

WITNESS IN WASHINGTON WEEKLY

The Washington Office of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.)

May 15, 2009

The Presbyterian Washington Office will be closed the week of May 17-23 due to a mandatory furlough of PC(USA) General Assembly Council employees. This weeklong furlough provides significant savings for the 2009 mission budget during this challenging economic time. We will return to the office on Tuesday, May 26, after observing the Memorial Day holiday.

This week's messages are—

- Climate Action in D.C. - Time to make your voice heard!
- A Prayer for Healing
- Psalm 145: 3-5 - Wondrous Works of God

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Climate Action in D.C. - Time to make your voice heard!

This week members of the U.S. House of Representatives Energy and Commerce Committee will consider a bill to address the most pressing issue facing God's creation - our changing climate and the emissions that are causing our planet to grow warmer. This bill, the American Clean Energy and Security Act of 2009, is sponsored by Committee chairman Henry Waxman of California and Representative Edward Markey of Massachusetts.

This is a critical moment, and advocates must work hard to ensure that the Committee's bill is strong and protects the planet and people living in poverty in the U.S. and around the world. This is a moment of opportunity and great urgency, but the bill needs to be strengthened - please take a few minutes to call your Representative and urge him or her to support strong climate change legislation!

Climate change's impacts already fall, and will continue to fall, most heavily on the people around the world who are least able to mitigate the impacts - people living in poverty. As a leading industrialized nation that has disproportionately contributed to greenhouse gas emissions, it is incumbent upon the United States to rectify this injustice through national legislation to reduce global warming.

Please tell your Representative to support strong climate change legislation that:

- Reduces the U.S. contribution to greenhouse gas emissions in order to limit the warming of the earth to two degrees Celsius above pre-industrial temperatures. In order to achieve this goal, the U.S. must set emissions reduction targets of twenty percent below 1990 levels by 2020 and eighty percent below 1990 levels by 2050.
- Protects those living in or near poverty in the U.S. from the impacts of climate change and climate legislation. Legislation must ensure that low income Americans do not bear the disproportionate burden of increases in energy costs, must ensure that any increased costs do not push more people into poverty, and must provide for those whose jobs are impacted by climate legislation.
- Provides adaptation assistance for those living in poverty abroad. Those living in the most vulnerable developing nations around the world bear little responsibility for global warming and are already feeling the burden of climate change, with little ability to adapt. Through adaptation assistance, the U.S. can prevent the destruction of vulnerable communities around the world and help with climate relief.

Climate change is a moral crisis that elected officials are beginning to address on a national and international level. It is important that they hear the voice of the faith community as they begin to make decisions that will affect the well being of God's people and God's Creation.

Call your Representative:

Dial 877-88-CLIMATE (toll-free, thanks to Oxfam America) to reach the Capitol Switchboard.

Ask the operator to connect you to your Representative's office. If you don't know who your Representative is, visit

<http://capwiz.com/pcusa/dbq/officials/> to find out.

Sample Script for call:

"My name is _____ and I am calling from (your city/town/county). I would like to urge Representative _____ to support a strong climate change bill. As a constituent and a person of faith, I am concerned that people living in poverty around the world will suffer first and most if we do not aggressively reduce our emissions of carbon dioxide and other gases. I also urge you to support efforts to protect those living in or near poverty in the U.S. from the impacts of climate change and climate legislation and to provide assistance to those living in poverty around the globe as they adapt to a changing climate."

If your Representative is a member of the Energy and Commerce Committee, please consider using this sample script:

"As a member of the Energy and Commerce Committee, I hope that Representative _____ will support the American Clean Energy and Security Act of 2009 and work to strengthen it as the Committee considers the bill this week. As a constituent and a person of faith, I am concerned that people living in poverty around the world will suffer first and most if we do not aggressively reduce our emissions of carbon dioxide and other gases. I also urge you to support efforts to protect those living in or near poverty in the U.S. from the impacts of climate change and climate legislation and to provide assistance to those living in poverty around the globe as they adapt to a changing climate."

Here is a list of members of the House Energy and Commerce Committee:

Tammy Baldwin, WI
John Barrow, GA
Marsha Blackburn, TN
Roy Blunt, MO
Mary Bono Mack, CA
Rick Boucher, VA
Bruce L. Braley, IA
Joe Barton, TX, Ranking Member
Michael C. Burgess, TX
G.K. Butterfield, NC
Steve Buyer, IN
Lois Capps, CA
Kathy Castor, FL
Donna M. Christensen, VI
Nathan Deal, GA
Diana DeGette, CO
John D. Dingell, MI, Chair Emeritus
Mike Doyle, PA
Eliot L. Engel, NY
Anna G. Eshoo, CA
Phil Gingrey, GA
Charles A. Gonzalez, TX
Bart Gordon, TN
Gene Green, TX
Ralph M. Hall, TX
Jane Harman, CA
Baron P. Hill, IN
Jay Inslee, WA
Edward J. Markey, MA
Jim Matheson, UT

Doris O. Matsui, CA
Jerry McNerney, CA
Charlie Melancon, LA
Christopher S. Murphy, CT
Tim Murphy, PA
Frank Pallone, Jr., NJ
Joseph R. Pitts, PA
George Radanovich, CA
Mike Rogers, MI
Mike Ross, AR
Bobby L. Rush, IL
John P. Sarbanes, MD
Steve Scalise, LA
Jan Schakowsky, IL
John B. Shadegg, AZ
John Shimkus, IL
Zachary T. Space, OH
Cliff Stearns, FL
Bart Stupak, MI
John Sullivan, OK
Betty Sutton, OH
Lee Terry, NE
Fred Upton, MI
Greg Walden, OR
Henry A. Waxman, CA, Chair
Anthony D. Weiner, NY
Peter Welch, VT
Ed Whitfield, KY
Sue Wilkins Myrick, NC

General Assembly Guidance:

In 2008, the 218th General Assembly approved "The Power to Change: U.S. Energy Policy and Global Warming," in which it affirmed the following principles:

"With our Lord, we will stand with "the least of these" (Matt. 25:40) and advocate for the poor and oppressed in present and future generations who are often the victims of environmental injustice and who are least able to mitigate the impact of global warming that will fall disproportionately upon them...

"As advocates for justice, we reject the claim that all nations should shoulder an equal measure of the burden associated with mitigating climate change. Industrialized nations like the United States that have produced most of the emissions over the last three centuries deserve to shoulder the majority of the burden...

"The Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) supports comprehensive, mandatory, and aggressive emission reductions that aim to limit the increase in Earth's temperature to 2 degrees Celsius or less from pre-industrial levels. Legislation should focus on the short-term goal of reducing U.S. greenhouse gas emissions 20 percent* from 1990 levels by 2020, and 80 percent from 1990 levels by 2050...

"Revenues generated from either or both approaches should be utilized nationally to redress the regressive impact of higher energy prices on people who are poor, to increase funds for public transportation, to increase research and development as well as investment in renewable energy, and to encourage the purchase of energy efficient appliances and vehicles. Internationally, the United States needs to contribute funds to help poorer nations adapt to the social dislocation and ecological devastation caused by global climate change. (<http://www.pc-biz.org/Explorer.aspx?id=1537&promID=10>)

* Since the General Assembly, international climate scientists have updated this recommendation to keep pace with the alarming and much-faster-than-anticipated rate of global warming. Recommendations now urge reducing emissions by 25-40 percent by 2020. The same G.A. policy also includes a provision urging, "Increase the authority of science-based international standards for addressing the issue of global climate change."

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A Prayer for Healing

Let there be peace, welfare and righteousness
in every part of the world.

Let confidence and friendship prevail
for the good of east and west
for the good of the needy south
for the good of all humanity.

Let the people inspire their leaders
helping them to seek peace by peaceful means
helping them and urging them
to build a better world
a world with a home for everybody
a world with food and work for everybody
a world with spiritual freedom
for everybody.

Let those who have the power of money

be motivated by selfless compassion.
Let money become a tool
for the good of humankind.

Let those who have power
deal respectfully with the resources of the planet.
Let them respect and maintain
the purity of the air, water, land and subsoil.
Let them co-operate to restore
the ecological soundness of Mother Earth.

Let trees grow up by the billions
around the world.
Let green life invade the deserts.

Let industry serve humanity
and produce waste that serves nature.

Let technology respect
the holiness of Mother Earth.

Let those who control mass media
contribute to create mutual understanding
contribute to create optimism and confidence.

Let ordinary people
meet by the millions across the borders.
Let them create a universal network
of love and friendship.

Let billions of human beings
co-operate to create a good future
for their children and grandchildren.

Let us survive
In peace and harmony with Mother Earth.

- Hagan Hasselbalch, from Earth Prayers, compiled by Elizabeth J. Roberts,
Elias Amidon

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Psalm 145: 3-5 - Wondrous Works of God

Great is the Lord, and greatly to be praised;
God's greatness is unsearchable.

One generation shall laud your works to another,
and shall declare your mighty acts.
On the glorious splendour of your majesty,
and on your wondrous works, I will meditate.

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Help Us Help You!

To support the work of the Washington Office, send a contribution to:

Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.)
Individual Remittance Processing
P.O. Box 643700
Pittsburgh, PA 15264-3700.

Designate the Washington Office, ECO # 865714.

Or click here to give online: <http://www.pcusa.org/washington/support.htm>

Thank You.

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