention away](#) from the indisputable, irreversible consequences of burning fossil fuels.

As the western U.S. burst into flames, Shell Oil reminded us of their commitment to [supporting women in traditionally male-dominated jobs](#). As ever-warmer ocean currents spawned ever-larger and more frequent hurricanes, Chevron claimed solidarity with social justice movements – while [continuing to pollute](#) the Black-majority city where it is headquartered: Richmond, Calif. As polar ice sheets melted, BP touted the “digital innovations” on its massive new oil drilling platform in the Gulf of Mexico.

And we sat back and stayed mostly quiet. We even let Big Oil and their friends in the financial, utility and political worlds shift blame for their mess onto us. “Are you recycling all that you should?” they asked, while pumping out immense new quantities of non-

recyclable plastic goods – made from fossil fuels – and demanding access to the wild places that store Earth’s last large reserves of oil and gas.

And still, we haven’t grabbed the wheel. While three decades of climate-change denialism didn’t work, Big Oil and others with vested interests in burning fossil fuels are successfully [slow-walking the climate crisis](#), buying time while they extract every ounce of oil possible before time literally runs out.

“If they succeed with this grotesque agenda, they’ll lock in such extravagantly high temperatures that I fear the damage will overwhelm our societies,” warns Bill McKibben, author, activist and leader of a [newly formed group](#) intended to not only sound the alarm on these “discourses of delay,” but to launch a counterattack – to demand immediate and wide-ranging action by government at all levels.

This month, First UMC’s Green Team will devote our Green Notes to an examination of Big Oil’s tactics – the [“discourses of delay”](#) – followed by a look at actions we can take to counter these deadly misinformation campaigns. It is long past time, we believe, to grab the wheel.