

## **Resolution on Energy Stewardship**

Whereas, we are called to cherish and tend God's creation as a part of our loving and serving God and neighbor; and

Whereas, we in the industrialized world are consuming energy and Earth's resources in a way that is both unsustainable in the future and unfair to those in the developing world; and we hear scientific reports of environmental degradation, global climate change, record rates of species extinction, and a depletion of non-renewable resources that should give us pause; and

Whereas, human activity, especially the over-consumption of energy and natural resources, appears to be a critical driver in these changes in climate and environmental distress, causing harm to God's creation and exacerbating the already difficult situations for millions living with poverty and hunger, particularly as weather extremes such as flood and drought increase; and

Whereas, The Evangelical Lutheran Church in America, recognizing the gravity of these threats, has long been committed to addressing environmental issues as part of our call to justice, sustainability, and solidarity with affected communities and, along with our partners in the Lutheran World Federation and Lutheran World Relief, committed to working to alleviate hunger, poverty, and unsustainable living conditions globally; therefore,

**Be it resolved**, that the congregations, administrative offices, and outdoor ministry facilities of this synod be encouraged to offer a public witness of their care for creation by making a commitment to reduce their "ecological footprint" through promoting and adopting energy stewardship measures by: (1) doing an assessment of energy use in their facilities; (2) taking steps to reduce energy use; (3) encouraging their members to save energy in their homes; and (4) sharing information on the steps taken with the synod's "Green Team" as a way to encourage others to similar actions; and

**Be it further resolved**, that this synod memorialize the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America at its 2011 Churchwide Assembly to challenge all expressions of the ELCA to reduce their energy-related carbon emissions by at least 5 percent per year, with an ultimate goal of reducing our overall emissions by 25-40 percent by 2020, and to share this commitment and steps taken to achieve it in a public way in official publications and communication channels of this church.

Submitted by:

The Rev. Leah Schade, Bridge Pastor, Spirit and Truth Worship Center, Yeadon  
Eco Ministry, Reformation, Media  
Green Team Ministry, St. Luke, Devon  
Green Team Ministry, Trinity, Lansdale

**The Committee on Reference and Counsel recommends approval of this resolution.**

## **Additional Information**

This resolution builds upon a history of past statements and actions in this synod and across the ELCA, calling us to cherish and tend God's creation as part of our loving and serving God and neighbor. Recognizing our call to eco-justice, to addressing hunger and poverty, to faithful stewardship of creation and our finances, this resolution offers a bold witness and a plan for action. It is hoped that a number of synods across the ELCA will adopt this resolution this year, as a way to encourage and challenge one another to reduce our energy use and lessen our carbon footprint. This adds to the voices of 10 other ELCA synods, which took similar action in 2010.

The goal of a 25 – 40 % reduction in carbon emissions by 2020 is in line with what the ELCA has been advocating for at the Federal level, through the ELCA's Washington Office. Setting this goal is a way for us to practice what we preach, as well as to save money on energy expenses for use in other areas of mission and ministry.

### **Implementing this resolution**

Our synod's Green Team, with the help of Lutherans Restoring Creation, stands ready to offer assistance and guidance on the implementation of this resolution and in the sharing of your congregation's results with others. Our synod Team will be in contact with LRC and others that are joining in this effort in a collaborative, coordinated initiative across the ELCA.

Synod green team contact info: The Rev. Leah Schade, [jimleah@aol.com](mailto:jimleah@aol.com); 610-420-6861

**For tools to assess and reduce your energy consumption**, see: Interfaith Power and Light's "Cool Congregations" calculator at <http://coolcongregations.com/>; or the EPA Energy Star Portfolio Manager energy conservation tool at <https://www.energystar.gov/istar/pmpam/>.

### **Additional resources for use in congregational forums**

The following educational and informational materials are highly recommended to help congregants understand the importance of taking these actions, as part of our faith witness:

See [www.elca.org/caringforcreation](http://www.elca.org/caringforcreation) for:

- Climate Change Fact Sheet (2 page pdf)
- What Can You Do? (2 page pdf)
- Poverty and Hunger in a Changing Climate (4 page pdf)
- Climate Change and Hunger in Nicaragua (DVD, 10 min), ELCA study trip Jan 2009 and "As long as the earth endures" (6 page pdf) discussion guide for use with the DVD

#### **Also:**

Lutherans Restoring Creation (LRC) [www.lutheransrestoringcreation.org](http://www.lutheransrestoringcreation.org) and the pages there for the "Lutheran Climate Change Coalition"

ELCA World Hunger Program [www.elca.org/hunger/toolkit](http://www.elca.org/hunger/toolkit) for educational materials that show how hunger and climate change are connected.

ELCA 1993: *Caring for Creation: Vision, Hope and Justice* [www.elca.org/socialstatements](http://www.elca.org/socialstatements)

ELCA Mission Investment Fund [www.elca.org/mif/green](http://www.elca.org/mif/green)

The Pew Center on Global Climate Change [www.pewclimate.org](http://www.pewclimate.org) (non-partisan; sound science)

See also <http://www.pewclimate.org/WhatYouCanDo/tips>