

## Changing Course for a Green Future

\_\_\_\_\_ Presbytery overtures the 227th General Assembly (2026) of the Presbyterian Church (USA) to:

1. Declare that the continued investment of PC(USA) funds in the exploration, development, extraction, refinement, transportation, and sale of fossil fuels is incompatible with the mission and goals of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) and our call to serve as faithful stewards of creation.<sup>1</sup>
2. Commend The Presbyterian Foundation and The Board of Pensions for reducing their fossil fuel and (aggregated) energy sector holdings (respectively).<sup>2</sup>
3. Commend the many faith institutions, including the World Council of Churches on their decisions to remove fossil fuel investments from their portfolios, answering “the prophetic call to care for our common home and stand in solidarity with those who suffer most from climate injustice.”<sup>3</sup>
4. Affirm that the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) has satisfied the substantive requirements of The Divestment Strategy: Ethical and Institutional Context (1984)—and any successor policy which may be adopted by the General Assembly—for determining when divestment is warranted with respect to the fossil fuel industry.
5. Call upon all PC(USA)-related fiduciaries, to:
  - a. Undertake the orderly removal of investments from all companies whose primary business (more than 50% of annual profit) is based on the extraction, refinement, transport or sale of fossil fuels, with the goal of fully completing this divestment by 2030 or as soon thereafter as prudent management allows;
  - b. Cease from initiating new investments in such companies; and
  - c. Seek suitable opportunities in renewable energy sectors that meet established ethical and risk-return criteria.
6. Direct the Unified Agency through its Mission Responsibility Through Investment (MRTI), the Office of Faith Based Investing and other components) to:

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<sup>1</sup> The Divestment Strategy:Principles and Criteria, MINUTES, 196th GENERAL ASSEMBLY, PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH (U.S.A.), May 29-June 6, 1984, Phoenix, Arizona. This policy clearly states that “divestment of holdings can be in a particular firm or *class of firms* and that this is both part of the normal management of funds and *potentially an occasion for Christian witness to God’s call for justice and renewal of society*. [emphasis added] (Paragraph 25.202.) Also see paragraphs 25. 204 and 261

<sup>2</sup> Between 2018 and 2025 PF moved from 5.14% to 2.24% of total investments and the BoP from 4% in 2019 to 1% of total energy sector investments as of September, 2025. The dollar value of these two combined is still a combined estimated total of around \$141,772,800.

<sup>3</sup><https://oikoumene.org/what-we-do/care-for-creation-and-climate-justice/ecumenical-decade-of-climate-justice-action>

- a. Continue and expand the church's stockholder advocacy efforts to resist lending and insurance institution practices as directed in the "Green Future" policy adopted by the 225th G.A.
- b. Encourage all Unified Agency program components to advocate for a just global transition away from fossil fuels and toward ethically produced renewable sources of energy and to stand with local communities who suffer either from the the harms of the fossil fuel industry and climate injustice or the dislocations of the energy transition.

7. Direct the Stated Clerk to:

- a. Inform all appropriate Church constituencies and church and public media outlets, and ecumenical partners of the passage of this overture;
- b. Encourage governing bodies, institutions, congregations, and members to engage in theological reflection and advocacy concerning the harms of fossil fuel dependence and the need for a just energy transition; and
- c. Provide pastoral care to any among our Presbyterian household who may experience dis-ease with the Church's decision or dislocation or other negative consequences which will result from the energy transition envisioned in this overture.

## Rationale

The Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) has long affirmed that caring for God's creation is central to our discipleship and our public witness. In doing so we have repeatedly proclaimed our corporate commitment to teaching and practices which will fulfill the mandate in the book of Genesis for humankind to be "keepers and nurturers" of the earth. (Genesis 2:15).

In light of humanity's failures in this regard, and seeking to amend our own efforts as a church, the 226th (2024) General Assembly recommitted the PC(USA) to align its program with that of the global efforts of the United Nations to battle human caused climate change by prioritizing ". . . responses to the urgent needs associated with the existential threats of the climate crisis, including those related to limiting global warming to well below two degrees Celsius, as outlined in the Paris Agreement. . ." and "transitioning away from fossil fuels in a just, orderly and equitable manner, accelerating action in this critical decade. . ." [emphasis added]<sup>4</sup>

**Why is this decade critical? Why the focus on fossil fuels?** Greenhouse gasses produced from extraction, production and use of fossil fuels comprise around 70 percent of climate changing emissions. The global scientific consensus confirms that the world must make significant emissions reductions by 2030 to avoid temperatures

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<sup>4</sup> ENV-06

which will be catastrophic for all life.<sup>5</sup> We already are experiencing many of these consequences in the form of “super-sized” weather events which wreak havoc on all in their path but disproportionately impact those least equipped to recover.

In its adoption of *Investing in A Green Future: A Vision for a Renewed Creation*, the 225th General Assembly confessed our denomination’s failure to take sufficient action to implement the “turnaround decade” proclaimed in the 1990 Assembly’s *Restoring Creation for Ecology and Justice*. In each of these, (and many more) statements, the Church recognized that faithful stewardship of the earth requires both confession and concrete change. The current overture seeks to bring our Church’s financial practices into alignment with the commitments we have already made by describing the kind of change demanded by the repentance we have offered.

The “Green Future” policy also underscored that the Church’s financial practices must align with its commitments to creation care, encouraging individuals, congregations, and church entities to evaluate how their investments contribute to climate harm and to consider shifting resources toward renewable and just energy systems. In its supporting rationale for that document, ACSWP noted that investment decisions across all levels of the Church have direct moral implications and called for discernment around our denominational investments that reflect our responsibility to safeguard God’s good creation.

Despite these clear policy foundations, the denomination continues to maintain significant investments in fossil fuel companies—companies whose core business activities remain a primary driver of the climate crisis. Our current engagement strategy has yielded only limited improvement in corporate behavior related to emissions from their operations and does not address the larger reality that the products of this industry, when used exactly as intended, are destabilizing the global climate. As a result, our existing investment posture remains out of step with the theological commitments and moral direction repeatedly expressed by past General Assemblies.

**Our denominational stockholder strategy related to fossil fuel companies is focused only on harms resulting from company activities but not on their products.** This, in essence, is the reason we must divest. In order to send a clear message regarding our refusal to continue to enable the production of products which are poisoning the planet and wreaking havoc on the most vulnerable of our siblings. Our current strategy of investing millions of dollars in these businesses in order to maintain a “seat at the table” comes at too great a price as it contributes to the very harms we claim to want to heal, as well as undermining the integrity of our Christian witness. We believe, with the leaders of the *Laudato Si* movement in the Catholic Church, that, “By divesting from fossil fuel companies, faith institutions remove the

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<sup>5</sup> IPCC Synthesis Report, 2023, <https://www.ipcc.ch/report/sixth-assessment-report-cycle/>

social licence of fossil fuel companies to continue pursuing new fossil fuel projects and exacerbating the climate crisis.”<sup>6</sup>

Our strategy as related to fossil fuel companies must now shift to advocacy with lending institutions and end users of fossil fuels and to the social, political, legal and moral spheres, some of which may be achieved through MRTI and others through the Office of Public Witness, the Office of the Stated Clerk and other programmatic initiatives. Communities in need of support in their struggles with fossil fuel companies that pollute and abuse or the economic dislocation associated with the energy transition, may be assured that we have not abandoned them because we have other means of providing assistance and support than through our current practice of stockholder engagement.

While we acknowledge the preference, inherent in our Reformed theological tradition, to practice stockholder advocacy as a strategy for exerting leverage toward outcomes aligned with God’s vision for humanity, we believe that, having pursued the engagement course for decades, divestment is the more faithful choice at this point in time. For the sake of our public witness, as well as our commitment to address environmental racism and other forms of climate injustice, we must take our stand with and give voice to those who have been, as our Brief Statement of Faith puts it, “long silenced”: the poor, marginalized, future generations, and the creatures of the planet, with no voice in our decision processes.

**A Green Future is Possible Now and Saves Lives and Money.**<sup>7</sup> Today, we have viable, cheaper and safer alternatives to fossil fuels with solar, wind, hydropower and battery storage. This action will bring our investments into alignment with the 225th General Assembly’s call for all congregations, mid councils and agencies to “Work toward a goal of 100% renewable energy . . . by 2030 by practicing energy efficiency, purchasing our power from renewable energy sources and investing in the development of renewable energy.”

While, as individuals we are still often dependent on, (even addicted to), living lives deeply intertwined with fossil fuels, we are called as a Church to move forward into the new day of renewable energy and away from our corporate financial investments in the

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<sup>6</sup> From the Catholic Church’s Laudato Si Divestment COP 30 announcement letter of September 15, 2025. [https://laudatosimovement.org/news/no-faith-in-fossil-fuels-join-the-global-divestment-announcement-ahead-of-cop30/?utm\\_source=newsletter&utm\\_medium=email&utm\\_term=2025-10-31&utm\\_campaign=Hope+gratitude+and+care+for+creation+November+Prayer+Guide](https://laudatosimovement.org/news/no-faith-in-fossil-fuels-join-the-global-divestment-announcement-ahead-of-cop30/?utm_source=newsletter&utm_medium=email&utm_term=2025-10-31&utm_campaign=Hope+gratitude+and+care+for+creation+November+Prayer+Guide)

<sup>7</sup> See: “The Precautionary Principle: Managing Technological Risks to Protect Humanity and our Planet,” Approved by the 223rd General Assembly (2018) I. AFFIRMATION AND DESCRIPTION OF PRECAUTIONARY RESPONSIBILITIES “In retrospect, the climate change crisis reflects the widespread failure of market systems to assess and reduce the impacts of fossil fuel use.”

polluting production and use of fossil fuels. By acting now to redirect our investments away from fossil fuels and toward a more sustainable future, we believe our denomination will more faithfully embody the fruits of repentance previous assemblies have called for and strengthen our witness to God's justice, care, and hope for creation.