



Bishop Michael J. Pryse

74 Weber Street West, Kitchener, ON N2H 3Z3
Telephone: (519) 743-1461 Fax: (519) 743-4291
Toll Free: 1-877-373-5242 Email: mpryse@elcic.ca

July 17, 2014

The Right Honourable Stephen Harper
Office of the Prime Minister
80 Wellington Street
Ottawa, ON K1A 0A2

Dear Prime Minister Harper:

Subject: A Call for National Environmental Leadership and Action

This past June delegates representing more than 200 congregations from Nova Scotia to Sault Ste Marie, ON, gathered at the 2014 Convention of the Eastern Synod of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in Canada in Toronto. They again called for national environmental leadership and action by reaffirming the position taken at the previous synod convention. We shared that position with you two years ago and now I repeat it:

Out of respect for all of creation and accepting our responsibility as stewards of creation, this convention calls for a vision and policies for the future of our country and our planet that

- acknowledge that Canada's Environmental Footprint — industrial, institutional, and individual — exceeds the planet's capability to sustain it,
- acknowledge that, according to the vast majority of climate scientists, global warming is caused by humans and is having an increasingly devastating effect on the planet's ecosystem, its flora and fauna, and on vulnerable human populations,
- move us from dependence on oil, gas, and coal to clean, sustainable energy sources such as solar, wind, tidal, and geothermal, and, in the process creates jobs,
- eliminate the current federal tax subsidies of over \$1 billion annually to oil and gas companies allocating those funds for environmentally responsible policies and through public education campaigns and financial incentives to encourage conservation of energy by industry, government, public and private institutions, and individuals.

Finally, Prime Minister, the motion directs me to write to you conveying these declarations and calls for action. Clearly we believe that our federal and provincial governments must take action. As people of faith it is our responsibility to remind our political leaders how important the issue is.

Our 2014 Convention environmental motion continued:

We encourage members of congregations of the Eastern Synod to:

- Participate at the local level in their municipalities to support local efforts to reduce greenhouse gas emissions through public transit, waste reduction, green space protection, agriculture, etc.;

- Contact their federal, provincial and municipal government representatives to affirm their support for policies that reduce greenhouse gas emissions and promote environmental sustainability; and
- Find out the environmental impact of their lifestyle by determining their carbon footprint and prayerfully consider ways of reducing their personal energy consumption.

We encourage congregations of the Eastern Synod to:

- Carry out an energy audit of congregational plant and facilities and use the results to educate members and reduce energy use wherever possible;
- Include environmental themes and the stewardship of creation in educational programmes for children, youth and adults; and
- Join with other faith groups and community organizations to promote environmental sustainability at the municipal level, which controls nearly 45 per cent of the total national greenhouse gas emissions in Canada.

Finally, we encourage our Bishop and Synod Council to:

- Write to our Prime Minister and the Premiers of the provinces in our Synod, conveying these declarations and calls for action;
- Write to Eastern Synod congregations encouraging them to continue the greening of their homes, their buildings and their use of the planet's limited resources; and
- Remind us of our vocation as stewards of creation through proclamation and education.

Clearly, Prime Minister, environmental leadership and action are important to our Synod and we therefore encourage our members and congregations to thoughtful action and leadership – but we believe that our federal and provincial governments must take immediate environmental action – and as people of faith it is our responsibility to remind our political leaders how important the issue is.

With all of God's blessings,

Sincerely,



Bishop Michael Pryse, Eastern Synod of the
Evangelical Lutheran Church in Canada
MP/sc

cc. The Honourable Thomas Mulcair, Leader of the Official Opposition
The Honourable Justin Trudeau, Leader of the Liberal Party
The Honourable Mario Beaulieu, Leader of the Bloc Québécois
The Honourable David Alward, Premier of New Brunswick
The Honourable Stephen McNeil, Premier of Nova Scotia
The Honourable Kathleen Wynne, Premier of Ontario
The Honourable Philippe Couillard, Premier of Quebec