

Abbreviated Statement of Urgent Concern for the Care of Creation
Holy Trinity Lutheran Church
Draft revision July 12, 2020

God has blessed humankind with an abundant planet as our home, a habitat teeming with life, clean air, fresh water, awe-inspiring in fruitfulness, complexity, and beauty. We share this vast Earth community of life with all creatures, both human kind and other kind. As people of faith, we acknowledge that the human vocation is to “till and keep” Earth as a garden, even as we draw from it all that we need to live. (Genesis 2:15). Humans are failing disastrously in this calling, and tragically, the Christian peoples of modern Western Europe and America bear great responsibility. Driven by a will to dominate both nature and neighbor with a culture of aggressive industrialization and economic imperialism, we have badly abused this home. Furthermore, we have unjustly burdened colonized and indigenous peoples with a deteriorating environment, loss of life, and removal from homelands. Yet despite the dire state of the living world, we believe that we humans can still curb our destructive ways – and must do so urgently – if only we hear God's call, open our eyes, and lend our hands in the service of the restoration of creation.

Therefore, as members of Holy Trinity Lutheran Church, we resolve:

1. To inspire wonder and respect toward God's living world in our church services, programming, education, and communications;
2. To empower our congregation's members with information, resources, and practical tools that they can use to care for creation in their personal lives;
3. To conduct all church business in an environmentally sustainable manner, including in our maintenance of the facilities and grounds, as well as in our purchase, use and re-purposing of materials and food products; and
4. To participate actively and effectively in broader actions that promote environmental concern and justice within our local, national, global, and faith-based communities.

Full Statement of Urgent Concern for the Care of Creation
Holy Trinity Lutheran Church
Draft revision July 3, 2020

God's Good Creation

God has blessed us with an abundant planet as our home, a habitat teeming with life, clean air, fresh water, awe-inspiring in fruitfulness, complexity, and beauty. As people of faith, we remember we share this vast Earth community of life with all creatures, both human kind and other kind. We acknowledge that from the beginning the human vocation is to “till and keep” Earth as a garden, even as we draw from it all that we need to live. (Genesis 2:15)

Human Moral Failure

Humans are failing disastrously in this calling, and tragically, the Christian peoples of modern Western Europe and America bear great responsibility. Driven by a will to dominate both nature

and neighbor with a culture of aggressive industrialization and economic imperialism, we have badly abused this home. We have ravaged entire ecosystems. We have driven countless plant and animal species to extinction. Addicted to fossil fuels, we threaten our planet's very ability to support life. Furthermore, we have unjustly burdened colonized and indigenous peoples with a deteriorating environment, loss of life, and removal from homelands. We refuse to hear their voices crying for urgent action. Nor have we heeded either the climate scientists who warn of the coming catastrophe or the youth who strike for climate justice. As descendants and beneficiaries of this culture, we hear that what God spoke to Ancient Israel through the prophet Jeremiah (2:7) now also applies to us: "you entered and defiled my land, you made my heritage loathsome."

Repentance

Yet despite the dire state of the living world, we believe that we humans can still curb our destructive ways – and must do so urgently – if only we hear God's call, open our eyes, and lend our hands in the service of the restoration of creation. We beg forgiveness for our sins against God's creation, and we pray that the Holy Spirit may instill caring for creation in the hearts of all people. We find hope in the biblical confidence that God is reconciling all things to Godself (Colossians 1:15). With the oppressed and those who grieve for lost Earth-kin, we are encouraged and comforted by Jesus' promise from the Sermon on the Mount, that those who renounce violence and exploitation to give their lives in service – thus acting with our Creator to make space that is life-giving habitat for others -- will find joy in the restoration of Earth as their heritage (Matthew 5:4-5).

Action

Therefore, as members of Holy Trinity Lutheran Church, we resolve:

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4. To participate actively and effectively in broader actions that promote environmental concern and justice within our local, national, global, and faith-based communities.