

ECO-PALM SUNDAY

April 5, 2009



A worker in Guatemala sorts and prepares palm fronds for selling.
Courtesy of Lutheran World Relief

Every year, Christian congregations across the nation purchase palm fronds to celebrate Palm Sunday, which commemorates Jesus' triumphal entry into Jerusalem. In that time, the worshipping crowd paved Jesus' path with palms and shouts of "Hosanna!" Today, palms are paving the way for fair trade and a better ecosystem. For harvesters in Guatemala and Mexico, palms symbolize fair wages through the Eco-Palm Project.

The Eco-Palm Project is an effort of the North American Commission for Environmental Cooperation and the University of Minnesota Center for Integrated Natural Resources and Agricultural Management. The project helps to sustain forestry, protect local jobs and helps preserve the livelihoods of small-scale farmers.

UMCOR, along with other denomination agencies, is partnering with the University of Minnesota to build support in the US for the Eco-Palm Project which ensures that palm harvesters in Guatemala and Mexico are earning a fair income for their labor. Support the Eco-Palm Project by raising an Eco-Palm branch on Palm Sunday, April 5.

Environmental Protection

Eco-Palms are harvested in a more sustainable way—harvesters are paid on the quality of their palms rather than the quantity. These communities are committed to using harvesting practices that minimize the impact on the natural forest which helps to protect the environment. Harvesters are trained to gather only quality palm fronds in a way that allows the plant to keep growing. The palms are then brought to a community processing building, where the palms are processed and packaged for export. By processing the palms themselves, these communities keep more of the profits. When we raise our branches, we play an important role in protecting forests, local jobs, and sustainable livelihoods in harvesting communities.

How to Order Eco-Palms

United Methodists are encouraged to support this social and environmental justice project through the purchase of Eco-Palms. Visit www.ecopalms.org or contact Josh Gamble at 1-612- 624-7418 to place your order by March 2.

How to Give

You can also support sustainable agricultural programs by giving to **Sustainable Agriculture and Development, UMCOR Advance # 982188**. Your contributions will enable UMCOR to respond effectively and quickly. Write the # and name of the project on your offering envelope and in the memo line of your check.

Give Online

www.givetomission.org

By Offering

For local church and Annual Conference credit, put your gift in the offering plate on Sunday.

By Check

Make your check to **UMCOR** and mail to UMCOR, PO Box 9068, New York, NY 10087

By Credit Card

Call toll-free (800) 554-8583



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The United Methodist Committee on Relief delivers hope and enhances human dignity through food, shelter, health and peace projects.

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UMCOR is part of The General Board of Global Ministries.