

SIERRA PACIFIC SYNOD: RESOLUTION 2022-4 REGARDING CLIMATE CHANGE

1 WHEREAS the world’s average surface temperature has risen 2 degrees Fahrenheit (1 degree
2 Celsius) since the late 19th century; as witnessed by the last seven years having been the
3 warmest on record, and average sea levels have risen about 8 inches in the last century, with the
4 rate of increase doubling in the past two decades and accelerating every year; and

5 WHEREAS this climate change is driven almost exclusively by increased carbon dioxide emissions
6 into the atmosphere due to the burning of fossil fuels; and

7 WHEREAS this climate change has a disproportionate impact on communities of color (including
8 reduced access to traditional food sources for Native Americans, increased flooding of coastal
9 Indigenous and African American communities, and increased heat co-morbidities for Americans
10 of Indigenous and African ancestry); and the Global South (including the flooding of island
11 nations, famine caused by drought in equatorial areas, water shortages, and armed conflicts
12 caused by drought-related immigration); and

13 WHEREAS the ELCA – in its 1993 Social Statement “Caring for Creation” – identified “caring for
14 the earth as a profoundly spiritual matter,” and “recognize[d] the severity” of the environmental
15 crisis; and

16 WHEREAS Portico Benefit Services (the pension/investment ministry of the ELCA) in it’s recently
17 approved Issue Paper entitled “Caring for Creation: Climate Change” has stated that “Investors
18 have a significant role and responsibility in addressing climate change”; and

19 WHEREAS JPMorgan Chase Bank provided more funding to the fossil fuel industry than any
20 other bank in the five-years between 2016 and 2021 despite voicing support for the Paris
21 Climate Accords and is identified as the top global banker for arctic oil and gas operations,
22 offshore oil and gas operations, fossil fuel expansion, and fracking, as well as the top U.S. banker
23 for coal mining and tar sands oil; and

24 WHEREAS the Sierra Pacific Synod transferred approximately \$1 million of its general funds to JP
25 Morgan Chase Bank in 2021 despite that financial institution’s aggressive support of the fossil
26 fuel industry; therefore, be it

27 RESOLVED that the Treasurer of the Sierra Pacific Synod sever our direct financial relationships
28 with JP Morgan Chase Bank by no later than September 31, 2022; and be it further

29 RESOLVED that the Bishop – in conjunction with the Synod Council – communicate to JP Morgan
30 Chase Bank that the reason for our withdrawal of funds is that institution’s aggressive support of
31 the fossil fuel industry; and be it further

32 RESOLVED that all synod congregations, clergy, and lay members be strongly encouraged to
33 review their own banking relationships so as to ensure that they are not unwittingly abetting
34 aggressive support of the fossil fuel industry in the face of the global climate crisis.

Submitted by not less than fifteen voting members of the 2022 Sierra Pacific Synod Assembly, including:

Rev. Dr. Todd Benson, Bethlehem Lutheran, Oakland
Rev. Sharon Stalkfleet, intentional interim, Shepherd of the Hills Lutheran, Berkeley
Clare McElaney, University Lutheran Chapel, Berkeley
Sherry Mattson, Messiah Lutheran, Hayward
Rev. Dave Miller, All Saints Lutheran, Novato
Rev. Tyler Jensen, Bethlehem Lutheran, Santa Rosa
Rev. Crystal Larsen, chaplain, Alta Bates Hospital, Berkeley
Rev. Julie Kelly, Episcopal Church of the Saviour, Hanford (via synodical call)
Janet Katari, Our Savior's Lutheran, Lafayette
Rev. Courtney Geibert, Messiah Lutheran, Redwood City
Rev. Sanna Reinholtzen, University Lutheran Chapel, Berkeley
Rev. Ned O'Donnell, Trinity Lutheran, Oakland
Rev. Dr. Tia Pelz, Christ the King Lutheran, Fremont
Rev. Dr. Diane Bowers, Advent Lutheran Church, Morgan Hill (sabbatical pastor)
Raymond Noell, Messiah Lutheran, Hayward
George Fosselius, Christ Lutheran, El Cerrito