CLIMATE CHANGE and AFRICAN-AMERICAN COMMUNITIES

CLIMATE CHANGE is caused by the warming of our Earth due to human activity. Electricity, heating, transportation, and food production release heat-trapping climate pollution into the atmosphere, causing the Earth to warm. There are devastating consequences for all of God’s creatures, including human beings, on an ever-warming Earth, including rise in sea levels, heat waves, droughts, extreme storms, loss of species, and more diseases like Zika and malaria. Global climate change is threatening the lives and well-being of God’s Creation.

CLIMATE CHANGE HURTS THE MOST VULNERABLE.

Fighting climate change is a fight for social justice and for human rights. African-Americans are on the frontline of the social, environmental, and economic upheaval caused by climate change. This is an example of environmental racism. The issues that face the African-American community now will only get worse as temperatures rise.

**Extreme weather events.** Climate change will bring about more intense storms. As we saw with Hurricane Katrina and Hurricane Sandy, low-income communities and communities of color are much more vulnerable to extreme weather events. A year after Hurricane Katrina, only 40% of displaced black residents had been able to return to New Orleans compared to 69% of displaced white residents due to major discrepancies in which houses were destroyed or uninhabitable.

**Health.** Climate change will exacerbate existing health issues in the African-American community. Currently, African-Americans are nearly three times as likely to be hospitalized or killed by asthma than whites and in Baltimore City, 16.1% of black children are afflicted with asthma in comparison to 7.8% of white children. A 2007 study by the University of Michigan found that more than half of the population in the U.S. living within 2 miles of a hazardous waste facility, including coal and gas plants, trash incinerators, and landfills, are people of color. When summer temperatures rise due to global warming, air quality will get worse and asthma attacks will increase.
WE ARE BUILDING A CLIMATE JUSTICE MOVEMENT TOWARDS A JUST, SUSTAINABLE, AND HEALTHY WORLD FOR ALL OF GOD’S CREATION, NOW AND FOR GENERATIONS TO COME. THIS IS THE WORK OF BUILDING GOD’S KINGDOM.

- We need a just transition to a society that is free of fossil fuels in order to avoid the worst effects of climate change. Without careful planning, this kind of economic transition will strike hardest at those without resources or savings to adapt. We must unite the movements of racial and economic justice with our fight to halt climate change.

- The mainstream white-led environmental movement has failed to include people of color, indigenous people, and low-income communities. **African-Americans need to have a seat at the table** to ensure that equity remains a central concern in any energy and environmental policy. **The African-American Church has been and must continue to be a powerful force for social, economic, and environmental justice.**

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4 National Council of Churches USA, “Climate and Church: How Global Climate Change Will Impact Core Church Ministries.”