

## Resolution E

### To Divest from Fossil Fuel Corporations

*United in Purpose, NY Our Saviour United Church, Westwood, NY Our Saviour United Church, Westwood, NY Our Saviour United Church, Westwood, NY Our Saviour United Church, Westwood, NY Our Saviour United Church, Westwood, NY Our Saviour United Church, Westwood, NY Our Saviour United Church, Westwood, NY Our Saviour United Church, Westwood, NY Our Saviour United Church, Westwood, NY*

- 1 WHEREAS, God has created us and all that exists, given 1 and preserves our bodies and all the  
2 necessities for life [The First Article: On Creation, Luther's Small Catechism]; and
- 3 WHEREAS, the 1993 ELCA Social Statement Caring for Creation: Vision, Hope, and Justice  
4 affirms that "we are called to care for the earth as God cares for the earth;" and
- 5 WHEREAS, the 1999 ELCA Social Statement Economic Life: Sufficient, Sustainable Livelihood  
6 for All recognizes that "the growth of economic activity during the twentieth century, and the  
7 industrialization and consumerism that fueled it, radically changed the relationship between  
8 humans and the earth. Too often the earth has been treated as a waste receptacle and a  
9 limitless storehouse of raw materials to be used up for the sake of economic growth, rather  
10 than as a finite, fragile ecological system upon which human and all other life depends;" and
- 11 WHEREAS, climate research is clear that there has been a rapid rise in the levels of carbon  
12 dioxide in the atmosphere, occurring most rapidly in the past 200 years during the worldwide  
13 Industrial Revolution<sup>123</sup> and leading to current levels of around 400 ppm – the highest in  
14 2,000,000 years; and
- 15 WHEREAS, climate research is clear that burning fossil fuels is the major source of the rising  
16 levels of atmospheric carbon dioxide, negatively impacting not only our climate but also the  
17 health and wellbeing of all life on the planet<sup>4567</sup>; and
- 18 WHEREAS, with Caring for Creation, this church realized the urgency was already "widespread  
19 and serious, according to the preponderance of evidence from scientists worldwide [of]  
20 dangerous global warming, caused by the buildup of greenhouse gases, especially carbon  
21 dioxide" from the burning of fossil fuels, and that "action to counter [climate] degradation,  
22 especially within this decade, is essential to the future of our children and our children's  
23 children;" and
- 24 WHEREAS, in Caring for Creation, the ELCA declares that it will seek to incorporate the principles  
25 of sufficiency and sustainability in its life, and that "we will, in our budgeting and investment of  
26 church funds, demonstrate our care for creation;" and
- 27 WHEREAS, in 1990, the Church Council transmitted [CC90.04.38] investment screens on "Energy  
28 and Environment" for social purpose funds of the ELCA Board of Pensions, which recommend  
29 limiting investments made in corporations that are the most egregious in terms of damage to  
30 human health or the natural environment and investing in corporations which are taking positive  
31 steps toward a sustainable environment, and, in 2007, approved [CC07.11.95b] the updated  
32 "Environmental Social Criteria Screen;" and

33 WHEREAS, the Investment Policy Statement adopted by resolution of the Metro New York Synod  
34 Council on June 25, 2013, states that because we are committed to responsible stewardship  
35 of the earth and to human dignity and empowerment, we encourage, inter alia, investment in  
36 companies that work to maintain and conserve the supply of natural resources and to control  
37 pollution; therefore, be it

38 RESOLVED, that the Metro New York Synod shall:

- 39 a) Publish a list of the values of all its stock and bond holdings in companies whose primary  
40 business is the exploration, extraction, production, or refining of coal, oil, or natural gas,  
41 and urge all congregations within the Synod do the same; and  
42 b) Cease any new investments in companies whose primary business is the exploration,  
43 extraction, production, or refining of coal, oil, or natural gas, and urge all congregations  
44 within the Synod do the same; and  
45 c) Ensure that, within five years, directly held or commingled assets in companies whose  
46 primary business is the exploration, extraction, production, or refining of coal, oil, or natural  
47 gas are removed from its portfolio, and urge all congregations within the Synod do the  
48 same; and  
49 d) Release quarterly updates, available to the public, detailing progress towards such  
50 divestment, and urge all congregations within the Synod do the same.

**MNYS Environmental Stewardship  
Committee:**  
Gerard Falco, Chair

Pastor John Flack  
Terra Rowe  
Sarah Gioe

Kristin Quell-Garguilo  
Pastor Jim O'Hanlon  
Patrick Almonrode

## Reference and Counsel Committee recommends adoption

### Notes

<sup>1</sup> Climate Change: The Evidence and Our Options, Lonnie Thompson, Ohio State University. Concentrations of carbon dioxide (CO<sub>2</sub>) and methane (CH<sub>4</sub>) over the last 800,000 years. Fig. 6, pg. 163. <http://researchnews.osu.edu/archive/TBA--LTonly.pdf>.

<sup>2</sup> 2007 IPCC Working Group. "Atmospheric carbon dioxide (CO<sub>2</sub>) concentration has continued to increase and is now almost 100 ppm above its preindustrial level." [http://www.ipcc.ch/publications\\_and\\_data/ar4/wg1/en/ch7s7-es.html](http://www.ipcc.ch/publications_and_data/ar4/wg1/en/ch7s7-es.html).

<sup>3</sup> 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>.

<sup>4</sup> NRC (2011). Climate Stabilization Targets: Emissions, Concentrations, and Impacts over Decades to Millennia. National Research Council. The National Academies Press, Washington, DC, USA. "Emissions of carbon dioxide from the burning of fossil fuels have ushered in a new epoch where human activities will largely determine the evolution of Earth's climate."

<sup>5</sup> NASA: Global Climate Change; Vital Signs of the Planet. "Humans have increased atmospheric CO<sub>2</sub> 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 (CO<sub>2</sub>)." <http://climate.nasa.gov/causes>.

<sup>6</sup> USGCRP (2009). Global Climate Change Impacts in the United States. Thomas R. Karl, Jerry M. Melillo, and Thomas C. Peterson (eds.). United States Global Change Research Program. Cambridge University Press, New York, NY, USA. "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=UCg7inAHksC&oi=fnd&pg=PA13&dq=USGCRP+%282009%29,+Global+Climate+Change+Impacts+in+the+United+States&ots=uXe7HdVN2l&sig=3OclArtHzaKsX5JwzBrWNEj59A#v=onepage&q&f=false>.

<sup>7</sup> 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.noaa.gov/stories/2013/20130125\\_coastalclimateimpacts.html](http://www.noaa.gov/stories/2013/20130125_coastalclimateimpacts.html)