

CLIMATE TALK

Larry Jorstad

Dear Friends and Neighbors

“We the People...” We are blessed people, who live on and around Lake Superior, blessed people with the extraordinary beauty of the area, but our area is changing, our world is changing, our climate is changing.

I wear three hats. I am a Farmer, a Pastor and a Grandfather. As a farmer, the living and working of the land is to have an ongoing awareness of weather and the gradual but significant changes we are experiencing-- heat or cold, rain or lack thereof and significant impacts of extreme storms.

As a pastor, and we as people of faith are often reminded that this world, this creation and all that is in it, is from God. We also are reminded that we are to care for it and manage it. “Be fruitful and multiply, and fill the earth and subdue it; and have dominion over the fish of the sea and over the birds of the air and over every living thing that moves upon the earth.”

We have found this common translation misinterpreted over time and used to abuse creation and use up our natural resources. A better translation is “...to protect and care for creation, to be responsible for it.” We are called to not sit back and assume that God will take care of everything or that the future of the world is safely in God’s hands. Instead, we are called to be actively engaged in caring for the world and our environment every day. I believe that we have been given a special responsibility -- and the ability -- to respond on behalf of the earth’s care, for all those who will inherit it from us.

This leads then to the third hat that I wear and that is as a grandfather who loves and is concerned for my two grandchildren and the world that they are inheriting. A world that I see as being in trouble. When I see the beautiful woods behind my home clear cut and gone, I feel physically ill and a tear comes to my eye. This past summer I see the effects and damage from powerful storms, trees blown down, rivers flooding, bridges and roads washed away and homes damaged. I was seeing the destructive effects of climate and climate change first hand here in Ashland and Bayfield Counties.

“We the people...” these words from our U.S. Constitution often run through my mind. I think of us, neighbor and friends, living and caring for each other, but also challenged to live and care for this beautiful area as well. It’s always a challenge to care for each other as neighbor and now an even bigger challenge is to deal with the climate change that is happening. So, we together, living in this area, can and need to share in this challenge, working on caring for our earth.



What can we do? We can read and learn about climate change and the challenge before us, to become more informed. We can talk to others, listening to what others think and try to understand where they come from on this issue. We can also work at making a difference. We can plant trees, plant a garden and buy locally. We can walk more, drive less. We can drive for better mileage by slowing down and driving more efficient vehicles. We can gather with others to learn and work on change like the Chequamegon area Citizens Climate Lobby group. There is also the important work of communicating with our state and national representatives telling them of our concerns. These are but a few of the many things that we can do to care for our world, a world that we are passing on to our children and the next generation.

(Larry Jorstad and his wife are the owners of Good Earth Gardens in Bayfield. He is a Lutheran pastor serving Emmanuel Lutheran Cornucopia and Bethesda Lutheran Bayfield. He has three adult children and two grandchildren.)

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