

# BLESSED EARTH

*Serving God, Saving the Planet*

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## Thawing out for a year of blessings ahead...

Dear friends,

Podcasts, film crews, creation care through missions -- February was anything but a sleepy month in the Sleeth household. Of course, we continue to miss daughter Emma as she enters her second month of service among the poorest of the poor in Chennai, India--providing hospice care where touching people dying of cancer is considered taboo.

Just as it breaks Emma's heart to know that many of these cancers, especially among the young, would have been easily treated in the United States, we are saddened by the rise of preventable cancers here in the U.S. Living in a sea of chemicals is simply not part of God's plan, for us, or for the rest of His creation.

On a brighter note, one of the many high points of the month was a gathering of twenty-five neighbors in our home. Last fall, chatting over the clothes line, a neighbor and I discussed the many ways we could all start living more intentionally.

Already, we share gardens, composting, tools, and childcare. At the potluck dinner at our home (mostly local foods!), we came up with a long list of ideas for living more sustainably. It's so much easier to collect rainwater, can garden produce, grind wheat, and tree-line streets when you are working together.



*Pictured: Dr. Matthew and Nancy Sleeth*

Spring comes early in Kentucky--we have already seen our first robins. In March, we look forward to planting peas, reforesting a section of eastern Kentucky that has been devastated by coal mining, and sharing the creation care message at churches throughout the country.

With every blessing,

**Nancy Sleeth**  
Program Director

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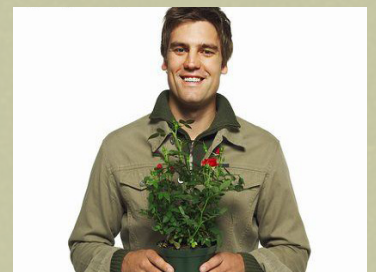
### Creation Care Scripture

“Be exalted, O God, above the heavens, and let your glory be over all the earth.”

**Psalm 108:5**

### Green Tip of the Month

Have a date coming up? When you meet, instead of presenting cut flowers give your date a potted plant that she or he can keep alive for much longer.





# Letters from you...

*Julia Burnett recently shared these words with the congregation of Centenary United Methodist Church in Lexington, KY, just before Matthew Sleeth delivered a sermon about stewardship of God's creation.*

## By Julia Burnett

A little over a year ago, I was led to read Dr. Sleeth's first book, and after reading I heard the Holy Spirit's voice say "contact him NOW" – so I did.

I knew there was a reason God wanted to connect our lives, and God began to unfold a vision and mission of a creation care ministry at Centenary to help our members to learn to be good stewards of the earth and its people.

The next miracles were direct answers to my two greatest fears. First, I had this intimidating vision of going before the board of trustees and inquiring about energy use within the church, specifically the heating and air conditioning system. And, within a month's time, my husband Seth (who had no idea of this fear) was asked to serve on the board of trustees. The very first project he was given was the servicing of the heating and air conditioning system!

My second biggest fear was that I would be the only one who cared. I began

praying for God to raise up leaders, and within a week I was introduced to Zadie Ryan, a fellow church member who shared this passion. Zadie lives in my neighborhood, only three streets down from me.

The list of miracles is actually longer, but I hope you are encouraged to know that this ministry is indeed something important to God. He is already doing a great work among his people and we are choosing to jump in to what He's already doing. This ministry is timely. This ministry is necessary. And this ministry could be an amazing bridge between believers and non-believers.

I sense an awakening, a rustling of sorts, among the Christian community to care about the interconnectedness of all life.

Jesus said the harvest is plentiful, but the workers are few. Will you be a worker and join in? There are endless opportunities to serve. We will need fathers and sons, mothers and daughters, and youth leaders to start a "No Child Left Inside" program. We need parents who take their children away from the TV and outside into God's world, youth leaders to educate our youth and make it fun, dish washers, leaders of mission trips to replant forests in Eastern KY, community garden workers on

the land, grocery shoppers to put away the plastic and the paper and use re-useable grocery bags. There is a place for everyone to serve.

Most importantly, we need followers of Christ who are willing to be inconvenienced to do the right thing — followers of Christ who are willing to live in the world but not of the world, followers of Christ who do not accept the hand we've been dealt to us as, 'Okay, someone else will do it.'

James, the brother of Jesus said, "Faith without works is dead." I pray that the flood gates of your heart may be flung open to take off the old lenses to experience a new way of thinking and a new way of life.

When I met with David Thomas [former senior pastor of Centenary UMC] last year, he was not only super supportive, but he also encouraged me to be an agent for change.

He has a list of national and international accolades, but his humility proceeds him.

Our earth is dying. Arising out of humanity's desperation, the cross is the bridge from knowing to doing. May your heart have ears to hear. ☺

## Prayer & Praise

☺ Safety, endurance, and strength for our daughter, Emma, and our son's girlfriend, Val, as they take care of the dying in Chennai, India.

☺ Provisioning for the proposed twelve-film creation care series, with the makers of the Nooma films

☺ Open hearts and minds as Matthew and Nancy speak to tens of thousands this month in Kentucky, North Carolina, New York, and Massachusetts.

☺ That people be moved in this season of Lent to change at least one consumer habit (forgoing carryout coffee, making the switch to cloth shopping bags), in order to share more with our global neighbors

## MEDIA & SPEAKING EVENTS

### March 1

Lexington, KY  
Dr. Matthew Sleeth  
Southland Christian Church

### March 3

Boiling Springs, NC  
Dr. Matthew Sleeth  
Gardner-Webb University  
Dimensions: Chapel

### March 6

Lake Junaluska, NC  
Dr. Matthew Sleeth  
Lake Junaluska Creation Care  
Conference  
Keynote Speaker

### March 16-20

Houghton, NY  
Dr. Matthew Sleeth  
Houghton College  
Various Activities

### March 16

Olean, NY  
Dr. Matthew &  
Nancy Sleeth  
Christ United Methodist Church:  
Conversations that Matter

### March 17

East Aurora, NY  
Dr. Matthew Sleeth  
Baker Memorial United Methodist  
Church

### March 22

Richmond, KY  
Nancy Sleeth  
Northridge Community Church

### March 29

Byron Center, MI  
Dr. Matthew Sleeth  
Baker Memorial United Methodist  
Church



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## OUR MISSION

*Blessed Earth is an educational nonprofit that inspires and equips faith communities to become better stewards of the earth. Through outreach to churches, campuses and media we build bridges that promote measurable environmental change and meaningful spiritual growth.*

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