

Resolution sets synod climate goals to match churchwide goals

by Donna Rasmussen, Northeastern Iowa Synod Care for Creation Network

At the 2022 Synod Assembly, the Northeastern Iowa Synod, along with 15 other synods around the country, approved a memorial for “the ELCA churchwide organization to set the goal of reducing its net greenhouse gas pollution 50 percent by 2030, and achieve net-zero emissions by 2050.” That memorial also passed at the Churchwide Assembly (Yes-672, No-45) held in August in Columbus, Ohio.

As a follow up to that action, the Northeastern Iowa Synod Care for Creation Network has prepared a resolution that aims to achieve those same climate goals for our synod. Knowing it is not possible for all to achieve everything at once, the resolution directs the synod’s Care for Creation Network, with support from the synod office, to assist at least 15 congregations, educational facilities, administrative offices, and outdoor ministry facilities every two years in reaching the goals set churchwide for greenhouse gas emissions.

To set an example and demonstrate actions that can be taken, the resolution calls for the synod, in partnership with the synod’s Care for Creation Network, to continue to implement best management practices. The first step will be to establish a baseline for energy use (i.e. conduct an energy audit for the synod office) from which a plan will be developed to reduce greenhouse gas emission. This may mean exploring such possibilities as installing solar panels or managing the synod office property grounds for sequestering carbon, e.g. by planting native vegetation.

This resolution is meant to keep the momentum going. There is good energy in the Northeastern Iowa Synod, its congregations, and Care for Creation Network. For example, if you are attending the synod assembly this year, you may notice that the reports and materials are once again online and not printed. This article is available in the newly digital Star newsletter. The synod council has committed to meeting four out of their six meetings online, which saves time, money, and carbon emissions! The synod office space had energy efficient HVAC installed in April 2021, and lighting is intentionally being replaced by the most energy efficient options available.



If you were to take a tour of congregations, you might notice solar panels, recycling bins, creative lawns that use native vegetation left to bloom without the need of being mowed, and so much more. To learn more and to help your congregation consider being one the first 15 to reduce greenhouse gas pollution by 50 percent by 2030, contact the synod office to get started (belle@neiasynod.org). The Care for Creation Network is here to walk with congregations and leaders to achieve these goals.

In order to measure progress toward these goals, the actions taken in the facilities within our synod may be shared with the Care for Creation Network and the synod office, along with the energy savings realized. The bonus to creation care actions is that they often result in economic benefits that can help keep our congregations vital and viable. Please consider voting in favor of this resolution for the long term health of our earth and our faith community.

