

CLIMATE CHANGE, ENERGY USE & FAITH

As stewards of creation, humankind was given “dominion” over the earth and the responsibility of “tilling it” and “keeping it.” However “dominion” has too often been interpreted to mean “control over,” rather than “responsibility for.” In these times of great environmental concerns, the original Hebrew understanding that humankind was made accountable for creation must once again become the defining role of humankind in relationship to God’s creation. “Tilling it and keeping the earth” means not simply to grow crops and to use the natural resources God has given to us, but more importantly to serve and sustain the creation with which we have been blessed.

An international consensus among scientists and scientific institutions has concluded that global warming is occurring and that human activity is contributing to this climate change. While the full scope and impacts of climate change cannot be predicted, we recognize that it will have a disproportionate negative impact on those in the human family who are least able to bear the burdens of such changes.

Because a timely response is critical to preventing catastrophic consequences, we call upon individuals, organizations, government and churches to engage in extensive educational activities, advocacy, and conservation efforts to reduce energy consumption, lower greenhouse gas emissions, and convert to alternative and sustainable energy sources and systems.

We recognize that environmental justice is closely interconnected to issues of social, economic and political justice and we encourage our members and their churches to consider those interrelationships as they seek to be accountable and responsible stewards of God’s creation and as they serve and sustain the earth that God has pronounced to be “indeed, very good.”

We call upon our members and their churches to study and consider the resolution of witness on Climate Change adopted by the 26th General Synod of the United Church of Christ, and the UCC Collegium’s “Pastoral Letter on Faith and Environment” Living in Community with God’s Creation” issued April 2008 with the UCC Environmental and Energy Task Force. We encourage them to share these materials with other faith and community bodies and to join in coalition efforts to effectively address the issues of climate change, taking actions at the local, national, and international levels to alleviate its impacts and prevent future consequences,

We call upon each of our churches to survey their energy use and to develop short and long-term strategies and programs to reduce their energy consumption and to reduce their “footprint” on the earth’s environment.

We further call upon the Northern Plains Conference of the United Church of Christ to provide assistance, leadership, coordination, and education for these efforts, and to provide recognition to churches for their activities and programs.

Submitted by Karl Limvere, Pastor, Zion United Church of Christ, Medina, ND