

ELCA CIVIC LIFE AND FAITH —

Informing Care for Creation Action in Our Civic Lives

by Donna Rasmussen, Care for Creation Network

A presidential election year brings civic engagement to the forefront of our lives as we weigh our choices for voting. Care for creation, in particular climate change, is urgent among those social issues affected by this year's election which require discernment to understand how faith and civic life interact. The ELCA is developing a social statement on civic life and faith, which was called for by the 2019 Churchwide Assembly to help understand the relationship between church and state. It can be useful in helping us make decisions about voting and in our overall civic involvement.

As the introduction to the draft social statement states, "Daily we are to pray as Jesus taught: 'Your will be done on earth as in heaven. Give us today our daily bread.' These words teach us that God's will seeks the well-being of creation and all aspects of human life, including civil society." The statement goes on to say that human beings are inherently social and, therefore, political beings. God intends that we use our knowledge and intellect to foster the common good through our social institutions, policies and regulations.

A number of social issues have become highly politicized, such as immigration, health care, and climate change. Whether we like it or not, addressing these issues means engaging in the political process and making choices about who will represent us in government and the policies they will support. In addition, we should give government workers respect for "good and just work"



while also holding them accountable. It also means that as we serve God and our neighbors, we draw on our faith and values to support our civic participation.

"The ELCA encourages individuals and worshiping communities to work together toward a civic life that better reflects God's vision for a more just and reconciled world....Faith-informed advocacy of various kinds can play a transformative role in a polarized political world by bringing people together to work toward the common good in public life." From a creation care perspective, the social statement can help guide important discussions within our own congregations, and the church as a whole, about our actions affecting climate and the environment and the consequences of those actions for such things as social justice, equity and fairness in the broader society.

The draft social statement can be found on the ELCA website (Civic Life and Faith—Evangelical Lutheran Church in America (www.elca.org). Feedback on the social statement can be submitted via an online survey until Sept. 30, 2024.

The ELCA Task Force on Studies for Civic Life and Faith also released a study curriculum to facilitate conversation about religious liberty, the

proper role of the church in relation to government, and many other critical topics. The preparation of this study was part of the process toward developing the social statement and is still available online. The curriculum has six sessions. Each session comes ready to use, with a teaching video, prayers, hymn suggestions, Scriptures, group discussion questions, suggested resources, and case studies taken from everyday life.

Give feedback on Social Statement

The ELCA is developing a Civic Life and Faith Social Statement and is seeking public feedback on the draft version. People are invited to study and give feedback on the draft by filling out an online survey by Sept. 30, 2024.

After the feedback period has closed, the task force will revise the draft with attention to the public input and submit a proposed version of the social statement to the ELCA Church Council, which will vote on sending it to the ELCA 2025 Churchwide Assembly for consideration. If adopted at the assembly by a two-thirds margin, the social statement will become the official social teaching of this church.

To access the draft and the survey, go to www.elca.org/civicsandfaith.

Care for Creation Survey Results

Congregations respond about their creation care activities to reduce energy use

by Donna Rasmussen, Care for Creation Network

At the beginning of this year, all the congregations in the Northeastern Iowa Synod were asked to complete a survey about their creation care activities. A summary of those results will be available at the 2025 Synod Assembly by stopping by the Care for Creation display table.

At the 2022 Churchwide Assembly, the ELCA adopted a resolution to reduce greenhouse gas pollution by 50% by 2030. In 2023, an Action Plan was developed by the Northeastern Iowa Synod Care for Creation Network, with assistance from the ELCA Coaching

“The highest percentage of activities were in the HVAC (heating, ventilation and air conditioning) category, with anywhere from 70% to 98% of the congregations completing an activity that reduced energy use in their facilities.”

Program and funded by the synod, to lay out steps for assisting member churches with making progress with creation care activities that help meet the goals set out in the 2023 resolution. One of the first steps in the Action Plan was to develop a survey/checklist in order to determine what steps congregations have already taken, to provide information about the benefits of those activities, and to determine what help congregations might want or need, or what advice or assistance they may be able to offer other congrega-



tions wanting to do similar activities. Congregations were asked to complete the survey by Feb. 28, 2025.

Of the 139 congregations in the synod, 41 congregations responded to the survey, a 29% return rate. From the checklist, congregations indicated all the operating practices that apply to them within each category. The highest percentage of activities were in the HVAC (heating, ventilation and air conditioning) category, with anywhere from 70% to 98% of the congregations completing an activity that reduced energy use in their facilities. This could range from something as simple as making sure windows and doors are closed when heating or air conditioning is on to investing in the installation of programmable thermostats or energy efficient HVAC systems. These types of things have significant economic benefits to the congregation, which may be the reason for the higher adoption rates. There were individual activities in other categories which also had very

high adoption rates often related to cost savings realized by the congregation, such as reducing paper use.

One purpose of the survey was to identify congregations willing to offer advice or assistance to other congregations that are interested in implementing a particular practice. There were 16 congregations that indicated a willingness to be a resource to other congregations. The Care for Creation Network has identified this as a significant way to expand creation care activities in the synod since the Network can only do so much as a small volunteer group. With the knowledge and expertise of those congregations who have been through the process of completing projects, much more can be accomplished.

For more information about the survey, or if your congregation would still like to complete the survey, contact the synod office to connect you with a member of the Care for Creation Network.

Why congregations may want to add solar power

by David Voigts, Care for Creation Network

There are several reasons for churches and other religious institutions to add solar power to offset a portion of electricity they use. First of all, money can be saved on the electricity bills. This will be enhanced by a big benefit from the government that will help churches and other religious institutions with the cost of installing solar panels. The Inflation Reduction Act will pay 30% of the cost of the project. This is called “direct pay” or “elective pay.” Please be advised that the money will be paid to the owner only after the system is installed and operating, but the benefit is substantial.

The cost of installing solar panels would normally be about \$2.62 per watt (\$2620.00 per kilowatt). For example, the cost of replacing the electricity of an average electric bill of about \$150 would be about \$18,450. However, the direct pay funds would reduce the cost of the example project to \$13,000. This would reduce the payback time from about 10 years to seven years, depending on the actual cost of installing, and the net metering agreement with your utility that governs the amount they pay for the excess energy that is produced and provided to the grid. After the payback period, the electricity would be essentially free.

Please be advised that the cost of the project would be increased if any structural upgrades are needed before solar panels can be installed. For example, since solar panels should last for twenty years or longer, the roof or shingles may need to be replaced or upgraded before solar panels are installed. Also, compliance with local rules and ordinances may increase the cost. A cost estimate for the project can be determined at

www.solar-estimate.org. Also, a directory of solar consultants and installers is available at the Iowa Solar Energy Trade Association (www.iowaseta.org). You may receive marketing calls if you use either service.

Please be advised that considerable paperwork is needed to obtain the direct pay funds, so it is best to have a dedicated, knowledgeable person to ensure that this is done correctly. However, some installing companies will do the paperwork as a service to the client. It is important to add that other projects that reduce fossil fuel use should also qualify for an Inflation Reduction Act rebate.

Another important reason for adding solar is that you will be combating climate change by lowering your carbon footprint. Energy produced by solar panels does not come from the burning of fossil fuels, so their use will not add any heat-trapping carbon dioxide to the atmosphere. In addition, the placement of solar panels on your building or grounds may inspire others by demonstrating that you care about the environment and combating climate change.

The cost of the project would be the responsibility of the church, although after it is operational the cost would be reduced by the direct pay rebate. The system could be funded by available funds, by a special fundraising appeal, or by a loan for all or part of the cost. Please remember that the Mission Investment Fund of the ELCA provides low-cost loans to churches for projects like this.

If you decide that you do not want to own the system directly, a third-party could own it. The third-party owner may be a church member(s) or an in-

vestor. In this case, a “Power Purchase Agreement” will be needed. It will control how much will be paid to the third-party for the electricity generated by the solar panels. Usually, this will be at least 15% less than the current price being charged by the electric utility. Even if the electricity rate goes up, your cost will remain flat for the life of the agreement, typically 20 years. After this period, the church will be given ownership of the system.

Third party ownership has the advantage over direct ownership of having a guaranteed savings each month without any cost to the church. Also, Power Purchase Agreements have a long and successful track record. However, the savings probably will not be as much as with direct ownership, and since more parties are involved, there may be more project complications.

The final choice will be dependent on the unique situation of each church. The following sources of information may help you in making that choice:

- IRS Publication 5817
- Interfaith Power and Light’s Congregational Solar webpage (under Resources)
- The Nature Conservancy: Solar for Nonprofits
- Environmental and Energy Study Institute
- Midwest Renewable Energy Association
- Greenpenny Bank (an Iowa online bank that helps with projects like solar)
- www.elca.org/climatecare
 - Social Message on Climate
 - Climate Crisis Study Guide

What is your congregation doing to care for creation?

by Donna Rasmussen, Care for Creation Network

We want to hear from you! The Northeastern Iowa Care for Creation Network has sent a survey to all congregations, colleges, camps and organizations in the Synod to gather information about:

- current creation care activities in the synod,
- what projects/activities could be done with guidance from the Care for Creation Network, and
- who is willing to share their knowledge with others.

The ELCA adopted a resolution at the Churchwide Assembly in 2022 to reduce greenhouse gas pollution by 50 percent by 2030. The

Northeastern Iowa Synod adopted a resolution in 2023 setting the same goal for the synod's congregations, educational facilities, administrative offices, and outdoor ministry facilities. The Care for Creation Network of the Northeastern Iowa Synod has been working to determine how best to help member churches make progress along this path.

Benefits of this work will be significant cost savings to congregations and organizations that implement efficiency measures and reduce their carbon footprint. The purpose of the survey is to provide some information about the benefits, gather information to determine what measures your

organization has taken already and the realized benefits, what help your organization might want or need, and what advice or assistance your organization may be able to offer others wanting to do similar projects.

Please assign someone from your congregation or organization to complete the survey by Feb. 28, 2025. If you would like to receive the link in order to complete the survey for your congregation or organization, please email rdrasmussen@outlook.com. Survey results will be available at the 2025 Synod Assembly.

Thank you!

GLOBAL CHURCH TOGETHER

Area pastors to join ELCA delegation trip to Namibia

Three pastors from the Northeastern Iowa Synod will join an ELCA delegation to Namibia in February to witness the historic installation of the first female bishop in the Evangelical Lutheran Church in Namibia (ELCIN).

Pastor Dena Gable of St. Timothy, Hudson; Pastor Mike Wilker of First, Decorah; and Pastor Margaret Yacke-Juleen of the One in Faith Parish in Strawberry Point, Elkader and Volga; will join nine other representatives from the Southwestern Washington Synod, New Jersey Synod and Metropolitan Washington, D.C. Synod for the trip to Windhoek, Namibia. All four synods have companion synod relationships with the three churches of Namibia.

The Evangelical Lutheran Church in

Namibia (ELCIN) made history in August when the Rev. Hilja Nghaangulwa was elected as the first woman to serve as a diocesan bishop in Namibia. She will be installed as bishop for the Eastern Diocese of the ELCIN. Namibia's first female president, newly elected Netumbo Nandi-Ndaitwah, will be among those attending the installation.

The delegation will also witness the installation of the Rev. Alfredo Barros of the Evangelical Lutheran Church of Angola, which is joining the companion relationship with Namibia.

Bishop Kevin Jones has hand-carved wooden prayer birds for the group to take as gifts on behalf of the



Prayer birds hand-carved by Bishop Kevin Jones

Northeastern Iowa Synod. As he carved each bird, Jones prayed for the person who will receive the bird. The birds were carved from firewood harvested at Ewalu Bible Camp near Strawberry Point.

The Northeastern Iowa Synod has been in a synod companion relationship with the three churches of Namibia since 1990.

Caring for Our Soil Through Conservation

by Donna Rasmussen, Care for Creation Network

"You cause the grass to grow for the livestock and plants for man to cultivate, that he may bring forth food from the earth." — Psalms 104:14

Soil is vital to our survival. Without it, there would be no food. This thin layer covering only portions of the Earth provides the medium for plants to grow, sustaining them with nutrients and water stored in the soil.

Iowa is blessed with some of the richest soils in the world, once abundant with organic matter created by the verdant prairies that covered the landscape. The organic matter in those native soils measured 8-9 parts per million, but over time, with cultivation and erosion, the organic matter now averages closer to 2-3 parts per million. Less organic matter means that nutrients need to be added to the soil in the form of fertilizers.

Organic matter also helps the soil hold and infiltrate water; low organic matter means that rain is less likely to soak into the ground (creating runoff and erosion), and water is less likely to be held in the soil profile for plants to use during dry periods. Being good stewards of the land requires that soil is conserved by preventing erosion and building up the health of the soil so it remains productive. Plus, keeping soil healthy and preventing erosion keeps sediment and pollutants out of our rivers and streams improving water quality and recharging our groundwater.

90 YEARS OF SOIL CONSERVATION

Soil and Water Conservation Week is April 27 to May 5, and this year marks 90 years since the Soil Conservation Act was passed by Congress and signed by Franklin D. Roosevelt on April 27,

1935. The act established a permanent soil conservation agency, the Soil Conservation Service, now known as the Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS). In 1935, the nation was in the grips of the Dust Bowl due to an extended drought in the Great Plains that started in 1932. Widespread crop failures and exposed soil resulted in blowing dust clouds, one of which blew over Washington, D. C. in 1934 continuing 300 miles into the Atlantic Ocean. In 1935, on March 6 and then on March 21, dust clouds again passed over Washington and darkened the sky just as Congress held hearings on a proposed soil conservation law. Hugh Hammond Bennett, later the head of the Soil Conservation Service, used this opportunity to explain the cause of the storms and to offer a solution which convinced Congress to act.

The success of soil conservation in the United States is credited to the establishment of democratically organized Soil Conservation Districts led by local farmers and landowners. To create a framework for cooperation, the Standard State Soil Conservation Districts Law was sent to the governors of all the states in 1937 by President Roosevelt. The first soil conservation district was organized in the Brown Creek watershed of North Carolina on Aug. 4, 1937. Today, there are over 3,000 Soil and Water Conservation Districts (SWCDs) across the country, of which 100 are in Iowa: one in each county with Pottawattamie County having two districts. Each district is managed by an elected board made up of five local SWCD Commissioners.

Of Iowa's 35.7 million acres of land, about 29 million acres (81%) are cropland. On those cropland acres, a vari-

SURVEY REMINDER

The Care for Creation Network Survey deadline has been extended to April 15!

Congregations should have received a request to complete the survey to share about their creation care activities. The Care for Creation Network will compile a summary of submitted responses for the Synod Assembly in June.

If your congregation or organization has not completed the Care for Creation survey, contact rdrasmussen@outlook.com for the survey link.

If completing the survey online is not your best option, print the survey and complete it on paper and send an email to the address above for further instructions to submit it. Thank you!

ety of soil conservation practices are needed and have been implemented, including terraces, grassed waterways, water and sediment control basins, bio-reactors, grade stabilization structures, reduced tillage, no till, cover crops, contour strips, crop rotations, field borders, and nutrient management. Most of these practices are used in some combination because no one practice can do everything to prevent erosion and build soil health.

As our climate changes and weather patterns become more extreme, our soil needs extra care to remain productive into the future. If you see these soil conservation practices on the landscape, thank those farmers and the staff in your local soil conservation office for being good stewards of God's creation.

TEDx Talk connects soil conservation and women's rights

from the Care for Creation Network

Women: Be inspired by Luther College professor's TEDx Talk, "Power of the Unseen."

Below is the online description given for a fascinating TEDx talk given by Dr. Jodi Enos-Berlage, professor in the Biology Department at Luther College, that has special interest for women who farm or own farmland and why it is so important to protect soil, the precious resource we have been given for growing food. To view the talk, go to: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=cbEeugqrnWA>.

"In this captivating TEDx talk, Dr. Jodi Enos-Berlage shines a spotlight on the remarkable connection between microbes, soil erosion prevention, and women's rights in Iowa. Drawing from her extensive research and personal experiences, she explores the often-unseen world beneath our feet and the crucial role that microbes play in maintaining healthy soil.

"Through the lens of her own family history, she shares the inspiring story of her mother's journey in overcoming societal barriers to own land and represent their family. By intertwining the narratives of microbial ecosystems and women's empowerment,

Dr. Jodi Enos-Berlage unveils the hidden power that lies within both the natural world and individuals who challenge conventions. Prepare to be captivated as she unveils the profound link between soil resilience and societal progress, leaving you with a newfound appreciation for the invisible forces that shape our environment and human rights.

"Jodi Enos-Berlage has served as a professor in the Luther College Biology Department for over 20 years, with primary areas in microbiology, immunology, and introductory cell biology. Her 10-plus years of student-centered research on water quality in Northeast Iowa have resulted in the Dry Run Creek Watershed being one of the most monitored watersheds of its size in the state.

"More recently, her teaching and research has integrated student-sourcing antibiotic discovery from microbes in Northeast Iowa soils. In the last five years, Dr. Enos-Berlage has also focused attention on student career and life design development, having co-developed, launched, and implemented a new



high impact, immersion internship program in Rochester, Minn., and served a three-year term as associate dean for Integrating Academic and Career Development, partnering with Luther's Career Center Director to lead career and life design efforts on campus."

"Dr. Enos-Berlage grew up and was actively involved in her family's Northwest Illinois cow-calf beef and crop farm and currently owns and operates a direct sale beef and hog farm outside of Ridgeway with husband John and family. She finds peace in flowing water, energy from walking in the wild, and joy in dancing and storytelling. Her most treasured moments have been reading out loud to her children after dinner for over two decades. People who know her well describe her as a "relentless advocate for positive change".

New Federal Clean Energy Funding for Houses of Worship

by Donna Rasmussen, Care for Creation Network

The passage of the bipartisan Infrastructure Investment and Jobs Act (IIJA) in November 2021 and the Inflation Reduction Act (IRA) in August 2022 provide exciting opportunities for houses of worship to have easier access to clean energy funds.

The IIJA provides the Department of Energy with \$50 million over five years for a new program, the Renew America's Nonprofits program. This program will provide grants of up to \$200,000 to nonprofits to improve the energy efficiency of their facilities. Visit www.energy.gov/scep/renew-america-nonprofits or contact nonprofits@doe.gov for more information.

The IRA allows nonprofits and houses of worship to have access to clean energy funds and tax credits through its elective pay provision, more commonly known as "direct pay." Before the IRA, only homeowners and commercial entities with some tax liability could claim tax credits when installing solar panels, wind turbines, or other eligible technologies. Now, the "direct pay" option means non-taxable entities can also benefit from these credits. Unlike competitive

grant and loan programs in which applicants may not receive an award, direct pay allows entities to get their payment if they meet the requirements for both direct pay and the underlying tax credit. There are steps leading up to filing for direct pay, such as a required pre-filing registration process, which requires an EIN or TIN. More information about this pre-filing registration process will be available by late 2023.

Interfaith Power and Light (IPL) (<https://interfaith-powerandlight.org/federal-funding.org>) has compiled extensive information on its website to help houses of worship understand eligibility and application requirements. In order to prepare for implementing a project, IPL recommends lining up 12 months of utility bills, determining the construction date of your building, tracking occupancy rates, and using IPL's Cool Congregations Calculator to learn more about your congregation's carbon footprint. It is also helpful to learn what other sources of state, local, and utility funding you can leverage to go along with the federal funding.



Clean Energy Districts of Iowa are local institutions that can also provide assistance. As of 2021, there were nine established Energy Districts in Iowa (Howard, Winneshiek, Allamakee, Clayton, Delaware, Dubuque, Jackson, and Johnson) and more are in the process of being established. To find the energy district near you, go to <https://energydistrict.org>.

These resources come at a critical time when God is leading us into action to address climate change. If your congregation has been considering implementing energy efficiency and/or clean energy projects, whether to save money or protect God's creation or both, the time is now.

Ask for action on climate change

by Leslie Sand, Care for Creation Network

Recently, four inches of rain falling in 40 minutes caused [landslides in Lansing](#), Iowa, which took out a propane tank, which caused a house to explode. A nearby campground saw an extreme flash flood event, downing trees and causing electrical damages. As this is being written, a flood warning has been issued for Allamakee and Clayton counties along the Mississippi.

Beyond our synod, Iowans' lives have been lost and upended due to flooding in nearly one quarter of Iowa counties, and Greenfield saw much of the town flattened. And that only covers the last several weeks.

We have come to realize that these are no longer freak weather events; this is a changing weather pattern, known as climate change. [Katharine Hayhoe](#) is a Christian climate scientist, and she says that we need to talk about it. The ELCA's newly released study guide for the social message "Earth's Climate Crisis" is a wonder-

ful tool for congregations to do just that—talk about it. (Find resources at the end of this article.)

As Lutherans, God calls us to care for others and all of His creation. We are good at supporting Lutheran World Relief, making quilts, sending money, and helping out at Thrivent events. These are worthwhile and important responses. Are we called to do more? Yes, and the ELCA Task Force on Civic Life and Faith defines what that looks like.

Polling shows that 70 percent of Americans want action on climate change. We need to respectfully tell our elected officials that we want solutions implemented. We can ask candidates about the issue, and vote for those who tell us they will do that work. There are many; this is not hopeless. [Project Drawdown | 100 Solutions to Reverse Global Warming | One Earth](#) is a repository of work being done globally.



To learn more about respectfully advocating for climate solutions, go to www.citizensclimate.org, where you can join Citizens' Climate Lobby and its Lutheran Action Team, www.cclusa.org/action-teams.

Check out these resources:

- [ELCA Civic Life and Faith](#)
- [ELCA Carbon Pricing Basics](#) (Oct. 2019)
- [ELCA Carbon Tax Implementation Considerations](#) (Dec. 2020)
- [ELCA Earth's Climate Crisis social message](#) (April 2023)
- [Our Kairos Moment Earth's Climate Crisis](#)

Fall Theological Conference set for Oct. 13-15

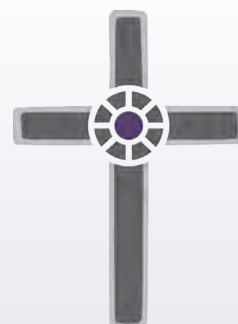
Mark your calendars for the 2024 Northeastern Iowa Synod Fall Theological Conference, set for Oct. 13-15 at the Bien Venu Event Center in Cedar Falls.

The conference will be centered on learning, camaraderie, and spiritual refreshment for active rostered ministers and those preparing to become rostered.

This year's event will give participants tools and insights for preaching in the upcoming Lectionary, Year C, beginning with Advent 2024. Featured speakers will be The Rev. Dr. Troy Troftgruben, association professor of New Testament at Wartburg Theological Seminary, and The Rev. Dr. Kristin Wendland, associate professor of Religion at Wartburg College.

The conference will start at 5 p.m. Sunday and conclude at 12 noon Tuesday. It will include learning sessions, worship service, devotions, lunch and time with Bishop Kevin Jones, who will discuss preaching on the Sunday after the election.

More information about the agenda, online registration and hotel reservations will be posted on the synod website, www.neiasynod.org. Questions can be directed to Pastor Liz Bell, 319-352-1414.



Good Shepherd, Decorah wins national energy saver award

Congratulations to Good Shepherd Lutheran Church of Decorah for winning the energy saver category of Interfaith Power & Light's 2024 Cool Congregations Challenge!

IPL awarded congregation winners in six categories and 16 runner-ups for their work in responding to climate change by reducing their carbon footprint. Good Shepherd received the \$1,000 Energy Saver Award for eliminating the use of fossil fuels in heating, cooling, lighting, and powering their buildings. They have converted their building to all-electric with heat pumps to heat and cool their buildings, powered entirely by solar on their property, preventing 25 tons of carbon emissions annually.

The Cool Congregations Challenge, is an annual national contest to recognize "Cool Congregations" that are becoming energy efficient and sustainable role models within their

communities. The contest is available through Interfaith Power & Light, a nonprofit organization inspiring and mobilizing people of faith and conscience to take bold and just action on climate.

Learn more at www.neiasynod.org/care-for-creation.



A solar pergola is part of the energy saving additions at Good Shepherd, Decorah.

OBITUARIES

The Rev. Dr. William ("Bill") Paul Thalacker died Jan. 31, 2024, at the age of 89. He was ordained May 28, 1961. He graduated from Wartburg College, Waverly, and Wartburg Theological Seminary, Dubuque. He also earned a master's degree in religion from the University of Iowa and a Doctor of Ministry from Luther Theological Seminary in St. Paul.

He served as pastor for Bethany, West Branch; Ridgeway Parish (Peace, Madison, Orleans); Trinity, Hawkeye; Trinity, Waterloo; and St. John's Bennington, Dunkerton. He retired March 1, 2000. The funeral service will be April 20 at St. Paul's Lutheran Church in Waverly.

Rev. Thalacker is survived by his wife, Marilyn, five children, 14 grandchildren, and three great-grandchildren. The full obituary is available at www.kaisercorson.com.

The Rev. Harold McMillin, Jr, died March 2, 2024, at the age of 78. He was ordained on June 10, 1973. He graduated from Wartburg College and Wartburg Theological Seminary. He served as pastor at St. John's Crane Creek, Tripoli; First, Dows and Vernon, Williams; Emmanuel, Fontanelle; Elgin, Elgin and Highland, Elkader; and St. John's, Guttenberg. After his first retirement in 2011, he served St. John, Luana and St. John, Farmersburg. He retired again in 2019 and was most recently serving as contract interim pastor for St. Peter, Garnavillo and Peace, Clayton.

Rev. McMillin's funeral took place March 9 at St. John's, Guttenberg. He is survived by his wife, Linda, two children, two stepchildren, and six grandchildren. Harold's full obituary is available at www.graufuneralhomes.com/2024/03/15910.

How Lutherans can respond to the climate crisis

by Donna Rasmussen, Care for Creation Network

The ELCA has published *The Earth's Climate Crisis* social message, and an ELCA Task Force on Civic Life and Faith tells us that we cannot separate our faith from caring for all of God's creation. We know that the most vulnerable are suffering the most.

Solutions are out there; they need to be enacted. Putting a price on carbon at its source is the fastest, most effective solution. This means that fossil fuel producers (Exxon, BP, etc.) will pay fees to bring fossil fuels, such as coal, into the economy.

Sending all the net revenue from those fees back to Americans will make it possible to weather the transition to renewable energy. This will



1. give us affordable, clean energy,
2. put money in our pockets,
3. get us to net zero by 2050, and
4. save lives.

Learn more at www.energyinnovationact.org. To learn more about advocating for specific, effective climate solutions, go to www.citizensclimate.org, where you can join the Citizens' Climate Lobby Lutheran Action Team.

- ELCA Civic Life and Faith, <https://>

elca.org/civicsandfaith

- [ELCA Carbon Pricing Basics](#) (Oct. 2019)
- [ELCA Carbon Tax Implementation Considerations](#) (Dec. 2020)
- ELCA Earth's Climate Crisis social message, www.elca.org/climatecare (April 2023)
- *Earth's Climate Crisis* powerpoint, <https://docs.google.com/presentation/d/1H6DQjvJY7qcvZRhatOHIT5YoNu3KjGs/edit#slide=id.p1>
- Join the Citizens' Climate Lobby and its Lutheran Action Team, www.cclusa.org/action-teams.