

Lazarus, Come Out:

A Shared Statement of Hope
in the Face of Climate Change

“Lazarus, come out: A shared statement of hope in the face of climate change”

As people of the Resurrection, it is appropriate that we gather in this Easter season to praise God and to celebrate the beauty of God’s Creation. As Christians, we do not live in the despair and melancholy of the tomb, but in the light of the Risen Christ. Our resurrection hope, which is grounded in the promise of renewal and restoration for all of God’s Creation, gives us energy and strength to respond to the accelerating threat of climate change.

Let us be clear. The scientific data is stark. We know that climate instability is reaching a dangerous point. Now is the time to slow the rate of catastrophic climate change. Unless we take action now, our children and our children’s children will live in a world of increasingly unexpected and dangerous climate events. Climate change already affects the ability to grow crops to feed the growing world population, creating significant concern for food security. The poorest among us are becoming even more vulnerable. Biodiversity in many regions of the world is being destroyed, and species are becoming extinct at alarming rates.

Yet even in the face of these truths, there is denial and a deafening silence from many of our political leaders. Political gridlock and science deniers undermine even the smallest efforts to accomplish legislative or policy changes that could reduce carbon emissions, increase energy conservation and efficiency, create clean “green” jobs, and set this country on a path to sustainability.

It is essential that we, as religious and spiritual leaders, speak up, because climate change is a moral and justice issue. The choices and actions of human beings are largely responsible for driving climate change, and all of us need repentance and conversion. We can no longer remain blind to the fact that our sinful natures, driven by greed and lack of concern for our sisters and brothers, are at the center of this crisis.

As Christians we are called, just as Lazarus was called, to receive God’s power, to come out of the tomb, and to lead transformed lives. We are called to come out of the tomb of sinfulness and to acknowledge our individual and communal responsibility. We are called to take up our calling as followers of the Risen Christ: to strengthen the faint-hearted, to rouse the careless,

to comfort those burdened by grief and fear, and to join the search and the struggle to create a more life-giving society.

We are called in a variety of ways and actions to be a prophetic witness for eco-justice in the public sphere and in our pulpits. We are called to join the rapidly growing environmental sustainability movement of young and old that demands an end to our dependence on fossil fuel, on oil subsidies, and on environmentally risky projects that jeopardize and pollute ecosystems. We are called to engage in a more intense political and economic effort to make safe, clean, renewable energy a top energy and public policy priority.

We recognize that words are not enough, and that the Holy Spirit leads us to respond to the climate crisis prophetically and prayerfully. The strategies we favor are various, but we are united in our shared commitment to the Risen Christ, who bids us to rise with him from the tyranny of suffering and death. We are united in our conviction that just as Lazarus was called to act by stepping out of the tomb and into the light, so we, too, are called by God to take action.

Therefore, as Christian leaders, we commit to

1) Advocate for national and international policies and regulations that enable a swift transition from dependence on fossil fuels to clean, safe, renewable energy, and for economic systems that are fair and just. At the same time, we commit to encouraging our faith communities to engage in public witness about climate change through advocacy at the local, national and international levels.

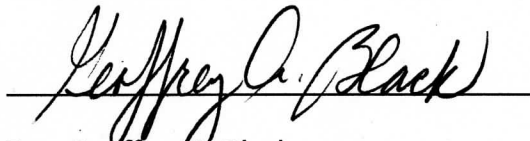
2) Initiate and sustain an interfaith, regional and national conversation around climate change and social justice.

3) Invite our communities to prayerfully consider how their own actions and lifestyle choices affect the environment. We commit to offering our communities continued opportunities to learn about climate change and the universal Church's response to this crisis.

4) Foster a prayerful response to our changing world as we recognize that communal prayer is at the heart of shared faith life. We invite all of our congregations to share in the following prayer (whose imagery is drawn from Psalm 104) as part of their worship:

May God give us the grace to heed Jeremiah's prophetic warning "How long will the land mourn, and the grass of every field wither?" May we accept the gracious invitation of the incarnate Word to live a life of grace for the world, so that the earth may be restored and humanity filled with hope. O Lord, send us forth by your Spirit to renew the face of the earth, that the world may once again be filled with your good things: the trees watered abundantly, springs flowing between the hills and in verdant valleys, all the earth made fruitful, and birds, beasts, and humans alike quenching their thirst and receiving their nourishment from you once again in due season. Amen.

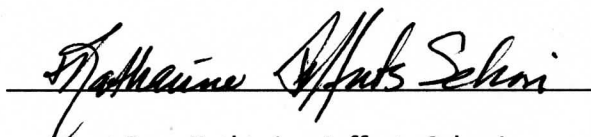
We place our signatures on this statement, filled with confidence that in Christ there is a new creation. The stone has been removed from the tomb, death has been put to flight, and Christ is Risen!



Rev. Geoffrey A. Black

General Minister and President

United Church of Christ



Most Rev. Katharine Jefferts Schori

Presiding Bishop

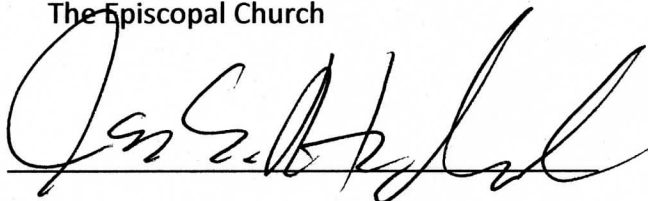
The Episcopal Church



Rev. Thomas G. Carr

Co-Founder/Co-Chair of the Board

Inter-Religious Eco-Justice Network



Rev. James E. Hazelwood

Bishop of the New England Synod

Evangelical Lutheran Church in America

on behalf of
Reverend A. Roy Medley
General Secretary
American Baptist Churches, USA
Affiliations listed for identification purposes only

27 April 2013

Other denominational leaders signing "Lazarus, come out: A shared statement of hope in the face of climate change"

Margaret Rose Episcopal Church Interreligious Ecumenical Office
+ W. L. Kristy Bishop Diocese of Rhode Island
Kikere Pama, Protestant Church (E.S.A.)
Rev. Robert Mark Pastor Church of the Covenant (PCUSA + UCC), PCUSA Eco-Step Program
Step Johns - Province I, Energy & Stewardship minister
Laura E. Everett Massachusetts Council of Churches
+ Thomas C. Ely, Bishop Episcopal Diocese of Vermont
+ M. Domingo Juvo, S.S.F. Bishop of Massachusetts
+ Roy F. (and) Cederholm, Bishop Suffragan Mass. (retired)
+ Lauren J. Alvares, Bishop Suffragan of CT
+ Ian T. Douglas, Bishop of CT.
+ Charles Wildeman, Int. Conf. Minister, UCC, CT
+ Richard W. Cortel, Interim Conference Minister UCC MAINE
+ Gary M. Schultz, Conference Minister, NH Conference, UCC
+ Harold P. Anderson, Canon to the Ordinary, NH
+ Doug Fisher, Bishop Episcopal Diocese of Western Mass
+ Metropolitan Methodios, Greek Orthodox Metropolis of Boston
+ Jim Antal, Mass. Conference United Church of Christ

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Names of those signing this statement in Boston, Massachusetts at the
Climate Revival – April 27, 2013

Rev. Geoffrey A. Black, General Minister and President of the United Church of Christ
Most Rev. Katharine Jefferts Schori, Presiding Bishop of the Episcopal Church
Rev. James E. Hazelwood, Bishop of the New England Synod, Evangelical Lutheran Church in America
Rev. Thomas G. Carr, Senior Minister, First Baptist Church (West Hartford, CT), Co-Founder and Co-Chair of the Board of the Inter-Religious Eco-Justice Network, and Member of the Steering Committee of Interfaith Moral Action on Climate – signing on behalf of Rev. A. Roy Medley, General Secretary of the American Baptist Churches, USA

Rev. Margaret R. Rose, Presiding Bishop's Deputy for Ecumenical and Interfaith Collaboration
Rt. Rev. W. Nicholas Knisely, S.O.Sc., Bishop, Episcopal Diocese of Rhode Island
Rev. R. Wayne Parrish, General Presbyter Boston Presbytery Presbyterian Church USA
Rev. Robert Mark, Sr. Pastor Church of the Covenant PCUSA Eco-Stewards Program
Rev. Stephanie Johnson (Energy Stewardship Minister of Province One, Episcopal Church)
Rev. Laura E. Everett, Executive Director, Massachusetts Council of Churches
Rt. Rev. Thomas C. Ely, Bishop, Episcopal Diocese of Vermont
Rt. Rev. M. Thomas Shaw, SSJE, Bishop, Episcopal Diocese of Massachusetts
Rt. Rev. Roy (Bud) Cederholm, Jr., Bishop Suffragan (Retired), Episcopal Diocese of Massachusetts
Rt. Rev. Laura Ahrens, Bishop Suffragan, Episcopal Diocese of Connecticut
Rt. Rev. Ian T. Douglas, Bishop, Episcopal Diocese of Connecticut
Rev. Mr. Charles Wildman, Interim Conference Minister, Connecticut Conference, UCC
Rev. Rick Cowles, Interim Conference Minister, Maine Conference, United Church of Christ
Rev. Gary M. Schulte, Conference Minister, New Hampshire Conference, United Church of Christ
Rev. Canon Hannah P. Anderson, Canon to the Ordinary, Episcopal Diocese of New Hampshire
Rt. Rev. Douglas John Fisher, Bishop, Episcopal Diocese of Western Massachusetts
His Eminence Metropolitan Methodius, Greek Orthodox Metropolis of Boston
(representing His All Holiness, Ecumenical Patriarch Bartholomew)
Rev. Dr. Jim Antal, President and Minister, Massachusetts Conference, United Church of Christ