

R-3: Calling for A Just Transition to 50% Reduction in US Greenhouse Gas Emissions by 2030

WHEREAS, our faith commands us to love “your neighbors as yourselves” (see Luke 10:27); and

WHEREAS, “made in the image of God, we are called to care for the earth as God cares for the earth”¹; and

WHEREAS, we acknowledge that Indigenous Peoples, whose ancestors originally cared for the land that feeds us, make up less than 5% of the global population and protect over 80% of the biodiversity² that sustains us all; and

WHEREAS, “the global environment with its finite resources is a common concern of all peoples. The protection of Earth’s vitality, diversity, and beauty is a sacred trust”³; and

WHEREAS, the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC) reported that in order to avoid catastrophic consequences of climate change, global warming needs to be limited to 1.5 degrees Celsius; and

WHEREAS, the planet has already warmed 1.1 degree Celsius since pre-industrial times, causing record-smashing wildfires, hurricanes, heat waves, droughts, ocean acidification, and species loss⁴; and

WHEREAS, climate change is already leading to the destruction and displacement of peoples’ homes, food sources, and well-being (leading to at least 30.7 million climate displaced persons in 2020 according to the Internal Displacement Monitoring Centre (IDMC))⁵; and

WHEREAS, Indigenous, Black, People of Color and communities impacted by poverty have contributed the least to climate change and are the most impacted by it⁶; and

¹ 1993 ELCA Social Statement Caring for Creation: Vision, Hope, and Justice

² <https://www.wri.org/insights/numbers-indigenous-and-community-land-rights> and <https://www.scientificamerican.com/article/biodiversitys-greatest-protectors-need-protection/>

³ Earth Charter (adopted at the 2019 ELCA Churchwide Assembly), full text which was endorsed can be found at: <https://earthcharter.org/>

⁴ IPCC, 2021: Summary for Policymakers. In: Climate Change 2021: The Physical Science Basis. Contribution of Working Group I to the Sixth Assessment Report of the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change [MassonDelmotte, V., P. Zhai, A. Pirani, S.L. Connors, C. Péan, S. Berger, N. Caud, Y. Chen, L. Goldfarb, M.I. Gomis, M. Huang, K. Leitzell, E. Lonnoy, J.B.R. Matthews, T.K. Maycock, T. Waterfield, O. Yelekçi, R. Yu, and B. Zhou (eds.)]. Cambridge University Press. In Press.

⁵ <https://www.internal-displacement.org/global-report/grid2021/>

⁶ <https://nca2018.globalchange.gov/>

WHEREAS, the United States has contributed more greenhouse gas to the atmosphere historically than any other country⁷; and

WHEREAS, we have a realistic chance of meeting the goal of not exceeding 1.5 degrees Celsius of warming if the United States reaches at least a 50% reduction of greenhouse gas emissions by 2030 and equitable net zero emissions by 2050⁸; and

WHEREAS, to reduce greenhouse gas emissions by at least 50% by 2030 the United States will need a World War II sized mobilization that includes government investment, public-private partnerships, binding emission reduction targets, and possibly a carbon fee and dividend; and

WHEREAS, a just transition from a fossil-fuel based economy will lead to better health⁹, family-sustaining jobs¹⁰, clean air and water for communities historically left behind, and a safer, more sustainable future for our children and future generations;

THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED, that the Northern Illinois Synod memorialize the 2022 Churchwide Assembly of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America that the ELCA Churchwide Organization continues to call upon the leadership of the United States of America to reduce its greenhouse gas emissions by at least 50% by 2030, generate 100% of its power from clean renewable sources by 2035, and achieve net zero emissions by 2050; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that the ELCA Churchwide Organization will continue to equip and encourage congregations, synods, and associated ministries to advocate that the United States of America reduce its greenhouse gas emissions by at least 50% by 2030, generate 100% of its power from clean renewable sources by 2035, and achieve net zero emissions by 2050; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that the ELCA Churchwide Organization encourages congregations and synods to advocate for a just transition away from greenhouse gasses where at least 40% of the funding goes towards projects that directly benefit communities made up of Indigenous, Black, People of Color, and those impacted by poverty, who bear a disproportionate cost of pollution and climate change already; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that the ELCA Churchwide Organization will support these actions through investments in staff, education, tools, and resources that equip congregations, synods, and associated ministries to accomplish this goal and leverage knowledge, skills, and experience across the church; and

⁷ <https://www.carbonbrief.org/analysis-which-countries-are-historically-responsible-for-climate-change>

⁸ <https://www.unep.org/news-and-stories/press-release/cut-global-emissions-76-percent-every-year-next-decade-meet-15degc>

⁹ <https://www.who.int/publications/i/item/cop24-special-report-health-climate-change>

¹⁰ <https://newclimateeconomy.report/>

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that congregants, rostered ministers, and bishops be encouraged to further educate themselves to the urgency of the climate emergency both locally and globally as well as to the local and global opportunities a just transition will create; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that rostered ministers and bishops will be encouraged to lift up loving our neighbor in response to the climate emergency through their preaching at least once a month; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the Northern Illinois Synod and the ELCA Churchwide Organization will encourage and cooperate with Lutherans Restoring Creation and other faith-based and secular organizations that share our commitment to the protection and restoration of the natural world while doing justice for all.¹¹

Contact Person: Rev. Jeff Schlesinger

Heart of Illinois Lutheran Parish (First Lutheran, Lee & Immanuel Lutheran,
Compton

Submitted by: Ms. Carolyn Ciaccio, Rev. Scott Ralston, Ms. Joan Soltwisch, Ms. Becky Keller, Rev. Jeff Schlesinger, Rev. Jamie Gallagher, Rev. Carol Soderholm, Rev. Chad McKenna, Rev. Julie Monnard, Rev. Jacob Gawlik, Ms. Greta Bates.

Action of the Resolution Committee: Forward without recommendation

Date of Action: April 21, 2022

¹¹ For suggested organizations to connect with in doing this work please visit:
<https://lutheransrestoringcreation.org/actions-for-a-just-transition-to-a-healthier-climate-for-all/>

**2022 Northern Illinois Synod Assembly
Anticipated Implementation Analysis for Assembly Resolutions**

(This resource impact form must accompany any Resolution submitted)

Resolution Title: Memorial Calling for a Just Transition to 50% Reduciton in US Greenhouse Gas Emissions by 2030

Anticipated financial cost for implementation of resolution, if adopted, for:

Synod Organization: \$0

Congregations: \$0

Anticipated staff time or other personnel implications of resolution, if adopted, for:

Synod Organization: As this resolution is primarily memorializing the Churchwide organization
there is not a direct implication to the synod staff, committees or the
congregations of the synod. However the contents of the resolution

Congregations: is to be taken under advisement as the ministries of the synod
unfold.

Name of person completing this form: Rev. Jeff Schlesinger

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