

Care of Creation Green Teams

Resolution #3

WHEREAS, Genesis 1 emphasizes the goodness of all that God has created and stresses humanity's role as caretakers for all of creation; and

WHEREAS, human activity can impact creation for good or for ill, and many past and current practices have been shown to have a harmful impact upon God's good creation refer to background information; and

WHEREAS, the work of God's people is to embody the love of God and to live in the hope that change for the better is possible; and

WHEREAS, John 3:16 declares that God's love is for "all the world"; therefore be it

RESOLVED, that the congregations in the Northwest Synod of Wisconsin commit to taking the faithful step of caring for God's creation by forming congregational Green Teams whose on-going purpose is to promote awareness while challenging the congregation to implement effective practices that protect and promote the health of creation; and be it further

RESOLVED, that the Northwest Synod of Wisconsin will provide training to equip members of these Green Teams as well as video materials appropriate for worship and/or educational events.

Background Information: On April 17, 2021 the NWSWI Assembly approved a "Resolution in Support of Creation Care" that urges "all members to exemplify personal and institutional care for Creation by practicing energy conservation, purchasing energy efficient items, investing in renewable energy, and eliminating single-use plastics."

Supporting ELCA documents include:

"Church in Society: A Lutheran Perspective" (1991)

"Caring for Creation: Vision, Hope and Justice" (1993)

"Sufficient, Sustainable Livelihood for All" (1999)

Click here to read the 1993 social statement on the Environment.

<https://www.elca.org/Faith/Faith-and-Society/Social-Statements/Caring-for-Creation>

Climate Change-We Cannot Deny It Any Longer

"In God we trust. All others must bring data." by W. Edwards Deming

We have been hearing about climate change for years. It seemed like something that happens to people somewhere else, but not here in Wisconsin. The data is in. We cannot deny it any longer. Wisconsin's climate is continuing to change, and there are wide-ranging effects to our land, water, businesses, people and ecosystems. If you feel like there are milder winters, less snowpack, more rain, and more severe weather events, you are correct.

The issues and impacts produced by this changing climate are already being felt and will become more drastic as the climate continues to warm. According to the *Wisconsin Initiative on Climate Change Impacts*' (WICCI) 2021 Assessment Report, here are the climate takeaways:

- Wisconsin's average daily temperature has become three degrees Fahrenheit warmer since the 1950s.
- The last two decades have been the warmest on record, and the past decade has been the wettest.
- Wisconsin has become wetter – average precipitation has increased 17 percent (about five inches) since 1950.
- Warming is happening fastest in the winter and at night.
- Southern Wisconsin has experienced the highest increase in precipitation.
- Very extreme precipitation events will increase in the future.
- Extreme events are already causing immense impacts across the state, and the frequency of those events will generally increase.ⁱ

The report contains additional information on how these climate changes are affecting the land, water, built environments, people, and ecosystems.

The WICCI also recognizes that climate change is a justice issue.

As climate change and the need for solutions are becoming more apparent, so too is the recognition that environmental and climate justice must be an integral aspect of our response. While not the focus of this report, WICCI scientists and practitioners underscore that historically disadvantaged communities bear a disproportionate burden and suffer the greatest harms and risks from climate impacts such as flooding, worsening air quality, heat waves, and drought. For example, changing conditions for plants and wildlife have uniquely affected Native Americans' important cultural, treaty, and subsistence resources. Decision-makers should acknowledge and understand these uneven impacts of climate change to ensure solutions are effective and equitable.ⁱⁱ

The WICCI report makes one thing clear; the climate is changing, and the results are adversely affecting Wisconsin families, businesses, and ecosystems. We will need to deal with climate change either now or later.

The solution is not a surprise. We need to decrease carbon emissions and promote environmental and climate justice by investing in solutions that reduce greenhouse gas emissions and associated climate impact.ⁱⁱⁱ It is an issue of justice, even the scientists recognize this. Our God is a God of justice. What are we, the people of God, going to do?

ⁱ Wisconsin's changing climate: Impacts and solutions for a warmer climate. 2021. Wisconsin Initiative on Climate Change Impacts, University of Wisconsin-Madison and the Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources, Madison, Wis.

ⁱⁱ Ibid. page 5

ⁱⁱⁱ Ibid. page 6

"The question is how far are we willing to go? And how fast are we willing to allow the climate to change? Our actions now will make a huge difference for avoiding the worst outcomes." –Dan Vimont, Professor of Atmospheric and Oceanic Sciences and Director of the Nelson Institute Center for Climatic Research, UW-Madison

"Some of us do have hope, others not so much. But that all depends on whether you want to take a more realistic perspective or a more hopeful perspective. People my age talk about whether we want to be parents and ask why would I bring a child into a world that is dying. There are big anxieties that we have to consider every day, knowing that water scarcity and air pollution could get worse.... Personally, the way I like to view climate change is, to be realistic. We will have to deal with climate change by 2050, one way or another." – Stephanie Janeth Salgado Altamirano, Co-founder, Youth Climate Action, Madison, Wis.