



Open Hearts. Open Minds. Open Doors.

The people of The United Methodist Church®

New Heaven and New Earth

RESOURCE GUIDE



Dear Pastor,

It takes a lot to sustain the ministries of a local church. As United Methodists, in our membership vows, we promise to support the ministries of the church with our prayers, presence, witness, service, and our gifts.

Each dollar that is offered through a local United Methodist Church joins with others' and makes it possible to transform lives around the world. The United Methodist structure of connectionalism began as a means of accomplishing the mission of spreading scriptural holiness.

Connectional giving demonstrates that goal by connecting the faithful giving of all United Methodists. The impact of 12.6 million United Methodists' giving helps make a difference outside the walls of congregations locally and globally through food ministries, clothing ministries, rebuilding lives, building hospitals and schools, funding scholarships and reaching out to communities.

Our members often feel financially stressed. They say they don't want to hear about money in the church. It can be challenging to ignite a culture of giving. But the good news is that God has entrusted us with abundance and has promised to create a new heaven and new earth.

This guide contains resources to help you spark that passion and to invite your parishioners into a partnership that together builds God's vision in your community and the world. This toolkit is framed around the God's vision for us as told through Isaiah 65:17-25.

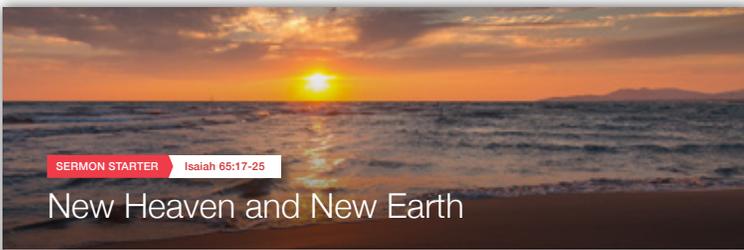
We are praying for you as you take on this important task. Please use and adapt these resources to best fit your community.



Sermon Starter: New Heaven and New Earth

This sermon starter is designed to frame the Isaiah text through the lens of giving in community – **Together We Do More to build up God’s Kingdom**. This vision God has for a New Jerusalem is not in some far of place or time. It is already happening through followers of Jesus Christ.

Help your listeners see the ways that their generosity is already creating signposts to a new heaven and new earth. Challenge them to invest in this vision.



SERMON STARTER Isaiah 65:17-25

New Heaven and New Earth

“Be glad and rejoice forever in what I’m creating, because I’m creating Jerusalem as a joy and her people as a source of gladness.” Isaiah 65:18CEB

Reading this passage from Isaiah fills us with a sense of peace for a vision that God has created for us.

When the world around us is filled with disagreement and suffering, we are assured that **God has a vision of a new heaven and a new earth** that is already being manifested on earth as it is in heaven.

I see this vision of a new heaven and new earth lived out in the life of our church and in our Connection as United Methodists. In this Body of Christ called (church name), I see a God sided vision being lived out in

- the **love and tenderness** as we journey with those who are sick and sit with those

who are dying and care for those who are grieving.

- In the **shared rejoicing** when prayers are answered
- In the **children** who know that this is a place where they belong and they are cherished and. . . I see it in how they return that love and in their desire to know that we will support their dream for what this church can be.

From this community, this Jerusalem, we are **creating God’s dream of beloved community beyond the church walls**.

We are living out the Holy One’s preferred future for us to be the church in the world. Trusting in the creator, we are building relationships and sharing with our neighbors that God loves each and every one of us and there is nothing we can do about it.




after disasters (places being supported through volunteer mission)

- I see a new heaven and new earth being created through our Connection, with every student educated through the Africa University Fund and each ecumenical relationship that is nurtured through the Interdenominational Fund.
- I see a new heaven and a new earth being created every time we stand with those facing injustice, and pray with those who seeks healing, with every dollar placed in the offering plate, and every time we gather as a community of grace for baptisms, weddings, funerals, and

- I see a new heaven and created with every moment donated to the food pantries that address (name these ministries)
- I see a new heaven and created in how we reach out in prison (name the church)
- I see a new heaven and created in the work of support (name and ministry)
- I see a new heaven and in the rebuilding



Christ to reflect the vision of God’s holy joy in the beloved community?

- And what will you do to be part of bringing that vision into the here and now?

We are called to **embrace** the other, to **seek** forgiveness, to **offer** grace.

We respond to God’s grace not only to claim Isaiah’s vision for ourselves, but to experience relationship with God who delights in us and wants us to be whole.

May we have the confidence that we are equipped to partner with God to create a new heaven and new earth not through the powers and principalities of this world but through the teachings and promise found in the life, death, and resurrection of Jesus Christ. Amen

It is so awesome that we are invited to be part of this creation!

We are invited to be part of the transformation of the world for the glory of God as disciples of Jesus Christ!

Together we are more, united as the body of Christ, called to be

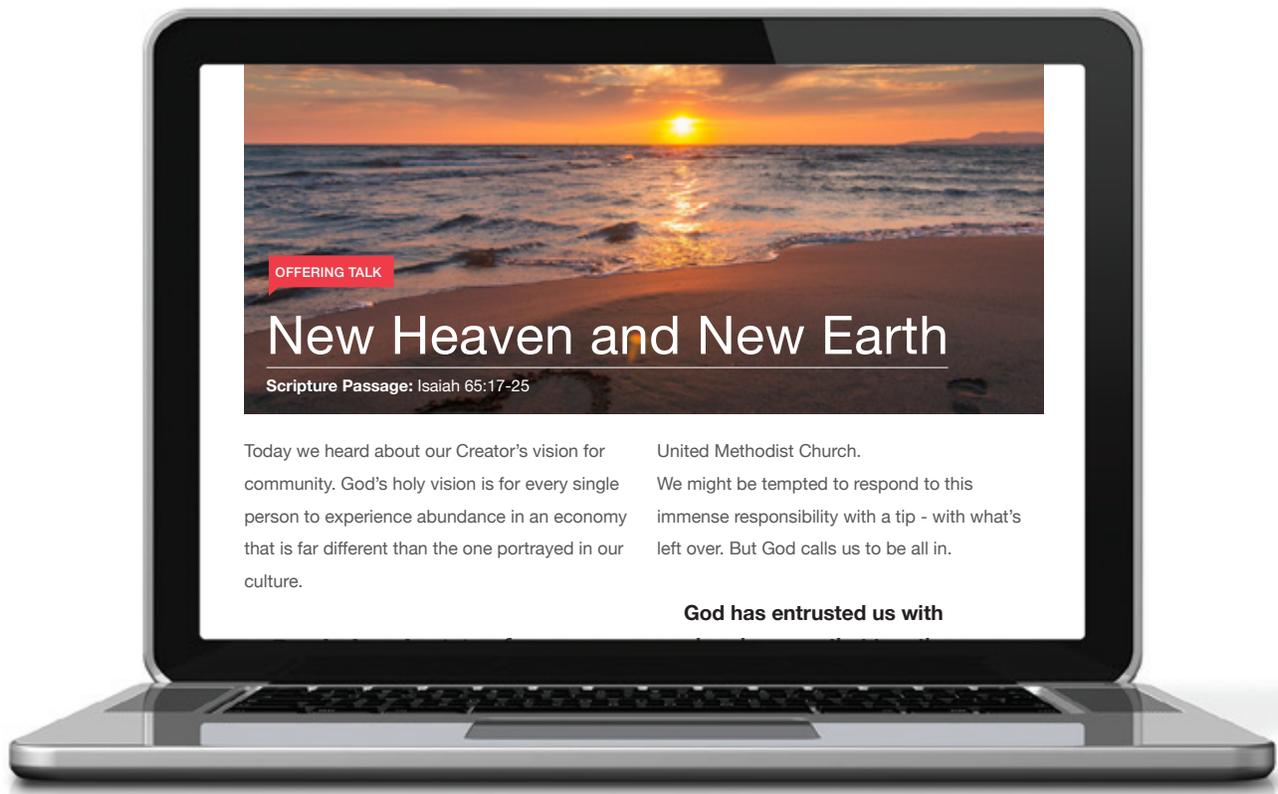
- justice seekers,
- truth tellers, and peace makers.



Offering Talk: New Heaven and New Earth

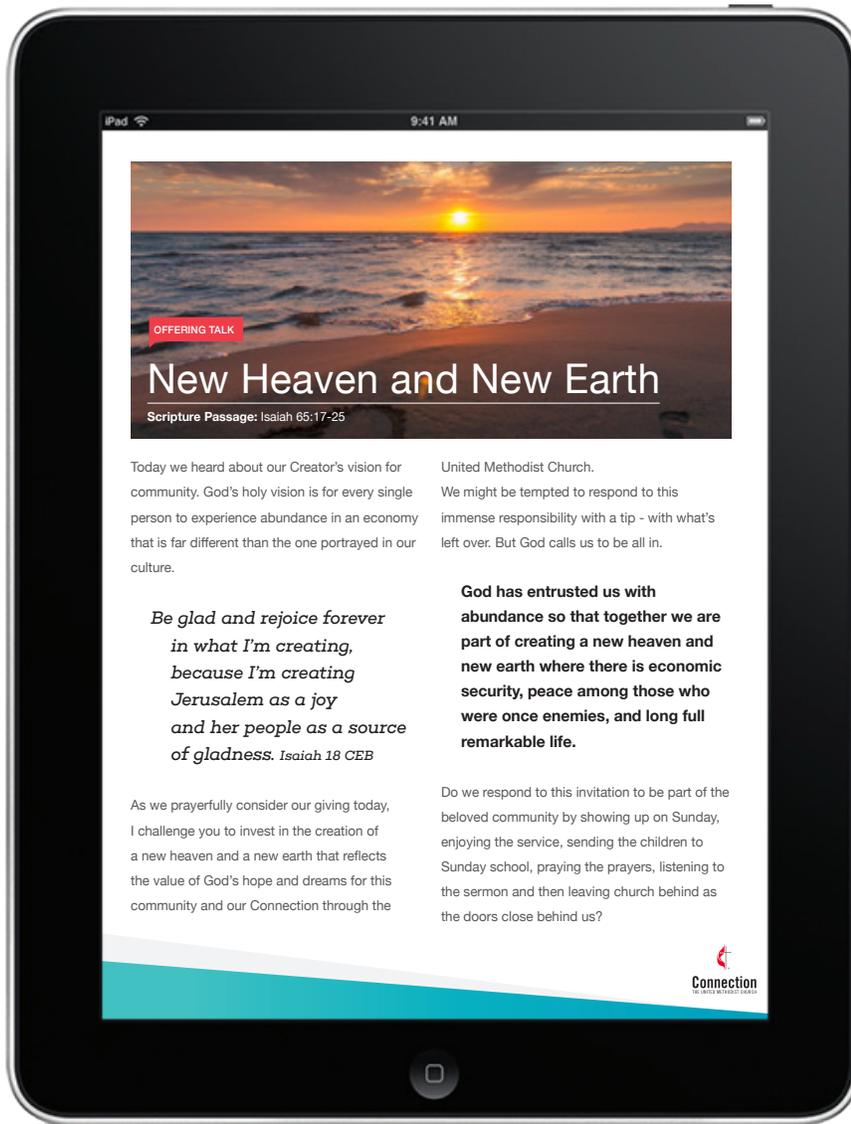
Your members trust you and want to hear how God's word applies to the local church today. But it is helpful to also hear from trusted community members about the impact of giving and to invite the congregation into this culture of generosity. Choose someone from your finance committee or the stewardship chair who is a faithful giver to encourage a partnership that reflects God's love and vision.

The offering talks ties back to the sermon and reminds the congregation that giving through the United Methodist Church touches people around the world. Because we are connectional, together we can do more to heal the brokenness in God's world.



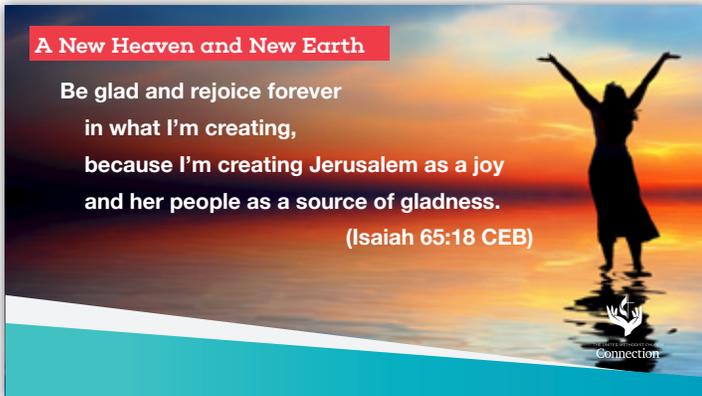
Spotlight on Giving: World Service Fund

To highlight the United Methodist Connection, we included a spotlight on giving to show how the portion of gifts applied to the World Service Fund are used to support the denomination's four areas of focus throughout the world. The ministries of each area of focus are reflected in Isaiah's prophecy, building on the sermon starter and offering talk.



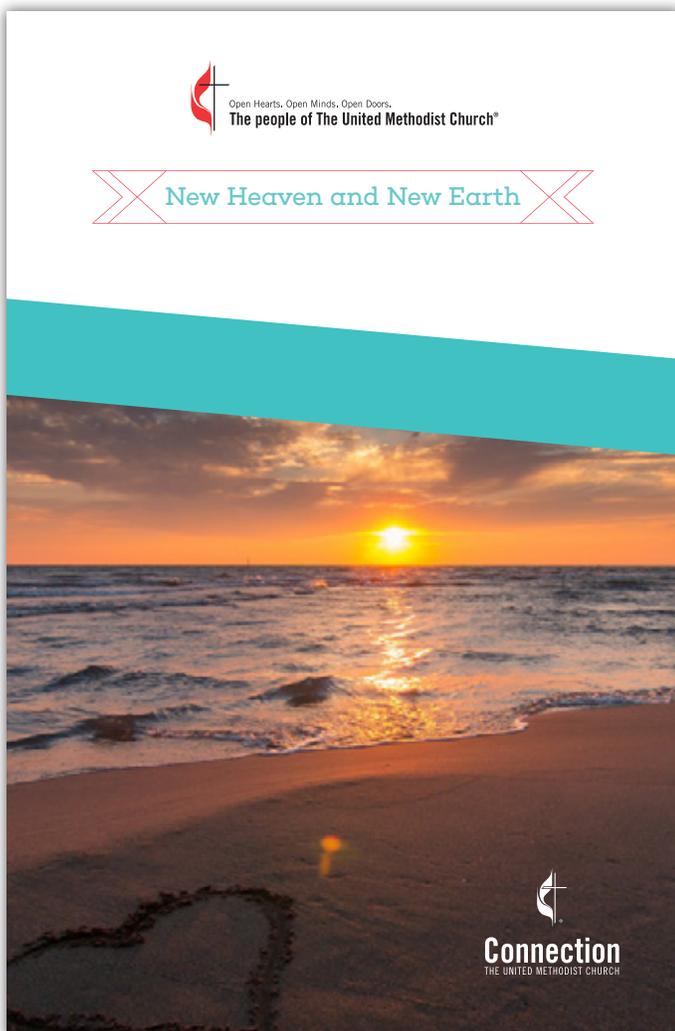
Offering Slides: New Heaven and New Earth

During the offering talk, these slides offer a visual way to express God's hope for communities who are faithfully living out the covenant made with God's people.



Bulletin Insert: New Heaven and New Earth

Use every opportunity to create different ways of processing the message. A bulletin insert is a helpful reminder throughout worship that your church is already living into God's preferred future. It gives the worshipper an opportunity to begin thinking about how s/he will be part of living out that vision through giving.



Look! I'm creating a new heaven and a new earth . . .

Be glad and rejoice forever

in what I'm creating,

because I'm creating Jerusalem as a joy

and her people as a source of gladness.

Isaiah 65:17-18 CEB

God's vision of a new heaven and new earth is lived out in the life of our church. Through our connection with 12.6 million United Methodists, from this community, this Jerusalem, we are living out the Holy One's preferred future for us to be the church in the world.

God has entrusted us with abundance so that together we are part of creating a new heaven and new earth where there is economic security, peace among those who were once enemies, and long full remarkable life. Connectional giving offers us the opportunity to do more together by combining our gifts with other United Methodists to make this vision a reality locally and globally.

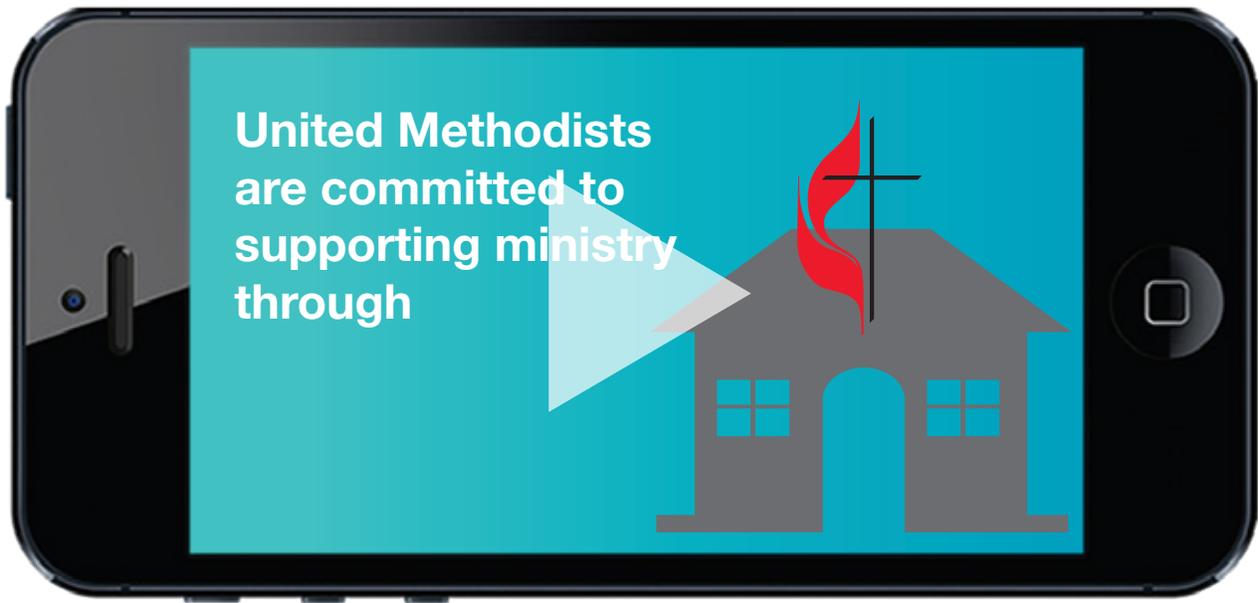
As we prayerfully consider our giving today, accept the challenge to invest in the creation of a new heaven and a new earth that reflects the value of God's hope and dreams for this community and the world.



Videos: New Heaven and New Earth

Videos are a powerful tool to share information in a very short message that combines hearing and seeing. These video messages can be shown the weekend before or during Sunday worship. They might also be uploaded to social media in the week leading up to your worship service. Help members prayerfully prepare their hearts and minds for how they will respond to the invitation.

The video is available in two different lengths to fit your needs.



Social Media Graphics

Post this graphic on social media. Invite others into the joy of giving. Use alone or post with a hashtag to personalize for your community.

