**A Letter to the Congregations of the Brethren**

Dear Brothers and Sisters,

What to say about climate change? I don’t know where to start. We’ve had David Radcliff among us for decades, he has warned and instructed. There have been others whose lives *for years* have shown real simplicity, un-conformed to the small “g” god of this world. I know that some listened, and, yet, others turned away. God has indeed been working among us, encouraging us, loving us, and, yet, letting us each do our own thing. And don’t presume upon God. God allowed the holocaust, God allowed this plague, God allows for sin and death, even the death of His Son. The Spirit is what turns us to God and turns us to life. The kingdom is among us. We are privileged to live in the kingdom.

So, you know the drill. Deeper droughts, forests dying, forests aflame, floods, and hurricanes, and heat, more of it. Record temperatures upon record temperatures. Lives lost. Homes ruined. Businesses lost. And all the displacement: people at the border clamoring to find a safe place for their children. Getting worse year upon year. Just as predicted.

And the litany of scripture should be boring to you; it’s been pulled out time and again. It is the Lord’s world. With our whole beings we are to love our neighbors as we love ourselves as we love our God. The kingdom is *here.*  The kingdom is within and among us. And we are to call out to God every day to make this earth like heaven. We are to do to others as we would have done to ourselves.

But instead of hearing and living into the Good News, we who have had a livable climate, we who have loved living in it, have taken it for granted, and we stopped up our ears and we let it go to waste for our neighbors, even our own children and their children.

So, what do we do after we repent our stagnating fear?

First, there are things to do as an individual. Second, there are things to do as a good citizen.

First, as an individual, do significant things first. They might not be cheap, but this world is so loved by God.

1. Drive electric.

2. Heat your water with an electric hybrid air sourced heat pump.

3. Heat your home with an electric hybrid air sourced heat pump.

4. Insulate and seal up your house.

5. Walk or bike as much as possible.

6. Eat less meat or, if you can, eat locally sourced meat.

7. Fly only when absolutely necessary.

8. If you have a business, do these things at your larger scale. If doing them puts you at a competitive disadvantage, look for ways of getting others with like businesses to do them, too. If such is impossible, remember that government can create a level playing field through regulation.

If you do these things, you will learn how it all works, you can become a leader for your friends and neighbors. As time goes by and these technological changes become routine, their prices will decline. But do not wait! The crisis is now. Your friends and neighbors need to see these things now. No one wins if we all attempt to be last over the finish line. The kingdom wins when you lead.

Second, act as a good citizen— in America “good citizenship” is not passively enduring an autocrat as in Peter’s day, but rather living into the messy freedom of responsible adult action. One uses one’s voice, one uses one’s skill in organizing to magnify the people’s voice, and, if need be, one uses one’s non-violent, turning-enemy-into-friend resistance against evil.

1. See that your electric utility ends the use of coal and greatly reduces the burning of natural gas as soon as feasible. Replace the fossil sources of energy with wind, solar, and battery storage. Our Denver utility has figured out that it can be 85% renewable by 2030. We in the environmental community think that they can get there faster than 2030. But the point is that while 85% is not 100%, mainly renewable electricity creates vastly cleaner power than simply burning gas, oil, or coal. And Xcel Energy is a fiscally conservative company with many engineers who would not commit to 85% renewable if they hadn’t figured out that they could profitably do just that. And for us customers, renewable energy turns out to be cheaper to use.

2. Convince your (local/state/national) representatives that the climate crisis is a collective problem. As we have collectively created our current energy system, so we must collectively make necessary changes.

3. Convince your (local/state/national) representatives that the climate crisis is a moral problem. Be people of faith, represent the kingdom and its values, especially towards those of lessor means who suffer first the consequences of climate change.

4. Speak to your community. Stand for life in the kingdom. Don’t passively wait for them to rearrange their lives to come to you, find ways to come to them. Our national life is embedded with the fossil fuel industry. People need to see and understand an alternative that allows them to thrive. Be that for them.

Brothers and sisters, much more has been written about these points as well as other things not mentioned. If you haven’t already, form a group of persons called to address the climate crisis. Study these things together.

And now that you have considered the gravity of what is ahead for you, pray.

Pray for those who already suffer the effects of our burning fossil fuels. Pray for those whose land becomes too dry to farm. Pray for those whose crops no longer produce. Pray for those who have been victims of hurricanes, floods, fires, heat waves. Pray for a vision to see the disaster across the world. Pray for the witness of the church. Pray for your children and their children and their children’s children. Pray for their spirits as they face a world much more difficult than what we have enjoyed. Pray for courage to stand against the god of this world and pray that you conform as best you might to the kingdom proclaimed by our Lord. Pray in your grief of what is lost. Pray for God’s new thing which is being born in this moment.  
  
May you taste the blessings,  
  
Jeff Neuman-Lee   
Denver, Colorado  
November 12, 2021

*Jeff is willing to meet with individuals and church groups wanting to further discuss these things.*