



COUNTDOWN TO CO₂PENHAGEN

Time to ensure enough for all

WHY THIS CAMPAIGN FOR CLIMATE JUSTICE?

Every morning at five, Grace begins her daily trek to fetch water. Depending on the season, she must walk 6-12 miles to a river bed and then carry her heavy load back before she begins her day of cooking, cleaning, and caring for her four children. Grace and her family are members of the Pokot tribe living in Kenya. Like many nomadic peoples in Africa, her community is facing a crisis caused by a shortage of rainfall—the source of water for bathing, washing, farming, and raising cattle. Land is turning into desert at a horrifying rate. Hunger is increasing. Life is becoming more threatened.

The culprit behind the droughts is carbon dioxide (CO₂) emissions. This pollution is changing the Earth's climate. The people who are suffering the most from climate change are the poorest of the poor in both industrialized and developing countries. It is time for the countries that benefit most from activities that cause climate change to acknowledge this injustice and take the steps necessary to correct it. This means consuming sustainably and moving to cleaner energy sources. It means reducing the impact of climate change on those living in poverty.

WHAT'S SO IMPORTANT ABOUT COPENHAGEN?

The last international agreement to stabilize carbon emissions was signed in 1997 in Kyoto, Japan. The targets set by that agreement, called the Kyoto Protocol, expire in 2012. It is time to strengthen it and extend it. It also is time for the United States to join the global community in addressing climate change.

Since 1997, scientific research has dramatically increased our knowledge about the extent of climate change and how it is harming God's creation. The world's leading scientists recommend limiting the rise in global temperature to less than 3.6 degrees Fahrenheit. Here's what they say can happen if we don't:

- acute water shortages for 1 to 3 billion people
- 30 million more people going hungry
- 40 to 60 million more Africans exposed to malaria
- in the U.S., heat-related premature deaths would increase

WE NEED TO SET THE BAR HIGH.

The new deal must effectively curb high carbon emissions. It also must require industrialized nations like the U.S. to act responsibly by making the largest cuts in their carbon emissions, and by contributing the most money to help the developing countries now suffering the worst effects of climate change.

MORE THAN JUST AN AGREEMENT IS AT STAKE.

Climate change goes to the very heart of how people live in this world that God created and that we all share. We can make a difference for Grace's daughters and granddaughters. We can help make sure they're not stuck in poverty, having to choose between going to school or walking more and more miles in search of less and less water. It is within our power to create an Earth where all of God's children share in the abundance of this magnificent creation. Now is the time for us to ensure that there is enough for all.

December 2009 will bring our biggest opportunity to curb climate change, when government representatives meet in Copenhagen, Denmark, to finalize a new global agreement.

WHAT YOU CAN DO

Our political leaders in the United States and our brothers and sisters in faith around the world need to know that we don't just care about climate change—we are serious about taking action! Many faith-based and secular groups in the U.S., Europe, and in developing countries have launched similar advocacy campaigns. By signing the postcard pledge (available at www.ncccojustice.org/countdownpledge.html), you demonstrate solidarity with them and you become part of a powerful, worldwide network

of people who are acting on their beliefs by working toward the same goal.

Please spread the word in your congregation and other groups, and to your family, friends, and neighbors. For the latest news and information about climate change advocacy and for more ideas about what you can do at home, at church, and in your community, go to: www.faithfulclimate.org

REDUCE YOUR FOOTPRINT

WHAT YOU CAN DO

- Watch out for “**phantom**” appliances that use electricity even when they don’t look like they’re on. A good example is your **cell phone’s charger**—unplug it when you’re not using it to save energy!
- **Computers** use a lot of energy: turn yours off when you’re not using it, or set it to automatically go into “sleep” mode when it’s not in use. The monitor alone uses 60 percent of the energy needed for your computer’s operation! When you’re in the market for a new one, buy a **laptop** instead of a desktop: they use less energy.
- Wash a full load of **laundry**—it’s the best use of water and energy. Also, wash your clothes on the “**cold**” setting—your clothes will get just as clean, and as much as 90 percent of the energy used by washing machines goes into heating water. Instead of using the dryer, air dry your clothes on a drying rack. If you use the dryer, clean out the dryer lint before each use to boost efficiency.
- If you have a **dishwasher**, use it. Washing dishes by hand uses more hot water. Fill it full before running it and air dry the dishes by opening the door after the wash cycle is finished to save even more energy.
- Use **rechargeable batteries** rather than throw-away batteries. They are more cost effective and better for the environment.
- **Turn off lights**, even if you’ll only be out of the room for a few minutes.
- Take a **shower** (short ones!) instead of a bath—showers use less hot water.
- Use your **microwave**. Microwaves use a lot less energy than ovens and stoves. Or use a toaster oven rather than the larger oven.
- **Check your tires**—your gas mileage is better when tires are properly inflated.
- **Slow down**—fuel consumption goes up rapidly whenever you drive over 60mph and is much worse over 80mph. Reducing your motorway cruising speed by 5 mph will make a big difference. And it’s safer too.

TALK TO YOUR PARENTS ABOUT

- Replacing the light bulbs in your house with **low energy bulbs**. They are more expensive, but last 8–15 times longer than regular incandescent light bulbs.

- Buying **Energy Star** appliances that use less electricity when they replace refrigerators, furnaces, and other large appliances in your home.
- Comparing the fuel consumption of different models when they replace the family **car** (and think about it if you’re buying your first car!).
- Trying not to use disposable plastic bags since they contain petroleum products, which contribute to carbon emissions. Take **re-usable shopping bags** with you to the store. If you’re only buying one thing, refuse the bag.

YOUTH GROUP IDEAS

- **Plan to drive less**—plan gatherings so that people can walk, bike, take public transport, or carpool.
- Does your congregation **recycle**? Help start a recycling program to reduce the waste in landfills, which contribute to greenhouse gas emissions.
- Does your congregation use throwaway plates and cups for coffee hours and pot lucks? These items use lots of energy to produce them and release methane gases in landfills, contributing to global warming. Volunteer to help clean up **reusable plates, silverware, and cups** after church events.
- Start a **compost pile** for food waste from church events—and use the compost to feed a garden on your church grounds, reducing the need for petroleum-based fertilizers. Does your congregation have room on its grounds for a community garden? Think about starting one: if you grow vegetables, you may be able to donate them to your local food pantry.
- Find out about environmental issues in your community—read the paper, invite a representative from your local government to speak at a meeting (like the local parks department or the solid waste disposal and recycling office)—and come up with a plan to help.
- Find out why advocacy is a part of our baptismal calling to care for our neighbors and for all of creation and learn how to be an advocate at www.elca.org/advocacy.
- Serve more vegetables and less meat at gatherings: more land and energy is used to produce meat than to produce plants.
- Buy food **locally**—the closer it’s grown, the less energy is used to get it to you. And it supports your local farmers.



Evangelical Lutheran
Church in America
God’s work. Our hands.

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