

To the Deputies and Bishops of the Episcopal Church assembled at the 79th General Convention:

We Are Still In: A Resolution to Fight Climate Change

Resolved, that the 232nd Annual Convention of the Diocese of Massachusetts send the following Memorial to the Deputies and Bishops of the Episcopal Church assembled at the 79th General Convention of The Episcopal Church; and be it further

Resolved, that the 232nd Convention of the Episcopal Diocese of Massachusetts affirms the leadership of Presiding Bishop and Primate of The Episcopal Church, The Most Reverend Michael Curry, in his June 1, 2017, response to President Trump's decision to pull out of the 2015 Paris Climate Accord; and be it further

Resolved, that the 232nd Convention of the Episcopal Diocese of Massachusetts praises the "We Are Still In" declaration in which hundreds of signatories pledge support of the goals of the Paris Climate Accord; and be it further

Resolved, that the 232nd Convention of the Episcopal Diocese of Massachusetts joins with the United Church of Christ in living out the principles of the Paris Climate Accord by committing our time, financial resources and prayers to:

- call on our congregations and every person of faith to set a moral example by making decisions of integrity in our energy choices and holding our leaders accountable to likewise reduce carbon emissions;
- call on our clergy and lay leaders to speak from the pulpit about our moral obligation to protect God's creation; and
- call on our communities of faith to be bold and courageous in proclaiming the urgency of the climate crisis in the public square and at the local, state, and federal levels.

Explanation

The scientific evidence continues to be overwhelming that climate change is real and caused by humans. Its effects are already manifest in the severity and frequency of extreme weather events around the world that disproportionately affect the poor. Almost all scientists agree that we must stabilize the global mean temperature increase to 2° Celsius to avoid catastrophe by instituting significant reductions in global levels of carbon emissions.

In his June 1 statement¹, The Most Reverend Michael Curry calls on the Episcopal Church to continue to take bold action to address the climate crisis, reminding us that we are all trustees and stewards of God's good creation.² The Diocese of Massachusetts has been a leader within the Episcopal Church and our communities in urging divestment of our financial resources from fossil fuel companies and re-investment in carbon-free sources of energy, both with our direct financial investments and in the structures of our houses of worship. We must continue to do so. We are still striving to meet the goals of the Genesis Covenant passed by General Convention in 2009 and affirmed by Diocesan Convention in 2010. The full statement of the Covenant is: "Resolved, the House of Deputies concurring, that the 76th General Convention of the Episcopal Church affirms that The Episcopal Church become a signatory to the Genesis Covenant, thereby making a public commitment to work to reduce greenhouse gas emissions from every facility it

1 <https://www.episcopalchurch.org/posts/publicaffairs/presiding-bishop-presidents-action-and-paris-climate-accord>

2 Genesis 1:26-31

maintains by a minimum of 50% within 10 years” (i.e. by 2019). The Creation Care Initiative is the diocesan response to this covenant, having already helped about 100 of our congregations with over \$900,000 in grants and \$500,000 in loans. This support of the efforts of our congregations should continue.

The “We Are Still In”³ declaration in support of the Paris Accord has so far been signed by the mayors of more than 200 American cities, governors of numerous states, leaders of hundreds of American companies, and many university presidents. They pledge to “pursue ambitious climate goals, working together to take forceful action and to ensure that the US remains a global leader in reducing emissions.”

On June 2, 2017, Bishop Doug Fisher of the Diocese of Western Massachusetts and the Rev. Dr. Jim Antal, Conference Minister and President of the United Church of Christ in Massachusetts, also condemned President Trump's decision to abandon the Paris Climate Accord by signing a statement “An Opportunity for Which the Church Was Born.”⁴ This ecumenical statement, also passed by the leadership of the national UCC Church, affirms, “Our Judeo-Christian heritage teaches that the Earth and its web of life are precious in God’s sight, that the Earth belongs not to us but to God, and that we are entrusted with loving the Earth as God loves it.⁵ As followers of Jesus, we are committed to God’s mission of reconciling people with each other and with the whole of creation.” They added, “[The President’s] decision is scientifically, economically, medically, politically and morally wrong. With heartache we recognize the devastating toll of suffering that will be exacted by this Administration’s refusal to address the climate crisis. We are appalled by the Administration’s unwillingness to join with other nations in protecting and stabilizing the atmosphere upon which our species – and so many other forms of life – depend.” We fully concur.

We must, therefore, in the three-fold challenge of the UCC resolution, “accept the mantle of moral leadership, strive for incarnate change, and proclaim the truth of climate change in the public square.” The alternative is devastating to contemplate.

Respectfully Submitted,

The Rev. Jane B. Bearden, The Rev. William Bradbury, The Rt. Rev. Bud Cederholm, The Rev. Timothy E. Crellin, The Rev. Maggie Geller, The Rev. Elizabeth Good, The Rev. Amy McCreath, Kevin Miller, The Rev. Chris Morck, The Rev. Barbara A. Peterson, The Rev. Dr. Jennifer Phillips, The Rev. Laurie Rofinot, The Rev. Barbara Smith-Moran, Dawn Tesorero, The Rev. Evan Thayer, The Rev. Deb Warner, Sylvia Weston, Lauren Zook, The Episcopal Diocese of Massachusetts

3 www.WeAreStillIn.org

4 <http://www.macucc.org/newsdetail/opportunity-for-which-the-church-was-born-8390216>

5 Genesis 1-2:3, Psalm 24, and Genesis 2:15