

ESTF resolutions

No resolutions in 2014, 2015, 2017, or 2019. No minutes for 2020

2018

RESOLUTION C – ON ENVIRONMENTAL STEWARDSHIP

Whereas, human caused climate change and pollution present grave and urgent threats to God's good creation and to the well being of humans and of our fellow creatures; and
Whereas, we are tasked by God to be faithful stewards of creation and to be loving neighbors to those impacted by the wounding of creation; and
Whereas, many people and organizations have joined to reduce the damage we humans are inflicting on the environment to lessen the impacts of climate change and pollution, therefore,
be it

Resolved, that each congregation and baptized member of this Synod be encouraged to make a prayerful, informed assessment of how they are currently involved in the brokenness and the healing of the environment; and be it further

Resolved, that each congregation and baptized member be encouraged to identify and commit to specific steps that they will take to diminish their role in climate change and pollution and how they will participate in working towards effective ways to address both their causes and impacts; and be it further

Resolved, that the Environmental Stewardship Task Force provides each congregation of the North/West Lower Michigan Synod with resources to assess its level of awareness of and response to the crisis of climate change. Congregations will be invited to submit a written response including additional steps they are considering. The ESTF will endeavor to offer appropriate encouragement and support to those wishing to take next steps.

Submitted by,

Environmental Stewardship Task Force; including.

Kim Winchell, Linn Kracht, Ellen Schoepf, John Burow, Laurie Swanson, John Schleicher, and Erick Johnson

2016

RESOLUTION A – ENVIRONMENTAL STEWARDSHIP

Whereas, we are called by our Creator to participate in the sacred task of caring for the Earth, our home; and

Whereas, we affirm that God's plan is to bring all creation together, everything in heaven and earth with Christ as head, who is already present in all of creation in both its brokenness and its goodness, and that a faithful church will in its worship and actions anticipate the completion of

God's plan; and

Whereas, we acknowledge our complicity in wounding the earth, bringing our home to its current crisis as stated by Bishop Elizabeth Eaton in her September, 2014 pastoral letter (see Appendix to Resolution A): therefore be it

Resolved, that the North/West Lower Michigan Synod, recognizing the need for ongoing reformation of the ELCA, memorialize the 2016 Churchwide Assembly of the ELCA to make climate change and ecological justice major themes in ELCA planning and activities leading up to and following the observance of the 500th anniversary of the Reformation; and be it further

Resolved, that this synod will find specific ways to enact the 2013 Churchwide Assembly action to "support and encourage synods, congregations, members, the churchwide organization, and agencies and institutions of this church to adopt and advocate for policies that reduce energy use, and with it our dependence on fossil fuels, as an expression of this church's commitment to address climate change and to care for God's creation" and "to re-examine lifestyles and environmental footprints as they relate to the climate crisis and to improve their stewardship of energy resources and promote care for God's creation;" and be it further

Resolved, that this synod commits itself to participate with the ELCA in becoming even more faithfully a church that embraces creation care throughout its life and mission, guided by an environmental stewardship task force of the Publicly Engaged Church.

Submitted by Pastors John Schleicher, John Burow, Erick Johnson, Richard McKenzie, and Ellen Schoepf, and congregational members Laurie Swanson and Linn Kracht; supported by Publicly Engaged Church, Chairperson Pastor Ken Ponds

APPENDIX TO RESOLUTION A - ENVIRONMENTAL STEWARDSHIP

From Bishop Elizabeth Eaton in her September 2014 pastoral letter:

"Daily we see and hear the evidence of a rapidly changing climate. Glaciers are disappearing, the polar ice cap is melting, and sea levels are rising. Incidents of pollution-created dead zones in seas and the ocean and toxic algae growth in water supplies are occurring with greater frequency. Most disturbingly, the concentration of carbon dioxide in the atmosphere is rising at an unprecedented rate. At the same time we also witness too many instances of how the earth's natural beauty, a sign of God's wonderful creativity, has been defiled by pollutants and waste... The present moment is a critical one, filled with both challenge and opportunity to act as faithful individuals and churches in solidarity with God's good creation;"

2021

Resolution A – Toward a Creative, Dedicated Reduction of Disposable Plastics – was submitted by the Environmental Stewardship Task Force of the Publicly Engaged Church Table. One Voting Member spoke to the assembly in favor of this resolution. With no other requests to speak, the motion to approve the resolution was placed before the assembly.

RESOLUTION A

Toward a Creative, Dedicated Reduction of Disposable Plastics

Whereas, there is a growing mindfulness of the degradation of the earth with the ubiquitous presence of plastics (an estimated 86 million tons of plastic packaging produced annually), especially of single-use which are not or cannot be recycled properly, polluting our oceans, waterways, and communities, negatively impacting our health as well as the health of land- and marine-based ecosystems; and

Whereas, as members of the Body of Christ, and specifically of the ELCA since the adoption in 1993 of the social statement, Caring for Creation, we have challenged each other to steadfastly care for creation with vision, hope, and justice, praying for the creativity and dedication “to live more gently with the earth”; and

Whereas, every congregation and every member of our synod can be a bearer of hope and a courageous witness to God’s profound involvement with and love for this increasingly despoiled world; therefore be it

Resolved, that we, as voting members of this Synod Assembly, commit to a sustained awareness of the urgency to radically reduce our own use of disposable plastics, finding and creatively using sustainable, reusable alternatives; and be it further

Resolved, that we ask the Synod Council, our Bishop, and every rostered leader to assist us in urging our congregations to likewise adopt creative and dedicated alternative practices; and be it further

Resolved that we, as the North/West Lower Michigan Synod and as individual members and as congregations pray for the courage and fluency to publicly share our concerns and our hopes with local, national, and international businesses urging them to move quickly and rigorously in utilizing and promoting reusable and/or biodegradable products.

Submitted by the following members of the Environmental Stewardship Task Force of the Publicly Engaged

Church Table and other members of the synod:

ESTF Members: John Burow, Ellen Schoepf, Erick Johnson, Linn Kracht, John Schleicher, Kim Winchell, and Laurie Swanson

Others: Kimberly O’Brien, Adell Dingleline, Brielle Bowers (all Faith, Okemos); Paul Schmidt, Hunter Whitman, Matthew Smith (all Bethlehem, Lansing); Haley Vay Beaman, Stephanie Hall (both University Lutheran); Alex Aivars (St. Stephen, Lansing) ; C.J. & Amanda Clark, John & Barbara Wyns, Roy Field, Lisa Payne, David A Dietrich, Mary Jo Thies-Dietrich from Trinity New Era; Wayne Shearier, Holy Trinity Lutheran, Niles; Natalie Dingleline, Jack Dingleline, Cecelia Kramer, Warren Heilman, Rick Beaderstadt, Tammy Heilman, Gwynne Kadrofske, Ellen Holste, Tula Ngasala from Faith Lutheran, Okemos. Marcia Schultz, Our Savior's Lutheran Church, Edmore, MI; Barbara Paff, St. Paul Evangelical Lutheran; Susan Callahan, Cheryl Tsuchiyama, Ken Tsuchiyama, Colleen Kracht, St. Peter Lutheran, Battle Creek; Kris Burow, Bethlehem, Lansing; Richard A. Moe, St. Paul Lutheran, East Lansing; Michael Anton, rostered pastor of Synod; Miriam Bunge, University Lutheran, Lansing; Chuck Forester, Immanuel, Grand

Ledge; Karla Chamberlain, Judy Salminen, Luanne Beaudry, Robin Bosgraaf, Nancy Yeager, James Domine, Juan Velasquez, Meredith Hines, Charlene Crebo, and Robert Myers, all of Grace in Lansing; Richard D. McKenzie, Immanuel, Grand Ledge; Kathryn Griffin, St. Paul, East Lansing; Church Council from Peace Lutheran, Holland; Jake Lehman, Trinity Lutheran, Kalamazoo.

Motion SA21.05.18 To approve Resolution A – Toward a Creative, Dedicated Reduction of Disposable Plastics.

Adopted 167-Yes; 7-No

Rev. Kamphuis presented Resolution B – Responding to the Climate Emergency – which was also submitted by the Environmental Stewardship Task Force. This resolution generated more discussion with four members of the task force speaking in favor. No opposition was presented from other Voting Members and the motion to adopt the resolution was placed before the assembly.

RESOLUTION B

Responding to the Climate Emergency

Whereas, in 1993 with the Caring for Creation social statement, we, in the ELCA realized the urgency was already “widespread and serious, according to the preponderance of evidence from scientists worldwide [of] dangerous global warming, caused by the buildup of greenhouse gases, especially carbon dioxide” from the burning of fossil fuels, and that “action to counter degradation, especially within this decade, is essential to the future of our children and our children’s children”; and

Whereas, the most recent report by the 2019 U.N. Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change claims continued greenhouse gas emissions will cause “long-lasting changes in all components of the climate system, increasing the likelihood of severe, pervasive and irreversible impacts for people and ecosystems”; and

Whereas, while actions of individuals and congregations responding to the climate emergency may well serve as significant prophetic and anticipatory symbols; only bioregional, national and international regulations, policies and corporate commitments could adequately reduce the pace of climate change and lead to equitable means of adaptation; therefore be it Resolved, that this Synod declares that the climate emergency is a spiritual and moral crisis that calls for an urgent, faith-rooted response similar to the demands for justice and mercy voiced by the Hebrew prophets, by Jesus and the New Testament writers; and be it further Resolved, that this Synod through the office of the Bishop, the Publicly Engaged Church Table, the Environmental Stewardship Task Force and its rostered leaders be encouraged to publicly and consistently advocate for those policies, corporate practices and governmental cooperation that would slow the pace of climate change and promote equitable adaptations; and be it further;

Resolved that the congregations of this Synod be encouraged to commit themselves to learning, prayer and repentance leading to faithful environmental stewardship and care for those most affected by climate change.

Submitted by: John Burow, John Schleicher, Ellen Schoepf, Erick Johnson, Laurie Swanson, Kim Winchell, & Linn Kracht

Supporting resolution: C.J. and Amanda Clark, John & Barbara Wyns, Roy Field, Lisa Payne, David A. Dietrich, Mary Jo Thies-Dietrich, Trinity in New Era; Marcia Schultz, Our Savior's Lutheran, Edmore; Wayne Shearier, Holy Trinity Lutheran, Niles; Matt Smith, Bethlehem Evangelical Lutheran, Lansing; Barbara Paff, St. Paul, Lutheran, East Lansing; Susan Callahan, Cheryl Tsuchiyama, Ken Tsuchiyama, St. Peter Lutheran, Battle Creek; Richard A. Moe, St. Paul Lutheran, East Lansing; Pastor Michael Anton, Rostered pastor; Miriam Bunge, University Lutheran, Lansing; Tula Ngasala, Jack and Nataline Dinledine, Cecelia Kramer, Rick Beaderstadt, Gwynn Kadrofake all from Faith, Okemos; Chuck Forestee, Immanuel, Grand Ledge; Richard D. McKenzie, Immanuel, Grand Ledge; Kathryn Griffin & Pat Cramer St. Paul, East Lansing; Church Council from Peace Lutheran, Holland; Jake Lehman, Trinity, Kalamazoo.

Motion SA21.05.19 To approve Resolution B – Responding to the Climate Emergency.

Adopted 167-Yes; 7-No