

Responding to the Kairos Moment of the Climate Crisis (from Synod EcoFaith Network)

WHEREAS, God created human beings in God's image as part of the whole web of creation and placed humans in the garden of earth "to serve and preserve" it (Genesis 1:27; 2:15); and

WHEREAS, through its 1993 Social Statement, "Caring for Creation: Vision, Hope, and Justice," the ELCA has emphasized God's promise for the fulfillment of all creation and humanity's interdependent role in the flourishing of creation; and

WHEREAS, in its 2022 "Draft Social Message on Earth's Climate Crisis," the ELCA asserted that "climate change presents our generation with a *Kairos* moment; that is, a critical moment in time when decisive action is required," and issued several challenges to all expressions of this church (congregation, synod, and Churchwide) that included:

- Promoting creation care through preaching and through worship and educational resources,
- Reducing greenhouse gas emissions through investing in energy efficiency and renewable energy systems,
- Assessing how church grounds can be used to promote biodiversity and to encourage life-giving relationships with creation,
- Engaging in legislative advocacy at all levels of government for creation's wellbeing, and
- Joining with ecumenical, interfaith, and secular partners working to address the climate crisis; and

WHEREAS, the Northeastern MN Synod's EcoFaith Network has, since being established by the synod at its assembly in 2008, assisted the synod in its stated pledge "to grow as individuals and congregations within the synod by:

- Worshiping in ways that celebrate and foster care for creation,
- Educating adults and children about ecological issues and energy conservation,
- Improving energy conservation efforts in church buildings and on their grounds,
- Promoting earth-friendly practices of members at home and work,
- Demonstrating the care of creation in their communities, and
- Advocating for energy policies at the state and national levels that will foster cleaner, renewable, and more efficient energy use in all sectors of society;" and

WHEREAS, the Northeastern MN Synod in its 2009 assembly strongly urged "all of its member congregations to actively engage in reducing their carbon footprints," conduct energy audits "for all church owned properties," and form congregation creation care teams; and

WHEREAS, the Northeastern MN Synod in its 2014 assembly recognized "Creation Care as integral to each faith practice, lived out in worship, service, study, and witness as a vital component of the church's identity and vocation today;" and

WHEREAS, the EcoFaith Network of the Northeastern MN Synod in its 2019-20 video series discussion, "Called to Arise: Standing at the Intersection of Racism, Inequality, and the

Environment,” co-organized with the synod’s Together Here Ministries, identified Racial justice, Economic justice, and Environmental justice as essential elements of the church’s witness today; and

WHEREAS, the Northeastern MN Synod in its 2022 Strategic Plan identified as one of its strategic goals, “8. Advocate for social justice. Educate, empower, and engage leadership in anti-racism work, creation care, LGBTQIA+, mental health, and reconciliation work to strengthen our congregational ministries in these areas,” and added a footnote, “Some goals may have the potential to add new roles to the bishop’s staff to support new ministry in partnership with congregational leaders;” and

WHEREAS, the Northeastern MN Synod has leaders on synod staff that are engaged in anti-racism work, LGBTQIA+ ministry, and mental health, but not yet creation care; and

WHEREAS, the EcoFaith Network of the Northeastern MN Synod has continued to engage congregations in and beyond our synod to integrate creation care into their ministries, through cluster meetings in each conference, EcoFaith summits, a weekly preaching resource, a monthly e-newsletter Green Blades Rising, micro-grants, a website with videos and resources, and in-person and virtual presentations and discussion groups; and

WHEREAS, the EcoFaith Network of the Northeastern MN Synod has been funding its work with a current annual budget of \$20,000, supported primarily through the generosity of individuals, congregations, and partner organizations (e.g. St. Paul Area Synod, NW Wisconsin Synod, and Luther Seminary); therefore, be it

RESOLVED, that the Northeastern MN Synod, meeting in assembly, renew our commitment to live out God’s call to be stewards of the earth for the sake of the whole creation; and be it further

RESOLVED, that the Northeastern MN Synod declare that racial justice, economic justice, and environmental justice, in their distinctiveness and intersectionality, are essential components of witnessing to the gospel of Jesus Christ today; and be it further

RESOLVED, that the Northeastern MN Synod respond to this *Kairos* moment of the climate crisis as a synod and as congregations by:

- Promoting creation care through preaching and through worship and educational resources,
 - Reducing greenhouse gas emissions through investing in energy efficiency and renewable energy systems,
 - Assessing how church grounds can be used to promote biodiversity and to encourage life-giving relationships with creation,
 - Engaging in legislative advocacy at all levels of government for creation’s wellbeing, and
 - Joining with ecumenical, interfaith, and secular partners working to address the climate crisis;
- and be it further

RESOLVED, that the Northeastern MN Synod support these actions with the leadership of the EcoFaith Network by:

- Including the Northeastern MN Synod EcoFaith Network in the synod budget,

- Encouraging contributions to the Northeastern MN Synod EcoFaith Network from congregations and individuals, and
- Assisting the leadership efforts of the Northeastern MN Synod Ecofaith Network in cultivating these initiatives, and further discerning and refining the structures and processes as needed for the vital work of this ministry at this *Kairos* moment.