**Resolution to “Care for Creation and Respond to Climate Change”**

**Whereas**, God’s first commandment to humanity is that we care for and take care of God’s good creation (Gen. 1:28 & 2:15); and

**Whereas**, the 1993 ELCA Social Statement Caring for Creation: Vision, Hope, and Justice affirms that “we are called to care for the earth as God cares for the earth;” and recognizes that “action to counter degradation, especially within this decade, is essential to the future of our children and our children's children;” and

**Whereas**, the 1999 ELCA Social Statement Economic Life: Sufficient, Sustainable Livelihood for All recognizes that “the growth of economic activity during the twentieth century, and the industrialization and consumerism that fueled it, has radically changed the relationship between humans and the earth. Too often the earth has been treated as a waste receptacle and a limitless storehouse of raw materials to be used up for the sake of economic growth, rather than as a finite, fragile ecological system upon which human and all other life depends;” and

**Whereas**, Presiding Bishop Elizabeth Eaton wrote in a pastoral letter on September 19th, 2014: “Daily we see and hear the evidence of a rapidly changing climate. Glaciers are disappearing, the polar ice cap is melting, and sea levels are rising. Incidents of pollution-created dead zones in seas and the ocean and toxic algae growth in water supplies are occurring with greater frequency. Most disturbingly, the concentration of carbon dioxide in the atmosphere is rising at an unprecedented rate......The present moment is a critical one, filled with both challenge and opportunity to act as faithful individuals and churches in solidarity with God’s good creation”; and

**Whereas**, the Lutheran World Federation has in 2017, with its three-fold theme “Salvation: Notfor sale. Human beings: Not for sale. Creation: Not for sale.”, signaled its intention to include creation at the center of its global mission; and

**Whereas,** there is scientific consensus that the climate is warming due to human activity. The United Nations Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC) 2018 Special Report on Global Warming states that allowing the earth to continue to warm would cause widespread impacts on ecosystem and human health; and 1

1 IPCC, 2018: Summary for Policymakers. In: Global Warming of 1.5°C. An IPCC Special Report on the impacts of global warming of 1.5°C above pre-industrial levels and related global greenhouse gas emission pathways, in the context of strengthening the global response to the threat of climate change, sustainable development, and efforts to eradicate poverty [Masson-Delmotte, V., P. Zhai, H.-O. Pörtner, D. Roberts, J. Skea, P.R. Shukla, A. Pirani, W. Moufouma-Okia, C. Péan, R. Pidcock, S. Connors, J.B.R. Matthews, Y. Chen, X. Zhou, M.I. Gomis, E. Lonnoy, T. Maycock, M. Tignor, and T. Waterfield (eds.)]. World Meteorological Organization, Geneva, Switzerland, 32 pp.

**Whereas**, according to the 2017 Montana Climate Assessment, the projected climate impacts for Montana include: increased annual temperatures, hotter summers, reduced low-elevation

snowpack, earlier spring snowmelt, more frequent and intense droughts, wildfires, and wildfire smoke, will be more severe if global greenhouse gas emissions are not reduced sharply in the near future ; 2

**Therefore, be it resolved**, that the Montana Synod will commit to better caring for our creation and respond to climate change by taking the following steps:

1) Strive for more public awareness of the Montana Synod’s current climate change efforts

including: the recent construction of a LEED certifiable Synod Office building, Synod Sustainability Loans, and its support of broader ELCA ministries which boldly confront this issue.

2) Direct the Montana Synod Council to assemble a *Creation Care and Climate Change*

*Task Force* that will present measurable and meaningful actions for the Synod and its congregations to implement. This Taskforce will be made up of ELCA church members and clergy from around the Montana Synod and include one member liaison from the Montana Synod Council. The taskforce will report to the Montana Synod Council and will offer periodic updates and resources for future Synod Assemblies and within regular Synod communication.

3) Commit to working with environmental advocacy and ecumenical partners in raising

awareness and inspiring collective action among faith communities across Montana and Wyoming.

Submitted by: Pastor Eric Huseth and Pastor John Lund

2 Whitlock C, Cross W, Maxwell B, Silverman N, Wade AA. 2017. Executive Summary. In: Whitlock C, Cross W, Maxwell B, Silverman N, Wade AA. 2017. 2017 Montana Climate Assessment. Bozeman and Missoula MT: Montana State University and University of Montana, Montana Institute on Ecosystems. 318 p. doi:10.15788/m2ww8w.

**Resolutions Committee Recommendation:  Do Consider**