

## **Introduction to the Earth Charter Initiative in CSS**

In 2019 the ELCA Church Wide Assembly endorsed the Earth Charter. This document presents values and principles for achieving sustainable development by living into a mindset of global interdependence and shared responsibility to care for creation. The charter and its principles align well with ELCA social teachings and the Social Statement on Caring for Creation: Vision, Hope, and Justice. Within the charter there are four pillars: 1) Respect and Care for the Community of Life; 2) Ecological Integrity; 3) Social and Economic Justice; 4) Democracy, Nonviolence and Peace.

What does endorsement look like in the Central States Synod? There is an Earth Charter Implementation Team that is working with congregations to introduce the Earth Charter and take actions locally. There are currently nine ministries active in Kansas and Missouri. Each is determining the interests, concerns and passions that will lead to actions and projects in their community in 2021. Similar efforts are being undertaken in the New England, Metro New York and the Delaware-Maryland Synods, and we are sharing our learnings and outcomes. We welcome congregations who are interested in participating at any time. In addition, there is a Lutherans Restoring Creation Team to address awareness, education and actions around environmental issues and climate solutions at state and local levels.

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