

10-01 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 there are disturbing 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 both harm to God's creation and exacerbating already difficult situations for millions living with poverty and hunger, 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 energy stewardship by: (1) Measuring the greenhouse gas emissions (i.e., "carbon footprint") of the facilities they own, to establish a baseline starting point; and (2) With the assistance of environmental liaison, Pr. Nancy Wright [see Addendum to this resolution], conduct an energy audit to determine what options there are for reducing energy use; and (3) Make a commitment to decrease their carbon footprint by a certain percentage over a specified period of time through energy conservation, efficiency, or clean energy measures; and be it further

RESOLVED, That the congregations, administrative offices, and outdoor ministry facilities of this synod be invited to share this information with the environmental liaison, Pr. Nancy Wright, synod office and, where applicable, on ELCA congregational reporting forms, and subsequently also share what energy-saving steps were taken, and what measurable energy savings realized, as evidenced in a lower carbon footprint measurement; 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 greenhouse gas emissions by at least 5 percent per year with the ultimate goal of reducing these emissions 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 Vermont and New York Conference, New England Synod

See addendum which follows.

Addendum – Additional Information for the Resolution on Energy Stewardship

Background

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 (and that additional synods will follow suit in 2011), as a way to encourage and challenge one another to reduce our energy use and lessen our carbon footprint.

The goal of a 25 – 40 % reduction in greenhouse gas 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 “walk the talk,” as well as to save money from energy expenses for use in other areas of mission and ministry.

Implementing this resolution

Our synod’s environmental liaison, Pr. Nancy Wright, 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 (or other coordinator) contact info: The Rev. Nancy Wright (pastornancy@alcvt.org); Ascension Lutheran Church, S. Burlington, Vermont (802) 86208866.

* For tools to measure your carbon footprint, see www.lutheransrestoringcreation.org
(Anticipated ready date, Sept 2010, if not sooner)

* For tools to conduct a comprehensive energy audit of your congregation or home, consult with each states office of Interfaith Power and Light (www.InterfaithPowerandLight.org).

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 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
 - “As long as the earth endures” (6 page pdf) discussion guide for use with the DVD
- *Hard copies of many of these are available – See synod Team and/or assembly display table.

ELCA World Hunger Program www.elca.org/hunger/toolkit for educational materials that show how hunger and climate change are connected.

The Pew Center on Global Climate Change www.pewclimate.org (non-partisan; sound science)
See also <http://www.pewclimate.org/WhatYouCanDo/tips>

ELCA 1993: *Caring for Creation: Vision, Hope and Justice* www.elca.org/socialstatements

Lutherans Restoring Creation (LRC) www.lutheransrestoringcreation.org