



35th Annual Synod Assembly
Northeastern Pennsylvania Synod, ELCA
June 10-11, 2022

Resolution Submittal Form

Please use this form to submit resolutions to be considered by the 2022 Northeastern Pennsylvania Synod Assembly. **The Committee of Reference and Counsel will review resolutions submitted to it before the assembly and requests that resolutions be submitted as soon as possible, so that voting members can consider them before the assembly.** Please note: a resolution adopted by

the 2005 Synod Assembly requires that resolutions submitted less than 2 weeks before the assembly (by Thursday, May 26, 2022) will be considered only if the assembly votes to receive them.

Please read the guidelines on the reverse side of this page. Return the form to the synod office (address information below)

Please type or write legibly. You may submit only one resolution on each form. Copy form for additional resolutions.

Sign the form where indicated; include the name and location of your congregation. If you are a lay member of a congregation, include the signature of the pastor or president of the congregation (this signature is requested to certify that you are a participating member of an ELCA congregation in the Northeastern Pennsylvania Synod).

A resolution concerning A Just Transition to 50% Reduction in US Greenhouse Gas Emissions by 2030

WHEREAS, our faith commands us to love “your neighbors as yourselves” (see Luke 10:27);
And

WHEREAS, “made in the image of God, we are called to care for the earth as God cares for the earth”¹; and

WHEREAS, we acknowledge that Indigenous Peoples, whose ancestors originally cared for the land that feeds us, make up less than 5% of the global population and protect over 80% of the biodiversity² that sustains us all; and

WHEREAS, “the global environment with its finite resources is a common concern of all peoples. The protection of Earth’s vitality, diversity, and beauty is a sacred trust”³; and

WHEREAS, the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC) reported that in order to avoid catastrophic consequences of climate change, global warming needs to be limited to 1.5

¹ 1993 ELCA Social Statement Caring for Creation: Vision, Hope, and Justice

² <https://www.wri.org/insights/numbers-indigenous-and-community-land-rights> and <https://www.scientificamerican.com/article/biodiversitys-greatest-protectors-need-protection/>

³ Earth Charter (adopted at the 2019 ELCA Churchwide Assembly), full text which was endorsed can be found at: <https://earthcharter.org/>

degrees; and

WHEREAS, the planet has already warmed 1.1 degree since pre-industrial times, causing record-smashing wildfires, hurricanes, heat waves, droughts, ocean acidification, and species loss⁴; and

WHEREAS, climate change is already leading to the destruction and displacement of people's homes, food sources, and well-being (leading to at least 30.7 million climate displaced persons in 2020 according to the Internal Displacement Monitoring Centre (IDMC))⁵; and

WHEREAS, Indigenous, Black, People of Color and communities impacted by poverty have contributed the least to climate change and are the most impacted by it⁶; and

WHEREAS, the United States has contributed more greenhouse gas to the atmosphere historically than any other country⁷; and

WHEREAS, we have a realistic chance of meeting the goal of not exceeding 1.5 degrees of warming if the United States reaches at least a 50% reduction of greenhouse gas emissions by 2030 and equitable net zero emissions by 2050⁸; and

WHEREAS, to reduce greenhouse gas emissions by at least 50% by 2030 the United States will need a World War II sized mobilization that includes government investment, public-private partnerships, binding emission reduction targets, and possibly a carbon fee and dividend; and

WHEREAS, a just transition from a fossil-fuel based economy will lead to better health⁹, family-sustaining jobs¹⁰, clean air and water for communities historically left behind, and a safer, more sustainable future for our children and future generations; therefore, be it,

RESOLVED, that the Northeastern Pennsylvania Synod memorialize the 2022 Churchwide Assembly of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America that the ELCA churchwide continues to call upon the leadership of the United States of America to reduce its greenhouse gas emissions by at least 50% by 2030, generate 100% of its power from clean renewable sources by 2035, and achieve net zero emissions by 2050; and be it further

RESOLVED, that ELCA churchwide will continue to equip and encourage congregations, synods, and associated ministries to advocate that the United States of America reduce its greenhouse gas emissions by at least 50% by 2030, generate 100% of its power from clean

⁴ IPCC, 2021: Summary for Policymakers. In: Climate Change 2021: The Physical Science Basis. Contribution of Working Group I to the Sixth Assessment Report of the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change [MassonDelmotte, V., P. Zhai, A. Pirani, S.L. Connors, C. Péan, S. Berger, N. Caud, Y. Chen, L. Goldfarb, M.I. Gomis, M. Huang, K. Leitzell, E. Lonnoy, J.B.R. Matthews, T.K. Maycock, T. Waterfield, O. Yelekçi, R. Yu, and B. Zhou (eds.)]. Cambridge University Press. In Press.

⁵ <https://www.internal-displacement.org/global-report/grid2021/>

⁶ <https://nca2018.globalchange.gov/> There

⁷ <https://www.carbonbrief.org/analysis-which-countries-are-historically-responsible-for-climate-change>

⁸ <https://www.unep.org/news-and-stories/press-release/cut-global-emissions-76-percent-every-year-next-decade-meet-15degc>

⁹ <https://www.who.int/publications/i/item/cop24-special-report-health-climate-change>

¹⁰ <https://newclimateeconomy.report/>

renewable sources by 2035, and achieve net zero emissions by 2050; and be it further

RESOLVED, that churchwide encourages congregations and synods to advocate for a just transition away from greenhouse gasses, with emphasis on supporting projects that directly benefit Indigenous, Black, People of Color, and communities impacted by poverty that bear a disproportionate cost of pollution and climate change already; and be it further

RESOLVED, that the ELCA Churchwide will support these actions through investments in staff, education, tools and resources that equip congregations and Synods to accomplish this goal and leverage knowledge, skills and experience across the church; and be it further

RESOLVED, that congregants and rostered leaders be encouraged to further educate themselves to the urgency of the climate emergency both locally and globally as well as to the local and global opportunities a just transition will create; and be it further

RESOLVED, that rostered leaders and bishops will be encouraged to lift up loving our neighbor in response to the climate emergency through their preaching, teaching, and congregational action as often as possible; and be it further

RESOLVED, that the Synod and ELCA churchwide will encourage and cooperate with Lutheran, ecumenical, faith-based and secular organizations that share our commitment to the protection and restoration of the natural world while doing justice for all.¹¹

Pastor Paul Metzloff - Reformation, Reiffton

Pastor Inge Williams - Friedens, Shartlesville

Pastor Robert Argot - Holy Spirit, Reading

Pastor Wayne Moritz – Holy Spirit, Emmaus

Kristen Edelman-Weiner - Vice President, Northeastern Pennsylvania Synod

Sue Reier - Saint Paul's, Orwigsburg

Date of submission: Wednesday May 25, 2022

Return to: *Committee of Reference and Counsel, 2022 Synod Assembly, Northeastern Pennsylvania Synod, 2354 Grove Rd., Allentown PA 18109-3044, email info@nepssynod.org.*

Recommendation of the Committee of Reference and Counsel:

The Committee of Reference and Counsel recommends that the proposed memorial concerning “A Just Transition to 50% Reduction in US Greenhouse Gas Emissions by 2030” be commended to this Assembly for its consideration.

¹¹ For suggested organizations to connect with in doing this work please visit:

<https://lutheransrestoringcreation.org/actions-for-a-just-transition-to-a-healthier-climate-for-all/>