

1 The Executive Council has recommended this resolution be sent to the implementing bodies named in “A  
2 Resolution on Climate Change,” as voted by the Twenty-sixth General Synod (07-GS-16).

## 3 4 **A RESOLUTION ON THE URGENCY FOR ACTION ON CLIMATE** 5 **CHANGE**

### 6 7 **A Resolution of Witness**

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10 **Submitted By:** The Connecticut Conference

#### 11 12 **SUMMARY**

13 In light of the overwhelming accumulation of evidence concerning the danger presented by  
14 the changes in the global climate, the resolution reflects the urgency of the issue, asking for  
15 redoubled efforts on the part of the denomination, conferences and churches to stem the  
16 effects of global warming and to achieve a carbon-neutral footprint in the next seven years.

#### 17 18 **BACKGROUND**

19 While there have been earlier resolutions concerning the need to attend to the environmental  
20 degradation we are experiencing, this resolution urges more vigorous and sustained  
21 leadership on the part of the United Church of Christ. Indeed, this resolution believes  
22 environmental action is the priority issue of our time.

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24 In a statement made May 29, 2008, over 1700 leading scientists and economists in the  
25 U.S. sounded an alarm, stating that there needs to be a broad sense of urgency to stem the  
26 “irreversible consequences” of global warming:

27 *We call on our nation’s leaders to swiftly establish and implement policies to bring about*  
28 *deep reductions in heat-trapping emissions. The strength of the science on climate*  
29 *change compels us to warn the nation about the growing risk of irreversible*  
30 *consequences as global average temperatures continue to increase. . . As temperatures*  
31 *rise further, the scope and severity of global warming impacts will continue to*  
32 *accelerate. . . There is no time to waste. The most risky thing we can do is nothing.*  
33 ([http://www.ucsusa.org/assets/documents/global\\_warming/Scientist\\_Economists\\_Call\\_to](http://www.ucsusa.org/assets/documents/global_warming/Scientist_Economists_Call_to)  
34 [\\_Action\\_fnl.pdf](http://www.ucsusa.org/assets/documents/global_warming/Scientist_Economists_Call_to))

#### 35 36 **THEOLOGICAL AND BIBLICAL FOUNDATION**

37 The text of the Pastoral letter of April, 2008 provides our theological and biblical foundation:

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39 Humanity is asked to answer a call of stewardship understood as *care* for and solidarity  
40 *with* God’s good creation. The distinction between humanity and other created things  
41 begins to soften, inviting a profound kinship, all participating in a creation community.  
42 In a time of environmental concern, the church must respond with its gifts of faith and  
43 nurture to work against reckless, negligent, or prejudicial use of natural resources. . .

44  
45 Our call to become good stewards in God’s ever evolving creation is reflected in the  
46 many resolutions passed addressing our environment. Beginning in 1959 with the

47 Second General Synod, whereby there was a “call to Christian action in society,  
48 ‘includ(ing) (a) call for conservation and development of the Earth’s resources for the  
49 benefit of all people now and in the future.’” . . .

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51 One thing is certain: for the love of the earth and one another, we may not remain  
52 indifferent. *We are called to face the challenges with a deep sense of urgency and*  
53 *hopeful attention.* (emphasis added)

## 54 55 56 **RESOLUTION**

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59 **WHEREAS**, Scripture reveals God’s will that humans shall have dominion (stewardship or  
60 responsibility) over all the earth (Genesis 1:26); that we must provide for the future, acting as  
61 trustworthy stewards (1 Corinthians 4:2) of the earth’s finite resources on God’s behalf (Genesis  
62 41:46-57); that Jesus Christ teaches the church that our actions on the earth have cosmic  
63 consequences in God’s will for redemption (Matthew 16:18-20)<sup>1</sup>; and

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65 **WHEREAS**, responsible stewardship of Creation is integral to Christian discipleship (General  
66 Synod resolutions 1959,1975,1989, 2005, 2007); and we are called to compassionate action on  
67 behalf of those who disproportionately bear the consequences of climate change and  
68 environmental degradation (General Synod resolutions 1977, 1983, 1989); and

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70 **WHEREAS**, the scientific consensus concerning climate change persuades us that we must  
71 intensify our efforts beyond what has previously been adopted (General Synod resolutions 2005,  
72 2007); and there is growing evidence that climate change is occurring at an accelerated rate and  
73 it is primarily caused by human activities; and unless the use of fossil fuels is immediately  
74 reduced, the amount of carbon dioxide and other greenhouse gases in the atmosphere will reach  
75 irreversible harmful levels within the next two decades; and

76  
77 **WHEREAS**, the evidence that glaciers and high altitude snow packs from the Andes to the  
78 Himalayas are melting at alarming rates is incontrovertible and the effects of this unprecedented  
79 circumstance has permanent life-threatening implications for millions of people in many regions  
80 of the world; and recent satellite and observational evidence indicates an unexpected rapid  
81 increase of global warming in the North polar region, some three decades ahead of warming  
82 trends projected by most computer models; and

83  
84 **WHEREAS**, the projected long-term consequences of current trends include sea level rise,  
85 coastal flooding, wide-scale loss of species, migration of vector-borne diseases, and more heat-  
86 related episodes among vulnerable members of urban populations; and when taken together,  
87 these trends pose the most serious threat to humanity in recorded history and demand our urgent,  
88 immediate response to significantly alter our current course; and

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90 **WHEREAS**, the Collegium of the United Church of Christ, in a pastoral letter issued on April 8,  
91 2008, reminded us that “We may not remain indifferent. We are called to face the challenges,  
92 engage deeply and with hopeful attention... to invite those who seek and those who love, those

93 who lament and those who act on prophetic and imaginative dreams, to journey with us, build  
94 greening places and spaces for the holy and one another;”

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96 **THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED** that, the delegates to the Twenty-seventh General Synod  
97 of the United Church of Christ, declare a profound sense of urgency about the present and  
98 potential environmental and social consequences of climate change; and

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100 **BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED** that the Twenty-seventh General Synod urges the entire  
101 United Church of Christ, clergy and laity, officers and members, to listen carefully and  
102 prayerfully to the scientific consensus now available, to make education on these matters a  
103 priority throughout the United Church of Christ, and to take immediate steps, both individually  
104 and collectively, to address the changes required at all levels by this unprecedented global crisis;  
105 and

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107 **BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED** that the Twenty-seventh General Synod urges all United  
108 Church of Christ churches to achieve energy conservation, material-use reduction and other life-  
109 style changes as soon as possible; and that all conferences of the United Church of Christ are  
110 urged to assemble and distribute currently available resource materials to assist members and  
111 churches to increase their level of “green” activity and practice within the next two to five years,  
112 with the aim of moving toward a carbon-neutral footprint over the next five to seven years; and

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114 **BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED** that the Twenty-seventh General Synod urges the United  
115 Church of Christ, at all levels, to advocate the prompt enactment of state and federal legislation  
116 that will forward these practices throughout the nation and will support the creation of new  
117 international agreements that address the fundamental causes of climate change. Those actions  
118 include, but are not limited to:

- 119 a. passage of meaningful cap and trade legislation on carbon emissions;  
120 b. enactment of stringent gas mileage standards for motor vehicles;  
121 c. incentives for investing in renewable sources of energy;  
122 d. financial disincentives for fossil fuel consumption;  
123 e. allocation of significant public finances for research and development of alternative  
124 energy technologies;  
125 f. meaningful participation in international treaty negotiation, thereby improving our  
126 country’s moral standing in the community of nations; and

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129 <sup>1</sup>1989 Resolution of the Connecticut Conference, UCC – *Solid Waste and Ecologically Sound*  
130 *Life*

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132 **FUNDING**

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134 Funding for the implementation of this resolution will be made in accordance with the overall  
135 mandates of the affected agencies and the funds available.

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137 **IMPLEMENTATION**

138 Justice and Witness Ministries is requested to be the primary implementer of this resolution.

