



Evangelical Lutheran Church in America

God's work. Our hands.

June 2015

ELCA statement on Pope Francis encyclical

As members of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America, we share a deep concern with our Catholic brothers and sisters for the well-being of our neighbors and of God's good creation. "Humans, in service to God, have special roles on behalf of the whole of creation. Made in the image of God, we are called to care for the earth as God cares for the earth" (ELCA social statement, "Caring for Creation: Vision, Hope and Justice").

Daily we see and hear the evidence of a rapidly changing climate. At the same time, we also witness in too many instances how the earth's natural beauty, a sign of God's wonderful creativity, has been defiled by pollutants and waste.

An accounting of climate change that has credibility and integrity must name the neglect and carelessness of private industry and the failure of government leadership that have contributed to these changes. However, it also must include repentance for our own participation as individual consumers and investors in economies that make intensive and insistent demands for energy.

Yet we find our hope in the promise of God's own faithfulness to the creation and humankind. We serve in concert with God's creative and renewing power, understanding that we have the resources and responsibility to act together for the common good, especially for those who are most vulnerable to the effects of climate change.

Today we join with Pope Francis in calling on world leaders to embrace our common responsibility as work continues toward a global agreement on climate change. We urge leaders to support an ambitious agreement that reduces greenhouse gas emissions, encourages development of low-carbon technologies, and supports the ability of countries to cope with the effects of a changing climate and build resiliency for a sustainable future.

The present moment is a critical one, filled with both challenge and opportunity to act as individuals, citizens, leaders and communities of faith in solidarity with God's good creation and in hope for our shared future.

God's peace,

The Rev. Elizabeth A. Eaton
Presiding Bishop
Evangelical Lutheran Church in America