



Massachusetts Conference, United Church of Christ

Nurturing local church vitality and the covenant among our churches

Rev. Dr. Jim Antal
Conference Minister & President

One Badger Road

• Framingham, MA 01702

• 508-875-5233

• www.macucc.org

October 24, 2017

To: Scott Pruitt, Administrator, Environmental Protection Agency

I come to you today as the leader of the United Church of Christ in Massachusetts. With 360 congregations, 820 pastors and 60,000 members we are the largest Protestant denomination in the Commonwealth. I am also the national spokesperson on Climate Change for the United Church of Christ. In what follows, I will represent the views and actions of our 5,000 congregations across the United States.

- Since 1975 the national Synod of the United Church of Christ has passed dozens of resolutions on protecting the environment, global warming and climate change.
- In 1982 the United Church of Christ introduced America to the term “environmental racism,” and in 1987 we released a widely read report, “Toxic Wastes and Race in the United States – A National Report on the Racial and Socio-Economic Characteristics of Communities with Hazardous Waste Sites.”
- Like most of mainline Protestantism in America, while the United Church of Christ is grounded in faith, we are also informed by science. Since our origins in Massachusetts Bay Colony in 1620, we have lifted up the countless ways people of faith can be intellectually honest and at home in a scientific era.¹
- In 2017, two national surveys of UCC members revealed that climate change was identified as the top issue the UCC as a church needs to focus on going forward.²
- At our national Synod in July 2017, **97%** of our national delegates voted in favor of a resolution titled **“The Earth Is the Lord’s – Not Ours to Wreck -- Imperatives for A New Moral Era.”** In that resolution, we committed “to resist all expansion of fossil fuel infrastructure and demand new sources of renewable energy that are accessible to all communities.”

Today, I come before you representing the 5,000 congregations and 1,000,000 members of the United Church of Christ. We are stakeholders in the environment which you have sworn to protect. Like most Americans, we accept mainstream science, which tells us that the decisions you are making will determine what sort of world our children and grandchildren will inhabit. We are now living on the hinge of history, and because you have been placed in a position of leadership and influence, the weight of history’s judgement is now upon your shoulders. Like your predecessors, you have the responsibility to protect our country from pollution of all kinds, including CO2 and other greenhouse gases. Purging your agency of environmental and climate scientists, discrediting their research as biased, and privileging the opinions of scientists paid by the fossil fuel industry violates the vocation to which you have been called as the Administrator of the EPA.

For the sake of our children, grandchildren and unborn generations, we ask you to hear us -- as representatives of tens of millions of people of faith, all of whom are stakeholders in the EPA and in God’s creation – hear us. Provide the EPA and our country with leadership, enforce policies and promote innovation that will allow the next generation to at least forgive us for what we and a few generations before us have already caused. Overcome the false and destructive divide that dominates climate policy and conversation, and refocus this nation on providing the next generation with what is their Constitutional right to inherit a world not wrecked by climate change.

¹ http://d3n8a8pro7vhmx.cloudfront.net/unitedchurchofchrist/legacy_url/1489/pastoral-letter.pdf?1418424941

² http://www.ucc.org/news_task_force_identifies_future_priorities_for_ucc_focus_03142017