



## FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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## 31<sup>st</sup> United Church of Christ General Synod calls clergy to preach on climate change

**BALTIMORE (July 4, 2017)** — The 31st General Synod of the United Church of Christ is calling on clergy across the denomination to preach about the moral obligation to protect God's creation and appealing to its 900,000 members to lead efforts to educate and advocate for legislation to reduce the impact of humans on the environment.

Ninety-seven percent of delegates to the UCC's biennial governance meeting voted July 3 in favor of a resolution, entitled "The Earth is the Lord's-Not Ours to Wreck." It was first adopted by the denomination's Southern California Nevada Conference, shortly after the Trump administration announced on June 1 that the United States would withdraw from the Paris Climate Accord. By the time Synod opened on June 30, the resolution had been endorsed by 16 more regional conferences.

"The climate crisis is an opportunity for which the church was born," said the Rev. Jim Antal, president and conference minister for the UCC's Massachusetts Conference and the author of the resolution. "This sets the stage for engagement and hope. This is a proclamation of truth and the love of God's gift." Antal said no previous resolution had arrived at General Synod "with this much momentum."

The resolution states, "Now is the time for clergy to speak from their pulpits about the moral obligation of our generation to protect God's creation. When the powers that be deny or obscure the truth, we followers of Jesus will proclaim the truth to protect our common home."

<https://docs.google.com/viewerng/viewer?url=http://uccfiles.com/synod/resolutions/14b-The-Earth-is-the-Lords-Not-Ours-to-Wreck-Imperatives-for-a-New-Moral-Era-FINAL.pdf>

It adds, “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 religions, political, corporate and global leaders accountable to do the same.”

Other General Synods have addressed environmental concerns, with 19 previous resolutions, beginning with the second General Synod in 1959, and most recently including a measure adopted in 2015 calling for responsible stewardship of the outer space environment. In 2013, General Synod adopted a resolution urging all settings of the church to divest from fossil fuel companies. In response, the UCC Pension Boards and the United Church Funds have created investment vehicles that do not include fossil fuel companies and that promote renewable energy sources.

“Clergy are among the most trusted leaders who can influence America to do what science says we must,” said Antal, a longtime environmental advocate. “Whatever the views of people in the pews, when their clergy take a position, people listen. Advocating for creation is a moral imperative.”

The denomination has also just adopted a two-year initiative called “Three Great Loves,” which seeks to unite its congregations in mission and advocacy in three areas, one of which is “love of creation.” <http://3greatloves.uccpages.org/>

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**About the United Church of Christ** The United Church of Christ is a mainline Protestant denomination comprised of nearly 900,000 members and 5,000 congregations nationwide. Headquartered in Cleveland, Ohio, the UCC is a church of many firsts, including the first mainline denomination to ordain a woman, the first to ordain an openly-gay man and the first predominantly white denomination to ordain an African American.

The UCC and its members are tireless advocates for social issues such as immigration reform, racial equality, LGBT rights, marriage equality, environmental protection and economic justice.