

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

Demand action at the ballot box – and at COP26!

Events unfolding this week in Glasgow, Scotland, and at polling places across the United States could determine whether our planet will face a full-scale climate catastrophe later this century.

Each of us will live with the consequences of actions taken – or not taken – by leaders of the 197 nations who gather, beginning Sunday, in Glasgow for the United Nations' climate conference known as COP26.

So, too, do our fates rest with the local officials selected in Tuesday's elections. Their actions will determine how aggressively some U.S. cities (including Missoula) and states reduce the greenhouse gas emissions that have increased – rather than decreased – since the last climate conference in 2015.

The Paris Accord, adopted at COP21, was a promise by world leaders to meet self-selected voluntary emission reductions. The goal was to prevent average global temperatures from rising 1.5 degrees Celsius, or 2.7 degrees Fahrenheit, above pre-industrial levels. Instead, the world produced more annual greenhouse gas emissions in 2019 than ever before, equivalent to [more than 60 billion tons](#) of carbon dioxide.

Nations were asked to submit new action plans before this week's meeting in Glasgow. The revised emission reductions put the world on track to warm by 2.7 degrees Celsius (4.86 F) by the end of this century. In other words, these new targets will not slow global warming. To meet the 1.5-degree threshold and avoid ecological and social calamity, the biggest-polluting nations must

radically transition their energy systems away from fossil fuels in the next 10 years.

Meanwhile, the United States' commitment to achieving the needed emission reductions is in disarray because of objections from two senators, [Joe Manchin](#) of West Virginia and Krysten Sinema of Arizona. The remaining 98 senators are either unable or unwilling to take the collective action needed to adopt legislation that would reward utilities for quickly converting to clean, renewable, non-fossil-fuel power sources – the heart of President Biden's climate agenda.

It is time for action by each member of our community of faith. Each of us has an obligation – to one another and to humanity – to demand that elected officials at all levels take immediate, meaningful action to stop global warming. Our leaders – from the delegates in Glasgow to the six Missoula City Council members and mayor who will be elected Tuesday – must heed the science, look with clear and honest eyes at what is happening to our planet, then adopt action plans that match our hope for a healthy and livable world. We stand ready to join them in that endeavor.

ACTION ALERTS: Call or write our U.S. senators and representatives. Let them know you want action now to stop the march toward climate catastrophe. [Here's a link](#) to one such effort by United Methodist Women. You can also add your name to a [petition to President Biden](#), sponsored by Interfaith Power and Light.

Tuesday is Election Day. If you haven't voted yet, be sure to return your ballot to the Missoula County elections office no later than 8 p.m. [Here's a link](#) for more information. Then – and this is important – stand up to those who cast doubt on the outcome. Every election has winners and losers; Tuesday's unsuccessful candidates must accept the results

and find other avenues for public service. That's how we keep our democracy whole.