

February 10, 2007
Presbytery Resolution

Affirming 217th General Assembly Commissioners' Resolution Item: 09-22, On Calling All Presbyterians to Take Positive and Immediate Steps to Live Carbon Neutral Lives.

The Florida Presbytery affirms that the Christian mandate to care for creation and the biblical promise of the restoration of right relationships between God, human beings and the rest of creation impels and inspires us to act to reduce our energy usage.

It affirms that the urgency, injustice and seriousness of climate change call us as Christians to act now and to act boldly to lead the way in reducing our energy usage.

It affirms the resolution guidance that strongly urges all Presbyterians to immediately make a bold witness by aspiring to live carbon neutral lives. (Carbon neutrality requires our energy consumption that release carbon dioxide into the atmosphere be reduced and carbon offsets purchased to compensate for those carbon emissions that could not be eliminated.)

It affirms the call for all Presbyterians to take this seriously, to pray asking for God's forgiveness and guidance, to study this issue, to calculate your carbon emissions, to educate others, and to use less energy, striving to make your life carbon neutral.

Further, The Florida Presbytery calls on each church in the Presbytery to inform its members on the rationale and urgency of the need to reduce our energy usage; calls on each church to go carbon neutral; and calls on its members to make their lives carbon neutral as a Christian witness for caring for creation.

Rationale

It is the consensus of the scientific community that human activity is rapidly changing the natural environment in measurable ways through the destructive effects of climate change (commonly called global warming).

Global climate change is predominantly caused by our burning of fossil fuels, like coal, oil and natural gas, which emit greenhouse gases, and is accelerating faster than predicted just a few years ago.

Global climate change is directly causing or contributing to harmful changes including but not limited to:

1. Ice sheet and glacial melting at alarming rates;
2. Rising sea levels that, by the end of this century, will encroach or cover many of the world's coastal communities and lands where more than half of the world's population currently resides;
3. A 30% weakening of the Gulf Stream in the last twelve years;
4. Episodic coral reef die-off worldwide threatening traditional fisheries, a major food source for many;
5. Island nations, such as Tuvalu, to seek refuge in other countries for their entire populations due to sea level rise;
6. Water shortages and severe droughts in Africa;
7. Record number of killer storms worldwide, leaving more than a thousand people dead and 3,500 missing as of April 2006 from Hurricane Katrina along and billions of dollars of damage in multiple states;
8. A violation of the rights of entire populations, such as the Alaskan Inuit, to maintain their traditional culture of hunting and fishing on which their lives depend;
9. Hundreds of species to face extinction – from Arctic polar bears to tropical tree frogs – due to habitat changes.

A growing number of scientists now suggest that we have perhaps only a decade's grace period to reduce our energy usage before these devastating effects start to become irreversible.

We Americans are champion energy consumers, using 40 percent of the world's oil and emitting 25 percent of the world's greenhouse gases, even though we are less than 5 percent of the world's population.

We have the knowledge, skills and resources to reduce our energy consumption and switch to alternative energy sources that less harmful to the environment.

Prompt action and leadership by individuals, organizations, communities, states, and countries can keep global climate change from becoming worse.

The President of the United States has called upon the nation to reduce its dependence on fossil fuels.