

Public Witness on Climate Change, Thomas Jefferson Memorial Church

Whereas, climate change is here and scientists are now predicting a seven to eleven degree Fahrenheit rise in the average surface temperature of the Earth by 2100;

Whereas, the effects of sea level rise are already being felt on our coasts. Many of the predicted changes and effects have already occurred including: extreme weather events like droughts and floods, ocean acidification, melting polar ice caps and glaciers; and

Whereas, continued human-induced changes to the Earth's climate may prove catastrophic to life, would inflict great pain and suffering among both the rich and the poor and may prove beyond the ability of global civilization to adapt; and

Whereas, catastrophic climate change will occur unless concerted and unprecedented national and international action is taken now to reduce our production of greenhouse gases, especially carbon dioxide and methane to a safe level of 350 ppm; and

Whereas, we are all complicit in the problem and responsible for the solutions; and

Whereas, the fossil fuel industry has worked systematically to fund campaigns of disinformation, harass climate scientists, and provide unprecedented campaign contributions and lobbying efforts to delay action on climate change while continuing to receive millions in state and federal subsidies; and

Whereas, the fossil fuel industry has wrought destruction to the environment of the state of Virginia through mountaintop removal coal mining, emissions from coal-fired power plants and its effects on plants and animals, and continued drilling for natural gas; and

Now Therefore, we the members of Thomas Jefferson Memorial Church Unitarian Universalist, in keeping with our seven principles, do bear public witness to these truths and call upon our congregation to join in an urgent national response to this threat. We speak with one voice in urging our legislators, both in Virginia and in Washington, to do everything possible to replace fossil fuels with renewable energy sources and to support conservation and efficiency; and

We, the members of Thomas Jefferson Memorial Church, as an act of conscience, do call upon TJMC Board, Finance Committee, and Endowment Committee to divest our TJMC Endowment Fund from investments in the top two hundred global fossil fuel companies modeling our re-investments after the Unitarian Universalist Common Endowment Fund (UUCEF) portfolio, at the earliest opportunity. We call upon the Unitarian Universalist Association and all congregations of all faiths to do the same. We are one human family and we pray for a better future for our Earth.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that, notwithstanding any provision above, the TJMC Endowment Committee shall not take any action inconsistent with its fiduciary duty or that is incompatible with the principles of sound investment.

As approved by the Environmental Action Group on May 7, 2014