



SIX MILE RUN REFORMED CHURCH

3037 STATE ROUTE 27 • FRANKLIN PARK, NJ 08823

Telephone: 732-297-3734

Fax: 732-297-4234

E-mail: admin@sixmilerun.org

Website: www.sixmilerun.org

ENVIRONMENTAL STEWARDSHIP OVERTURE TO CONSISTORY OF SIX MILE RUN REFORMED CHURCH

Approved by Six Mile Run Reformed Church Consistory as amended on 6-11-19

We, the members of the Six Mile Run Peace & Justice Committee, urge the consistory of the Six Mile Run Reformed Church to adopt the following as Six Mile Run ongoing ministry actions:

Proposed Ongoing Ministry Actions

To adopt goals to:

- To assist Six Mile Run members and attenders to understand and live into the view that caring for God's creation is an important part of being a child of God and a sister or brother of Jesus
- To reduce fossil fuel (oil, natural gas, coal, propane) consumption within the church's buildings and encourage church members to reduce fossil fuel consumption in their daily lives
- To save on church utility bills to reduce budget deficits and/ or divert some savings to other church ministries such as for youth or outreach
- To explore and adopt appropriate environmental stewardship alternatives regarding energy, water, single-use plastics, refuse disposal, etc. to benefit and bless our church family
- To consistently review these and other areas of our church's operations for opportunities to improve our church's impact on climate change

and further,

To direct the elders and pastor to incorporate care of God's creation in our worship and fellowship hour times through prayers, music, and sermons, and through guided groups conversations, during at minimum:

- Earth Day (a Sunday around April 22 of each year) and
- Season of Creation (September 1 through October 4 of each year); and further,

To direct the deacons to periodically undertake an energy audit of the church buildings and to promote an audit-based energy efficiency, cost savings plan for our church buildings developed by the Peace & Justice team; and further,

To encourage Six Mile Run member creation care outreaches with other local people, churches, and organizations that work to improve environmental quality of God's world locally at least; and further,

A Multicultural, Multiethnic Congregation



SIX MILE RUN REFORMED CHURCH

3037 STATE ROUTE 27 • FRANKLIN PARK, NJ 08823

Telephone: 732-297-3734

Fax: 732-297-4234

E-mail: admin@sixmilerun.org

Website: www.sixmilerun.org

To encourage the Classis of New Brunswick and Regional Synod of the Mid-Atlantic's to adopt and promote similar overtures and actions for their respective jurisdictions and the RCA's General Synod; and further,

To make Six Mike Run Reformed Church a signatory to the "We Are Still In" declaration regarding the Paris Climate Accords, as indicated in their website, <https://www.wearestillin.com/faith-orgs>; and further,

To receive from the Peace & Justice Committee quarterly reports through December 2020, with options to extend the reporting, on the implementation of these adopted ministry actions.

NOTE: The RCA has many resources available to assist and can connect Six Mile Run with stories and people of other congregations that have made creation care differences in their congregations and communities.

Reasons:

I) Bible: Psalms 24:1 states "*The earth is the Lord's and all that is in it, the world, and those who live in it.*" Romans 8:19-22 states that the creation itself needs to be set free from decay. Genesis 2:15 states "*God set the man and put him in the garden of Eden to till it and keep it.*" We believe there is a biblical mandate for our church and its members to faithfully and fruitfully grow as stewards of God's creation.

II) The RCA's 1993 General Synod Christian Action report, "Global Warming" (MGS 1993, pp 98- 103), stated that "the greatest priority must be to reduce the use of fossil fuels, particularly coal and oil" and called on churches "to play a positive role with wise purchases and an active educational efforts to inform members about the cause and consequences of global warming and the steps that are necessary to reduce this danger" (p.100).

III) The RCA's 1999 report of the General Synod's Christian Action Commission, "Climate Change Update," (MGS 1999, pp. 98- 104) noted that addressing climate change is:

- A matter of faithfulness to the Biblical mandate "to till and to keep" the garden of creation. "God has given us dominion over creation, not to do with it as we please but, 'for its profit, well-being, and enhancement...to see to it that the creation becomes fully the creation willed by God'" (MGS 1999.)
- An issue of justice. The poor, the marginalized and future generations will suffer the most from the effects of climate change, while the wealthier and those in the more developed nations have been responsible for creating most of the greenhouse gas emissions.
- A means of fulfilling the Biblical command to love our neighbors as ourselves.

A Multicultural, Multiethnic Congregation



SIX MILE RUN REFORMED CHURCH

3037 STATE ROUTE 27 • FRANKLIN PARK, NJ 08823

Telephone: 732-297-3734

Fax: 732-297-4234

E-mail: admin@sixmilerun.org

Website: www.sixmilerun.org

IV) Since those reports were presented to the General Synod, the threat of climate change has become even more severe. The 20 warmest years on record have been in the past 22 years, and “2018 is on course to be the 4th warmest year on record”.

<https://www.thejournal.ie/global-temperatures-4366649-Nov2018/>

The October 2018 Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change Report (<https://www.ipcc.ch>), written by a U.N.-sponsored collection of the world’s top scientists, stated that the world may have as little as 12 years to act to limit global warming to 1.5 degrees Celsius. If we do not reduce fossil fuel emissions the catastrophic consequences will include: intense drought and poverty, food shortages, more devastating wildfires, coastal flooding, and increasing numbers of environmental refugees. “Several hundred million” lives are at stake, according to the IPCC.

The November 2018 U.S. National Climate Assessment report (<https://nca2018.globalchange.gov>) states climate change could cause nearly \$300 billion in annual damage in the U.S. through deadly heat waves, wildfires, crop failures, coastal flooding, and an increase in extreme weather events. The nation’s farm belt is likely to be among the hardest-hit regions. "This report draws a direct connection between the warming atmosphere and the resulting changes that affect Americans' lives, communities, and livelihoods, now and in the future," the document reads, concluding that "the evidence of human-caused climate change is overwhelming and continues to strengthen."

Additionally, the 2018 Lancet Journal Countdown on Health and Climate Change -

[https://www.thelancet.com/journals/lancet/article/PIIS0140-6736\(18\)32594-7/fulltext](https://www.thelancet.com/journals/lancet/article/PIIS0140-6736(18)32594-7/fulltext) - concluded that there are growing medical challenges from climate change, noting that climate change threatens significant amounts of medical progress made over the last 50 years. Lancet indicated that 51% of the world’s cities are so affected.

V) Here are three online resources that speak to how climate change can affect our lives in New Jersey, our state:

- “Here’s how climate change will make N. J. deadlier in your lifetime” - https://www.nj.com/news/index.ssf/2018/10/climate_change_will_make_nj_deadlier_and_it_will_p.html
- New Jersey Climate Change Alliance (sponsored by Rutgers) - <https://njadapt.rutgers.edu>
- “‘F’ for New Jersey: Report Cites Bad Planning for Storms, Climate Change” - <http://nj1015.com/f-for-new-jersey-report-cites-bad-planning-for-storms-climate-change/>

VI) There are causes for hope. Increasing awareness, advances in technology, and renewed commitment to the ministry of creation care are making change possible. The RCA’s Fowler Camp and Conference Center has significantly reduced its fossil fuel consumption by implementing several energy conservation measures. The First Reformed Church in Schenectady and Community Reformed Church of Manhasset have made of creation care a crucial priority in their congregations. Additionally, there is a vigorous, impactful RCA denominational creation care initiative now in its second year. In 2018, among other things, the denomination held five three-hour events serving 39 churches and 139 people, nearly half of whom signed up for next steps.

A Multicultural, Multiethnic Congregation



SIX MILE RUN REFORMED CHURCH

3037 STATE ROUTE 27 • FRANKLIN PARK, NJ 08823

Telephone: 732-297-3734

Fax: 732-297-4234

E-mail: admin@sixmilerun.org

Website: www.sixmilerun.org

These and other reasons give us cause for hope. By working together we can more faithfully care for God's good earth, protect the lives of the poor and vulnerable, show love for our neighbors, save substantial dollars through increased energy efficiency, and in word and deed offer a message of hope to a world tempted to despair.

The need is urgent.

We are the first generation to feel the impact of climate change and the last generation able to do something about it.

The time to act is now.

Respectfully submitted,

The Six Mile Run Reformed Church Peace & Justice Committee, whose members include:

AnnieMaude Anderson

Benjamin Beede

Esther Johnson

Jane Jones

Van Jones

Earl James

Anna Killen

Carol Mayer

Adrian Perdomo

Sherian Perdomo

Mary Schmidt

Robin Suydam

Nancy Vega

Laura Waddell

Postscript: In 2018, the Peace & Justice Committee surveyed our congregation identify areas of peace and justice its members wanted to know more about. Environmental stewardship was one of those identified topics. February – April 2019 is dedicated to environmental stewardship. The Peace & Justice Committee thanks that team's members – Esther Johnson, Mary Schmidt, Laura Waddell, Sherian Perdomo and Earl James - for their excellent work on this proposal and the three-month presentations.

A Multicultural, Multiethnic Congregation