



## **223<sup>rd</sup> General Assembly Overture Summary**

### **Pertaining to Congregational Care for Creation**

The complete overture texts can be found at [www.pc-biz.org](http://www.pc-biz.org), by overture number shown below.

#### 08-03 (climate change)

- Express its profound concern about the detrimental effects of climate change on all God's creation, including those living in poverty, the elderly and children, and those least responsible for the emissions of greenhouse gases.
- Proclaim that we recognize the Gospel's call to shift to a just, compassionate, and sustainable energy plan.
- Acknowledge that this compels us to implement strategies and actions that engage climate change and offer the realistic prospect of changing our destructive behaviors that contribute to the issue.
- Call upon congregations to develop ways for those who disagree on climate change to be in dialogue with one another, seeking together to find and represent the will of Christ; affirm the need for dialogue and discernment, not only within and among our congregations, but also all parties outside our denomination, seeking faithful individual and collective responses to address climate change, trusting that we share a common belief in the need to respond.
- Affirm that we have a duty to assure that our response to climate change does not endanger the economic progress and improvements in living conditions that have been made among all of God's people, most notably the impoverished, but instead enables that progress to continue.
- Affirm that is both possible and practical to effect meaningful change; urge individuals [and] congregations ... to initiate, continue, and build upon steps to reduce our carbon footprint and to continue adoption of lower-carbon and zero-carbon technologies and lifestyles.
- Commend congregations that have committed to the "earth care pledge" and encourage all congregations to consider joining the Earthcare Congregation Network of the PC(USA).
- Advocate for the reduction of greenhouse gases through the use of alternative, cleaner energy sources, such as wind, solar, and industrial-scale power storage, even if only as a bridge to the long-term future.

#### 08-06 (climate change)

- Call upon the whole church to raise a prophetic voice regarding the urgency of healing the climate of the earth, our home and God's gift for the future of all life, human and nonhuman.
- Call upon the whole church to engage prayerfully with the following priorities as we seek to initiate a new moral era:
  - a. Let our clergy 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 we who follow Jesus will not back away from God's call to protect our common home. When the powers that be deny or obscure the truth, we followers of Jesus will proclaim the truth to protect our common home.

b. Let all of us incarnate the changes for which we long. Now is the time for congregations and for every person of faith to set a moral example through our own words and actions. As individuals and as communities, let us commit to making decisions of integrity in our energy choices, even as we commit to hold all our religious, political, corporate, and global leaders accountable to do the same.

c. Let us proclaim truth in the public square. We are now living in a John 18:37 moment, in which we must hold to the truth we understand from the Bible and from the sacred book of nature, recognizing that when truth is compromised, only power prevails.

- Let our communities of faith be bold and courageous as we address one of the greatest moral challenges that the world has ever faced.
- Let us do all we can to change America's understanding of the story that our generation is writing. Let us begin a new story—a story that is not dependent on increased greenhouse gas emissions or on wealth for the few and misery for the many.

This overture was inspired and based on the resolution, “The Earth Is the Lord’s—Not Ours to Wreck, Imperatives for a New Moral Era” passed by the United Church of Christ National Synod on July 3, 2017. Now is the time to encourage deeper ecumenical cooperation to lift up our collective moral voice.

Accepting that it is up to us, whether in the streets, at our State Houses, in the halls of power, with our phones, emails, technology, and social media by committing our time, financial resources, and prayers—let us pour ourselves out to bend the moral arc of justice, with joy in our hearts, beauty in our sights, and hope for the children.

#### 08-09 (carbon fee & dividend)

- Invite all our congregations to advocate for creation care by encouraging members and friends to regularly engage in respectful conversations with their federal elected officials to advocate for climate action. Congregations’ acts of engagement can include:
  - a. approaching all conversations with the intent to build bridges of trust and respect;
  - b. organizing ongoing calling, writing, and requesting visits with their elected officials, requesting climate action now;
  - c. encouraging and supporting youth to independently engage with their representatives;
  - d. educating their members and surrounding communities about climate impacts and solutions.
- Encourage congregations to learn about and consider including in their conversations the concepts of “Carbon Fee and Dividend,” a just and effective approach to carbon pricing:
  - a. An annually rising fee per ton of CO<sub>2</sub> is collected at the wellhead, mine, and border—the fee drives businesses to avoid cost, selecting and innovating for lower-carbon energy, products, and food.
  - b. A monthly dividend paid to all families comes from returning all of the fee, strengthening families and keeping three-fifths of the country even or a little ahead. The buying power of the fee leads to more local, mainstreet jobs.
  - c. Border tariffs protect our industry and compel other countries to follow our lead.
- Invite congregations to share their climate advocacy resources, successes, and encouragement.

#### 08-11 (styrofoam)

2. Direct the Stated Clerk of the General Assembly and the Presbyterian Mission Agency, through its Office of Environmental Ministries, to communicate with the more than 9,000 congregations of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) urging them to reduce to the maximum extent feasible use of products made of polystyrene foam.