



OFFICE OF THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY

J. HERBERT NELSON, II  
STATED CLERK OF THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY

**STATEMENT BY PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH (U.S.A.) STATED CLERK**  
*The Reverend Dr. J. Herbert Nelson, II*

October 17, 2018

Siblings in Christ,

*The earth is the Lord's and all that is in it, the world, and those who live in it; for God has founded it on the seas, and established it on the rivers.—Psalm 24: 1-2*

According to a new report from the United Nations' International Panel on Climate Change, God's earth could be facing dire consequences sooner than we thought. This panel of 91 scientists from 40 countries has concluded that if greenhouse gas emissions continue at the current rate, our atmosphere will warm by as much as 2.7 degrees Fahrenheit above preindustrial levels by 2040.

The results, according to the panel, would intensify the drought and poverty we are facing now. There would be food shortages, wildfires, and coral reefs would die-off at an alarming rate.

The 223rd General Assembly (2018) affirmed yet again how passionate Presbyterians are about caring for God's creation, particularly about responding with faithful action in a time of climate change.

A policy called "The Earth Is the Lord's" encourages "the whole church to raise a prophetic voice regarding the urgency of healing the climate of the earth, our home and God's gift for the future of all life, human and nonhuman" as pastors take on the moral mantle of preaching and teaching while congregations and Presbyterians lead by our example of making energy choices with integrity (<https://www.pc-biz.org/#!/search/3000298>).

Another policy that was approved by the assembly encouraged the church to "express its profound concern about the destructive effects of climate change on all God's creation, including a disproportionate impact on those living

in poverty and in the least developed countries” while advocating for the creation of carbon pricing that is fair and just especially for those in vulnerable populations (<https://www.pc-biz.org/#/search/3000325>).

The assembly, after much debate and consideration of divestment from fossil fuels, voted to maintain the current corporate engagement strategy of Mission Responsibility for Investment to continue engaging fossil fuel companies of which the PC(USA) holds shares on issues of climate change and environmental sustainability, while vetting those companies for selective divestment at the 224th General Assembly (2020) (<https://www.pc-biz.org/#/search/3000263>).

These, and the decades of General Assembly policies and Presbyterian action on climate, are especially crucial now.

Presbyterians believe that all people are beloved by God and deserving of a healthy, bright future. We want for our children to breathe clean air and drink clean water. We do not desire for lives and churches to be consistently disrupted by natural disasters caused by climate change. What Presbyterians in North Carolina, Puerto Rico, Florida, Texas, California, New Jersey, and Louisiana have experienced are helping us to realize that the time is now for bold action, and that we can all take steps in the right direction—becoming energy efficient, purchasing renewable energy, lowering our carbon footprint, and advocating for safe environmental policies at all levels of government.

<https://www.nytimes.com/2018/10/07/climate/ipcc-climate-report-2040.html>

<https://www.nationalgeographic.com/environment/2018/10/ipcc-report-climate-change-impacts-forests-emissions/>

In the name of Christ we serve,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "J. Herbert Nelson, II". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Reverend Dr. J. Herbert Nelson, II  
Stated Clerk of the General Assembly  
Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.)