

# 2015 Climate Justice Curriculum

## by Fossil Free PCUSA

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# Climate Justice Curriculum from Fossil Free PCUSA 2015

## Overview for Leaders



As Christians we have a spiritual and moral obligation to care for all of God's creation – plants, animals, and humans – and the land, water and air on which all life depends. Extracting fossil fuels is devastating our land, water and air and burning fossil fuels is the major culprit in creating climate change. If we are to slow the effects of climate change, the most effective way is to keep fossil fuels in the ground and minimize burning them. There are many ways this can be done individually and as a society. Divestment - selling investments in fossil fuel companies - is one way to put pressure on those companies to develop newer and cleaner technologies for producing energy.

This 4-week curriculum will lead your congregation through the Biblical basis for caring for creation, the basics of climate change, what we can do as individuals and congregations, and the role of our denomination in combatting climate change with a focus on divesting from fossil fuels.

### **Session 1: Biblical and Theological Foundations for Earth Care**

As Creator, God has fashioned a universe that is based on love, forgiveness and reconciliation. As creatures, human beings are bound by these "rules," whether we agree with them or not. It is our choice if we choose to live in harmony with creation and God, or work against them. This overarching principle is the lens through which we can view all scripture related to the care of the environment. This first lesson is designed to be about one hour long, with additional material for a longer or additional class period. A handout is provided to be shared with participants for further study.

### **Session 2: Climate change basics and impacts**

The goal of this second session is to inform class members about the basic science behind climate change and its impacts. It is designed to be about an hour long and has three options for teaching basic climate science: 1) a short video with main points, 2) prepared questions and answers, and 3) a PowerPoint presentation that can be printed or projected. A handout of recommended readings and follow-up activities is provided to be distributed at the end of the class.

### **Session 3: What can we do as individuals and congregations?**

In recent history, rather than caring for the creation we have exploited it. The result is a scarred earth with more waste than we know how to dispose. Even more serious are the consequences these activities are having on our climate. In this session we will discuss actions Christians can take to reduce consumption and begin to slow this process of climate change. This third session is intended to be about an hour long and is designed with two options to suit the audience, and the materials and space available. A handout of resources for further study and action is included.

### **Session 4. What should our denomination do moving forward?**

This final lesson will discuss how PC(USA) has responded to the challenge of climate change and will focus on divestment as a strategy. Divestment is a moral and prophetic act of refusing to invest in or profit from companies that rely on fossil fuels for income. Session 4 is designed to be about an hour long and includes materials to be printed for class preparation, in-class use, and a handout of resources to be taken home.

**Session 1. God is Creator: Biblical and Theological Foundations for Earth Care  
Leader's Guide**

**Introduction for the leader**

"In the beginning God created the heavens and the earth." So begins the Bible and the book of Genesis. This statement is more profound than you might think upon first reading. The statement makes the point that God is the Creator of all. Human beings tend to think and act like we are the creators and not the creatures. Only God is Creator, and this is our starting point in considering how we are to take care of the environment ([Psalm 24:1](#)).

As Creator, God has fashioned a universe that is based on love, forgiveness and reconciliation. We see this most clearly in knowing Jesus Christ our Lord. As creatures, human beings are bound by these "rules," whether we agree with them or not. It is our choice if we choose to live in harmony with creation and God, or work against them. This overarching principle is the lens through which we can view all scripture related to the care of the environment.

This first lesson is designed to be about one hour long, with additional material for a longer or additional class period. A handout is provided to be shared with participants for further study.

**Lesson Plan**

**Welcome**

**5 minutes**

Invite participants to share how they have found God in creation and why they are interested in learning more about Scripture, caring for creation, and our responsibility as people of faith to care about our financial impact on creation.

**Opening Prayer**

**1 minute**

God, in the beginning you created the universe out of love. You call us to live in harmony with creation and you. Help us learn more about how you call us, how you forgive our ecological sins, and how you empower us to be reconciled with you and with creation. Amen.

**Scripture: Genesis 1:1—2:4a**

*Overview*

The opening chapters of Genesis give us a staggering amount of theologically-based environmental principles. It is helpful to know first that there are two creation stories: Genesis 1-2:4a and 2:4b-25. The first creation story is written like a poem and called a "priestly" account (Bruggemann, 14-15; von Rad, 24-28), written to give hope to the Israelites in exile, or just after the exile in Babylonia. Two main themes in the poem are, first of all, that all of creation (including human beings) is good; and second, that human beings are given a vocation of caring for the earth.

## The Goodness Theme—All Creation Is Good

### Reading the Text

5 minutes

Read Genesis 1:1—2:4a as a group and notice the goodness theme, letting different people read each verse or section (like a "day," such as verses 1:1-5 and 1:6-8 and so on). Identify how many times creation is called "good" (and "very good!").

This poem is not meant to be a scientific account but a theological declaration—revealing the relationship between God and humanity and all creation. This relationship is based on this idea of goodness, which means that order is brought to the chaos that existed before God acted (v.2). The story of creation tells us that if we are connected with God, then order or goodness flows. If we are disconnected from God, sin emerges and the possibility of evil arises. Chaos emerges.

What happens to us when we get disconnected from the earth? For example, many farmers no longer walk their fields, listen to the birds and put their hands in the dirt. They do farming from a distance, staying in their tractors and combines. An organic farmer once gave advice to farmers that they need to go walking in their fields and notice what they hear and see. Those in the city spend much of their time in their cars or in buildings, living in artificial environments. When we distance ourselves from the rest of creation, we distance ourselves from what is good, and so our relationship with God suffers.

### Questions for Engagement

20 minutes

1. How do you disconnect from the earth? How do you connect with the earth? How do either affect your view and care of the earth?

Rev. Garrett Keizer in an article in *Christian Century* magazine (December, 2000) suggests that we need to use our spades and work the earth with our hands once again. (Go to <http://www.christiancentury.org/article/%252Fnatural-resistance> if you have access to the archives of the Christian Century magazine.) In so doing, we encounter the “resistance” of the earth, and we realize our limits. Our technology has tempted us to think that we are “as gods.” God said, “Let there be light,” and light appeared. Now we can flip on the light switch and do the same. Technology’s goal is to make the mind supreme over matter, time and distance. Things have speeded up as a result and we no longer have to wait. We need to come into contact with our mortality and realize there are limits to our existence as well as to the resources of the earth. We can do this by “spading” the earth, and experiencing its resistance.

2. Do you garden? How has it helped you to realize your mortality? How has technology speeded up our lives? How has it tempted us to think that our minds can now control all matter, time and distance? What are the dangers in this?

One of the results of our distancing from creation is that many human beings see nature as adversarial. We work against the weeds in the field; we wipe out bacteria using antibiotics; we tear down forests and mountains to build our cities and get our fuel.

3. How has our adversarial relationship with nature affected the way we treat the earth? What are some negative consequences of having this kind of relationship with creation? How might we look at our relationship with creation differently? How would this new relationship with creation affect your daily life?

## **The Theme of Our Vocation—Subdue and Have Dominion**

### *Reading the Text*

**5 minutes**

Focus now on Genesis 1:28. God gives humankind its vocation: “Be fruitful and multiply, and fill the earth and subdue it; and have dominion over the fish of the sea and the birds of the air and over every living thing that moves upon the earth” (NRSV). The ideas of subduing and having dominion over creation have been misused to justify humankind’s exploitation of the earth.

Both verbs (“to subdue” and “to have dominion”) concern the use of power (Bruggemann, 32-33). Made in the image of God, humanity is God’s representative on earth, exercising God’s authority and freedom. But humanity’s exercise of power is to be done as God would do it. God would never exploit the earth. As God’s representatives all of creation is to be cared for by us. Having dominion only has to do with the animals of the earth. Humanity is to act as a shepherd, watching over, protecting and caring for the living creatures as the shepherd king does in Ezekiel 34.

### *Questions for Engagement*

**20 minutes**

1. In what ways do you see humanity acting properly as God’s representatives in the care of the earth and its living creatures?
2. In what ways has humanity exploited the earth, using power and freedom in a way that does not reflect God’s ways?

Now let us compare another description of our vocation found in the second creation story in Genesis 2:4b-25. This is a narrative account thought to be written much earlier than the priestly account. The description of vocation is found at 2:15: “The Lord God took the man and put him in the garden of Eden to till it and keep it” (NRSV).

Humanity’s purpose here is to work the garden to preserve it from all damage. The garden is not humanity’s possession, but rather humanity is called to a state of service (von Rad, 80). Humanity’s calling is to work the garden and enhance it as a part of what God is doing in creation. God has entrusted us with the garden and this work is our vocation (Bruggemann, 46).

3. If it is our vocation to preserve and care for and enhance the garden, how does this understanding affect the way we raise food, obtain fuel, and work? For you personally, do you see the way you live as a vocation of caring for the “garden”? If so, where do you see this? If not, how might you change your life so that your vocation is fulfilled?

### **Closing Prayer**

**1 minute**

Dear God, thank you for calling us. Work in our hearts this week and help us continue to seek ways to know your Word and care for your creation. In the name of Jesus the Christ who reconciles us, Amen.

### **References**

Bruggemann, Walter. *Genesis*. John Knox Press, Louisville, KY. 1986.  
Von Rad, Gerhard. *Genesis*. Westminster John Knox Press, Louisville, KY. 1973

### **Material for a longer or additional class:**

Two other themes in this Genesis 1 creation story are that human beings are given an identity, being made in the image of God, and that the seventh day of the week is a Sabbath day (the seventh day) on which we are to rest and to keep holy.

Explore what it means that we are made in God's image, and how does this image affect the way we care for the earth.

Observing the Sabbath is actually a radical practice in our hurry up, workaholic, anxiety-filled culture. How might the practice of Sabbath help us to slow down and take better care of creation? Study what Sabbath is and how it can have long term, positive effects on our lives.

To go into greater depth into these scriptures look at these webinars:

- Christian and Jewish teachings are presented by Professor Patricia Tull and Rabbi Lawrence Troster at: <http://greenfaith.org/success-stories/webinars-christian-jewish-teachings/?searchterm=Jewish%20&%20Christian>
- Professors Bill Brown and Patricia Tull provide excellent biblical teachings on creation care at: [https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=wkp\\_80LfF1Q&feature=youtu.be](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=wkp_80LfF1Q&feature=youtu.be)
- Professor Bill Brown's powerpoint for his lecture can be seen at: <http://www.pcusa.org/resource/powerpoint-bill-brown-creation-care-bible/>

### **Additional Scriptures for further study**

Consider sharing these Scriptures with the group for reading between the first and second sessions of this study. Invite the group to sit with a text for the week.

#### *Second Scripture: Psalm 104*

Psalm 104 is not as familiar to many as other psalms, but it is one of the best psalms that praises God for all of nature. The psalm almost describes what it means when God said that all creation is “good” in Genesis 1 (Mays, 331). This psalm is a statement of faith although it covers areas of science, economics and art, and even recreation (v.26). The psalm is a delight to read as it describes the creatures God has made and how God sustains them.

What parts of creation are mentioned? How does God care for them? The psalm begins and ends with sections of praise, so you as the leader might read the first one before you begin (vv. 1-4), although this section describes some elements of nature that should be mentioned. Then you could have the entire group at the end read together the final praise (vv. 31-35).

Before reading the last section together, there is a verse here that seems out of place. V. 35a reads, “Let sinners be consumed from the earth, and let the wicked be no more” (NRSV). In the midst of this song of praise, a petition is made for God to rid the earth of sinners and the wicked. Point out this verse before or after you read these verses together.

### Questions:

1. After reading this psalm and considering all the parts of creation described in the psalm and how God cares for them, what kinds of insights and feelings have you experienced?
2. Read again v. 27. What does this say about our dependence on God, and our tendency to think that we are in control?
3. Look again at v. 35a. Who are these “sinners” and “the wicked” the writer is condemning? It is as if the author knew of polluters and those who care little about our vocation of caring for creation. Could there have been such polluters in the day of the writer? How does this verse inspire us to be God’s instruments in exposing or confronting such sinners and the wicked? How does this inspire us to look at our own use of God’s creation?

### *Third Scripture: Matthew 25:31-46*

These verses describe the familiar separation of the sheep from the goats by the Son of Man when he “comes in his glory” (NRSV). This judgment of the nations is an expansion of an image from Ezekiel 35:17.

### Questions:

1. Do you believe in a “judgment day” as described in these verses? How do you believe God will judge our actions on earth?
2. Who are the “least of these” that Jesus describes in this description of God’s judgment? How do our actions of pollution and creating climate change affect “the least of these”? Visit <http://www.climatehotmap.org/> for examples of low-lying areas close to the coast where people who are poor live and how rising sea levels affect those communities.

Here are other resources for additional exploration:

- <http://www.theguardian.com/environment/2013/may/07/pacific-islands-global-warming-climate>
- <http://www.countercurrents.org/cc-marks271006.htm>
- <http://archive.itvs.org/risingwaters/islands.html>

Also, might "the least of these" also include animals in creation, including tiny sea creatures whose shells are affected by higher ocean acidity?

See: [http://www.neaq.org/conservation\\_and\\_research/climate\\_change/effects\\_on\\_ocean\\_animals.php](http://www.neaq.org/conservation_and_research/climate_change/effects_on_ocean_animals.php)

[http://www.biologicaldiversity.org/campaigns/endangered\\_oceans/faq.html](http://www.biologicaldiversity.org/campaigns/endangered_oceans/faq.html)

### *Fourth Scripture: Romans 8:18-25*

In these verses, the Apostle Paul is expounding on our future glory in spite of the suffering we may go through as Christ’s followers. The glory to come far outweighs the suffering that his readers are going through so much so that there is almost no comparison (Achtmeier, 142). What this glory entails is the redemption of all creation (v. 21). Paul may have believed (whether literally or figuratively) that the events of Genesis 3 where Adam and Eve disobey God was the point at which the earth became accursed (Gen. 3:17-18). This all represents our sin, our unwillingness to obey God and follow our vocation, and the pollution of the earth is included in this, of course. Paul announces that there will be a final transformation of creation by God, and creation will regain its goodness of Genesis 1.

### Questions:

1. We are well aware of the results of the sin of humankind toward creation. Have your class give their vision of what the new creation will be like/look like and list those things on a white board or poster paper. For each of these, what things are you doing that would help make this renewal happen now? What things could be done? How far are you or others willing to go to help this happen—such as, are you willing to practice civil disobedience, or go talk to your state congresspersons, or write/call your U.S. congresspersons? How would a divestment overture accomplish a renewal of creation?
2. Read about the renewal of creation in Revelation 21:1-8. Notice that this new creation involves the coming together of heaven and earth. List the characteristics given in these verses of this new creation. Many see this new creation as God not destroying the earth to create a new one, but taking the present earth and making the new out of it. How does this viewpoint change our perspective on caring for this earth?

### **References**

Achtemeier, Paul. Romans. John Knox Press, Louisville, KY. 1985.  
Mays, James L. Psalms. John Knox Press, Louisville, KY. 1994.



*First Scripture: Genesis 1-2:4a and 2:4b-25*

Two other themes in the Genesis 1 creation story are that human beings are given an identity, being made in the image of God, and that the seventh day of the week is a Sabbath day (the seventh day) on which we are to rest and to keep holy.

1. Explore what it means that we are made in God's image, and how does this image affect the way we care for the earth.
2. Observing the Sabbath is actually a radical practice in our hurry up, workaholic, anxiety-filled culture. How might the practice of Sabbath help us to slow down and take better care of creation? Study what Sabbath is and how it can have long term, positive effects on our lives.

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What parts of creation are mentioned? How does God care for them? The psalm begins and ends with sections of praise, vv. 1-4 and vv. 31-35, although the first section also describes some elements of nature.

Before reading the last section together, there is a verse here that seems out of place. V. 35a reads, “Let sinners be consumed from the earth, and let the wicked be no more” (NRSV). In the midst of this song of praise, a petition is made for God to rid the earth of sinners and the wicked.

Questions:

4. After reading this psalm and considering all the parts of creation described in the psalm and how God cares for them, what kinds of insights and feelings have you experienced?
5. Read again v. 27. What does this say about our dependence on God, and our tendency to think that we are in control?
6. Look again at v. 35a. Who are these “sinners” and “the wicked” the writer is condemning? It is as if the author knew of polluters and those who care little about our vocation of caring for creation. Could there have been such polluters in the day of the writer? How does this verse inspire us to be God’s instruments in exposing or confronting such sinners and the wicked? How does this inspire us to look at our own use of God’s creation?

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These verses describe the familiar separation of the sheep from the goats by the Son of Man when he “comes in his glory” (NRSV). This judgment of the nations is an expansion of an image from Ezekiel 35:17.

Questions:

3. Do you believe in a “judgment day” as described in these verses? How do you believe God will judge our actions on earth?
4. Who are the “least of these” that Jesus describes in this description of God’s judgment? How do our actions of pollution and creating climate change affect “the least of these”?

*Fourth Scripture: Romans 8:18-25*

In these verses, the Apostle Paul is expounding on our future glory in spite of the suffering we may go through as Christ’s followers. The glory to come far outweighs the suffering that his readers are going through so much so that there is almost no comparison (Achte-meier, 142). What this glory entails is the redemption of all creation (v. 21). Paul may have believed (whether literally or figuratively) that the events of Genesis 3 where Adam and Eve disobey God was the point at which the earth became accursed (Gen. 3:17-18). This all represents our sin, our unwillingness to obey God and follow our vocation, and the pollution of the earth is included in this, of course. Paul announces that there will be a final transformation of creation by God, and creation will regain its goodness of Genesis 1.

Questions:

3. We are well aware of the results of the sin of humankind toward creation. Write your vision of what the new creation will be like/look like. What things are you doing that would help make this renewal happen now? What things could be done? How far are you or others willing to go to help this happen—such as, are you willing to practice civil disobedience, or go talk to your state congresspersons, or write/call your U.S. congresspersons? How would a divestment overture accomplish a renewal of creation?
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**References**

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Mays, James L. Psalms. John Knox Press, Louisville, KY. 1994.

To go into greater depth into Genesis 1-2:4a and 2:4b-25 look at these webinars:

- Christian and Jewish teachings are presented by Professor Patricia Tull and Rabbi Lawrence Troster at:  
<http://greenfaith.org/success-stories/webinars-christian-jewish-teachings/?searchterm=Jewish%20&%20Christian>
- Professors Bill Brown and Patricia Tull provide excellent biblical teachings on creation care at:  
[www.pcusa.org/phpwebinars](http://www.pcusa.org/phpwebinars)
- Professor Bill Brown's powerpoint for his lecture can be seen at:  
<http://www.pcusa.org/resource/powerpoint-bill-brown-creation-care-bible/>

Visit <http://www.climatehotmap.org/> for examples of low-lying areas close to the coast where people who are poor live and how rising sea levels affect those communities.

More resources for additional exploration of Matthew 25:31-46

- <http://www.theguardian.com/environment/2013/may/07/pacific-islands-global-warming-climate>
- <http://www.countercurrents.org/cc-marks271006.htm>
- <http://archive.itvs.org/risingwaters/islands.html>

Might "the least of these" also include animals in creation, including tiny sea creatures whose shells are affected by higher ocean acidity?

- [http://www.neaq.org/conservation\\_and\\_research/climate\\_change/effects\\_on\\_ocean\\_animals.php](http://www.neaq.org/conservation_and_research/climate_change/effects_on_ocean_animals.php)
- [http://www.biologicaldiversity.org/campaigns/endangered\\_oceans/faq.html](http://www.biologicaldiversity.org/campaigns/endangered_oceans/faq.html)

## Session 2. Climate Change Basics and Impacts

### Introduction for the leader

Scientific evidence indicates that human activity – primarily the burning of fossil fuels – is affecting the climate and causing glaciers to melt, sea levels to rise, and storms and droughts to be more severe. These consequences indicate that we have not been good stewards of the earth that our Creator has given us. Furthermore, the richest nations are most responsible for producing the pollution that is causing the climate to change, yet it is the poorest nations (those on the coast and those who rely on subsistence farming and fishing) who suffer the most.

The goal of this second session is to inform class members about the basic science behind climate change and its impacts. It is designed to be about an hour long and has three options for teaching basic climate science: 1) a short video with main points, 2) prepared questions and answers, and 3) a PowerPoint presentation that can be printed or projected. A handout of recommended readings and follow-up activities is provided to be distributed at the end of the class.

### **Materials**

- One copy of the handout for each person in the class. The handout is “Resources” on page 16 and “Follow- Up Activities” on page 17 printed double-sided.
- One copy of the CLIMATE CHANGE BINGO card on page 4 for each person in the class.
- 15 pennies or 15 buttons or one marker for each person in the class.

#### Option 1:

- Laptop computer and projector or large screen TV for viewing a 4-minute video
- One index card and a pen/pencil for each person in the class
- Flipchart or whiteboard and markers

#### Option 2:

- Go to [www.fossilfreepcusa.org](http://www.fossilfreepcusa.org) and click on the heading “Fossil Free 101” and scroll over to the heading “The Science.” Click on it and make one copy of all the questions and answers for each person in the class.

### **Preparation before Class**

- This lesson contains a lot of information on climate change science and the impacts of climate change. Read through the curriculum and adjust your presentation to what you feel comfortable presenting and what your audience would benefit from learning.
- It is very helpful to provide examples of climate change impacts for the area you where you live. To learn more about ongoing and expected impacts by region, check out the 2014 National Climate Assessment <http://nca2014.globalchange.gov/highlights>.
- More information regarding the bingo answers is found at <http://www.fossilfreepcusa.org/fossil-free-101/the-science/> under the Science tab.
- Review the *ABCs of Climate Change Science* PowerPoint presentation at <http://www.fossilfreepcusa.org/resources-1/curriculum/>

## Lesson Plan

### **Opening Prayer**

**1 minute**

Lord, people say that the climate is changing and that human activity is responsible. Help us to understand how this could be possible and open our minds to what we hear today. We ask that you guide our discussion with respect and concern for one another. In your name, we pray. Amen

### **Review and Introduction**

**2 minutes**

In the first session, we studied passages from Genesis that speak directly about all creation being good and that our vocation as humans is to care for it. We also learned that as God's representatives, we are to care for the earth as God would. God would never exploit the earth, but that is exactly what humans have done and today we will learn about the consequences of those actions.

Some of the information presented today may be controversial and you may not want to believe all that you hear. However, the facts presented here are backed up by references from hundreds of scientists and are not up for debate. There is scientific consensus on climate change, as we will see in this session.

### **Climate Change Bingo**

**10 minutes**

Begin by playing a game of CLIMATE CHANGE BINGO. By playing a game we are in no way implying that climate change is a game or not to be taken seriously. This simply is a way to help folks assess how much they already know about this topic, which is probably more than they think.

Provide each person a CLIMATE CHANGE BINGO card and 15 pennies or buttons or a marker. When there is more than one correct answer for a question, pick only one answer. The first person to answer all the questions in a row or on the diagonal wins. You must check to make sure that their answers are correct. You decide what they win. It could be to explain to the group why they are concerned about climate change. It could be a pat on the back or it could be a special goody.

Here are the questions to ask and the answers for the class leader. Each answer below is referenced to a slide number from the *ABCs of Climate Change Science* PowerPoint presentation at <http://www.fossilfreepcusa.org/resources-1/curriculum/>. Review this information prior to playing this game so you can use each question as a teachable moment.

1. What are the gases called that warm our planet? (Greenhouse gases. Slides 5,6 & 7)
2. Find a greenhouse gas. (Carbon dioxide, methane, water vapor. Slides 5,6 &7)
3. Where do greenhouse gases come from? (Burning of fossil fuels. Slide 6)
4. Find a fossil fuel (coal, oil or natural gas. Slide 6)
5. What percentage of climate scientists believe that climate change is real? (97%. Slide 3)
6. What is the warmest year on record so far? (2014. Slide 11)
7. What are the initials of the group of international scientists that have been studying climate change since the late 1980s? (Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change – IPCC. Slide 4)
8. What could we use for energy instead of fossil fuels? (Renewable energy such as wind or solar. Slide 43)
9. What harm do greenhouse gases cause? (Extreme weather and sea level rise. Slides 21-42)
10. Which country has put the most greenhouse gases in the atmosphere? (U.S. Slide 10)

11. What concentration of carbon dioxide is safe in the atmosphere? (350 parts per million. Slide 17)
12. How much carbon dioxide is already in the atmosphere? (400 parts per million. Slides 15)
13. What color are greenhouse gases? (invisible – there is no color. Slide 1)

### **Basic Climate Science (Option 1)**

**30 minutes**

The group can watch a four-minute video that is on the Internet, entitled Climate 101 by the Science Guy, Bill Nye. It is very basic. You can play it by clicking on [www.Climaterealityproject.org/video/climate-101-bill-nye](http://www.Climaterealityproject.org/video/climate-101-bill-nye). As you watch the video, ask each person to write down one to three new things they learn from the video on an index card that you provide. After the video ask folks to share what they learned.

With everybody working together compile a list of the main points that all should know about climate change from the video and write on a flipchart or whiteboard. The group list should look pretty much like the list below. Add any missed points to the groups' list and share with the group. Lead a discussion by asking for comments and questions.

Here are the main points everyone should know about climate change:

- Our burning of fossil fuels such as coal, oil and gas are responsible for climate change.
- Burning fossil fuels releases greenhouse gases, such as carbon dioxide and methane.
- Greenhouse gases hold heat around the planet that otherwise would have escaped back into space.
- This heat increases as the volume of gases increases as we burn more and more fossil fuels, raising the temperature of the earth and oceans.
- This warming is changing our climate and raising sea levels.
- Our weather is now more extreme – heavier rain and snowfalls, longer droughts and more wildfires, more violent storms and more heat waves.
- Sea level is routinely flooding coastal areas such as Miami Beach and New York City.
- We can stop this by switching to renewable energy.
- The technology to make the switch already exists, but because we have waited so long, it won't be easy or cheap.
- Congress must lead our nation in switching to renewable energy.

### **Basic Climate Science (Option 2)**

**30 minutes**

For those churches that can't access the Internet during Sunday school, provide copies of "The Science" questions and answers for each person in the class. Ask each person to read a question and answer, and then ask for comments or questions after each one. There may be more questions than participants, so each person may have to read more than one question.

### **Basic Climate Science (Option 3)**

**30 minutes**

A PowerPoint presentation entitled the *ABCs of Climate Change Science* is available at <http://www.fossilfreepcusa.org/resources-1/curriculum/>. If you don't have a PowerPoint projector, make handouts of the slides for your class and sit around a table and explain each slide. There is detailed information below each slide about what is presented. Please review it in advance.

This will be by far the most detailed, but hopefully the most easily understood explanation of the climate change science and its impacts. It may contain more slides and information than you have

time to present. Carefully review it and cut out information that you don't feel your audience needs to know. A basic presentation could be done with just 26 slides. Slides 1, 2, 3, 5, 6, 7, 11, 13, 14, 15, 17, 19, 20, 21, 22, 23, 24, 31, 32, 33, 37, 38, 39, 40, 43, 44. These slide numbers are repeated in the notes for the first slide. You should spend less than a minute per slide. Also, please add examples of climate change impacts for your area from the 2014 National Climate Assessment <http://nca2014.globalchange.gov/highlights>

### **Concluding the Session**

**5 minutes**

Announce the dates of the next two sessions, "What can we do as individuals and congregations?" and "What should our denomination do going forward?" If there is time, introduce the final two sessions by asking each person to share what they believe should be done to stop climate change and what they might do. Answers could include:

- Use less energy and identify a few ways to do this.
- Urge your community to switch to renewable energy.
- Write Congress and demand that it take action to regulate and lower carbon emissions.
- Support the world-wide fossil fuel divestment movement and encourage members to write our denomination asking them to recommend divestment at the 2016 General Assembly.

### **Closing Prayer**

**1 minute**

Creator God, in your goodness and mercy you gave us a magnificent and beautiful planet to call our home. We have not been the best caretakers of your Earth and for that we are sorry. Give us your direction so that we may know how we must act and advocate to protect your creation.

# CLIMATE CHANGE BINGO

Burning of fossil fuels	United States of America	Brown	China	Sun
400 ppm	Greenhouse gases	Carbon Dioxide	97%	1998
IPCC	1935	2014	Extreme weather	EPA
Natural Gas	Renewable Energy	Coal	Methane	350 ppm
Sea level rise	Nuclear Power	Water Vapor	Oil	Invisible



### Resources for Further Study and Action

*Recommended readings for those who want to know more about climate change science:*

1. The Rough Guide to Climate Change: The Symptoms, The Science, The Solutions. Robert Henson
2. The Complete Idiot's Guide to Global Warming. Michael Tennesen (This is a very helpful book.)
3. The Discovery of Global Warming. Spencer R. Weart (History)
4. The Heat is On. Ross Gelbspan (Interesting background on the topic.)
5. Synthesis of World Wide Climate Science Research for Last 24 Years: [www.ipcc.org](http://www.ipcc.org). (Most authoritative report on the topic.)
6. Storms of My Grandchildren. James Hansen (The truth about the coming climate catastrophe.)
7. Six Degrees: Our Future on a Hotter Planet. Mark Lynas (Our future under different temperature increases.)
8. How much is Safe to Burn. Bill McKibben <http://www.rollingstone.com/politics/news/global-warmings-terrifying-new-math-20120719>. (Critical reading if you want to know more about how much we can safely burn.)
9. Assessing "Dangerous Climate Change": Required Reduction of Carbon Emissions to Protect Young People, Future Generations and Nature. James Hansen, et al. <http://www.plosone.org/article/info%3Adoi%2F10.1371%2Fjournal.pone.0081648>.
10. "This Changes Everything" by Naomi Klein (Politics, economics and climate change.)
11. "Climate Cover-up" by James Hoggan (The campaign to question the science.)

## Climate Change Science Basics



### FOLLOW-UP ACTIVITIES:

**Costs of Climate Change:** Pick a past extreme weather event that can be verified by the American Meteorological Society as caused by climate change and add up the costs. Often newspaper articles will talk about the costs and provide a reference to where they got the costs. Go to these sources and determine what extreme weather is costing us. Hurricane Sandy (2012) would be a good example or the prolonged drought in California. Present this information to your Sunday school class and talk about what the impact of a storm or drought would have on your community. Think about how it might change your life.

**Effects of Climate Change on National Security:** Pick a volunteer for a future class to make a report on how climate change threatens national security. The Pentagon issued reports in 2004 and 2014 on this topic. The war in Syria has been attributed to climate change and would be a good example to present.

**Effects of Climate Change on Our Health:** If you have any medically trained persons in your class ask one of them to report to the class on the effects climate change is having on our health. The National Institute of Environmental Health Sciences is a good place to start reading about this. The EPA website has a good introduction to this topic. Talk about the effect if any on your family.

**What We Think About Cutting Carbon Emissions:** Poll the class to see how many support cutting carbon emissions versus those who don't think we should cut carbon emissions. Make a list on a flip chart of the reasons for both positions. Ask one person for each position to make a presentation justifying their position. Poll the class after their presentations to see if the support for either position changed. If so, ask one or two people who changed their vote, to explain what changed their minds.

**Why We Should Believe Climate Scientists:** Believing in the science of climate change is fundamental to stopping it, yet from the earliest days there has been a debate on the validity of the science. Ask a class member to research this topic and make a presentation on why such a large segment of our population no longer trusts scientists. They may want to include other issues such as vaccinations or GMO food. The underlying issues are the same.

### Session 3: What can we do as individuals and congregations?

#### **Introduction for the leader**

God is the creator and we are the creatures and we are called to care for God's creation. In recent history, rather than caring for the creation we have exploited it. We have over-harvested timber from forests, fish from oceans, minerals from soil, and fossil fuels from underground. The result is a scarred earth with more waste than we know how to dispose. Even more serious are the consequences these activities are having on our climate. In this session we will discuss actions we can take to reduce our consumption and begin to slow this process of climate change.

This third session is intended to be about an hour long and is designed with two options to suit the audience, and the materials and space available. A handout of resources for further study and action is provided to be shared with participants at the end of the class.

#### **Materials**

- Option 1: Flipchart or whiteboard and markers
- Option 2: Sticky notes – square (5 for each person) and rectangular (4-6 for each class)  
Pen or pencil for each person
- Option 1&2: One copy of Resources for Further Study and Action on pages 23-24 (printed double-sided) for each person in the class

#### **Preparation before Class**

- Read the list of actions from the “The Power to Change” on page 23 in this curriculum.
- Select 2-3 churches from Cool Congregations and the Eco-Journey blog:

Presbyterian churches that have the Interfaith Power and Light “Cool Congregation” designation:

- Crosslake Presbyterian, MN

<http://www.coolcongregations.org/about/list-cool-congregations/crosslake-presbyterian/>

- Westminster Presbyterian, TN

<http://www.coolcongregations.org/about/list-cool-congregations/westminster-presbyterian-church/>

Good examples of Earth Care Congregations from the Eco-Journey blog

<https://www.pcusa.org/blogs/eco-journey/2015/1/23/earth-care-church-stories/> are:

- Swarthmore Presbyterian – innovative ideas: bike or walk to church stickers, recycling pick-up
- St. Andrew's Presbyterian, VA – field trips, other recycling, pollinator garden
- Maryland Presbyterian Church – church covenant, public policy, rain garden
- Light St. Presbyterian, Baltimore, MD – energy audit, water audit, bike rack, green architecture

Print congregational action stories beforehand, mark paragraphs with specific actions with a highlighter or circle with a pen, and assign people to read them.

## **Lesson Plan**

### **Opening Prayer**

**1 minute**

Creator God, we ask that you be with us today as we are reminded that you have provided for our every need. Open our eyes and ears, Lord, that we would be willing to make changes in our lives to be better stewards of your glorious and perfect creation. Amen.

### **Review and Introduction**

**5 minutes**

*(Note to leader: It might be helpful to write the numbers in this introduction on a flipchart or on large sticky notes and post them on the wall as you say them.)*

If you attended Session 1, you heard that caring for creation is a biblical mandate that we first hear about in Genesis and that is carried into the New Testament. As Christians we have a spiritual and moral obligation to care for all of God's creation – plants, animals, and humans – and the land, water and air on which life depends. We are called to be good stewards of the earth and to take care of the earth for future generations.

For those of you who attended Session 2, you learned that the global climate is changing and that global warming of the past 50 years is primarily due to human activities, predominately the burning of fossil fuels.

Scientists estimate that in order to avoid warming of 3.6 degrees Fahrenheit, we must leave 85% of known fossil fuel reserves unburned.<sup>1</sup> Along with the leaders of 167 countries<sup>2</sup>, our General Assembly affirmed this goal to limit global warming to 3.6 degrees in a 2008 report, "The Power to Change: U.S. Energy Policy and Global Warming<sup>3</sup>."

To limit the rise in temperature to 3.6 degrees, we must begin making drastic reductions in the use of fossil fuels no later than 2020<sup>4</sup> – not that far away. By 2050 we will need to obtain most energy from renewable sources such as wind and power, and stop burning all fossil fuels by 2100<sup>5</sup>. So there is time, but we must begin to act now.

Now that we know our responsibility as Christians and why we need to act quickly to slow climate change, let's focus on what we can do as individuals and as a congregation. If the burning of fossil fuels is responsible for global warming, then reducing the use of fossil fuels (coal, oil and gas) will slow climate change.

### **What we can do as individuals: brainstorming (Option 1)**

**10 minutes**

- Ask the group to brainstorm what actions we can take as individuals to limit our use of coal, oil, and gas and record on a flipchart or white board. During the brainstorming, challenge the group to think beyond primary uses of fossil fuels for energy and consider the manufacturing of products and agricultural practices. Suggest actions in the list from The Power to Change in the handout if the class does not.
- Group actions into 4 areas such as those listed below by circling with a different colored marker for each area, or draw lines connecting each action in a group with a different color for each group.
  - Where we live (home energy and water use; yard care; sustainable consumption)
  - How we move (vehicle gas mileage, carpooling, public transit, biking, walking)

- What we eat (less meat, more plants; local food, sustainable farming)
- How we respond (advocacy, policy and divestment)

**What we can do as individuals: brainstorming (Option 2)**

**10 minutes**

- Give individuals sticky notes and ask them to write what actions we can take as individuals to limit our use of coal, oil, and gas - one action on each note. While they are writing, challenge the group to think beyond primary uses of fossil fuels for energy and consider the manufacturing of products, packaging and agricultural practices.
- Go around the room and ask each person to read one of the actions they wrote. Depending on the size of the class, you may make more than one round. Suggest actions in the list from the Power to Change in the handout if the class does not.
- Listen for similarities in the actions and write 3 – 4 categories, such as those listed below, on the rectangular sticky notes – one category on each note.
  - Where we live (home energy and water use; yard care; sustainable consumption)
  - How we move (vehicle gas mileage, carpooling, public transit, biking, walking)
  - What we eat (less meat, more plants; local food, sustainable farming)
  - How we respond (advocacy, policy and divestment)
- Stick the rectangular notes high up on a wall, separating them as much as space allows.
- Ask the class to stand up and stick their notes under the category where it fits the best
- Ask different volunteers to read the notes in each of the four categories.

**What we can do as individuals: small group discussion**

**10 minutes**

- Ask the class to get into groups of 2-3 (depending on the size of the class) and give them 2-3 minutes to share which actions they are already taking.
- Then challenge them to select an action they are not already doing and commit to doing it within a defined time period. Allow 2 minutes for each person to verbalize how they will go about completing the action. Call time and let the other person speak. Then ask those in the group to hold one another accountable by checking with each other periodically.

**What we can do as a congregation: Earth Care Congregations and Cool Congregations 2 minutes**

Our Presbyterian denomination has an environmental stewardship program for churches called Earth Care Congregations.<sup>6</sup> (Mention here if your church is an Earth Care Congregation.) Earth Care Congregations is a certification program that requires churches to take a pledge, complete an environmental audit, and earn points in four areas of church life: worship, education, facilities and outreach. Several churches recently completed their fifth year as Earth Care Congregations and their experiences can inspire others.

Interfaith Power and Light also has a stewardship program called “Cool Congregations<sup>7</sup>” and there are a couple Presbyterian churches that have received that designation. I have asked a few volunteers to read to us what some of these congregations are doing. (Ask class members to read excerpts from ECC and Cool Congregations reports.)

**What we can do as a congregation: prioritizing actions (Option 1)**

**10 minutes**

*(Note to leader: Make sure that policy and advocacy are included, especially actions such as going carbon neutral and divesting from fossil fuels)*

- Post the brainstorming sheet on the wall where the class members can see it.

- Ask which of the individual actions the congregation could take – record on flipchart or white board
- Ask if there are any other actions not previously listed that the congregation could take and write them on the flipchart or whiteboard.
- Ask the group which actions the church is already doing and put a check mark next to each action as it is called out.
- Read the remaining actions and ask people to vote on the one they think their congregation could do by raising their hand. Call out each action individually and record the number of votes to determine the preferred action.

**What we can do as a congregation: prioritizing actions (Option 2)**

**12 minutes**

*(Note to leader: Make sure that policy and advocacy are included, especially actions such as going carbon neutral and divesting from fossil fuels)*

- While people are still in their small groups, ask which of the individual actions the congregation could take. As the actions are called out, move the sticky notes to a different place on the wall or whiteboard. (You might want to ask someone to help you if there are a lot of notes)
- Ask if there are any other actions not previously listed that the congregation could take. Give the person who responds a sticky note and ask them to write it down and stick it on the wall or whiteboard.
- Have each small group choose one of the congregational actions and take that sticky note. Then give them 5 minutes to talk about how that action could take place in their church.
- Have one person in each group share with the class what action they chose and how they thought it could be done in their congregation.

**What we can do as a congregation: taking action**

**2 minutes**

- Gauge if there is interest in forming a “green team” and ask if someone is willing to organize it.
- If there is already a green team, challenge them to take on an additional action, with help from the class.

**Ending the Session**

**2 minutes**

Remind class members of their individual commitments and to follow-up with their small group. Distribute the handout of resources for further information and action. Announce the next session and thank the class for attending.

**Closing Prayer**

**1 minute**

Lord, we confess that we have taken more than we need and have desecrated the very planet you have given us, to satisfy our desire for comfort and convenience. We ask that you stay close to us this week as we strive to be better stewards of your wonderful creation. Amen.

## References

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3. The Power to Change: U.S. Energy Policy and Global Warming. Developed by the Advisory Committee on Social Witness Policy (ACSWP) and approved by the 218th General Assembly of the Presbyterian Church (USA), 2008. Available online at: [http://www.pcusa.org/site\\_media/media/uploads/acswp/pdf/energyreport.pdf](http://www.pcusa.org/site_media/media/uploads/acswp/pdf/energyreport.pdf). **p. 3.**
4. Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC) Working Group (WG) I, 2013: Summary for Policymakers. In *Climate Change 2013: The Physical Science Basis. Contribution of Working Group I to the Fifth Assessment Report of the IPCC* [Stocker et al. (eds.)]. Cambridge University Press, New York, NY, USA. Available online at: [http://ipcc.ch/report/ar5/wg1/docs/WGIAR5\\_SPM\\_brochure\\_en.pdf](http://ipcc.ch/report/ar5/wg1/docs/WGIAR5_SPM_brochure_en.pdf). **pp. 2-5, 21**
5. IPCC WG III. 2014. Summary for Policymakers. In *Climate Change 2014: Mitigation of Climate Change: Contribution of Working Group II to the Fifth Assessment Report of the IPCC* [Edenhofer et al. (eds.)]. Cambridge University Press, New York, NY, USA. Available online at: [http://report.mitigation2014.org/spm/ipcc\\_wg3\\_ar5\\_summary-for-policymakers\\_approved.pdf](http://report.mitigation2014.org/spm/ipcc_wg3_ar5_summary-for-policymakers_approved.pdf). **p. 13.**
6. PC(USA) Environmental Ministries Earth Care Congregations  
<http://www.presbyterianmission.org/ministries/environment/earth-care-congregations/>
7. Interfaith Power and Light Cool Congregations  
<http://www.coolcongregations.org>

## What can we do as Individuals and Congregations? Resources for Further Study and Action



*The Power to Change: U.S. Energy Policy and Global Warming Recommendations*<sup>1</sup>

Urge individuals and families in the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) to do the following:

- a. Pray, asking for God's forgiveness and for the power and guidance to enjoy and care for creation in new ways.
- b. Study **energy** sources, their advantages and disadvantages, and the impacts they have on human communities, all species, and the ecological systems that support life on Earth.
- c. Practice **energy** conservation as a form of thanksgiving and sharing by adjusting thermostats, walking, biking, carpooling, using mass transit, turning off lights and appliances, recycling, minimizing the use of plastic water bottles and other wasteful packaging, etc.
- d. Purchase **energy**-efficient appliances and fuel-efficient vehicles for use at home and at work.
- e. Purchase sustainably-grown food and other products from local producers in order to reduce the **energy** associated with producing, and shipping goods.
- f. Reduce consumption of meat because the production of grain fed to most livestock is fossil fuel-intensive and their waste emits methane, which is a potent greenhouse gas.
- g. Purchase Green-e certified **energy** and/or carbon offsets in the pursuit of a carbon-neutral lifestyle. Green-e certification ensures these payments result in additional installations of renewable **energy** generation capacity as well as verifiable and permanent environmental benefits.
- h. Invest personal funds in the renewable **energy** industry and also in companies that demonstrate concern for the well-being of their workers, their communities, and the environment.
- i. Advocate for change and leadership within the church and in all forms of government regarding energy policy and global climate change.

### Individual Change

Climate Change: What You Can Do <http://www.epa.gov/climatechange/wycd/>

Union of Concerned Scientists – Programs on Global Warming, Clean Energy, Clean Vehicles, Food and Agriculture: <http://www.ucsusa.org>

Household Carbon Footprint Calculator

<http://www3.epa.gov/carbon-footprint-calculator/>

Get a more complete picture of your global footprint through this fun and interactive carbon calculator. <http://www.footprintnetwork.org/en/index.php/GFN/page/calculators/>

What is your ecological footprint? (for adults)

[http://www.newcommunityproject.org/pdfs/ecological\\_footprint.pdf](http://www.newcommunityproject.org/pdfs/ecological_footprint.pdf)

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<sup>1</sup> The Power to Change: U.S. Energy Policy and Global Warming. Developed by the Advisory Committee on Social Witness Policy (ACSWP) and approved by the 218th General Assembly of the Presbyterian Church (USA), 2008. Page 1. Available online at: [https://www.pcusa.org/site\\_media/media/uploads/acswp/pdf/energyreport.pdf](https://www.pcusa.org/site_media/media/uploads/acswp/pdf/energyreport.pdf)



What is your ecological footprint? (for youth and young adults)

<http://www.newcommunityproject.org/pdfs/COUforweb.pdf>

### **Congregational Action**

PC(USA) Earth Care Congregations

<http://www.presbyterianmission.org/ministries/environment/earth-care-congregations/>

Interfaith Power and Light “Cool Congregations” is a stewardship program to help congregations reduce their greenhouse gas emissions. <http://www.coolcongregations.org>

GreenFaith Certification Program is a 2-year environmental leadership program for houses of worship.

<http://www.greenfaith.org/programs/certification>

EPA Energy Star Action Workbook for Congregations <http://www.energystar.gov/buildings/tools-and-resources/energy-star-action-workbook-congregations>

Go carbon neutral by reducing emissions and purchasing credits. For more information on how to do this go to: <http://www.presbyteryofflorida.com/resources/Carbon+Neutral+Guide.pdf>

### **Building A Just And Sustainable Food System**

Sustainable Table celebrates local sustainable food, educates consumers about the benefits of sustainable agriculture and works to build community through food.

<http://www.sustainabletable.org/1117/sustainable-table>

Gracelinks highlights the connections among food, water and energy, promoting a sustainable future.

<http://www.gracelinks.org>

Reduce red meat and dairy in your diet, and replace them with vegetable, chicken, and fish protein.

Environmental Working Group - Meat Eater’s Guide to Climate Change and Health:

<http://www.ewg.org/meateatersguide/>

### **Advocacy**

*Holy Discontentment: Lifting Your Voice for Effective Advocacy* outlines advocate’s tools, discusses their effectiveness, and gives suggestions on truly effective advocacy strategies.

<http://www.pcusa.org/resource/holy-discontentment-advocacy-resource/>

*Advocacy as Discipleship: A People Called to Witness* is a daily, 4-week reflection for personal or group use:

<http://www.pcusa.org/resource/advocacy-discipleship-people-called-witness/>

### **Responsible Investing**

Fossil Free – Resources on divesting from fossil fuel companies: <http://gofossilfree.org/usa/>

Fossil Free PC(USA): <http://www.fossilfreepcusa.org/>

Green Century Fund (fossil free investing option): <http://greencentury.com/>

### Session 4. What should our denomination do going forward?

#### **Introduction for the leader**

This final lesson will discuss how PC(USA) has responded to the challenge of climate change and will focus on the divestment overture brought before the 2014 General Assembly and the proposed 2016 overture to the General Assembly. Divestment from fossil fuels is a growing international movement where hundreds of colleges, universities, faith communities and organizations have refused to invest in or profit from companies that rely on fossil fuels for income. Fossil fuel divestment is a moral and prophetic act because burning of fossil fuels contributes to climate change that causes suffering and changes in the life cycles of humans and other living creatures. Therefore, it is morally wrong to make money from the unregulated extraction of fossil fuels. Recent divestment campaigns have been successful in making changes in Darfur, the tobacco industry, and South African Apartheid.

Session 4 is designed to be about an hour long and includes materials to be printed for class preparation, in-class use, and a handout of resources to be taken home. Distribute the printed materials on chairs before class or display them on a table where participants can pick them up as they enter the room.

#### **Set-up**

- Laptop computer and projector or large screen TV for viewing this 4-minute video [http://salsa4.salsalabs.com/o/51199/p/salsa/web/common/public/content?content\\_item\\_KEY=13198](http://salsa4.salsalabs.com/o/51199/p/salsa/web/common/public/content?content_item_KEY=13198)

#### **Preparation before Class**

- Print one single-sided copy of the 2-page document titled “Session 4 Class Materials” on pages 28 -29. Cut into strips so that each selection can be given to a class participant to read aloud to the group. *Note: you may want to print a second double-sided copy of this document to make it easy for you to follow along during the oral readings.*
- Print enough double-sided copies for each of the class participants of:
  - Session 4 Class Handout on pages 30-31
  - Fossil Fuel Divestment Resources on pages 32-33
  - 2016 PCUSA Fossil Divestment Overture and Rationale on page 34-35
  - 2016 PCUSA Fossil Divestment Overture + Commentary on pages 36-37 (print landscape orientation)
- Print one double-sided copy of “2016 Extended Rationale” for reference
- Collect a pen or pencil for each person in the class
- Carefully read the Overture and Commentary, the Overture and Rationale, and the Extended Rationale, so you can be comfortable knowing at least as much as your students.
- Optional: Print a double-sided copy of the PCUSA document “Power To Change.” It’s long: 40 pages. Alternatively, print pages 1-2 and 7-10. <https://www.pcusa.org/resource/power-change-us-energy-policy-global-warming/>

## **Lesson Plan**

### **Opening Prayer**

**1 minute**

Dear God, we ask you to guide us during this time together that we might open our minds and hearts as we grapple with the challenge to respond as a denomination to climate change. Amen

### **Review and Introduction**

**5 minutes**

Orally review with a summary such as, “In this series we have:

- Considered our responsibility as Christians to respond to this crisis both because we are stewards of creation and because Jesus repeatedly called us to care for the “least of these.” In the case of climate disruption, the “least of these” are people living in poverty and the least developed countries and those lacking power and voice. They are least responsible for the build-up of carbon in the atmosphere and least able to cope with it: poor coastal populations, island populations, voiceless unborn generations, and uncountable species of plants and animals.
- Studied the compelling evidence that human-caused climate change is having a profoundly disruptive effect on God’s good creation.
- Discussed possibilities for action as individuals and congregations.

Today we will go beyond our focus on responses of individual people and congregations to consider how our denomination is responding/can respond to the challenges of climate change.

### **PCUSA Responses to the Challenge of Climate Change**

**10 minutes**

1. Explain that PCUSA has already been responding to climate change and is preparing for further response in a variety of areas. Then you might say, “To give us just a sampling of our denomination’s work in the area of climate, I will ask volunteers to read aloud a brief description of one area of response.”

2. Ask each person holding a strip of paper with a bold heading (Disaster Assistance, MRTI, Public Statements of Concern, Educational Resources and Political Advocacy) to, in turn, read aloud what his/her strip of paper says. These can be read in any order. At the end, invite group to briefly discuss what they’ve heard. Mention that there is follow-up information on the resource sheet that you will hand out at the end of class.

### **PCUSA *investment*-related responses to Climate Change**

**28 minutes**

1. Another area in which PCUSA can respond to climate change is in the area of investments. First, let’s explore the thinking behind there being a link between PCUSA’s investments (held in its retirement fund and in its Foundation) and its response to world problems like climate change.

2. Ask each person holding a strip of paper with a numbered selection on it to read it aloud to the group. There are three of these and they should be read in order. **(3-4 minutes)**

3. Explain background: An overture, endorsed by 12 Presbyteries, urging PCUSA to divest from the top 200 fossil fuel companies was brought to General Assembly in June 2014. It was discussed and referred to MRTI (Mission Responsibility Through Investment committee) for further study and a report from MRTI will be brought to the floor of GA in June 2016. Because it will be coming up in our

Presbyteries and at the next General Assembly, it would be well for us to familiarize ourselves with this overture and the reasons it has been proposed.

4. The overture to PCUSA is part of an international movement for fossil fuel divestment. One of the spokespeople for that movement is Archbishop Desmond Tutu, who was also a leader of the divestment movement in South Africa. Show video **(4 minutes)**

[http://salsa4.salsalabs.com/o/51199/p/salsa/web/common/public/content?content\\_item\\_KEY=13198](http://salsa4.salsalabs.com/o/51199/p/salsa/web/common/public/content?content_item_KEY=13198)

5. Ask individuals to silently read through the list of “some reasons in favor of the divestment overture” as found on their “Lesson 4 Class Hand-out” sheet. These are some of the reasons given by advocates for the overture. Ask folks to then rank order them in terms of which reasons strike them as most compelling (#1) to least compelling. Finally, ask individuals to share with the group which reasons they found most compelling and why. **(10 minutes)**

*Note: The purpose of rank ordering is to push folks to carefully consider each reason as they weigh its resonance to them. If this is a problem, you could alternatively ask them to group the reasons as “Most resonant for me” and “Least resonant for me.” Or you may think of another method to ensure thoughtful consideration of each reason.*

6. Ask individuals to read through the list of “some concerns raised about the fossil fuel divestment overture” with the accompanying responses to those concerns (on “Lesson 4 Class hand-out”) Ask people to place an asterisk next to the concerns that they feel need to be addressed beyond what was provided in the advocates’ response. Those concerns can then be shared with the group for further discussion or follow-up research. **(10 minutes)**

### **The Proposed 2016 Fossil Fuel Divestment Overture**

**15 minutes**

1. Distribute the “PCUSA 2016 Fossil Divestment Overture” document and the “Overture + Commentary” document. Ask the class to turn to the “Rationale” side of the overture and read it silently. After about 4 minutes, ask for discussion on whether the rationale is consistent with other materials discussed in today’s lesson. As follow-up, ask which items in the rationale they found most compelling or most jarring. **(8 minutes)**

2. Ask the class to find the Overture and Commentary page. Acknowledge the small print and mention that it was done to save paper. Request that they concentrate on section 2.a. and 2.b. i – v, and find the one item that most jumps out at them. Provide opportunity for class members to comment on a given item and discuss. **(7 minutes)**

3. Distribute the “Fossil Fuel Divestment Resources” sheet for people to take with them. Mention that you have a copy of a longer and more detailed extended rationale with lots of resources. Optional: If you printed it, also mention that you have a copy of the Power to Change document for review if anyone is interested.

### **Closing Prayer**

**1 minute**

Close this final lesson with a prayer for denominational wisdom as we move forward in discernment on this important issue impacting God’s good creation. If there’s a class member who would feel comfortable doing so, you may want to ask them to close.

## Session 4 Class Materials

### Disaster Assistance

With the increasing severity of floods, droughts, extreme temperatures and extreme storms, PCUSA's call to respond to the needs of victims will undoubtedly increase over the next several decades. Fortunately, Presbyterian Disaster Assistance and PCUSA outreach agencies such as Self Development Of Peoples, Living Waters for the World, Solar Under the Sun, and others, are already in place to address some of these needs.

### Mission Responsibility Through Investment (MRTI)

MRTI implements the General Assembly's policies on socially responsible investing (also called faith-based investing) by engaging corporations in which the church owns stock. This is accomplished through correspondence, dialogues, voting shareholder proxies and recommending similar action to others, and occasionally filing shareholder resolutions.

### Public Statements of Concern

Our denomination has spoken out publicly about environmental challenges faced and the need to act. Some examples are:

- a. Restoring Creation for Ecology and Justice: A report adopted by the 202nd General Assembly (1990) Presbyterian Church, USA.
- b. Hope For A Global Future: Toward Just And Sustainable Human Development. Approved by the 208th Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) General Assembly.
- c. The Power to Change; U.S. Energy Policy and Global Warming. Approved by the 218<sup>th</sup> General Assembly (2008).
- d. Carbon Neutral Resolution. Approved by the 217<sup>th</sup> General Assembly (2006) Strongly urges all Presbyterians to immediately make a bold witness by aspiring to live carbon neutral lives.

*See Resource Sheet for relevant links.*

### Educational Resources

PCUSA has made educational resources available to congregations and individuals. Examples are:

- a. Guide to Going Carbon Neutral, prepared for families and churches in response to the General Assembly (2006) Resolution calling on all Presbyterians to go carbon neutral as a bold Christian witness to help combat the effects of climate change.
- b. Responding to the Cry of Creation for Healing and Justice: Restoring Creation for Ecology and Justice Study Guide
- c. "And the Leaves of the Trees Are for the Healing of the Nations: Biblical and Theological Foundations for EcoJustice" by Carol Johnston. A 35-page review of the basic affirmations on ecology and justice.

*See Resource Sheet for relevant links*

### Political Advocacy

[T]he 218th General Assembly (2008) ... [d]irects the Stated Clerk, the Presbyterian Washington Office, the Presbyterian United Nations Office, the Environmental Justice Office, and other General Assembly representatives to advocate for this approach to national energy policy before Congress, the Executive branch, state legislatures, and regulatory agencies, including those specifically involved in the areas of climate change and international cooperation, with the goal of restoring the United States of America to a leadership position in taking responsibility for reducing the scale and speed of global climate change.

## Session 4 Class Materials



1. According to the PCUSA policy document: The Divestment Strategy: Principles and Criteria, "The theology of mission extends the concept of stewardship into society and insists that the full influence and impact of church investment be seen in the larger social context, with motivation beyond financial gain [...] The imperatives of the gospel demand that we weigh the church's involvement in a particular investment with the church's engagement in the larger society."

2. The Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) believes that church investment[s], as well as personal investment, are more than practical questions. We believe that the Lordship of Jesus Christ is at the heart of all that we do and therefore, directs all aspects of our lives, including how we earn, use and invest our money. [...] In recognition of the church's unique opportunity to advance its mission faithfully and creatively through the financial resources entrusted it, both predecessor denominations established committees on corporate social responsibility that became the Mission Responsibility Through Investment (MRTI) of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) in 1986.

3. "Where your treasure is, there your heart will be also." Matthew 6:21

First and foremost, [fossil fuel] divestment takes the question of immediate financial self-interest out of climate and energy discussions. If our retirement funds don't rely on ExxonMobil making huge profits, then we can be more objective about the morality of a fossil fuel dependent society. - *Peter Sawtell: Eco-Justice Notes, May 2013*

## Session 4 Class Handout

### Some Reasons in favor of a Fossil Fuel Divestment Overture



- The reason that the top 200 companies have been targeted for divestment is because they hold significant reserves of fossil fuels. If they extract and burn all those reserves, as they intend to do, there will be so much carbon released into the atmosphere that the planet will be devastated. The message of the divestment movement is that business as usual cannot continue. 80% of the known reserves must stay in the ground.
- The divestment movement is growing internationally, including hundreds of universities, colleges, cities, philanthropies and religious organizations. By divesting, PCUSA would support the voice of youth. The divestment effort took root on college campuses and at 2012 GA, the young adults supported the fossil fuel divestment overture.
- Divesting from “dirty” industries builds momentum for moving money into clean energy, community development, and other more sustainable investments. Divestment opens up the opportunity to move our money from the problem to the solution.
- Divestment is a powerful public statement removing the social license from big oil, gas, and coal companies. These companies generate huge profits and overly influence public policy. They have used their power to block policies that would help us transition to renewable energy. The federal government is subsidizing oil and coal companies at 12 times the rate of renewable energy. And it’s no wonder: the oil industry alone spends almost half a million dollars a day lobbying Congress.
- Divestment is a moral and prophetic act. The moral statement is, “It’s wrong to wreck the climate and it’s wrong to profit from this wreckage.”
- The overture goes to the very heart of our Christian faith. *Genesis 2:15 tells us The Lord God took man and put him in the garden to till and keep it.* Our first vocation was to care for the earth. And God calls us as people of faith to care for each other. If we take seriously the commandment to love our neighbor, how can we fail to speak out boldly while our neighbors suffer from the impacts of climate disruption?

### Some Concerns Raised about the Fossil Fuel Divestment Overture

**Companies like ExxonMobil, Shell, and BP have billions of dollars. How can divesting by a few institutions make an impact? If PCUSA sells stock, won’t someone else just buy those shares?**

Response from Overture advocates: Divestment is not primarily an economic strategy. It’s a moral stand, an educational strategy and a publicity campaign. Just like in the struggle for civil rights in the U.S. or the fight to end apartheid in South Africa, the more we can make climate change a deeply moral issue, the sooner society will act.

In terms of financial impact, while sale of stock might not have an immediate effect on a fossil fuel company, what it does do is sow uncertainty about the viability of the fossil fuel industry’s business model. It also can build momentum for moving money into clean energy and, by creating public discourse, can add momentum to legislation limiting carbon emissions.

**Shouldn’t the PC(USA) be focusing on the demand side of this problem? People need to cut down on their use of energy if the problem is to be solved. How can we blame fossil fuel companies when we continue to use fossil fuels?**

Response from Overture advocates: We see the supply/demand question as “both and,” not “either or.” Yes, we as individuals and churches must continue to reduce our carbon footprint, and reduce it with even more urgency as climate change accelerates. The PC(USA) addressed precisely this issue in 2006, passing a resolution at the 217<sup>th</sup> General Assembly:

“...finds that the urgency, injustice, and seriousness of this issue calls us as Christians to act NOW and to act boldly to lead the way in reducing our energy usage.”

“...strongly urging all Presbyterians to immediately make a bold witness by aspiring to live carbon neutral lives.”

Now it is also time for the PC(USA) to address the supply side of the problem, which is what the overture to divest from fossil fuels does. Until the fossil fuel companies stop extracting carbon from the ground and begin to develop new energy sources that are clean, renewable and sustainable, we will never be able to live “carbon neutral lives.” Some changes, such as our national energy infrastructure, can only be made at a societal level. Of course we need energy in our lives, but most of us would be happy to have that energy come from renewable sources. The lobbying efforts of fossil fuel companies have blocked robust development of renewable sources. The technology is there. We need to remove the impediments to its rapid development.

### **Aren't the large fossil fuel companies contributing to solving the problem — by investing in researching and supporting alternative energy resources?**

*Response from Overture advocates:* That is what their public relations campaigns tell us, but the facts speak otherwise.

- Analysis of the balance sheets of the “top 200” shows that 75 percent of those companies have no revenues from clean tech or alternative energy investments.
- No major oil company has ever invested as much as 10 percent of assets or revenues in alternative energy activities. (Ten percent is the Securities and Exchange Commission’s threshold for public reporting on financial expenditures.)
- BP (6th largest holder of fossil fuel reserves) sold off all of its wind and solar investments in 2011
- Royal Dutch Shell (8th largest) now invests 1.5 percent in alternative energy. The highest point of their investment in renewables was 2.5 percent in 2007.
- Chevron’s (9th largest) alternative energy expenditures are similarly at 1.5 percent, down from 2.5 percent in 2008.
- Conoco-Philips (12th largest) divested from all alternative energy activities in April 2012, to focus on its core business, exploring and producing oil and natural gas.

### **Can we still make a reasonable financial return without investing in fossil fuel companies? We do have to consider the retirees who depend on PCUSA’s pension fund.**

*Response from Overture advocates:*

- A number of studies have shown that over time, the performance of fossil free portfolios is no worse, and in some cases better, than portfolios with fossil fuel industry holdings. *See resource page for details.*
- While it’s true that many fossil fuel companies are extremely profitable now, they’re increasingly risky investments. The value of the known reserves of coal, oil and gas that a company owns is factored into the share price of every fossil fuel company. When governments finally decide to regulate carbon dioxide, those assets will have to be written off. This is known as “stranded assets.” By divesting from fossil fuels now, we are not only building the case for that government action. We are also protecting our investors and pensioners from the consequences of the inevitable market collapse.

### **Shouldn't PCUSA keeps its investments in fossil fuel companies so that we have leverage with them through shareholder engagement?**

The very last topic of this lesson, coming up right now, covers this point.



## Fossil Fuel Divestment Resources



### Denominational Policy

The original version of denominational policy on divestment, produced in 1984 by the 196<sup>th</sup> General Assembly of the newly reunited PC(USA) can be found here, specifically paragraphs 25.199 through 25.210: [http://www.pcusa.org/site\\_media/media/uploads/acswp/pdf/divestment\\_strategy.pdf](http://www.pcusa.org/site_media/media/uploads/acswp/pdf/divestment_strategy.pdf)

A more readable format is reproduced as Section 2 (pages 29 ff) of the 1985 report: Divestment for South Africa: An Investment in Hope found here: [http://www.presbyterianmission.org/media/uploads/mrti/pdfs/1984\\_ & 1985 divestment strategy policy & south africa policy.pdf](http://www.presbyterianmission.org/media/uploads/mrti/pdfs/1984_&_1985_divestment_strategy_policy_&_south_africa_policy.pdf)

1981: The Power to Speak Truth to Power:  
[http://www.pcusa.org/media/uploads/acswp/pdf/power\\_to\\_speak\\_truth\\_to\\_power.pdf](http://www.pcusa.org/media/uploads/acswp/pdf/power_to_speak_truth_to_power.pdf)

1990: Restoring Creation for Ecology and Justice:  
<http://www.presbyterianmission.org/ministries/environment/pcusa-environmental-policy/>

1996: Hope For A Global Future: Toward Just And Sustainable Human Development:  
[https://www.pcusa.org/site\\_media/media/uploads/acswp/pdf/hope-for-a-global-future.pdf](https://www.pcusa.org/site_media/media/uploads/acswp/pdf/hope-for-a-global-future.pdf)

2006: Resolution for Presbyterians to Live Carbon Neutral Lives:  
[http://www.climate.org/PDF/PCUSA\\_carbon\\_neutral\\_resolution.pdf](http://www.climate.org/PDF/PCUSA_carbon_neutral_resolution.pdf)

2008: The Power to Change: U.S. Energy Policy and Global Warming:  
[http://www.pcusa.org/site\\_media/media/uploads/acswp/pdf/energyreport.pdf](http://www.pcusa.org/site_media/media/uploads/acswp/pdf/energyreport.pdf)

2008: Presbyterian Church (USA) Policy Brief: Environment and Energy:  
[http://www.pcusa.org/site\\_media/media/uploads/washington/pdfs/policybrief.pdf](http://www.pcusa.org/site_media/media/uploads/washington/pdfs/policybrief.pdf)

### Denominational Educational Resources

Guide to Going Carbon Neutral: <https://www.pcusa.org/resource/guide-going-carbon-neutral/>

Restoring Creation for Ecology and Justice Study Guide: <http://www.pcusa.org/resource/restoring-creation-ecology-and-justice-study-guide/>

And the Leaves of the Trees Are for the Healing of the Nations:  
<http://www.pcusa.org/media/uploads/environment/pdf/andtheleaves.pdf>

### Other Faith Responses

Peter Sawtell writes a weekly blog on environmental issues called Eco-Justice Notes: <http://www.eco-justice.org/E-about.asp> Many of his columns are on climate change and divestment, including “What would Jesus Divest”: <http://www.eco-justice.org/E-130503.asp> and “Leaving 80% in the Ground”: <http://www.eco-justice.org/E-150116.asp>

Megan Gregory from FossilFreePCUSA has a powerful lament about the GA process in Unbound: <http://justiceunbound.org/carousel/the-creation-waits/>

## **Web Resources**

FossilFreePCUSA: <http://www.fossilfreepcusa.org/>

PCUSA Environmental Ministries: <http://www.presbyterianmission.org/ministries/environment/>

MRTI: <http://www.presbyterianmission.org/ministries/mrti/what-mrti/>

GreenFaith: <http://www.greenfaith.org/programs/divest-and-reinvest>

350 and Fossil Free: <http://350.org/>, <http://gofossilfree.org/>

Mark Jacobsen, Director of the Atmosphere and Energy Program, Stanford University, has outlined a plan to transition all 50 states to 100% renewable energy: <http://thesolutionsproject.org/>

## **Articles on Fossil Fuel Divestment**

The original article by Bill McKibben calling for divestment can be found here: Global Warming's Terrifying New Math: <http://www.rollingstone.com/politics/news/global-warmings-terrifying-new-math-20120719>

The British Guardian published a series of climate change and divestment articles in March 2015: <http://www.theguardian.com/environment/2015/mar/06/climate-change-guardian-threat-to-earth-alan-rusbridger>

This article from the series focuses on divestment:

<http://www.theguardian.com/environment/2015/mar/09/10-myths-about-fossil-fuel-divestment-put-to-the-sword>

This article by Bill McKibben highlights recent efforts in fossil fuel divestment:

<http://www.theguardian.com/environment/2015/mar/09/climate-fight-wont-wait-for-paris-vive-la-resistance>

This article speaks to the futility of shareholder engagement with fossil fuel companies: Talk to the Hand: Engagement With Fossil Fuel Companies Offers Little Promise:

<http://www.triplepundit.com/2015/01/talk-hand-engagement-fossil-fuel-companies-offers-little-promise/>

Jeff Sachs and his daughter discuss what investors should be looking for from fossil fuel companies:

<http://www.marketwatch.com/story/the-responsible-investors-guide-to-climate-change-2015-01-29>

## **Books**

Merchants of Doubt, 2011, *Erik Conway and Naomi Oreskes*

The Burning Question: We Can't Burn Half the World's Oil, Coal, and Gas. So How Do We Quit?, 2013, *Mike Berners-Lee and Duncan Clark*

This Changes Everything: Capitalism vs the Planet, 2014, *Naomi Klein*

Don't Even Think About It: Why Our Brains are Wired to Ignore Climate Change, 2014, *George Marshall*

## 2016 PCUSA Fossil Fuel Divestment Overture



The Presbytery of \_\_\_\_\_ overtures the 222<sup>nd</sup> General Assembly (2016) to:

1. Express its profound concern about the destructive effects of climate change on all God's creation, including a disproportionate impact on those living in poverty and in the least developed countries; the elderly and children; and those least responsible for the emissions of greenhouse gases. The 222<sup>nd</sup> General Assembly (2016) thus recognizes the moral mandate for humanity to shift to a sustainable energy regime in a way that is both just and compassionate. This mandate compels us to action as a denomination to divest from the fossil fuel industry even as we reduce our use of fossil fuels and shrink our carbon footprint.
2. Call upon the Board of Pensions and the Presbyterian Church (USA) Foundation to:
  - a. Immediately stop any new direct investment in fossil fuel companies
  - b. Work to ensure that within three years, none of the Board's or the Foundation's directly held or commingled assets includes holdings of either equities or corporate bonds in the fossil fuel companies identified in the Carbon Underground 200 list<sup>2</sup> by:
    - i. Working with current and prospective asset managers to develop and implement institutional fossil free investment options
    - ii. Establishing within one year fossil free investment options for fund participants
    - iii. Actively seeking out and investing in renewable and energy efficiency related securities
    - iv. Notwithstanding the above provisions, retaining or acquiring minimal sufficient investment in fossil fuel companies to participate in shareholder engagement activities
    - v. Notwithstanding the above provisions, taking no action inconsistent with fiduciary duty or principles of sound investment, including the real and substantial risk of stranded carbon assets
  - c. Incorporate into public financial reports regular updates detailing progress made towards these ends
3. Call upon the Stated Clerk of the PC(USA) to inform affected fossil fuel companies and the larger public of the passage and implementation of this resolution
4. Call upon, and provide instructional materials to assist all levels of the denomination (presbyteries, congregations, and individual members) in taking action to slow climate change, including: divestment of fossil fuel holdings; shareholder activism; investments in renewable energy; advocacy at local, state, and federal levels for policies to reduce greenhouse gas emissions; and local efforts to reduce carbon footprint consistent with the 2006 call<sup>3</sup> for denominational carbon neutrality, and the 2008 "Power to Change" recommendations.<sup>4</sup>

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<sup>2</sup> <http://fossilfreeindexes.com/the-carbon-underground-2014/> or current equivalent (referenced 03-14-2015)

<sup>3</sup> <http://www.pcusa.org/resource/guide-going-carbon-neutral/> (referenced 03-14-2015)

<sup>4</sup> [http://www.pcusa.org/site\\_media/media/uploads/acswp/pdf/energyreport.pdf](http://www.pcusa.org/site_media/media/uploads/acswp/pdf/energyreport.pdf) (referenced 03-14-2015)

## 2016 PCUSA Fossil Fuel Divestment Rationale



In 1981, our church made clear through the document “The Power to Speak Truth to Power” the importance of transitioning away from a fossil fuel based economy.

In 2008, our church made clear through the document “The Power to Change” that the catastrophic effects of Climate Change make this transition essential to the preservation of human life and God’s good creation.

For over two decades, our church’s committee on Mission Responsibility Through Investment has engaged in shareholder action with fossil fuel companies. They have done an exemplary job, but have made no impact in addressing Climate Change. When the best people we have make so little progress, the fault lies with an intractable industry, hell-bent on profit, creation be damned.

Our church has voiced support for legislation addressing the need to transition to a fossil free economy, but has no power to enact it. Our church has voiced support for taxes on carbon emissions, but has no power to levy them. Our church has voiced the need for all members of our denomination to do what they can at an individual level, but individuals acting alone can do little to shift the course of an entire economy.

Our church invests hundreds of millions of dollars in fossil fuel companies.

We, as Christians, have the privilege, responsibility, and obligation to speak with moral authority on issues of great importance. However, the power and clarity of prophetic voice is easily stained by hypocrisy.

Many claim that it is hypocritical to divest from fossil fuels while we are members of a society that is addicted to them. This is true. But it is equally hypocritical to attempt to rehabilitate that society while invested in its addiction.

Even as we continue working to mitigate the climate crisis, we must shed the burden of our investments in climate destruction. This act will speak more loudly and more clearly than any prophetic declaration we have voiced to date.

It’s time to put our money where our mouth is. It’s time to divest from fossil fuels.

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*“Can we hear the grave warnings in reports like this one [Power to Change] from Christians who have carefully studied these matters? And then can we act as stewards of God’s earth, witnessing to Christ in the re-direction of our lives toward a more sustainable future? I pray that we can, and that our church’s good work can help in this great change.” -Gradye Parsons, Stated Clerk of the General Assembly, April 2009*

[ For more information, see Extended Rationale for Fossil Fuel Divestment ]

## 2016 PCUSA Fossil Fuel Divestment Overture and Commentary

The Presbytery of \_\_\_\_\_ overtures the 222<sup>nd</sup> General Assembly (2016) to:

Overture	Commentary
<p>1. Express its profound concern about the destructive effects of climate change on all God’s creation, including a disproportionate impact on those living in poverty and in the least developed countries; the elderly and children; and those least responsible for the emissions of greenhouse gases. The 222<sup>nd</sup> General Assembly (2016) thus recognizes the moral mandate for humanity to shift to a sustainable energy regime in a way that is both just and compassionate. This mandate compels us to action as a denomination to divest from the fossil fuel industry even as we reduce our use of fossil fuels and shrink our carbon footprint.</p>	<p>This is essentially the same as the language in the 2014 overture, approved by 12 presbyteries.</p> <p>Minutes from GA2014 regarding the 2014 overture and its referral to MRTI can be found here:  <a href="https://drive.google.com/file/d/0B997DYTjhCQhVUdWNk1nbzFmeDQ/view?usp=sharing">https://drive.google.com/file/d/0B997DYTjhCQhVUdWNk1nbzFmeDQ/view?usp=sharing</a></p> <p>Or directly at the pc-biz website here: <a href="http://www.pc-biz.org/PC-Biz.WebApp_deploy/%28S%2855xgjsxsb2nboovq23utk22j%29%29/IOBView.aspx?m=ro&amp;id=4587">http://www.pc-biz.org/PC-Biz.WebApp_deploy/%28S%2855xgjsxsb2nboovq23utk22j%29%29/IOBView.aspx?m=ro&amp;id=4587</a></p>
<p>2. Call upon the Board of Pensions and the Presbyterian Church (USA) Foundation to:</p>	
<p>a. Immediately stop any new direct investment in fossil fuel companies</p>	<p>This clause refers to directly held shares only; as opposed to shares commingled in other funds. The 2014 overture recommended “immediately stop[ing] any new investment in fossil fuel companies.” Staff of the Presbyterian Foundation (PF) and Board of Pensions (BOP) pointed out that such language would prevent them from using money markets or index funds or other commingled assets as short-term holding accounts.</p>
<p>b. Work to ensure that within three years, none of the Board’s or the Foundation’s directly held or commingled assets includes holdings of either equities or corporate bonds in the fossil fuel companies identified in the Carbon Underground 200 list<sup>5</sup> by:</p>	<p>The need for action is urgent and increasing. The 2014 overture asked for divestment within five years. GA2014 instructed the Mission Responsibility Through Investment (MRTI) committee to study the subject matter of the 2014 overture for two years, and report back. After two years of study, divestment should be possible within another three years.</p> <p>The Carbon Underground 200, compiled and updated by Fossil Free Indexes, LLC, is the successor to the 2009 Carbon Tracker Initiative list of the 200 global companies with the largest undeveloped reserves of coal, oil, and natural gas. It is the reference list used by most fossil fuel divestment efforts.</p>
<p>i. Working with current and prospective asset managers to develop and implement institutional fossil free investment options</p>	<p>This clause acknowledges that most BOP and PF funds are invested by external fund managers. These managers must provide fossil free investment options. If they don’t, new managers may need to be identified.</p>
<p>ii. Establishing within one year fossil free investment options for fund participants</p>	<p>Fossil free investment “sleeves” are easy to create. This option will soon be available for investors in the Presbyterian Foundation. It should also be made available to clergy invested in the pension fund.</p>
<p>iii. Actively seeking out and investing in renewable</p>	<p>This clause echoes the 2012 call by GA for positive</p>

<sup>5</sup> <http://fossilfreeindexes.com/the-carbon-underground-2014/> or current equivalent (referenced 03-14-2015)

Overture	Commentary
and energy efficiency related securities	reinvestment in Palestine that has been successfully implemented by PF. It was not included in the 2012 overture, but is endorsed by the PF, by the Advisory Committee on Social Witness Policy (ACSWP) and by GreenFaith.
iv. Notwithstanding the above provisions, retaining or acquiring minimal sufficient investment in fossil fuel companies to participate in shareholder engagement activities	<p>This clause acknowledges the faithful work and accomplishment of MRTI in shareholder action. It is possible to divest <i>and</i> keep our “seat at the table” by holding minimal shares. According to Securities and Exchange Commission guidelines, an entity holding as little as \$2,000 of a company’s assets may engage in shareholder advocacy.</p> <p>This provision allows the church funds to keep or buy stocks in order to pursue shareholder advocacy.</p>
v. Notwithstanding the above provisions, taking no action inconsistent with fiduciary duty or principles of sound investment, including the real and substantial risk of stranded carbon assets	<p>This clause ensures that we do not expect the PF and BOP to violate their legal fiduciary responsibility.</p> <p>Fiduciary duty, is often narrowly interpreted as simply maximizing return on investment. A broader definition includes consistency with the goals of the investing organization and avoiding foreseeable risks, such as the “stranded assets” that will occur as the world acknowledges that the majority of currently identified fossil fuel reserves cannot be developed.</p>
c. Incorporate into public financial reports regular updates detailing progress made towards these ends	Fossil fuel divestment is primarily a moral act. We ask for a mechanism to ensure transparency and communication within the church.
3. Call upon the Stated Clerk of the PC(USA) to inform affected fossil fuel companies and the larger public of the passage and implementation of this resolution	As called for in principle 7.b of the denominational “Divestment Strategy” document: <a href="http://www.pcusa.org/media/uploads/acswp/pdf/divestment_strategy.pdf">http://www.pcusa.org/media/uploads/acswp/pdf/divestment_strategy.pdf</a>
4. Call upon, and provide instructional materials to assist all levels of the denomination (presbyteries, congregations, and individual members) in taking action to slow climate change, including: divestment of fossil fuel holdings; shareholder activism; investments in renewable energy; advocacy at local, state, and federal levels for policies to reduce greenhouse gas emissions; and local efforts to reduce carbon footprint consistent with the 2006 call <sup>6</sup> for denominational carbon neutrality, and the 2008 “Power to Change” recommendations. <sup>7</sup>	As requested from the floor of GA2014, this broadens divestment beyond the PF and BOP to all levels of the church. It incorporates ideas expressed by ACSWP in their concurrence with the 2014 overture, and echoes the call for political involvement, such as calling for a price on carbon, in the 2008 “Power to Change”

<sup>6</sup> <http://www.pcusa.org/resource/guide-going-carbon-neutral/> (referenced 03-14-2015)

<sup>7</sup> [http://www.pcusa.org/site\\_media/media/uploads/acswp/pdf/energyreport.pdf](http://www.pcusa.org/site_media/media/uploads/acswp/pdf/energyreport.pdf) (referenced 03-14-2015)

# 2016 PCUSA Fossil Fuel Divestment Extended Rationale



## Introduction

According to The Divestment Strategy: Principles and Criteria<sup>i</sup>: **“The theology of mission extends the concept of stewardship into society and insists that the full influence and impact of church investment be seen in the larger social context, with motivation beyond financial gain [...] In this context, divestment of holdings in a particular firm or class of firms is both part of the normal management of funds and potentially an occasion for Christian witness to God’s call for justice and the renewal of society [...] The imperatives of the gospel demand that we weigh the church’s involvement in a particular investment with the church’s engagement in the larger society.”**[emphasis added]

Our church’s seminal document on divestment clearly establishes that the church, although not “of the world,” is involved—and invested—in it. Furthermore, our motivation for investment is “beyond financial gain.” In investment as in all things, Christian witness must be our first priority.

It has become clear that greenhouse gas emissions from our fossil fuel-based economy are profoundly changing our climate in ways that could make the earth irreversibly inhospitable to life as we know it. Transitioning away from fossil fuels to a renewable energy economy is imperative if we are to keep the consequences of climate change from becoming cataclysmic. As Christians, we cannot stand idly by as God’s creation is destabilized and the survival of much of the human family is imperiled. Our call to love our neighbors, care for the least of these, and be good stewards of God’s creation demands that we engage financially to transform our society and an industry that is destroying the climate.

The advocates of this overture believe it is time for another “occasion for Christian witness to God’s call for justice and the renewal of society” through categorical divestment from a class of firms: the fossil fuel companies that hold significant unexploited reserves of coal, oil, and gas.<sup>ii</sup>

The Divestment Strategy cited above outlines seven distinct principles that a call for divestment should adhere to. The call for categorical divestment from fossil fuel companies meets those criteria.

## Principles of Divestment

1) *The issue on which divestment is proposed should be one reflecting central aspects of the faith.*

In Genesis 2:15, God charged Adam with tending and keeping the Garden of Eden. This responsibility was a charge to people of all time, to be wise stewards of God’s good creation. Presbyterians, through multiple policy statements<sup>iiiivvviiviii</sup>, have taken this vocation seriously. The continued burning of fossil fuels diminishes God’s creation.

Jesus’ call to care for the “least of these” in Matthew 25:40 is a call to defend those with no voice or power. Climate change violates the rights of those least economically able to cope with its effects and least responsible for causing them. It also violates the rights of unborn generations who have no voice, yet must live with the consequences of choices we now make.

2) *The issue on which divestment is proposed should be one that the church has addressed by a variety of educational and action efforts, such as:*

a) *Correspondence with companies*

b) *Discussion with company managers and directors*

c) *Statements, questions, and shareholder resolutions at stockholder meetings*

d) *Legal action against companies*

Our denomination, through the efforts of the Committee on Mission Responsibility Through Investment (MRTI) and partner organizations such as Ceres (the Coalition for Environmentally Responsible Economies) and ICCR (the Interfaith Center on Corporate Responsibility), has engaged in a wide variety of efforts with many fossil fuel companies for more than two decades. In just 3 recent years, MRTI has filed shareholder resolutions with at least five coal companies<sup>ix</sup> and twenty seven oil and gas companies<sup>x</sup> that appear on the Carbon Underground<sup>ii</sup> list used as a reference in this overture. In the first six weeks of 2015 alone, MRTI engaged in dialog with seven listed fossil fuel companies in which we are invested<sup>xi</sup>. One specific example is our long involvement with ConocoPhillips, in which MRTI was finally successful in 2014 in an effort to convince them to set a carbon reduction goal for internal production.<sup>xix</sup> A joint resolution with the Unitarians for 2015 was rejected by ConocoPhillips on procedural grounds.<sup>xiv</sup> Although this important and persistent work of MRTI is to be commended, it is grossly insufficient in addressing the carbon reductions required by recent science and documented in The Power to Change<sup>vii</sup>.

3) *The analysis supporting the proposed action:*

a) *Should be clearly grounded in the church's confession and unambiguously present in the social policy of the General Assembly*

In 1981 the northern and southern branches of the Presbyterian church produced a policy document, The Power to Speak Truth to Power,<sup>iii</sup> which established a clear church policy directed toward energy efficiency, renewable energy, and a transition away from fossil fuel sources years before climate change was an issue. Twenty-seven years later, the 218<sup>th</sup> General Assembly approved The Power to Change,<sup>vii</sup> a resolution on U.S. energy policy and global warming calling for “comprehensive, mandatory, and aggressive emission reductions that aim to limit the increase in Earth’s temperature to 2 degrees Celsius or less” by “reducing U.S. greenhouse gas emissions 20 percent from 1990 levels by 2020, and 80 percent from 1990 levels by 2050.” Although such documents are clear indicators of General Assembly’s stance on climate change, little progress has been made in achieving these recommendations, while the situation becomes increasingly dire.

b) *Should clearly define the behavior and stance of the corporate entities whose policies or practices are at issue*

Fossil fuel companies own or control far more identified reserves than the world can afford to burn<sup>xv</sup>. And yet, these companies continue to spend hundreds of billions of dollars a year<sup>xvi</sup> searching for more. When asked by shareholders to analyze the asset risk of stranded carbon assets, ExxonMobil declared<sup>xvii</sup> in 2014 that, although climate change is real and should be addressed, there is no risk of stranded assets because “governments are “highly unlikely” to adopt policies that cut emissions”. Hess Corporation<sup>xviii</sup> discounts the carbon bubble and risk of stranded assets and, while acknowledging the validity of conclusions of the IPCC, ignores them in favor of an International Energy Agency projection that business-as-usual increases in energy demand will produce a 3.5°C temperature rise without putting their business model at risk. Under the rules of the Securities and Exchange Commission, ConocoPhillips has elected to ignore the latest shareholder proposal from MRTI and the Unitarian Universalist Association “because it relates to the Company’s ordinary business operations”<sup>xiv</sup> If fossil fuel companies simply successfully implement their ordinary business operations, they will knowingly create climate chaos.

c) *Should state the ends sought through divestment*

Despite many years of good faith efforts on the part of MRTI, other denominations, and the nation’s largest pension funds, shareholder engagement with fossil fuel companies has proven ineffective<sup>xix</sup> in changing large companies’ policies with respect to exploitation of their carbon reserves. Unless fossil fuel companies are willing to acknowledge climate change, subscribe to the international goal



of no more than 2°C of warming, and demonstrate how they plan to support that goal, the church should terminate financial support of their business plans.

Proponents of the overture have no illusions that divestment by the church from fossil fuel companies will have any direct financial effect on these companies. A decision to divest will instead send a clear and prophetic message that business as usual by coal, oil, and gas companies is morally unacceptable. Divestment will stigmatize<sup>xx</sup> a rogue industry and promote public awareness, through the advocacy and local action called for by denominational policy. The ultimate goal of this action is nothing less than the transition away from a fossil fuel based economy called for by our church since 1981<sup>iii</sup>.

- 4) *The decision should be taken after consultation with the ecumenical community, whenever possible. The implementation of a divestment action should ordinarily be in solidarity with other Christian bodies.*

MRTI collaborated with the Unitarian Universalist Association on development and submittal of a shareholder proposal to ConocoPhillips in 2014, asking the company to de-couple executive compensation from the presumed future value of its proven, but unexploited, reserves. MRTI heard testimony in 2014 from representatives of the Unitarian Universalist Association and the United Church of Christ, both of whom have approved divestment resolutions. Faith communities around the world are active in the fossil fuel divestment movement, which continues to grow rapidly<sup>xxi</sup>. FossilFreePCUSA is working with GreenFaith<sup>xxii</sup>, an ecumenical group including mainline denominations in the U.S. and around the world. Many faith communities worldwide<sup>xxiii</sup> have affirmed divestment actions or are in the process of debating them.

MRTI has long been a member of ICCR and Ceres, two ecumenical organizations with long histories of engaging the fossil fuel industry on climate change. Unfortunately, shareholder action through these groups has not decreased global CO<sub>2</sub> production from the products of fossil fuel companies<sup>xxiv</sup>.

- 5) *Efforts should be made to examine the probable effects and consequences of the action with affected communities, particularly Presbyterians.*

Beyond any effects on *us* as Presbyterians, the consequences of *not* acting are far greater for unborn generations; for those least responsible and least able to respond; for species and ecosystems across the globe. Extensive documentation<sup>xxv</sup> by a wide swath of organizations confirms that we are at the precipice of profound transformations in the climate that could make much of the planet inhospitable to life as we know it. We must use every tool at our disposal to mitigate those changes.

- 6) *The proposed action should be sufficiently precise that the effect of its application can be evaluated.*

This overture calls for an immediate freeze in the purchase of new stocks and substantial divestment over three years by the Board of Pensions and the Presbyterian Foundation from companies that appear on the Carbon Underground<sup>Error! Bookmark not defined.</sup> list. It also allows for exercise of appropriate fiduciary responsibility by the affected agencies and for continued minimal holdings<sup>xxvi</sup> that will allow MRTI to pursue the shareholder actions at which the committee has excelled for so many years.

The actions called for in the overture will be clear and reasonable to measure and report.

- 7) *Any proposed divestment action should include provision for:*

- a) *Informing appropriate church constituencies*

As a result of the overture presented to the 221<sup>st</sup> General Assembly<sup>xxvii</sup>, this topic has been under discussion in a variety of forums within the PC(USA). Conversations are underway in Presbyterian congregations; the Synod of the Sun has convened a task force to investigate the issue; MRTI has solicited public comment on the topic. A further requirement for the Clerk to inform and educate church constituencies is found in Clause 4<sup>xxviii</sup> of the overture, which is specifically intended to

educate and inform all levels of the denomination on climate change, energy transformation, divestment and advocacy opportunities, from individual members to middle ruling bodies.

b) *Giving appropriate public visibility to the action*

Clause 3<sup>xxix</sup> of the overture anticipates public awareness of this action and the reasons behind it, while building on the public profile of the larger divestment movement.

c) *Engaging other governing bodies and members in advocacy for the ends that prompt the divestment*

This advocacy is already clearly called for in the denominational Power to Change<sup>vii</sup> policy statement.<sup>vii</sup>

d) *Giving pastoral care to those directly affected.*

Those most directly and severely affected by the issue behind this overture will be the millions of victims of extreme global climate events over the next several decades. Presbyterian Disaster Assistance and PCUSA outreach agencies such as Self Development Of Peoples, Living Waters for the World, Solar Under the Sun, and others, are already in place to address some of these needs. Locally, some congregations in fossil fuel production areas such as West Virginia and Texas may suffer loss of jobs as the world inevitably transitions away from fossil fuels. Job retraining advocacy is a role in which the denomination already engages. Some in the denomination may also feel betrayed or alienated by these actions and will require pastoral compassion during this transition. This is a reason for concern in a denomination that has been struggling to live faithfully in Christian witness while prayerfully acknowledging a plurality of positions within the body of Christ.

## **Conclusion**

Human induced climate change is having a profound negative impact on God's good creation. That impact is felt most powerfully by those least responsible for it, and least able to cope with it: poor coastal populations in Bangladesh, island populations in the Maldives and Marshalls and Tuvalu and Kiribati, voiceless unborn generations, and uncountable species of plants and animals.

It's not too late. We can arrest climate change, or at least mitigate its worst effects. This will require a massive and immediate shift of our energy systems from fossils to renewables.<sup>xxx</sup>

Fossil fuel companies are fighting to keep that shift from happening. With their massive profits<sup>xxxi</sup> they create doubt about well-established science<sup>xxxii</sup>. They spend vast sums<sup>xvi</sup> each year searching for more oil we can't afford to burn, and hundreds of millions of dollars lobbying for favorable legislation<sup>xxxiii</sup>. They proclaim<sup>xviii</sup> that increasing energy demands will allow them to produce every barrel of oil they can find, climate be damned.

Like many other large funds, the church has engaged fossil fuel companies on climate change through shareholder action for decades with little to show for it. As one pastor says: *"The task at hand isn't like asking Nike to stop making shoes in sweatshops. It's like asking Nike to stop making shoes."*<sup>xxxiv</sup> Fossil fuel companies use SEC rules to ignore even these weak and ineffective resolutions.<sup>xiv</sup>

The church must use its voice, its moral authority, and its dollars to speak out against the entrenched resistance and denialism that perpetuates the growing threat to the human family and all of God's precious creation. It's wrong to wreck the climate. The church must stand up, speak out, and refuse to profit from that wreckage.<sup>xxxv</sup> Our carefully crafted and time-tested principles of divestment<sup>xxxvi</sup> identify *"times [when] the church must be free to act with both integrity and realism."* Now is the time to speak with a clear and prophetic Christian voice. Now is the time to divest from fossil fuels.

## Notes

<sup>i</sup> The original version of this seminal document, produced in 1984 by the 196<sup>th</sup> General Assembly of the newly reunited PC(USA) can be found here, specifically paragraphs 25.199 through 25.210:

[http://www.pcusa.org/site\\_media/media/uploads/acswp/pdf/divestment\\_strategy.pdf](http://www.pcusa.org/site_media/media/uploads/acswp/pdf/divestment_strategy.pdf)

A more readable format is reproduced as Section 2 (pages 29 ff) of the 1985 report: Divestment for South Africa: An Investment in Hope found here:

[http://www.presbyterianmission.org/media/uploads/mrti/pdfs/1984\\_&\\_1985\\_divestment\\_strategy\\_policy\\_&\\_south\\_africa\\_policy.pdf](http://www.presbyterianmission.org/media/uploads/mrti/pdfs/1984_&_1985_divestment_strategy_policy_&_south_africa_policy.pdf)

<sup>ii</sup> Fossil Free Indexes, The Carbon Underground 2015: <http://fossilfreeindexes.com/research/the-carbon-underground/>.

<sup>iii</sup> 1981: The Power to Speak Truth to Power:

[http://www.pcusa.org/media/uploads/acswp/pdf/power\\_to\\_speak\\_truth\\_to\\_power.pdf](http://www.pcusa.org/media/uploads/acswp/pdf/power_to_speak_truth_to_power.pdf)

<sup>iv</sup> 1990: Restoring Creation for Ecology and Justice:

<http://www.presbyterianmission.org/ministries/environment/pcusa-environmental-policy/>

<sup>v</sup> 1996: Hope For A Global Future: Toward Just And Sustainable Human Development:

[https://www.pcusa.org/site\\_media/media/uploads/acswp/pdf/hope-for-a-global-future.pdf](https://www.pcusa.org/site_media/media/uploads/acswp/pdf/hope-for-a-global-future.pdf)

<sup>vi</sup> 2006: Resolution for Presbyterians to Live Carbon Neutral Lives:

[http://www.climate.org/PDF/PCUSA\\_carbon\\_neutral\\_resolution.pdf](http://www.climate.org/PDF/PCUSA_carbon_neutral_resolution.pdf)

<sup>vii</sup> 2008: The Power to Change: U.S. Energy Policy and Global Warming:

[http://www.pcusa.org/site\\_media/media/uploads/acswp/pdf/energyreport.pdf](http://www.pcusa.org/site_media/media/uploads/acswp/pdf/energyreport.pdf)

<sup>viii</sup> 2008: Presbyterian Church (USA) Policy Brief: Environment and Energy:

[http://www.pcusa.org/site\\_media/media/uploads/washington/pdfs/policybrief.pdf](http://www.pcusa.org/site_media/media/uploads/washington/pdfs/policybrief.pdf)

<sup>ix</sup> Coal Companies in the Carbon Underground 200 List with which MRTI has filed recent shareholder resolutions:

2011	2013	2014	Company	Rank
	X	X	Peabody Energy Corp.	10
		X	Arch Coal Inc.	18
X	X	X	Alpha Natural Resources, Inc.	19
	X	X	CONSOL Energy Inc.	43
X	X	X	FirstEnergy Corporation	79

<sup>x</sup> Oil & Gas Companies in the Carbon Underground 200 List with which MRTI has filed recent shareholder resolutions:

2011	2013	2014	Company	Rank
X	X	X	Exxon Mobil Corporation	4
X			BP P.L.C.	6
X	X	X	Chevron Corp.	9
X	X	X	ConocoPhillips	12
X		X	Occidental Petroleum Corporation	19
X			Anadarko Petroleum	22
	X		Chesapeake Energy Corporation	24
	X	X	Devon Energy	27
X		X	EOG Resources, Inc.	31
		X	Marathon Oil Corp.	33
	X	X	Hess Corporation	34
	X	X	EQT Corporation	39
	X		Range Resources Corporation	40
	X		Continental Resources	41
X			Southwestern Energy	46
X			Woodside Petroleum	49
		X	Pioneer Natural Resources Company	53
		X	Cabot Oil & Gas Corporation	54
	X		WPX Energy Inc.	55
X			Ultra Petroleum	63
		X	Concho Resources Inc.	65
		X	Denbury Resources Inc.	66
		X	SM Energy Co.	74
X		X	Energen Corporation	81
X			Oil Search	83
		X	Oasis Petroleum Inc.	90
		X	National Fuel Gas Company	94

<sup>xi</sup> The MRTI agenda for February 2015 included reports on meetings with the following companies from the Carbon Underground list, shown with their ranking on the list: Chevron (9), ConocoPhillips (12), ExxonMobil (4), Marathon Oil (33), Noble Energy (37), and Ultra Petroleum (63). In addition, a site visit was made to Hess Oil (34).

<sup>xii</sup> MRTI's extensive shareholder engagement with ConocoPhillips is documented on the internet at least as far back as 2003: <http://archive.wfn.org/2003/10/msg00077.html>, and likely extends back significantly farther. In 2003, "MRTI celebrated: [...] Urging Conoco/Phillips Petroleum to develop an aggressive program to address greenhouse gas emissions".

<sup>xiii</sup> In 2013, "MRTI's shareholder resolution called for setting a corporate-wide reduction goal for greenhouse gas emissions. [...] [T]he resolution received 29.43% of the shareholder vote, up from previous years." <http://www.pcusa.org/news/2013/6/19/mrti-reports-record-proxy-votes-environmental-shar/>

<sup>xiv</sup> MRTI filed a joint resolution with the Unitarians for 2015 calling for "a policy that [ConocoPhillips] will not use "reserve additions," "reserve replacement ratio" ("RRR") or any other metric based on reserves to determine the amount of any senior executive's incentive compensation". ConocoPhillips filed an intention to exclude this proposal pursuant to SEC rules that allow a company to ignore resolutions that deal with the ordinary business of the company. For fossil fuel companies, this also means the exploration for and production of fossil fuels.

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(<http://www.sec.gov/divisions/corpfin/cf-noaction/14a-8/2014/unitarianunverisalistassociation123014-14a8-incoming.pdf>)

<sup>xv</sup> Global Warming's Terrifying New Math: <http://www.rollingstone.com/politics/news/global-warmings-terrifying-new-math-20120719>

<sup>xvi</sup> Leading companies invest \$674 billion in potentially worthless fossil fuels  
<http://www.theguardian.com/sustainable-business/companies-invest-worthless-fossil-fuels>

<sup>xvii</sup> <http://www.renewableenergyworld.com/rea/news/article/2014/04/exxonmobil-releases-shareholder-report-showing-little-concern-that-climate-change-may-affect-business>

<sup>xviii</sup> Hess Corporation 2013 Corporate Sustainability Report, page 34: <http://www.hess.com/docs/default-source/sustainability/hess-corporation-2013-csr.pdf>

<sup>xix</sup> Talk to the Hand: Engagement With Fossil Fuel Companies Offers Little Promise:  
<http://www.triplepundit.com/2015/01/talk-hand-engagement-fossil-fuel-companies-offers-little-promise/>

<sup>xx</sup> Stranded assets and the fossil fuel divestment campaign: what does divestment mean for the valuation of fossil fuel assets? <http://www.smithschool.ox.ac.uk/research-programmes/stranded-assets/SAP-divestment-report-final.pdf>

<sup>xxi</sup> Fossil fuel divestment campaign grows with global day of action: <http://tcktcktck.org/2015/02/fossil-fuel-divestment-campaign-grows-global-day-action/66535>

<sup>xxii</sup> GreenFaith divestment resources can be found here: <http://www.greenfaith.org/programs/divest-and-reinvest>

<sup>xxiii</sup> GreenFaith maintains a comprehensive list of faith groups and divestment activity here:  
<http://www.greenfaith.org/programs/divest-and-reinvest/listing-of-known-religious-divestment-efforts>

<sup>xxiv</sup> US CO<sub>2</sub> production from fossil fuels has remained relatively flat over the last 25 years while global output has increased by about 35%: <http://www.epa.gov/climatechange/ghgemissions/gases/co2.html>  
<http://www.epa.gov/climatechange/ghgemissions/global.html>

<sup>xxv</sup> Two credible organizations are the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC) and the World Bank. The IPCC released a series of four reports between late 2013 and late 2014. They are available in their entirety here: <http://www.ipcc.ch/report/ar5/index.shtml>.

A summary of the IPCC's conclusions about fossil fuel use can be found in the following quote and reference: "Humanity must phase out its reliance on fossil fuels or implement carbon capture and storage technologies if we are to avoid warming the planet by more than 2C, the IPCC says"

<http://www.reportingclimatescience.com/news-stories/article/ipcc-warns-on-fossil-fuels.html>

The World Bank has issued a number of reports on the adverse effects of global warming. Here's one: Climate Change Report Warns of Dramatically Warmer World This Century:

<http://www.worldbank.org/en/news/feature/2012/11/18/Climate-change-report-warns-dramatically-warmer-world-this-century>

<sup>xxvi</sup> "minimal holdings", as required by the Securities and Exchange Commission specify that to be eligible to file a shareholder proposal, "you must have continuously held at least \$2,000 in market value, or 1%, of the company's securities entitled to be voted on the proposal at the meeting for at least one year by the date you submit the proposal.": <https://www.law.cornell.edu/cfr/text/17/240.14a-8>

We can practice substantive divestment from fossil fuel companies and still retain the small amount of stock necessary to continue shareholder activism.

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<sup>xxvii</sup> The 2014 overture to General Assembly: On Divestment from Fossil Fuel Companies—From the Presbytery of Boston: [http://www.pc-biz.org/PC-Biz.WebApp\\_deploy/%28S%28euldv1k2b5x4p4s004zvaab2%29%29/IOBView.aspx?m=ro&id=4587](http://www.pc-biz.org/PC-Biz.WebApp_deploy/%28S%28euldv1k2b5x4p4s004zvaab2%29%29/IOBView.aspx?m=ro&id=4587)

<sup>xxviii</sup> Clause 4: “Call upon, and provide instructional materials to assist all levels of the denomination (presbyteries, congregations, and individual members) in taking action to slow climate change, including: divestment of fossil fuel holdings; shareholder activism; investments in renewable energy; advocacy at local, state, and federal levels for policies to reduce greenhouse gas emissions; and local efforts to reduce carbon footprint consistent with the 2006 call for denominational carbon neutrality, and the 2008 “Power to Change” recommendations.”

<sup>xxix</sup> Clause 3: “**Call upon the Stated Clerk of the PC(USA) to inform affected fossil fuel companies and the larger public of the passage and implementation of this resolution**”

<sup>xxx</sup> Mark Jacobsen, Director of the Atmosphere and Energy Program, Stanford University, has outlined a plan to transition all 50 states to 100% renewable energy: <http://thesolutionsproject.org/>

<sup>xxxi</sup> Profits for Oil, Gas & Coal Companies Operating in the U.S. and Canada were 331 Billion in 2013: <http://priceofoil.org/2013/09/26/profits-oil-gas-coal-companies-operating-u-s-canada/>

<sup>xxxii</sup> Industry funded climate change denialism is meticulously documented in *Merchants of Doubt*, published in 2011 and written by Erik Conway and Naomi Oreskes. ALEC, the *American Legislative Exchange Council*, has a documented history of misrepresenting climate change science: [http://www.huffingtonpost.com/elliott-negin/more-lies-from-alec-about\\_b\\_6149568.html](http://www.huffingtonpost.com/elliott-negin/more-lies-from-alec-about_b_6149568.html). The Heartland Institute, with a long history of climate change denial, has undeniable connections to fossil fuel company funding: [http://www.huffingtonpost.com/elliott-negin/unreliable-sources-5-how\\_b\\_3316714.html](http://www.huffingtonpost.com/elliott-negin/unreliable-sources-5-how_b_3316714.html). Willie Soon, a prominent climate denier and astrophysicist, has been extensively funded by petroleum companies including ExxonMobil: <http://www.theguardian.com/environment/2015/mar/03/wei-hock-soon-climate-change-denier-grants-exxon-mobil>.

<sup>xxxiii</sup> Fossil Fuel Lobby Spent \$213 Million Last Year to Influence US, EU Politicians: <http://www.desmogblog.com/2014/10/18/fossil-fuel-lobby-spent-213-million-last-year-influence-us-eu-politicians>

<sup>xxxiv</sup> Jenny Phillips, a UMC pastor: <http://www.fossilfreeumc.org/blog/>

<sup>xxxv</sup> “*If it’s wrong to wreck the planet, then it’s wrong to profit from that wreckage.*” <http://gofossilfree.org/do-the-math-fossil-fuel-investments-add-up-to-climate-chaos/>

<sup>xxxvi</sup> Paragraph 25.278 of the Principles of Divestment: *The identity of the church is found in its commitment to faithful life and action, in investments as in other areas of its life. Divestment from a particular enterprise thus can be a means of effective participation and witness in the larger social enterprise of justice. By refusing to be a shareholder in an enterprise whose effect is negative to justice, the church may be acting to increase responsibility in economic life. At certain times, divestment may be an action of transforming effectiveness, and at those times the church must be free to act with both integrity and realism.* [http://www.pcusa.org/site\\_media/media/uploads/acswp/pdf/divestment\\_strategy.pdf](http://www.pcusa.org/site_media/media/uploads/acswp/pdf/divestment_strategy.pdf)