

# 1. Action on Climate Change

**Whereas**, in Genesis 1:26, God charged humankind with responsibility for the earth: “Then God said, ‘Let us make humankind in our image and our likeness, and let them rule over the fish of the sea and the birds of the air, over the livestock, over all the earth, and over all the creatures that move along the ground;’” and

**Whereas**, in Luke 10:27, Jesus broadened the concept of neighbor when he said, “Love your neighbor as yourself.” Today our neighbor is anyone affected by our actions: future generations, including our grandchildren, and people anywhere in the world whose land is subject to the effects of climate change such as flooding from sea level rise, extreme droughts, and severe storm activity; and

**Whereas**, ¶160B in *The Book of Discipline* (2016) Social Principles states, “We call upon all to take measures to save energy...We encourage persons to limit CO<sub>2</sub> emissions...;” and

**Whereas**, the effects of climate change are clearly evident and are escalating. The earth is 1.6°F hotter than in the 1950s. 15 of the 16 hottest years on record have occurred since 2001. The last three years, 2014-2016, have successively been the hottest world-wide since records have been kept. Global sea level rose about 6.7 inches in the last century. As further evidence of the effects of climate change, in 1910 Glacier National Park had 150 glaciers; today, it has only 25. Further escalation of climate change will be devastating to the earth and its people; and

**Whereas**, 98% of the most-published climate scientists and 82% of all faculty and researchers agree that global warming is largely the result of human activity. In addition, the American Chemical Society, National Academies of Science, National Center for Atmospheric Research, Federation of American Scientists, and nearly 200 other scientific organizations worldwide acknowledge that climate change is largely caused by human activity. Furthermore, the Climate and Security Advisory Group, a nonpartisan group of 43 U.S. senior military, national security, homeland security, and intelligence experts, has developed a briefing book stating that climate change presents a risk to U.S. and international security; and

**Whereas**, climate change will ultimately exacerbate the problem of refugees fleeing uninhabitable areas, leading to increased destabilization and global tensions; and

**Whereas**, technical solutions have been effectively deployed to decrease CO<sub>2</sub> emissions. These solutions include energy efficiency strategies for buildings and transportation; renewable energy in the form of solar, wind, and other technologies; and research and development in all aspects of energy. These solutions have provided high quality employment and have decreased U.S. energy use in all sectors, promoting U.S. energy independence and making business and industry more competitive; and

**Whereas**, while many technical solutions have become established in the marketplace, comprehensive energy policy at the federal, state, and local levels is absolutely necessary to encourage further adoption and implementation of these solutions. The vast majority of progress in environmental protection and individual safety (elimination of lead in gasoline, seat belts in autos, clean water, limits on SO<sub>2</sub> and other emissions) would not have been achieved without legislative action. All of these policies were strongly opposed by the affected industries;

**Now, therefore, be it resolved**, the North Carolina Conference believes climate change and its devastating repercussions constitute the greatest threat to humankind today, second only to war in its destructive capabilities. We acknowledge both the existence of, and the role of, human activity in climate change; and

**Be it further resolved,** the North Carolina Conference urges all responsible parties (governments, utilities, corporations, and individuals) to take decisive action toward reduction of CO<sub>2</sub> emissions to 1990 levels and deems failure of any responsible party to take decisive action on climate change unconscionable; and

**Be it further resolved,** the North Carolina Conference urges the United States Government to support and adhere to the Paris Climate Agreement. A decision to walk away from this agreement precludes the possibility for the U.S. to shape this agreement as it moves forward and would thwart essential worldwide progress in addressing the critical threat of climate change; and

**Be it further resolved,** the North Carolina Conference urges adoption of a comprehensive energy and land use policy that includes but is not limited to:

- Renewable energy portfolio standards for electrical power generation
- Higher efficiency standards for building energy and vehicle fuel economy (CAFE) rather than ineffective voluntary standards
- A carbon tax whose proceeds will be used to fund energy programs
- Incentives such as tiered utility rates and rebates for energy efficiency measures
- Sustainable land use practices such as regenerative agriculture, conservation agriculture, and forest protection;

and

**Be it further resolved,** the North Carolina Conference will send this resolution to the members of the North Carolina congressional delegation, the North Carolina Speaker of the House and Senate President Pro Tempore, and the North Carolina Utilities Commission urging them to join other states that have committed to the principles of the Paris Climate Agreement. Concurrently, the Conference will publicize our position on climate change including our support for U.S. engagement in the Paris Climate Agreement through press releases to print and electronic media outlets; and

**Be it further resolved,** the North Carolina Conference urges all members of the Conference to inform our federal, state, and local legislators of our position on climate through targeted written communication, meetings with the legislators, and public rallies; and

**Be it further resolved,** the North Carolina Conference urges all congregations in the Conference to adopt programs at their facilities for the conservation of energy and water and for recycling of materials that can be reused; and

**And be it further resolved,** the North Carolina Annual Conference will submit this resolution to the 2020 General Conference for adoption by the General Conference.

Submitted by the Church & Society Committee  
And approved by the Church Council  
Benson Memorial United Methodist Church,  
Raleigh, North Carolina

## 2. Hurricane Matthew Relief: A Call to Care for the Least of These

**Whereas**, in Matthew 25:40, the King said, “just as you did it to one of the least of these..., you did it to me;” and

**Whereas**, ¶164B in *The Book of Discipline* (2016) Social Principles says, “The strength of a political system depends upon the full and willing participation of its citizens. The church should continually exert a strong ethical influence upon the state, supporting policies and programs deemed to be just and opposing policies and programs that are unjust;” and

**Whereas**, North Carolina only is getting \$6 million of the \$929 million requested for Hurricane Matthew relief in the proposed federal budget; and

**Whereas**, there are still people living in hotels and with relatives seven months after Hurricane Matthew, many of whom were renters and are unable to afford the repairs themselves [1]; and

**Whereas**, some of the counties most affected by the storm such as Edgecombe, Robeson, Wayne, and Wilson have some of some the highest poverty rates [2];

**Now, therefore be it resolved**, we, the North Carolina Annual Conference of the United Methodist Church, call on our representatives in the United States House of Representatives and in the United States Senate to appropriate the full request of \$929 million so that people may be able to return to their homes; and

**Be it further resolved**, that the North Carolina Annual Conference of The United Methodist Church continue to promote recovery efforts to local congregations.

1. *The News and Observer* [Raleigh, NC]. Sunday, May 14, 2017. Section 1, Page 1.
2. Budget and Tax Center and US Census

Submitted by  
Methodist Federation for Social Action  
North Carolina Annual Conference Chapter

### 3. Road Conditions in Johnston County, North Carolina

**Whereas**, in 2012, 1,262 people were killed, and 110,406 people were injured due to car accidents in North Carolina [1]; and

**Whereas**, in 2012, 174,112 of the 213,605 North Carolina car accidents were due to no contributing circumstances, unknown circumstances, or circumstances unable to be determined [1]; and

**Whereas**, in Johnston County, there is a car crash every 1.8 hours, there is an injury due to car accidents every 4.8 hours, and on average, 29 people die from car wrecks every year [1]; and

**Whereas**, youth in this Conference have lost loved ones, neighbors, and peers due to poor road conditions in Johnston County and other areas of North Carolina; and

**Whereas**, youth in this Conference have been injured, and even killed, due to harmful road conditions in Johnston County and other areas of North Carolina; and

**Whereas**, the U.S. Department of Transportation Federal Highway Administration claims that “shoulders increase safety by providing a stable, clear recovery area for drivers who have left the travel lane. If a driver inadvertently leaves the lane or is attempting to avoid a crash or an object in the lane ahead, a firm, stable shoulder greatly increases the chance of safe recovery” [2];

**Now, therefore be it resolved**, we, the North Carolina Annual Conference of the United Methodist Church, echo the 65<sup>th</sup> Annual Conference Session of the United Methodist Youth of the North Carolina Conference of the United Methodist Church in urging the North Carolina Department of Transportation, in cooperation with the Johnston County Public Utilities Department, to provide additional road shoulders to Johnston County roads that endanger the lives of citizens.

**Be it further resolved**, we call for similar action in North Carolina’s other 99 counties to be taken in regards to road safety as soon as possible in order to prevent future accidents.

**Be it further resolved**, copies of this resolution be sent to North Carolina Department of Transportation Field Manager William Bradley Lopp, NCDOT Director of Planning and Programming Patrick Norman, NCDOT Division Four Board Member Gus H. Tulloss, Chief Engineer Mike Holder, DMV Commissioner Kelly Thomas, Chief Deputy Secretary David Howard, the North Carolina General Assembly, and the Johnston County Public Utilities Department, other county utilities departments, and the news media.

1. “North Carolina 2012 Traffic Crash Facts.” *Connect NCDOT*. North Carolina Department of Transportation. 26 Aug. 2013. Web. 18 May 2017.

<https://connect.ncdot.gov/business/DMV/DMV%20Documents/2012%20Crash%20Facts.pdf>

2. “Shoulder Width.” *U.S. Department of Transportation: Federal Highway Administration*. Federal Highway Administration. 15 Oct. 2014. Web. 18 May 2017.

[https://safety.fhwa.dot.gov/geometric/pubs/mitigationstrategies/chapter3/3\\_shoulderwidth.cfm](https://safety.fhwa.dot.gov/geometric/pubs/mitigationstrategies/chapter3/3_shoulderwidth.cfm)

Submitted by the 65<sup>th</sup> Annual Conference Session of the United Methodist Youth of the North Carolina  
Conference of the United Methodist Church

## 4. Resolution Regarding Senate Bill 594

**Whereas**, we hear the call to speak up and defend the rights of the poor and needy (Proverbs 31:8-9), not exploit the poor (Proverbs 22:22-23); assist the oppressed (Isaiah 58:6-11); take up the cause of the children (Isaiah 1:17) show compassion (Zechariah 7:8-10); and be generous to the poor (Deuteronomy 15:10-11);

**Whereas**, Senate Bill 594 calls for proper accountability of Departments of Social Services in North Carolina or face the formation of regions to address the human needs of children, the elderly and the poor;

**Whereas**, there are 100 counties receiving their funding from taxation of the citizens of North Carolina within an existing infrastructure designed to provide cooperative support to the least, the last, and the lost among the children, elderly and poor of our state;

**Whereas**, consolidating 100 current county-based social service agencies into 30 regional agencies will reduce local connections and take away millions of salary and administrative dollars from the economies of two-thirds of our counties, mostly rural, at a time when the economy is just starting to rebound in some parts of our state and will result in even greater wealth disparity and the loss of precious well-paying jobs;

**Whereas**, the North Carolina Association of County Commissioners and the Association of Social Service Directors, two organizations on the front lines of service delivery in child welfare services, are opposed to the legislation as currently drafted which mandates the regionalization of county DSS departments and puts key stakeholders at a greater distance from the assistance they need;

**Whereas**, Senate Bill 594 claims among that North Carolina's child welfare system is failing and proposes legislation it claims will lead to "modernized case management", provide "real-time data about children in foster care" and reduce social worker caseloads, will, in reality, create more bureaucracy, divest counties of their statutory authority over social services delivery, and takes away a major source of revenue while still requiring counties to expend funds to support the regional model;

**Whereas**, previous attempts by the North Carolina General Assembly have failed miserably, most notably by the regionalization of the state's mental health system which has resulted in diminished service both in quality and availability at much greater expense;

**Whereas**, Senate Bill 594 refuses to recognize that the root of the problem of social services delivery in North Carolina cannot be solved by blaming the recipients of service. Similar to public school debate which blames academic failure on the student, questions must be asked about the archaic standards and methodologies mandated by the state and whether the system has been designed to lead to failure;

**Whereas**, Senate Bill 594 gives lip service to local service provision and preserving existing judicial districts where legal action is necessary however, the bill as written provides no details as to how populations who frequently don't have basic transportation will receive services in a distant regional office and,

**Whereas**, the language of Senate Bill 594 has already been removed from the House compromise budget in response to ever increasing opposition from County Commissioners, civic leaders, and public servants within the infrastructure of North Carolina's 100 counties;

**Whereas**, the result of further regionalization and dismantling of existing infrastructure within the communities and the established context for addressing the needs of the least, the last, and the lost will most likely result in further disenfranchisement of children, elderly, and the poor in the most rural and economically depressed communities of North Carolina;

**Now therefore, be it resolved**, we, the North Carolina Annual Conference of the United Methodist Church, call upon all Departments of Social Services and connected entities within the infrastructure of all 100 counties to maintain the highest standards of accountability in addressing the needs of children, elderly, and the poor;

**Be it further resolved**, in recognition and support of the best interests of all citizens of North Carolina and the diverse cultures of all 100 counties that constitute our great state, we strongly oppose North Carolina Senate Bill 594, urge its defeat in the legislature, and recommend to the Governor of North Carolina, Roy Cooper that he veto this law, if approved, so that every county Department of Social Services and infrastructures connected therein throughout North Carolina can promptly and effectively provide the help and care to those who need it the most.

**Be it further resolved**, copies of this resolution be sent to the members of the North Carolina General Assembly, Governor Cooper, the North Carolina Association of County Commissioners, the Association of Social Services Directors, and the state press.

Submitted from the floor by Saint Luke United Methodist Church  
Rev. Dr. A Gene Cobb, Jr., Elder; Rev. William Sabiston, C. C.; Rev. Judith B. Drye, Elder  
Bob Joyce, Lay Leader; Renee Keen, Lay Leader; Judy Womack, Council Chair