

South Carolina Synod 2024 Resolution: Communal Stewards of God's Creation

WHEREAS, scripture tells us “The earth is the Lord’s and all that is in it” (Psalm 24:1) and it proclaims “O Lord, how manifold are your works! In wisdom you have made them all; the earth is full of your creatures” (Psalm 104:24); and

WHEREAS, the testimony of scripture is that humanity is created in God’s image (see Gen. 1:27) – an image manifested in God’s love, care, and preservation of humanity – and humanity bears that image through its love, care, and preservation of all earthly habitants (see Gen. 2:15; 9:8ff);¹ and

WHEREAS, human actions are driving the extinction of plants, animals, and insects that form the foundations of earth’s ecosystems,² including threats to the habitats and the biodiversity of South Carolina;³ and

WHEREAS, science communicators state numerous reasons why humanity should have hope for a verdant and thriving future;^{4 5 6} and

WHEREAS, the 1993 ELCA Social Statement *Caring for Creation: Vision, Hope, and Justice* affirms that “we are called to care for the earth as God cares for the earth;” and recognizes that “action to counter [earth’s] degradation....is essential to the future of our children and our children’s children;” and declares that “each congregation should see itself as a center for exploring scriptural and theological foundations for caring for creation;” and that “as congregations and other expressions of this church, we will seek to incorporate the principles of sufficiency and sustainability in our life”; therefore, let it be

RESOLVED, that the South Carolina Synod Assembly set the goal of each congregation of this synod implementing at least one strategy to become better

¹ [The Stars Beneath Us](#) by the Rev. Dr. Paul Wallace, Fortress Press 2015, p.25ff

² “Extinction Crisis Puts 1 Million Species on the Brink” by Katy Daigle and Julia Janicki. December 23, 2022. <https://www.reuters.com/lifestyle/science/extinction-crisis-puts-1-million-species-brink-2022-12-23/>

³ <http://www.landscape.org/south-carolina/overview/>

⁴ “Reasons for Hope about Climate Change” by David Boraks. January 5, 2024. <https://www.wunc.org/2024-01-05/reasons-for-hope-about-climate-change>

⁵ “9 Reasons to be Hopeful for our Planet.” The Nature Conservancy. <https://www.nature.org/en-us/what-we-do/our-insights/perspectives/9-reasons-to-be-hopeful-for-our-planet/>

⁶ “Hope and Climate-Change Engagement from a Psychological Perspective” by Maria Ojala. <https://www.sciencedirect.com/science/article/pii/S2352250X22002354>

communal stewards of God's magnificent creation. Possible actions that congregations can take include, but are not limited to:

- decrease or eliminate the use of single-use plastics and/or Styrofoam in congregational meals and functions;
- invite and encourage people to bring their own coffee mugs for the Sunday coffee hour;
- plant native plants of South Carolina on church property, such as Swamp Milkweed, Butterfly Weed, and other plants that support butterflies and bees;⁷
- reduce the use of pesticides and weedkillers on church property;
- plant native trees around the property, giving special consideration to the unsurpassed biodiversity that's fostered by oak trees, the leaves of which are the main food source of numerous insects and caterpillars;⁸
- engage with ELCA resources related to *Caring for Creation*;⁹
- engage with the resources offered by Lutherans Restoring Creation;¹⁰ and, be it finally

RESOLVED, that congregations of the South Carolina Synod are encouraged to share their communal stewardship initiatives with the synod's Creation Care Task Force, with pictures, if possible, prior to the 2025 SC Synod Assembly.

Respectfully submitted,

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⁷ South Carolina Native Plant Society: Native Plant Directory. <https://scnps.org/plants/>

⁸ "Bird, Pollinator, & Wildlife Habitat Not Just for National Parks Anymore." National Park Service. <https://www.nps.gov/articles/bird-pollinator-wildlife-habitat-not-just-for-national-parks-anymore.htm>

⁹ <https://elca.org/Faith/Faith-and-Society/Social-Statements/Caring-for-Creation>

¹⁰ <https://lutheransrestoringcreation.org/>