

**THE EARTH IS THE LORD'S – NOT OURS TO WRECK  
IMPERATIVES FOR A NEW MORAL ERA**

**Submitted by the California, Nevada Southern Conference  
Endorsed by 16 UCC Conferences  
Passed by UCC National Synod July 3, 2017 with 97% support**

**A Resolution of Witness**

**SUMMARY:**

God's great gift of Creation – the context in which all life seeks fulfillment – is in crisis. Driven by material aspiration, humanity's use of fossil fuel since the Industrial Revolution has broken Creation's balance. The scale of Creation's demise is dramatically expanding beyond our comprehension. Never has the earth and the climate changed so quickly. While the leaders of every country in the world recognize this reality, our current Administration ignores science, defunds the Environmental Protection Agency, and withdraws from the Paris Climate Accord. As people of faith, recognizing that the earth is the Lord's, it falls upon our generation to embrace the imperatives set forth in this resolution – imperatives that constitute a new moral era. We view the current climate crisis as an opportunity for which the church was born.

**BIBLICAL, THEOLOGICAL AND ETHICAL RATIONALE**

Psalm 24

**John 18:37-38 (NRSV)**

*<sup>37</sup> Pilate asked him, "So you are a king?" Jesus answered, "You say that I am a king. For this I was born, and for this I came into the world, to testify to the truth. Everyone who belongs to the truth listens to my voice." <sup>38</sup> Pilate asked him, "What is truth?" After he had said this, he went out to the Jews again and told them, "I find no case against him.*

**TEXT OF THE MOTION**

WHEREAS the leaders of over 190 countries have signed the Paris Climate Accord, acknowledging the critical role every country must play if the life-sustaining climate of the earth is to continue to sustain life as we have always known it;

WHEREAS the mayors of 30 American cities, the governors of numerous states and leaders of hundreds of American companies have publicly committed the institutions they lead to reducing greenhouse gas emissions in compliance with the Paris Climate Accord;

WHEREAS over the past 50 years the UCC, along with religious leaders from other faiths and denominations, have issued countless statements on the goodness of Creation and our call to act as responsible stewards, all of which has been an insufficient witness;

WHEREAS the Core Purpose of the United Church of Christ states (in part): "... we serve God in the co-creation of a just and sustainable world as made manifest in the Gospel of Jesus Christ,"

WHEREAS this historic moment provides Christian communities with a powerful opportunity to bear witness to the sacredness of God's Creation and the urgent call to preserve it, and responding to this call expresses the new mission initiative of the UCC known as [the three great loves](#), one of which is love of creation;

THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED, that the Thirty-first General Synod of the United Church of Christ raises its prophetic voice regarding the urgency of healing the climate of the earth, our home and God's gift for the future of all life, both human and all other life,

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that the Thirty-first General Synod of the United Church of Christ calls upon the whole of the church to prayerfully engage the following imperatives as we seek to initiate a new moral era:

**Let our clergy accept the mantle of moral leadership**

Now is the time for clergy to speak from their pulpits about the moral obligation of our generation to protect God's creation.

Let the world know that whatever the current American administration may say or do, we who follow Jesus will not back away from God's call to protect our common home. When the powers that be deny or obscure the truth, we followers of Jesus will proclaim the truth to protect our common home.

**Let all of us incarnate the changes we long for**

Now is the time for congregations and for every person of faith to set a moral example through our own words and actions. As individuals and as communities, let us commit to making decisions of integrity in our energy choices, undoing the disproportionate impact of climate change on communities of color, indigenous communities, and poor white communities around the world even as we commit to hold all our religious, political, corporate, and global leaders accountable to do the same.

**Let us proclaim truth in the public square**

We are now living in a John 18:37 moment, in which we must hold to the truth we understand from our two Testaments and from the sacred book of nature, recognizing that when truth is compromised, only power prevails.

- Let our communities of faith be bold and courageous as we address one of the greatest moral challenge that the world has ever faced.
- Let us commit to resist all expansion of fossil fuel infrastructure and demand new sources of renewable energy that are accessible to all communities.
- Let us do all we can to change America's understanding of the story that our generation is writing. Let us begin a new story – a story that is not dependent on fossil fuel or on wealth for the few and misery for the many.

Accepting that it is up to us – we the people – whether in the streets, at the State House, in the halls of power, with our phones, emails, technology and social media by committing our time, financial resources and prayers – let us pour ourselves out to bend the moral arc of justice, with joy in our hearts, beauty in our sights, and hope for the children.

**FUNDING**

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

**IMPLEMENTATION**

The Collegium of Officers, in consultation with appropriate ministries or other entities within the United Church of Christ, will determine the implementing body.