

1 **NWMN Synod of the ELCA**  
2 **RESOLUTION from the Creation Care Task Force of the NWMN Synod on The World Council of**  
3 **Churches' Ecumenical Decade of Climate Justice Action**  
4

5 WHEREAS, God created heaven and earth, and everything therein, and proclaimed it good  
6 (Gen. 1:1ff); and God has entrusted humankind with the care of the earth (Gen. 2:15); and  
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8 WHEREAS, in 1993, our ELCA social statement, *Caring for Creation*, expressed concern about  
9 “climate change;” acknowledged that, “according to the preponderance of evidence from  
10 scientists worldwide” we face “dangerous global warming, caused by the buildup of greenhouse  
11 gases, especially carbon dioxide;” and emphasized that “action to counter degradation,  
12 especially within this decade, is essential to the future of our children and our children’s  
13 children. Time is very short;”<sup>1</sup> and  
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15 WHEREAS, in 2022 the ELCA Churchwide Assembly voted 672-45, “to receive with gratitude the  
16 memorials from 17 synods<sup>2</sup> concerning greenhouse gas emissions;” “to reaffirm the  
17 commitment of this church to engage in creation care and advocacy . . . ;” and “to encourage  
18 congregants, rostered ministers, and bishops to commit themselves to education about the  
19 urgency of the climate emergency . . . ;”<sup>3</sup> and  
20

21 WHEREAS, on Earth Day 2023, the ELCA Church Council unanimously adopted a social message,  
22 *Earth’s Climate Crisis*, stating that, “[f]rom a standpoint of faith, it is reasonable to conclude  
23 that the climate crisis is, indeed, a *kairos* moment”<sup>4</sup> and challenged all expressions of the ELCA  
24 to “[j]oin with ecumenical, interfaith, and secular partners working to address the climate  
25 crisis;”<sup>5</sup> and  
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27 WHEREAS, ELCA social teachings have emphasized the ethical priority for the most vulnerable  
28 and marginalized, who have contributed least to the climate crisis and bear a disproportionate  
29 weight of its effects; and the ELCA calls on organizations to support strategies that enable  
30 adaptation to climate change, including protecting the land rights of Indigenous peoples, in  
31 whose care land, resources, and biodiversity are more likely to be protected; and

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<sup>1</sup> ELCA Social Statement, [Caring for Creation, Vision, Hope, and Justice](#), 1993.

<sup>2</sup> Oregon Synod, Southwest California Synod, Northeastern Minnesota Synod, Minneapolis Synod, Saint Paul Area Synod, Southwestern Texas Synod, Northern Illinois Synod, Northeastern Iowa Synod, East-Central Synod of Wisconsin, Greater Milwaukee Synod, North/West Lower Michigan Synod, New England Synod, Northeastern Pennsylvania Synod, Northwestern Pennsylvania Synod, Central States Synod, and Delaware-Maryland Synod.

<sup>3</sup> ELCA, [Report of the Memorials Committee, 2022 Churchwide Assembly](#), July 15, 2022, pp. 13-28.

<sup>4</sup> ELCA Social Message, [Earth’s Climate Crisis](#), approved on Earth Day, April 20, 2023. “At the heart of this social message lies the claim that climate change presents humanity with a *kairos moment*; that is, a critical moment in time when God is leading us into decisive action.” (*Earth’s Climate Crisis*, p. 1)

<sup>5</sup> *Ibid.* p. 17.

32

33 WHEREAS, ELCA Presiding Bishop Yehiel Curry, in his 2025 “Message on the Tenth Anniversary  
34 of the Paris Climate Accords,” affirmed the 2015 United Nations agreement that committed all  
35 nations, including the U.S., to limit global warming to well below 2°Celsius (C) while also  
36 pursuing efforts to limit it to 1.5°C,<sup>6</sup> and emphasized:

37

38 It is not too late to protect our climate. With God, it is never too late. *Kairos*  
39 means that this is an opportune and urgent time to address Earth’s climate crisis.  
40 I am calling this church to be more connected and sustainable. This includes  
41 stewarding God’s creation as an expression of faith and seeking sustainability  
42 rooted in ways of living that honor everything God has called ‘good,’ including  
43 learning from and following the leadership of Indigenous communities. I  
44 commend to you the social message, *Earth’s Climate Crisis*;<sup>7</sup> and

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46 WHEREAS, on June 21, 2025, the World Council of Churches (WCC) began an Ecumenical  
47 Decade of Climate Justice Action, which is “a prophetic pilgrimage of repentance,  
48 transformation, and hope” that calls “churches to ecological *metanoia* and systemic change  
49 rooted in justice, peace, and the integrity of creation;”<sup>8</sup> and

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51 WHEREAS, in Belem, Brazil, WCC Vice President Rev. Dr. Angelique Walker-Smith introduced  
52 the Decade of Climate Justice Action to faith groups attending the 30th U.N. Conference of the  
53 Parties to the UN Framework Convention on Climate Change, stating that “We (WCC) have had  
54 Decades in solidarity with women, against violence, against racism, and now we say climate  
55 justice brings all of those together;”<sup>9</sup> therefore be it

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57 RESOLVED, that every member, congregation, ELCA-affiliated organization, and ministry of the  
58 Northwestern Minnesota (NWMN) Synod be strongly encouraged to commit to active  
59 participation in the WCC’s Ecumenical Decade of Climate Justice Action, since the ELCA is a  
60 member communion of the World Council of Churches;<sup>10</sup> and be it further

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62 RESOLVED, that the various ecclesial expressions of the ELCA in the NWMN Synod be guided  
63 over the next decade by “the convictions to guide discernment and actions toward the

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<sup>6</sup> United Nations Climate Change, [The Paris Agreement](#), accessed 20 December 2025.

<sup>7</sup> ELCA, [A Message on the Tenth Anniversary of the Paris Climate Accords](#), December 9, 2025.

<sup>8</sup> World Council of Churches, [“Ecumenical Decade of Climate Justice Action: Moving Together in Ecological Metanoia for Transformation.”](#)

<sup>9</sup> World Council of Churches, [“Tapiri closing service brings climate justice decade to COP30,”](#) November 18, 2025.

<sup>10</sup> World Council of Churches, [“Ecumenical Decade of Climate Justice Action: Moving Together in Ecological Metanoia for Transformation.”](#)

64 challenges posed by the climate *kairos*” adopted in the ELCA’s 2023 social message, *Earth’s*  
65 *Climate Crisis*,<sup>11</sup> which include the following:

- 66 • “Reduce greenhouse gas emissions at the rate scientists project will keep global  
67 warming below 2.0 degrees Celsius (3.6 degrees Fahrenheit) and as close as possible to  
68 1.5 degrees Celsius;
- 69 • Support an interim U.S. target of 50% reduction of greenhouse gas emissions from 2005  
70 levels by 2030;
- 71 • “Support mitigation strategies to achieve these goals;
- 72 • “Promote scientific literacy and instruction about global warming and climate change in  
73 all our educational institutions;
- 74 • “Engage in legislative advocacy at all levels of government, individually and collectively;
- 75 • “Join with ecumenical, interfaith, and secular partners working to address the climate  
76 crisis; and be it finally

77

78 RESOLVED, that the congregations and ELCA-affiliated organizations in the NWMN Synod be  
79 further guided in this climate *kairos* over the next decade to include the following convictions:

- 80 • “Promote creation care through preaching, worship, and educational programming;
- 81 • “Consider adopting congregational/organizational commitments to creation care, ( e.g.,  
82 for example, by becoming a Creation Care Covenant Congregation via Lutherans  
83 Restoring Creation);
- 84 • “Provide pastoral care to those struggling with “climate anxiety” and other related  
85 mental health concerns, especially our youngest people;
- 86 • “Witness publicly to the climate crisis and “walk the talk” by:
  - 87 ○ Achieving the same levels of greenhouse gas reduction that the ELCA urges the
  - 88 U.S. government to pursue
  - 89 ○ Investing in energy efficiency and renewable energy systems
  - 90 ○ Reviewing how ELCA landholdings can be used to sequester carbon, promote
  - 91 biodiversity, and/or encourage other life-giving relationships with creation
  - 92 ○ Becoming “anticipatory communities”<sup>12</sup> that model climate resiliency (e.g.,
  - 93 emergency shelters, cooling spaces, community gardens);
- 94 • “Engage in acts of community organizing to build stronger relationships and more  
95 resilient communities that can take action to create meaningful climate solutions and  
96 help people understand that they have the power to make lasting change.

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<sup>11</sup> ELCA Social Message, [Earth’s Climate Crisis](#), pp. 13-17.

<sup>12</sup> “Anticipatory communities” may be defined as “home places [e.g., families, neighborhoods, schools, churches, etc.] where it is possible to reimagine worlds, and reorder possibilities, places where new or renewed practices give focus to an ecological and [adaptively sustainable] way of life. Such communities have the qualities of a haven, a set-apart and safe place yet a place open to creative risk. Here basic moral formation happens by conscious choice and not by default... Here eco-social virtues are consciously cultivated and embodied in community practices.” (from *Earth-honoring Faith: Religious Ethics in a New Key* by Larry L. Rasmussen, Oxford University Press, 2013, pp. 227, 224, 124).