

THE *Episcopal* CHURCH



OCTOBER 12, 2014 – EIGHTEENTH SUNDAY AFTER PENTECOST

A PASTORAL MESSAGE ON CLIMATE CHANGE

The following excerpt is from “A Pastoral Message on Climate Change” from the heads of the Episcopal Church, Anglican Church of Canada, Evangelical Lutheran Church in America and Evangelical Lutheran Church in Canada, released September 19. This letter is available in its entirety at <http://www.episcopalchurch.org/notice/pastoral-message-climate-change>.

We are united as Christian leaders in our concern for the well-being of our neighbors and of God’s good creation that provides life and livelihood for all God’s creatures. 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. 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.

Many have reacted to these changes with grief and anger. In their outrage some have understandably focused on the neglect and carelessness, both in private industry and in government regulation, that have contributed to these changes. However, an honest accounting requires a recognition that we all participate both as consumers and investors in economies that make intensive and insistent demands for energy. In addition, as citizens we have chosen to support or acquiesce in policies that shift the burdens of climate change to communities that are most vulnerable to its effects. People who are already challenged by poverty and by dislocation resulting from civil war or famine have limited resources for adapting to climate change’s effects.

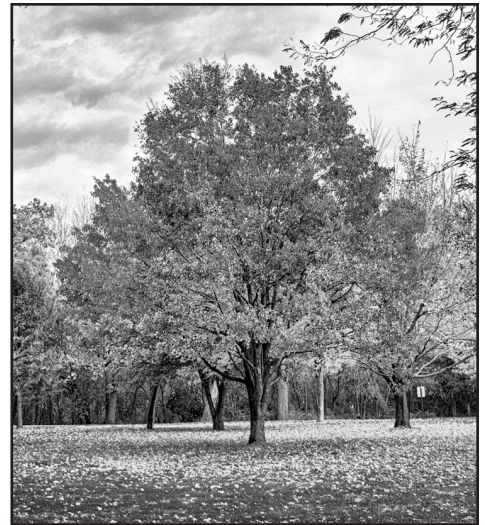
While an accounting of climate change that has credibility and integrity must include our own repentance, we find our hope in the promise of God’s own faithfulness to the creation and humankind and in the liberation that comes from God’s promise.

God, who made the creation and made it good, has not abandoned it. Daily the Spirit continues to renew the face of the earth. All who care for the earth and work for the restoration of its vitality can be confident that they are not pursuing a lost cause. We serve in concert with God’s own creative and renewing power. ...

We encourage you to take the initiative to engage decision-makers in this godly work in all arenas of public life – in government and business, in schools and civic organizations, in social media and also in our church life.

We are not powerless to act and we are not alone. “We have the power of the Holy Spirit and the indwelling Spirit of Christ to give us hope and courage” (“A Catechism of Creation,” The Episcopal Church, 2005, p.19).

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.



(Photo by Nicholas Cardot)

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