

1 **RC2022-05 Memorial Calling for Reduction in US Greenhouse Gas Emissions by 2030**

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

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4 WHEREAS, in the 1993 Social Statement Caring for Creation: Vision, Hope, and Justice, the
5 ELCA declares we are “made in the image of God, we are called to care for the earth as God
6 cares for the earth”¹; and

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

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12 WHEREAS, in 2019 the ELCA Churchwide Assembly adopted the Earth Charter, which
13 declares that “the global environment with its finite resources is a common concern of all
14 peoples. The protection of Earth’s vitality, diversity, and beauty is a sacred trust”³; and

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

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20 WHEREAS, a just transition from a fossil-fuel based economy will lead to better health⁴, family-
21 sustaining jobs⁵, clean air and water for communities historically left behind, and a safer, more
22 sustainable future for our children and future generations; therefore, be it,

23 **RESOLVED**, that the 2022 Minneapolis Area Synod, meeting in assembly, memorialize the
24 2022 Churchwide Assembly (CWA) of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America to urge the
25 agencies of the ELCA to continue to call upon the leadership of the United States of America to
26 reduce its greenhouse gas emissions by at least 50% by 2030, generate 100% of its power from
27 clean renewable sources by 2035, and achieve net zero emissions by 2050; and be it further

28 **RESOLVED**, that this Synod Assembly memorialize the 2022 CWA to urge the churchwide
29 organization to continue to equip and encourage congregations, synods, and associated ministries
30 to advocate that the United States of America reduce its greenhouse gas emissions by at least
31 50% by 2030, generate 100% of its power from clean renewable sources by 2035, and achieve
32 net zero emissions by 2050; and be it further

33 **RESOLVED**, that this Synod Assembly memorialize the 2022 CWA to encourage
34 congregations and synods to advocate for a just transition away from greenhouse gasses where at
35 least 40% of the funding goes towards projects that directly benefit Indigenous, Black, People of

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

⁵ <https://newclimateeconomy.report/>

36 Color, and communities impacted by poverty that bear a disproportionate cost of pollution and
37 climate change already; and be it further

38 **RESOLVED**, that this Synod Assembly memorialize the 2022 CWA to urge the churchwide
39 organization to support these actions through investments in staff, education, tools and resources
40 that equip congregations and Synods to accomplish this goal and leverage knowledge, skills and
41 experience across the church

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43 **RESOLVED**, that this Synod Assembly memorialize the 2022 CWA to encourage ELCA
44 members, rostered leaders, and bishops to further educate themselves to the urgency of the
45 climate emergency both locally and globally as well as to the local and global opportunities a just
46 transition will create; and be it further

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48 **RESOLVED**, that this Synod Assembly memorialize the 2022 CWA to encourage ELCA
49 rostered leaders and bishops to lift up loving our neighbor in response to the climate emergency
50 through their preaching at least once a month; and be it further

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52 **RESOLVED**, that this Synod Assembly memorialize the 2022 CWA to urge the churchwide
53 organization to encourage and cooperate with Lutherans Restoring Creation and other faith-
54 based and secular organizations that share our commitment to the protection and restoration of
55 the natural world while doing justice for all.⁶

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⁶ 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/>

62 **Background Information:**

63 The Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC) reported that in order to avoid
64 catastrophic consequences of climate change, global warming needs to be limited to 1.5 degrees.
65 The planet has already warmed 1.1 degree since pre-industrial times, causing record-smashing
66 wildfires, hurricanes, heat waves, droughts, ocean acidification, and species loss⁷; and climate
67 change is already leading to the destruction and displacement of people's homes, food sources,
68 and well-being (leading to at least 30.7 million climate displaced persons in 2020 according to
69 the Internal Displacement Monitoring Centre (IDMC))⁸. Studies show that Indigenous, Black,
70 People of Color and communities impacted by poverty have contributed the least to climate
71 change and are the most impacted by it⁹.

72
73 The United States has contributed more greenhouse gas to the atmosphere historically than any
74 other country¹⁰. However, we have a realistic chance of meeting the goal of not exceeding 1.5
75 degrees of warming if the United States reaches at least a 50% reduction of greenhouse gas
76 emissions by 2030 and equitable net zero emissions by 2050¹¹.

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⁷ 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.

⁸ <https://www.internal-displacement.org/global-report/grid2021/>

⁹ <https://nca2018.globalchange.gov/>

¹⁰ <https://www.carbonbrief.org/analysis-which-countries-are-historically-responsible-for-climate-change>

¹¹ <https://www.unep.org/news-and-stories/press-release/cut-global-emissions-76-percent-every-year-next-decade-meet-15degc>