

June 2, 2017

President Trump's decision to abandon the Paris Climate Accord violates the values and vision that are basic to Christian faith. Our Judeo-Christian heritage teaches that the Earth and its web of life are precious in God's sight (Genesis 1-2:3), that the Earth belongs not to us but to God (Psalm 24), and that we are entrusted with loving the Earth as God loves it (Genesis 2:15). As followers of Jesus, we are committed to God's mission of reconciling people with each other and with the whole of creation.

Withdrawing from the Paris Climate Accord is a tragic mistake, and we applaud the [Parliament of the World's Religions strong condemnation](#) of the President's decision. We concur that this decision is scientifically, economically, medically, politically and morally wrong. With heartache we recognize the devastating toll of suffering that will be exacted by this Administration's refusal to address the climate crisis. We are appalled by the Administration's unwillingness to join with other nations in protecting and stabilizing the atmosphere upon which our species – and so many other forms of life – depend.

Even as we grieve the death-dealing trajectory of this decision, we rejoice that many people and institutions are taking creative steps locally, regionally, and nationally to build a more just and sustainable future. For example, we applaud the [mayors of 30 American cities, governors of numerous states and leaders of hundreds of American companies](#) who are committed to reducing greenhouse gas emissions.

This historic moment provides Christian communities with a powerful opportunity to bear witness to the sacredness of God's creation and the urgent call to preserve it. This is our chance to be the church. Episcopalians and other members of the Anglican Communion recognize [Five Marks of Mission](#). The Fifth Mark is "to strive to safeguard the integrity of creation and sustain and renew the life of the earth." The United Church of Christ affirms this vocation in its new mission initiative known as [the three great loves](#), one of which is love of creation. If we listen carefully, the voice of our still-speaking God resounds above the jeers and cheers in response to Trump's decision. God is calling our congregations and clergy to rise to the occasion and to become bold witnesses to the creative power of God.

Now is the time to bear witness to the Christ who rises from the tomb and who proclaims that life and not death will have the last word.

We call upon our congregations and clergy to embrace this moment of opportunity in three ways:

- **Accept the mantle of moral leadership**

Now is the time for clergy to speak from their pulpits about the moral obligation of our generation to protect God's creation. Let the world know that whatever the current American administration may say or do, the Jesus movement will not back away from God's call to protect our common home.

- **Incarnate change**

Now is the time for congregations and for every person of faith to set a moral example through our own words and actions. As individuals and as communities, we can commit to

June 2, 2017

making decisions of integrity in our energy choices, and to holding our leaders accountable to do the same.

• **Proclaim truth in the public square**

Now is the time for communities of faith to be bold and courageous in proclaiming truth in the public square. It is now abundantly clear that the Federal Government will not address the greatest moral challenge that the world has ever faced. It is up to us.

Let us commit to resist all expansion of fossil fuel infrastructure and demand new sources of renewable energy that are accessible to all communities. As people of faith, we can and we must change America's understanding of the story that our generation is writing. We must begin a new story – a story that is not dependent on fossil fuel or on wealth for the few and misery for the many.

In the streets, at the State House, with our phones and emails, by committing our time, financial resources and prayers – it is up to us – we the people – to bend the moral arc of justice. And we will.

Faithfully yours,

The National Officers of the United Church of Christ

The Rev. John C. Dorhauer, General Minister and President

The Rev. Traci Blackmon, Acting Executive Minister, Justice and Witness Ministries

The Rev. James Moos, Executive Minister, Wider Church Ministries

The Council of Conference Ministers of the United Church of Christ

For appropriate liturgical and other resources: <http://april2016.uccpages.org/>

This statement sprang from a discussion among The Rev. Dr. Jim Antal (Conference Minister and President, Massachusetts Conference, United Church of Christ), The Rt. Rev. Dr. Douglas John Fisher (Bishop, Episcopal Diocese of Western Massachusetts), and The Rev. Dr. Margaret Bullitt-Jonas (Missioner for Creation Care, Episcopal Diocese of Western Massachusetts & Massachusetts Conference, United Church of Christ). We are glad to make it available to the wider Church.