Resolution E
To Divest from Fossil Fuel Corporations

WHEREAS, God has created us and all that exists, given and preserves our bodies and all the necessities for life [The First Article: On Creation, Luther's Small Catechism]; and

WHEREAS, the 1993 ELCA Social Statement Caring for Creation: Vision, Hope, and Justice affirms that "we are called to care for the earth as God cares for the earth;" and

WHEREAS, the 1999 ELCA Social Statement Economic Life: Sufficient, Sustainable Livelihood for All recognizes that "the growth of economic activity during the twentieth century, and the industrialization and consumerism that fueled it, radically changed the relationship between humans and the earth. Too often the earth has been treated as a waste receptacle and a limitless storehouse of raw materials to be used up for the sake of economic growth, rather than as a finite, fragile ecological system upon which human and all other life depends;" and

WHEREAS, climate research is clear that there has been a rapid rise in the levels of carbon dioxide in the atmosphere, occurring most rapidly in the past 200 years during the worldwide Industrial Revolution and leading to current levels of around 400 ppm – the highest in 2,000,000 years; and

WHEREAS, climate research is clear that burning fossil fuels is the major source of the rising levels of atmospheric carbon dioxide, negatively impacting not only our climate but also the health and wellbeing of all life on the planet; and

WHEREAS, with Caring for Creation, this church 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 [climate] degradation, especially within this decade, is essential to the future of our children and our children's children;" and

WHEREAS, in Caring for Creation, the ELCA declares that it will seek to incorporate the principles of sufficiency and sustainability in its life, and that "we will, in our budgeting and investment of church funds, demonstrate our care for creation;" and

WHEREAS, in 1990, the Church Council transmitted [CC90.04.38] investment screens on "Energy and Environment" for social purpose funds of the ELCA Board of Pensions, which recommend limiting investments made in corporations that are the most egregious in terms of damage to human health of the natural environment and investing in corporations which are taking positive steps toward a sustainable environment, and, in 2007, approved [CC07.11.95b] the updated "Environmental Social Criteria Screen;" and
WHEREAS, the Investment Policy Statement adopted by resolution of the Metro New York Synod Council on June 25, 2013, states that because we are committed to responsible stewardship of the earth and to human dignity and empowerment, we encourage, inter alia, investment in companies that work to maintain and conserve the supply of natural resources and to control pollution; therefore, be it

RESOLVED, that the Metro New York Synod shall:

a) Publish a list of the values of all its stock and bond holdings in companies whose primary business is the exploration, extraction, production, or refining of coal, oil, or natural gas, and urge all congregations within the Synod to do the same; and

b) Cease any new investments in companies whose primary business is the exploration, extraction, production, or refining of coal, oil, or natural gas, and urge all congregations within the Synod to do the same; and

c) Ensure that, within five years, directly held or commingled assets in companies whose primary business is the exploration, extraction, production, or refining of coal, oil, or natural gas are removed from its portfolio, and urge all congregations within the Synod to do the same; and

d) Release quarterly updates, available to the public, detailing progress towards such divestment, and urge all congregations within the Synod to do the same.

MNYS Environmental Stewardship Committee:

Pastor John Flack
Terri Rowe
Gerard Falco, Chair

Kristin Quell-Gargiulo
Pastor Jim O'Hanlon
Sarah Glee
Patrick Almonrode

Reference and Counsel Committee recommends adoption

Notes
1. Climate Change: The Evidence and Our Options, Lonnie Thompson, Ohio State University. Concentrations of carbon dioxide (CO2) and methane (CH4) over the last 800,000 years. Fig. 6, pg. 163. http://researchnews.osu.edu/archive/TBA--tonty.pdf.
3. EPA: Causes of Climate Change. "Since the Industrial Era began, humans have had an increasing effect on climate, particularly by adding billions of tons of heat-trapping greenhouse gases to the atmosphere." http://www.epa.gov/climatechange/science/causes.html.


* NASA: Global Climate Change; Vital Signs of the Planet. "Humans have increased atmospheric CO2 concentration by a third since the Industrial Revolution began. This is the most important long-lived "forcing" of climate change." "Over the last century the burning of fossil fuels like coal and oil has increased the concentration of atmospheric carbon dioxide (CO2)." http://climate.nasa.gov/causes.


"It is clear that impacts in the United States are already occurring and are projected to increase in the future, particularly if the concentration of heat-trapping greenhouse gases in the atmosphere continues to rise." http://books.google.com/books?hl=en&lr=&id=UCg77nAHsC&pg=PA13&dq=USGCRP%282009%29.+Global+Climate+Change+Impacts+In+the+United+States&ots=ux7HdVNY2&sig=3OdA1Tr7zaK5XJSJwzBfWNE59Af#v=onepage&q&f=false.

NOAA, USGS: Climate change impacts to U.S. coasts threaten public health, safety and economy Coastal Impacts, Adaptation, and Vulnerabilities: A Technical Input to the 2013 National Climate Assessment. "...the effects of climate change will continue to threaten the health and vitality of U.S. coastal communities’ social, economic and natural systems."
http://www.noaanews.noaa.gov/stories2013/20130125_coastalclimateimpacts.html