The Urgency of the Climate Crisis: Responding as People of Faith

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Photo from cnn.com
The Urgency of the Climate Crisis: Responding as People of Faith

Why is climate change now a crisis with urgency?  
Why should people of faith respond?  
How can people of faith respond?
Envision What Can Be
The Largest Source of Global Warming Pollution is the Burning of Fossil Fuels
162 million tons of human-made global warming pollution is spewed into the thin shell of our atmosphere every 24 hours — as if it were an open sewer.
As the CO$_2$ concentration increases, more of the outgoing infrared radiation is trapped.
Global Surface Temperature - Departure from Average

Anomaly (°C)

-0.5° - 0.5° - 0.5° - 1.0°

Worldwide Extreme Weather Catastrophes

- 1980 – 2020

- Extreme temperatures, droughts, fires
- Floods, mudslides
- Storms

Number of Events

- 1980
- 1985
- 1990
- 1995
- 2000
- 2005
- 2010
- 2015
- 2020

Graph showing the increase in worldwide extreme weather catastrophes from 1980 to 2020, with categories for extreme temperatures, droughts, fires, floods, mudslides, and storms.
2019 CO₂ Concentration: 415
The 19 of the 20 Hottest Years on Last 60 Years Occurred Since the Year 2002
Current Projections

• Even if nations keep their promises, GHG will increase 14% over next 9 years.
• This makes it highly unlikely a global temperature rise to just 1.5 degrees C; It is more likely to rise to 2.4 – 2.7 degrees.
• Our current path could increase global temperature by as much as 4.4 degrees Celsius.

• https://www.npr.org/2021/11/13/1055542738/cop26-climate-summit-final-decision
Surface Temperature

21st Century Projections

Dr. Robert Davies, christianscaringforcreation.com/projecto-4
Temperature Change PROJECTIONS (2010-2100)

Low Carbon

+ 4°F

High Carbon

+ 13°F

Christianscaringforcreation.com/projecto-4
What is Needed

• Cut our greenhouse gases by 45% (or roughly half) by 2030.
• Cut them again in half again by 2040.
• Then cut them again in half again by 2050 and move toward zero carbon.
• That means reducing greenhouse gases by 6-7% per year.
Crisis

• An unstable or crucial time in which a decisive change is impending (Merriam-Webster)
• A turning point at which the trend of future events is determined, for better or for worse (Dictionary.com)
Why Should People of Faith Respond?

In the beginning God created the Heavens and the Earth.

God saw everything made, and indeed, it was very good.
• Humanity (Adam) was created from earth’s soil (adamah) and is part of the earth.
• God created humanity in God’s image to care for the earth, as agents of God’s benevolent reign.
• God loves not only humans but the whole *kosmos* – the earth and all created beings.
• We experience God through nature.
Following Jesus in extending the reign of God today requires addressing climate change.
• Because the poor and most vulnerable suffer the most from climate change, our serving them requires climate action of their behalf.

• The climate crisis is an justice issue.
• Concern for young people and future generations requires climate action.

Photo by Markus Spiske on Unsplash

Photo by Callum Shaw on Unsplash
How can People of Faith Respond?

First need to understand the climate crisis and its solutions
## Solutions by Rank

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Rank</th>
<th>Solution</th>
<th>Sector</th>
<th>Total Atmospheric CO2-EQ Reduction (GT)</th>
<th>Net Cost (Billions US $)</th>
<th>Savings (Billions US $)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>Refrigerant Management</td>
<td>Materials</td>
<td>89.74</td>
<td>N/A</td>
<td>$-902.77</td>
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<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>Wind Turbines (Onshore)</td>
<td>Electricity Generation</td>
<td>84.60</td>
<td>$1,225.37</td>
<td>$7,425.00</td>
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<td>3</td>
<td>Reduced Food Waste</td>
<td>Food</td>
<td>70.53</td>
<td>N/A</td>
<td>N/A</td>
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<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>Plant-Rich Diet</td>
<td>Food</td>
<td>66.11</td>
<td>N/A</td>
<td>N/A</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>Tropical Forests</td>
<td>Land Use</td>
<td>61.23</td>
<td>N/A</td>
<td>N/A</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>Educating Girls</td>
<td>Women and Girls</td>
<td>59.60</td>
<td>N/A</td>
<td>N/A</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7</td>
<td>Family Planning</td>
<td>Women and Girls</td>
<td>59.60</td>
<td>N/A</td>
<td>N/A</td>
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<tr>
<td>8</td>
<td>Solar Farms</td>
<td>Electricity Generation</td>
<td>36.90</td>
<td>$-80.60</td>
<td>$5,023.84</td>
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<tr>
<td>9</td>
<td>Silvopasture</td>
<td>Food</td>
<td>31.19</td>
<td>$41.59</td>
<td>$699.37</td>
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<tr>
<td>10</td>
<td>Rooftop Solar</td>
<td>Electricity Generation</td>
<td>24.60</td>
<td>$453.14</td>
<td>$3,457.63</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Work with Others:
Join a Community of Climate Activists

• Belonging to a group that is learning and working together:
  o Shared information
  o Encouragement and inspiration
  o Joint efforts
  o Emotional support

Citizens Climate Lobby (CCL) – carbon fee and dividend
Blessed Tomorrow
C3 – Christians Caring for Creation
GreenFaith
Poor People’s Campaign
350.org
Work with Others

• Become part of a coalition or mass movement to build political will for climate action.
• Become an active citizen.
• Work with others for changes at local, state or national levels.
Talk with Others

- Work within your sphere of influence to get others engaged.
- Build awareness carefully and compassionately.
- In talking with others, focus on listening, understanding their perspectives, building on common concerns, holding out hope, and offering opportunities for action.

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**Global Warming’s Six Americas: Five Year Trend**

- **Alarmed**: 33%
- **Concerned**: 25%
- **Cautious**: 17%
- **Disengaged**: 5%
- **Doubtful**: 10%
- **Dismissive**: 9%

Highest Belief in Global Warming:
- Most Concerned
- Most Motivated

Lowest Belief in Global Warming:
- Least Concerned
- Least Motivated

September 2021
(n=1,006)
Congregations

• Congregational leaders need to provide teaching and leadership.
• Nurture love for nature.
• Grow to see addressing the climate crisis as an important part of the church’s mission.
• Work together to decrease carbon emissions of church building and congregational activities.

Saint Christopher’s Episcopal Church in Minnesota. Photo by Matthew Cole

https://www.solarpowerworldonline.com/
Personal Responses

• Work toward living the carbon free future now.
  • Transportation
  • Energy
  • Buying
  • Diet
  • Etc.
Care for yourself and Savor the Goodness of Nature and Those you Love.
Questions

1. What do you need in order to move forward in taking action to address the climate crisis?
2. What do you need in order to help your congregation address the climate crisis?
3. How might I and the seminary be of help to you?
4. What are you or your congregation doing now to address the climate crisis?