

Draft of a Social Message on Earth’s Climate Crisis

Final Survey Responses

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Overview

The Evangelical Church in America (ELCA) is currently drafting a social message on Earth’s climate crisis. As part of the process, ELCA members and leaders were invited to read the draft and provide feedback through an online survey. The draft and survey were posted in late September 2022, and responses were collected through Dec. 5, 2022.

Survey Results

The social statement draft is divided into seven sections, and the survey asked participants to answer questions about each section. There were also several demographic questions at the end of the survey. A total of 530 participants completed the survey. (See Appendix A for a complete set of frequencies.) The first question asked about the introduction. Using a five-point rating scale where 1 = “not at all” and 5 = “very,” participants were asked to rate how well the purpose of the social message was conveyed. Seventy percent of the participants felt the purpose was conveyed “well” or “very well” (ratings of 4 or 5, with an average rating of 4.04).

Section 1 Responses: How are Christians called to care for creation?

In response to Section 1, participants were asked to rate how well the section presented the biblical basis for humans to care for creation. Using the same five-point rating scale, 79% of the participants felt it was presented “well” or “very well” (ratings of 4 or 5, with an average rating of 4.18). When asked how helpful they found having the biblical texts along the side for convenience, 71% of the participants rated it “helpful” or “very helpful” (ratings of 4 or 5, with an average rating of 4.03).

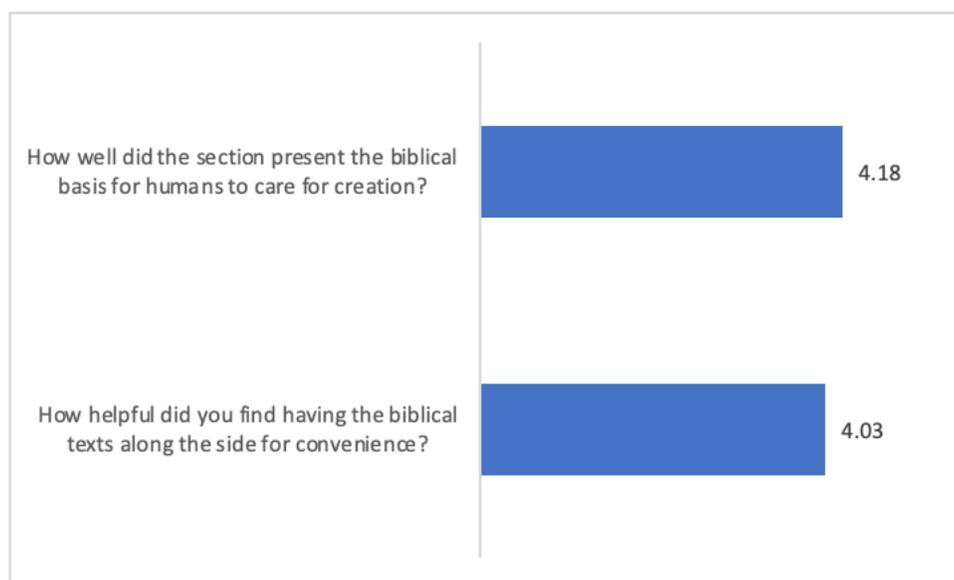


Figure 1: Section 1 Mean Ratings

Each section had two open-ended questions where participants had the option to type in their own comments. Responses to the open-ended questions were coded to find common themes. (See Appendix B for a complete list of comments.)

The first open-ended question asked participants what idea they would add to the section. A total of 126 comments were coded for this question. Of those comments, the most common was adding “a biblical reference that isn’t from Genesis” (21%). Several participants would add “humans are interdependent with all creation” (18%), while others felt “climate change is not real” or “it’s too political” (18%). A few participants suggested that the draft “focus on stewardship” (13%), while others felt “the translation of the Hebrew ‘have dominion over’ and ‘subdue’ are not accurate in lines 78-81” (12%).

The second open-ended question asked participants what idea they would delete from the section. A total of 55 comments were coded for this question. Of those comments the most common was “all of it should be deleted” and “this should not be a social message” (29%). Several participants would delete or change “lines 78-81, the translation of ‘have dominion over’ and ‘subdue’” (24%). A few participants suggested, “Delete line 94 because climate change is not the pinnacle of the curse of creation” (16%).

Section 2 Responses: Why are changes in Earth’s atmosphere affecting our climate?

In Section 2 participants were asked to rate how clear the explanation was of why changes in Earth’s atmosphere affect climate, using the same five-point rating scale described above. Seventy-four percent of the participants rated it as “clear” or “very clear” (ratings of 4 or 5, with an average rating of 4.07). (See Figure 2.) When participants were asked to rate how fairly they thought the scientific facts were represented, 72% rated the section “fair” or “very fair” (ratings of 4 or 5, with an average rating of 4.00). Finally, participants rated how helpful they found the charts in explaining changes in Earth’s atmosphere. Sixty-eight percent felt the charts were “helpful” or “very helpful” (ratings of 4 or 5, with an average rating of 3.88).

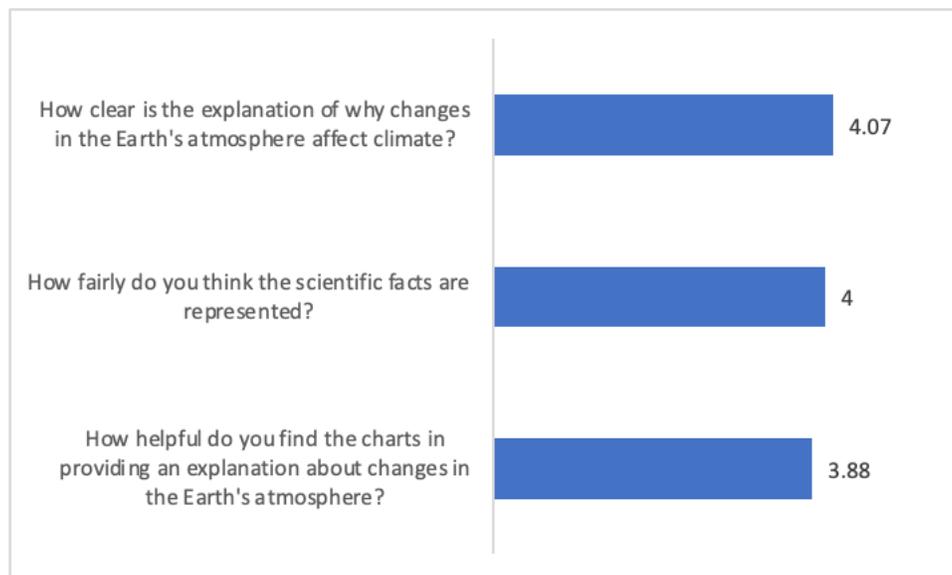


Figure 2: Section 2 Mean Ratings

For the first open-ended question in Section 2, participants were asked what idea they would add to the

section. A total of 88 comments were coded for this question. Of those comments, the most common response was that the section was “one-sided and should present other arguments” (30%). Several participants suggested that in “line 126, add that industrialized nations and the United States are the worst emitters” (14%). A few participants felt that there were “too many charts and graphs” and that “facts, examples and consequences make more of an impact” (14%). Others suggested adding in line 115 “although there are many gasses that contribute to the warming effect, some are more potent than others” (8%). A few participants felt “the church should stay out of politics” (6%), while others suggested adding a “paragraph explaining the Keeling curve chart” (6%).

The second open-ended question asked what participants would delete from the section. There were a total of 51 comments coded for this question. Of those comments the most common was that the section was “too long” and “a brief summary with references to data” would be better (31%). Several participants made the suggestion to “delete the whole section” (22%). A few participants felt the section was “biased and only presents one side” (12%), while others felt “‘perfectly calibrated 14 degrees Celsius’ (line 112) is misleading” (8%). A few participants said the “charts look like screenshots, not professional” (8%).

Section 3 Responses: What are the impacts of global warming and climate change?

In Section 3 participants rated how clear the explanation of the impacts of global warming and climate change were, using the same five-point rating scale described above. Seventy-four percent of the participants rated it “clear” or “very clear” (ratings of 4 or 5, with an average rating of 4.05). (See Figure 3.) When asked how fairly they thought the facts were represented, 68% of the participants rated it “fair” or “very fair” (ratings of 4 or 5, with an average rating of 3.91). Finally, participants were asked how helpful the chart (Figure 4) was in explaining the link between climate change and human health. Sixty-five percent of the participants rated it as “helpful” or “very helpful” (ratings of 4 or 5, with an average rating of 3.78).

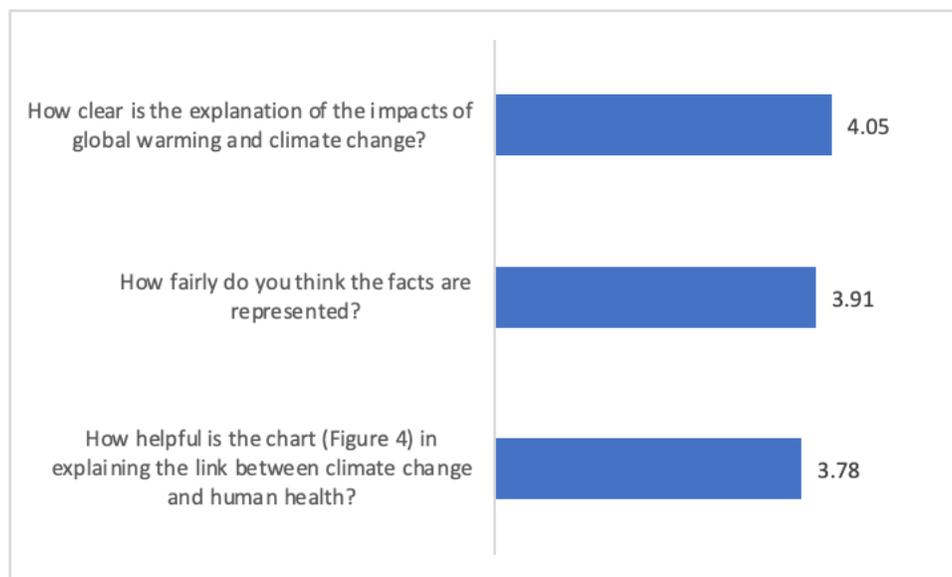


Figure 3: Section 3 Mean Ratings

Similar to previous sections, the first open-ended question asked what idea participants would add to the section. A total of 104 comments were coded for this question. Of those comments the most

common response was that the section was “too focused on humans, and it should talk more about the effects on plants and animals” (26%). Several participants felt the section should “provide evidence from the other side of the debate” (19%). A few said the section “needs more concrete examples” (14%), while others commented “how the rich have options could be emphasized more (lines 214-215)” (12%). A few participants suggested that the section “focus on the issue of justice resulting from climate” (8%).

As for suggestions of what to delete from this section, there were a total of 45 comments coded. Of those comments the most common responses were “Figure 4 (line 169) should be deleted and seems deceiving” (24%) and “lines 209-215 should be deleted because the references to racism are off-topic” (24%). A few participants suggested the “whole section should be deleted” (13%), while others suggested deleting “lines 195-199 about climate anxiety” (11%).

Section 4 Responses: Are we facing a critical moment with regard to Earth’s climate?

Section 4 introduced the concept of a “kairos moment,” or the critical moment we face regarding Earth’s climate. The first question asked if participants had ever heard of a “kairos moment.” Sixty-four percent of the participants said they had heard this term, while 29% said “no” and 7% were “not sure.”

Participants were asked to rate how well they understood the concept of kairos, using the same five-point rating scale described above. Eighty percent of the participants said they understood it “well” or “very well” (ratings of 4 or 5, with an average rating of 4.25). (See Figure 4.) Finally, participants were asked how useful they found the concept of kairos from a faith standpoint for explaining the character of the moment and the Christian calling regarding climate. Sixty-two percent of the participants felt it was “useful” or “very useful” (ratings of 4 or 5, with an average rating of 3.68).

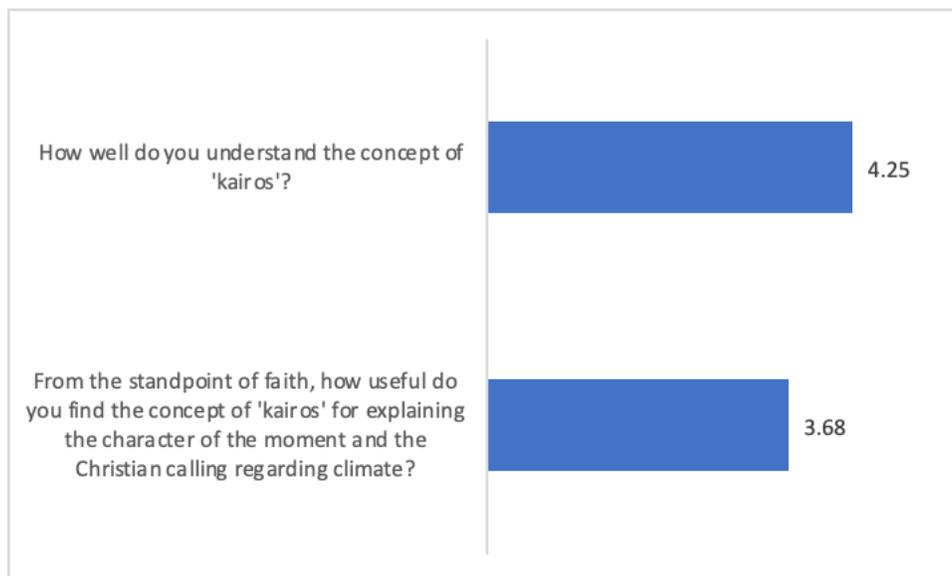


Figure 4: Section 4 Mean Ratings

As in previous sections, participants were asked what idea they would add to this section. A total of 69 responses were coded for this question. Of those comments the most common response was “remove the kairos concept because this is not a crisis moment” (30%). Others suggested the section include a “stronger emphasis on the urgency of the crisis” (22%). A few of the participants suggested, “Add

biblical references of 'kairos' (line 248)" (12%).

For what to delete from the section, 36 responses were coded. The most common suggestion was "delete the whole section" (28%). Several participants felt climate change is "not a crisis" (19%), while others suggested, "Remove the 'kairos' discussion" (17%). A few participants suggested that the "'salvific' context is confusing and not defined (line 254)" (14%).

Section 5 Responses: How should Christians begin to respond to this 'kairos' moment?

Section 5 did not include any rating scale questions, but participants were asked what idea they would add to the section. A total of 120 comments were coded for this question. Of those comments, the most common response was that this section should include "suggestions for individual lifestyle changes or concrete actions" (33%). Several participants felt it should "offer a counter perspective" or "stay out of politics" (18%). A few participants suggested the section "needs to address job re-training for fossil fuel workers (lines 285-286)" (8%). Finally, a few participants suggested the section focus on "prayer and faith in God's direction" (8%), while others suggested "the response must begin with confession and forgiveness (line 268)" (7%).

When the survey asked what idea should be deleted from the section, a total of 43 comments were coded. The most common suggestion was "delete the whole section" (23%), while others suggested that the writer "tone down the guilt and blame" (21%). A few participants suggested "delete 'colonialism,' which will alienate some people (line 307)" (14%). Others felt "immigration is a different topic and will distract focus from the section (lines 278-283)" (9%).

Section 6 Responses: What insights from ELCA teaching are helpful?

In Section 6, three dimensions of climate justice were introduced: intragenerational, intergenerational and intersectional. Participants were asked to rate how helpful the explanations were for each of these three dimensions, using the same five-point rating scale described above. For the intragenerational dimension, 56% of the participants rated it as "helpful" or "very helpful" (ratings of 4 or 5, with an average rating of 3.53). (See Figure 5.) For the intergenerational dimension, 59% of the participants rated it as "helpful" or "very helpful" (ratings of 4 or 5, with an average rating of 3.62). Finally, for the intersectional dimension, 56% of the participants rated it as "helpful" or "very helpful" (ratings of 4 or 5, with an average rating of 3.47).

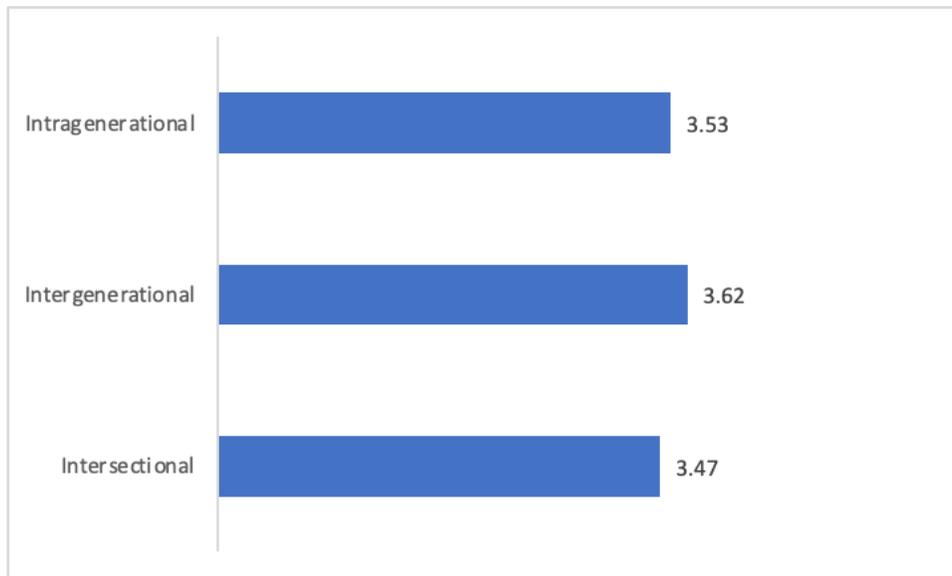


Figure 5: Section 6 Mean Ratings for Three Dimensions of Climate Justice

Next, the draft outlined four moral principles: participation, solidarity, sufficiency and sustainability. Participants were asked to rate how clear the explanations were for each of these four principles, using the same five-point rating scale described above. For participation, 69% of the participants rated the explanation “clear” or “very clear” (ratings of 4 or 5, with an average rating of 3.83). (See Figure 6.) For solidarity, 66% of the participants rated the explanation “clear” or “very clear” (ratings of 4 or 5, with an average rating of 3.77). Similarly, for sufficiency, 66% of the participants rated the explanations “clear” or “very clear” (ratings of 4 or 5, with an average rating of 3.78). Finally, for sustainability, 69% of the participants rated the explanation “clear” or “very clear” (ratings of 4 or 5, with an average rating of 3.85).

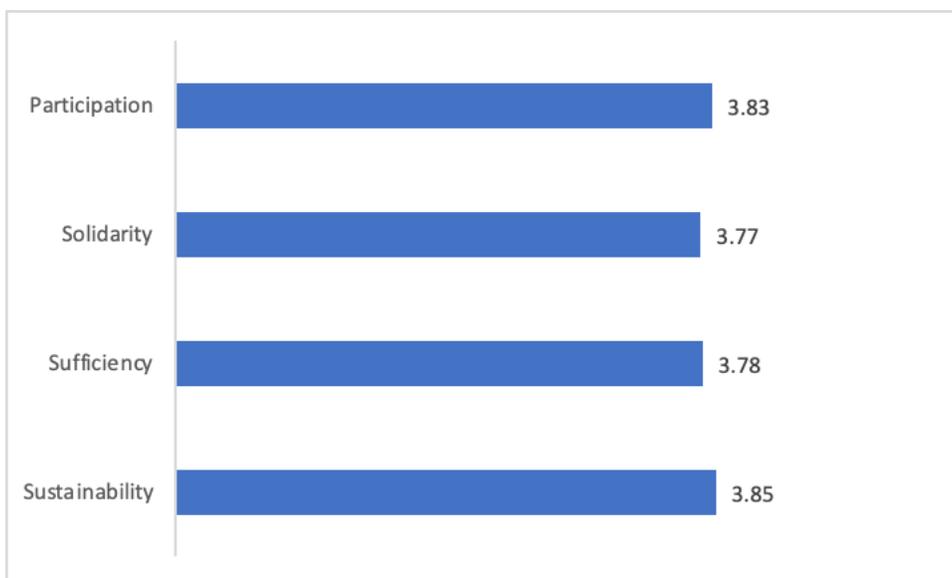


Figure 6: Section 6 Mean Ratings for Four Moral Principles

Following the pattern of the previous sections, participants were asked what idea they would add to the section. A total of 62 comments were coded for this question. Of those comments, the most common

response was “all forms of life are important, not just humans (lines 346-371)” (21%). Several participants suggested, “Delete the whole section” (16%). A few participants felt there needed to be a “better explanation of the four moral principles” and it should be “more rooted in Scripture” (13%). A few participants suggested that “to have sustainability we need to shift every system and narrative (line 368)” (10%). Finally, others commented, “Line 359 should use the full quote” and “Hold the oil and gas industry responsible” (8%).

When the survey asked what idea should be deleted from the section, a total of 43 comments were coded. Of those comments, the most common response was “delete the whole section” (28%). Several participants suggested “delete the precautionary principle (lines 389-394)” (19%). A few participants suggested the “wording is clumsy regarding the three dimensions of climate justice (lines 334-344)” (14%). Others felt “‘this church will be in solidarity with industry’ is confusing (line 359)” (12%).

Section 7: How does the ELCA teach that climate change should be addressed?

In Section 7 four convictions were outlined for the ELCA to address global warming and climate change. Participants were asked to rate how important each of these convictions were in the message, using the same five-point rating scale described above. Seventy percent of the participants rated Item A “important” or “very important” (ratings of 4 or 5, with an average rating of 3.99). (See Figure 7.) Sixty-seven percent of participants rated Item B “important” or “very important” (ratings of 4 or 5, with an average rating of 3.90). Sixty-three percent of the participants rated Item C “important” or “very important” (ratings of 4 or 5, with an average rating of 3.78). Finally, 71% of the participants rated Item D “important” or “very important” (ratings of 4 or 5, with an average rating of 4.01).

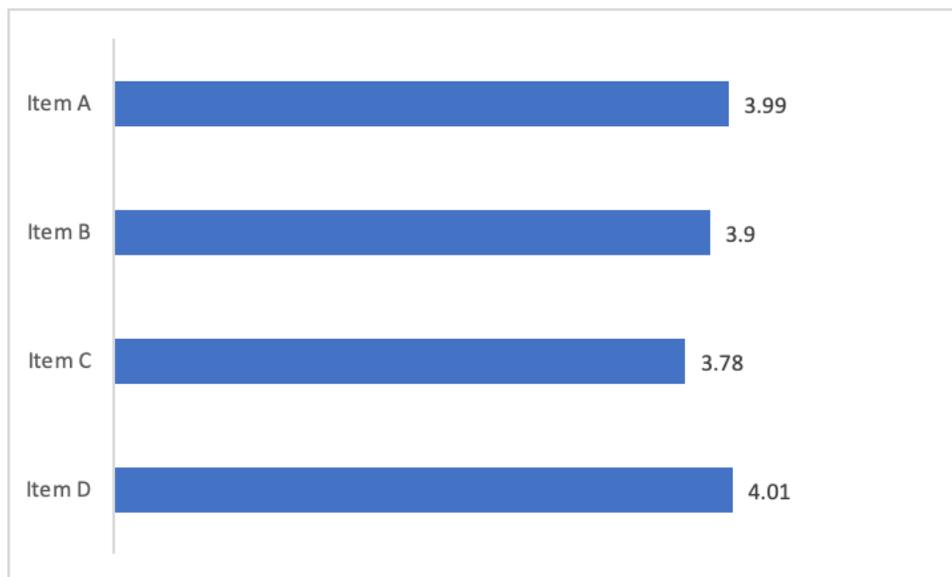


Figure 7: Section 7 Mean Ratings for Four Convictions

Next, participants were asked how clear the convictions were for the ELCA to address global warming and climate change, using the same five-point rating scale described above. Seventy-four percent of participants rated it “clear” or “very clear” (ratings of 4 or 5, with an average rating of 4.04). (See Figure 8.) When asked if they thought that pursuing these goals and actions would make a difference in the overall problem of Earth’s climate crisis, 53% of the participants gave ratings of 4 or 5, with an average rating of 3.45.

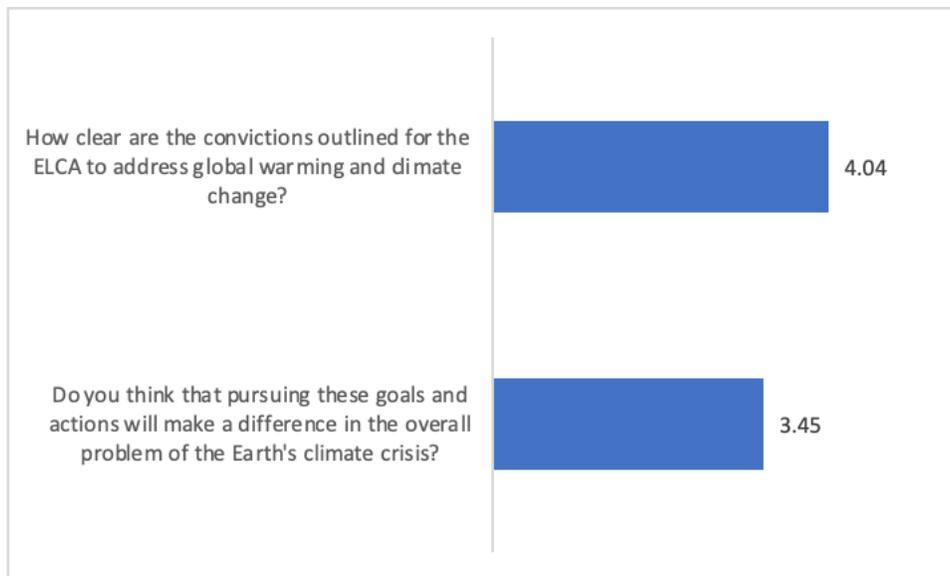


Figure 8: Section 7 Mean Ratings

This section had three open-ended questions, with the first asking for general comments about the convictions. A total of 138 comments were coded for this question. Of those comments the most common response was “this perspective doesn’t represent the consensus of the ELCA membership” (27%). Others commented that these were “concrete ideas that can be put to use” and thought it was a “great section” (20%). Many participants felt “these are admirable goals, but difficult to implement” (19%). Several participants said that “until the world addresses the issue it will only have a slight impact” (9%). A few participants suggested, “Add something about climate optimism, especially for young people” (5%), while others felt it was “too academic and complicated for the average person” (4%). A few participants felt that “Item B is not very clear, especially if the reader misses ‘rejects’” (4%).

Next, participants were asked what idea they would add to the section. A total of 54 comments were coded for this question. Of those comments, the most common response was adding to the section “specific things each person can do in their home and church to reduce their negative impact” (22%). Several participants said the “church should not be involved in politics” (13%), while others “hope this information will get down to each congregation and be part of an ongoing communication” (11%). A couple participants suggested, “Add something more specific about working to address and combat climate justice–related issues” (7%). Finally, a couple participants suggested adding “support strategies that enable adaptation to climate change, including retraining fossil fuel workers to work in the ‘green energy’ sector” (7%).

The last open-ended question in this section asked what idea participants would delete. A total of 30 comments were coded for this question. The most common suggestion was to “delete the whole section” (30%). A few participants suggested, “Delete lines 484-489, since ‘raise searching questions’ seems very low-commitment” (23%). Others felt that “a lot of points in A, B and C are inflammatory and echo political campaigns of the most progressive” (13%). A couple participants felt that “lines 435-437 should be deleted, because the message states we can agree on ends and disagree on means, then tries to awkwardly force-fit a highly specific proposal” (7%). Finally, a couple participants suggested, “Delete lines 400-404, what is the point?” (7%), while others suggested deleting “line 416, where does ‘humility’ enter the argument?” (7%).

Overall Questions About the Draft

The last section asked two questions about the draft as a whole. First, participants were asked to rate how helpful they found the draft in thinking about Earth’s climate crisis from a faith perspective and about what we can do to address the issue, using the same five-point rating scale described above. Sixty-five percent of the participants rated the draft “helpful” or “very helpful” (ratings of 4 or 5, with an average rating of 3.78).

The final open-ended question asked for overall comments about the draft as a whole. A total of 207 comments were coded for this question. Of those comments, the most common response was “thank you” with comments that the draft was “well done” (42%). On the other hand, many participants felt that this topic is “too political, shouldn’t be a social message, and will drive members away” (19%). Several participants felt it was “too long” and “needs an executive summary” (11%), while others felt it “needs more specific actions people can take” (9%). Some participants said the “draft is good but one-sided” (3%), and others felt there should be “more about overconsumption and greed” (3%). Finally, a few participants felt it was “long overdue” (3%), while others said the draft “focuses too much on the harm caused to humans and not the rest of creation” (3%).

Demographic Questions

The survey concluded with several demographic questions to give us a picture of who participated in the survey. When asked how they identify, 50% of the participants chose “man” and about 42% chose “woman.” About 1% of participants chose “non-binary,” and 7% preferred not to answer.

The large majority of commenters were 55 years or older (78%). (See Figure 9.) Two participants were 18 to 24 years old (1%), 6% were 25 to 34 years old, 7% were 35 to 44 years old, and 9% were 45 to 54 years old.

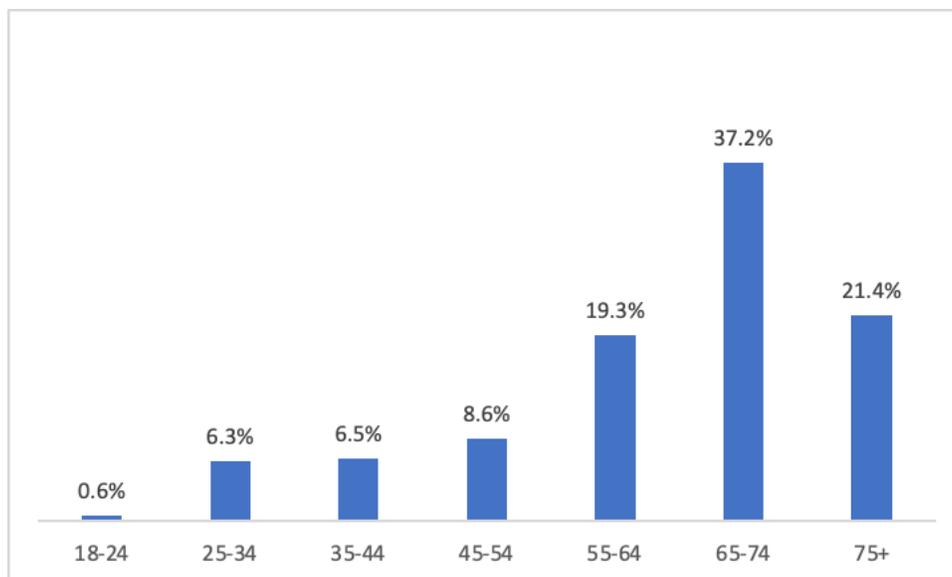


Figure 9: Age of Participants

As for race or ethnicity, the large majority identified as white (88%). About 9% of participants

identified as “other,” with 1% choosing “multiracial.” Two participants identified as American Indian/Alaska Native (1%), two participants identified as African American/Black (1%), and one participant identified as Asian/Pacific Islander (0.3%).

Next, participants were asked to indicate their highest level of academic achievement. The large majority of participants had a bachelor’s degree or higher (91%). (See Figure 10.) One participant chose “less than high school” (0.3%) and about 1% had a high school diploma or GED. About 6% of the participants chose “some college,” while about 2% had an associate’s degree.

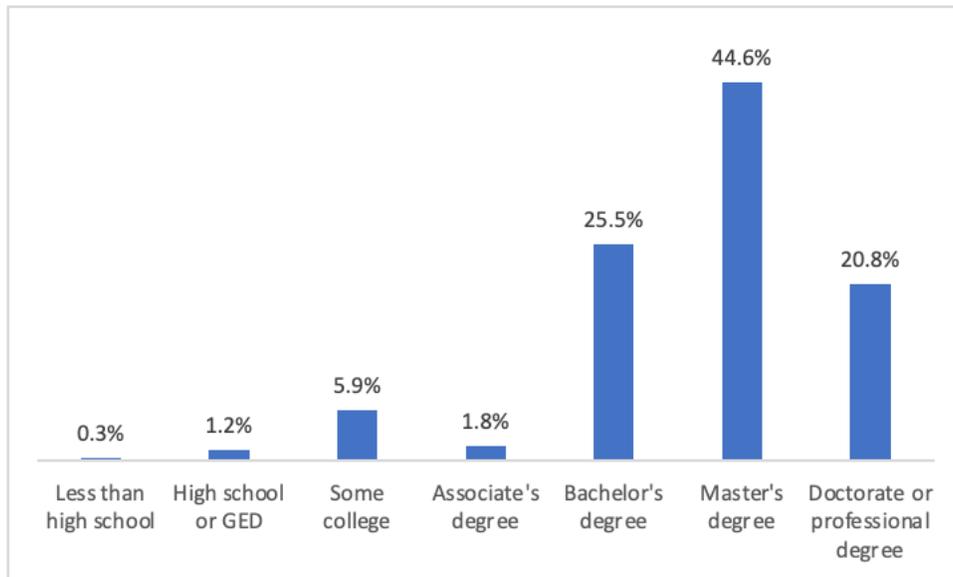


Figure 10: Education Level of Participants

Finally, we asked if participants were rostered leaders or laypeople. The large majority of participants were lay members and/or participants in an ELCA congregation (67%). About 21% were ministers of Word and Sacrament, and about 1% were ministers of Word and Service. About 11% of the participants chose “other.”

Differences by Gender Identity, Age and Roster Status

We examined the rating scale questions and compared the responses of women and men to look for significant differences.¹ There were significant differences for all the questions except for how well they understood the concept of kairos. Interestingly, women gave higher ratings compared to men for all the questions that had significant differences. (See Appendix C for a complete list of means.)

Next, we compared age groups to look for possible differences. Three age categories were created: 44 or younger, 45 to 64, and 65 or older. None of the comparisons by age was significant.

We also looked at the roster status of participants to compare responses. Rostered ministers included both ministers of Word and Sacrament and ministers of Word and Service. For several questions, rostered ministers gave higher ratings than lay participants did. (See Figure 11.) Rostered ministers found the biblical texts more helpful and better understood the concept of kairos compared to lay

¹ All reported differences are significant at the .05 level.

participants. In addition, rostered ministers gave higher ratings for the draft’s explanation of intergenerational climate justice and rated Item B more important than lay participants did. Finally, rostered ministers were more optimistic than lay participants that pursuing the goals and actions in the draft would make a difference in the overall problem of Earth’s climate crisis.

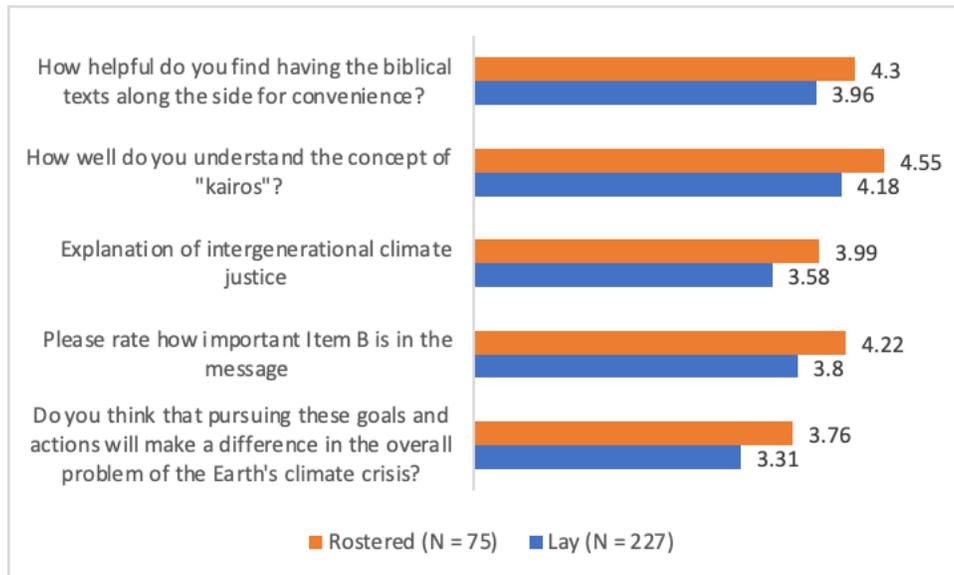


Figure 11: Differences by Roster Status

Summary and Conclusions

Overall, the initial responses to the draft of the social message on Earth’s climate crisis were positive. All the rating scale means were 3.5 or above on a five-point scale. When participants were asked to rate how helpful they found the draft in thinking about Earth’s climate crisis from a faith perspective and what we can do to address the issue, the average rating was 3.78 out of 5.

Comments to the open-ended questions were a bit more varied, with some participants feeling there shouldn’t be a social message on climate change because they don’t believe the ELCA should be involved in politics, or that climate change is not a crisis. On the other hand, many participants felt this draft was long overdue and thought even more should be done to address the climate crisis.

There were several common themes found throughout the comments to different sections of the draft. First, many participants commented that the draft was one-sided and that they would have liked to see more evidence presented from opposing views. Several people expressed concern that the draft was too long and academic and that few people in the pews would read the entire document. Many participants would have liked suggestions of more specific actions that people can take at home and at church. Finally, several people felt the draft was too focused on the harm to humans and didn’t include enough about the whole of creation, including plants and animals.

The demographic characteristics of the participants were very similar to the overall characteristics of ELCA members. About three-fourths of the participants were 55 or older, and 88% identified as white. Most participants were highly educated, with 91% having earned a bachelor’s degree or higher. About two-thirds of the participants were lay members of an ELCA congregation.

There were many differences by gender identity, with women giving higher ratings for all the questions except one. We also found several differences by roster status, with rostered ministers giving higher ratings than lay participants.

Appendix A
 Frequencies: Research Survey
 Draft of a Social Message on Earth's Climate Crisis
 Final Report (N = 530)²

Introduction

1. In the introductory paragraphs, how well is the purpose of this social message, regarding climate change, conveyed?

1-not at all	2	3-somewhat	4	5-very	Don't know	Mean
6.3%	5.6	16.1	19.0	50.5	2.5	4.04

Section 1: How are Christians called to care for creation?

2. In Section 1, how well did the section present the biblical basis for humans to care for creation?

1-not at all	2	3-somewhat	4	5-very	Don't know	Mean
5.7	3.7	11.5	25.0	53.9	0.2	4.18

3. How helpful do you find having the biblical texts along the side for convenience?

1-not at all	2	3-somewhat	4	5-very	Don't know	Mean
6.4	7.1	15.4	18.6	52.0	0.5	4.03

4. (Optional) If you could *add* one idea to this section, what would it be? (Please reference a line number for each suggestion.) (See Appendix B for comments.)

5. (Optional) If you could *delete* one idea from this section, what would it be? (Please reference a line number for each suggestion.) (See Appendix B for comments.)

Section 2: Why are changes in Earth's atmosphere affecting our climate?

6. In Section 2, how clear is the explanation of why changes in the Earth's atmosphere affect climate?

1-not at all	2	3-somewhat	4	5-very	Don't know	Mean
8.7	4.8	11.5	20.1	54.2	0.8	4.07

7. In Section 2, how fairly do you think the scientific facts are represented?

1-not at all	2	3-somewhat	4	5-very	Don't know	Mean
12.6	5.8	7.6	14.9	56.8	2.3	4.00

8. How helpful do you find the charts in providing an explanation about changes in the Earth's atmosphere?

1-not at all	2	3-somewhat	4	5-very	Don't know	Mean
12.0	7.2	12.3	17.4	50.6	0.5	3.88

9. (Optional) If you could *add* one idea to this section, what would it be? (Please reference a line

² All numbers are shown as percentages unless otherwise indicated.

number for each suggestion.) (See Appendix B for comments.)

10. (Optional) If you could *delete* one idea from this section, what would it be? (Please reference a line number for each suggestion.) (See Appendix B for comments.)

Section 3: What are the impacts of global warming and climate change?

11. In Section 3, how clear is the explanation of the impacts of global warming and climate change?

1-not at all	2	3-somewhat	4	5-very	Don't know	Mean
8.8	6.1	10.1	20.7	53.2	1.1	4.05

12. In Section 3, how fairly do you think the facts are represented?

1-not at all	2	3-somewhat	4	5-very	Don't know	Mean
12.5	7.5	9.6	14.7	53.3	2.4	3.91

13. How helpful is the chart (Figure 4) in explaining the link between climate change and human health?

1-not at all	2	3-somewhat	4	5-very	Don't know	Mean
13.4	7.5	13.4	18.2	47.1	0.5	3.78

14. (Optional) If you could *add* one idea to this section, what would it be? (Please reference a line number for each suggestion.) (See Appendix B for comments.)

15. (Optional) If you could *delete* one idea from this section, what would it be? (Please reference a line number for each suggestion.) (See Appendix B for comments.)

Section 4: Are we facing a critical moment with regard to Earth's climate?

16. Had you ever heard of a "kairos moment" before? **Yes** 63.7 **No** 29.4 **Not sure** 6.9

17. How well do you understand the concept of kairos as explained in Section 4?

1-not at all	2	3-somewhat	4	5-very	Don't know	Mean
4.2	2.9	11.8	24.5	55.3	1.3	4.25

18. From the standpoint of faith, how useful do you find the concept of kairos for explaining the character of the moment and the Christian calling regarding climate?

1-not at all	2	3-somewhat	4	5-very	Don't know	Mean
16.4	7.1	12.7	18.0	44.4	1.3	3.68

19. (Optional) If you could *add* one idea to this section, what would it be? (Please reference a line number for each suggestion.) (See Appendix B for comments.)

20. (Optional) If you could *delete* one idea from this section, what would it be? (Please reference a line number for each suggestion.) (See Appendix B for comments.)

Section 5: How should Christians begin to respond to this kairos moment?

21. (Optional) If you could *add* one idea to this section, what would it be? (Please reference a line number for each suggestion.) (See Appendix B for comments.)

22. (Optional) If you could *delete* one idea from this section, what would it be? (Please reference a line number for each suggestion.) (See Appendix B for comments.)

Section 6: What insights from ELCA social teaching are helpful?

In Section 6, how helpful is the explanation of the three dimensions of climate justice:

23. Intragenerational							
1-not at all	2	3-somewhat	4	5-very	Don't know	Mean	
14.6	7.0	20.3	23.0	32.8	2.2	3.53	
24. Intergenerational							
1-not at all	2	3-somewhat	4	5-very	Don't know	Mean	
13.6	7.1	18.8	22.6	36.2	1.6	3.62	
25. Intersectional							
1-not at all	2	3-somewhat	4	5-very	Don't know	Mean	
17.4	6.5	18.5	23.7	32.2	1.6	3.47	

In Section 6, how clear is the explanation of the four moral principles?

26. Participation							
1-not at all	2	3-somewhat	4	5-very	Don't know	Mean	
11.8	6.2	12.4	25.0	43.5	1.1	3.83	
27. Solidarity							
1-not at all	2	3-somewhat	4	5-very	Don't know	Mean	
12.7	5.4	15.0	24.3	41.5	1.1	3.77	
28. Sufficiency							
1-not at all	2	3-somewhat	4	5-very	Don't know	Mean	
12.1	5.9	14.4	24.3	41.2	2.0	3.78	
29. Sustainability							
1-not at all	2	3-somewhat	4	5-very	Don't know	Mean	
12.1	5.6	11.3	24.3	44.4	2.3	3.85	

30. (Optional) If you could *add* one idea to this section, what would it be? (Please reference a line number for each suggestion.) (See Appendix B for comments.)

31. (Optional) If you could *delete* one idea from this section, what would it be? (Please reference a line number for each suggestion.) (See Appendix B for comments.)

Section 7: How does the ELCA teach that climate change should be addressed?

32. In Section 7, how clear are the convictions outlined for the ELCA to address global warming and climate change?

1-not at all	2	3-somewhat	4	5-very	Don't know	Mean
8.6	4.5	11.9	23.8	50.6	0.6	4.04

33. Please rate how important Item A is in the message:

1-not at all	2	3-somewhat	4	5-very	Don't know	Mean
13.8	3.9	9.9	11.4	58.1	3.0	3.99

34. Please rate how important Item B is in the message:

1-not at all	2	3-somewhat	4	5-very	Don't know	Mean
14.6	3.3	11.6	15.2	51.9	3.3	3.90

35. Please rate how important Item C is in the message:

1-not at all	2	3-somewhat	4	5-very	Don't know	Mean
14.4	5.4	13.2	16.5	46.1	4.5	3.78

36. Please rate how important Item D is in the message:

1-not at all	2	3-somewhat	4	5-very	Don't know	Mean
14.3	4.2	7.5	11.3	59.4	3.3	4.01

37. Do you think that pursuing these goals and actions will make a difference in the overall problem of the Earth's climate crisis?

1-not at all	2	3-somewhat	4	5-very	Don't know	Mean
19.0	5.1	17.2	20.5	32.5	5.7	3.45

38. (Optional) General comments about these convictions: (See Appendix B for comments.)

39. (Optional) If you could *add* one idea to this section, what would it be? (Please reference a line number for each suggestion.) (See Appendix B for comments.)

40. (Optional) If you could *delete* one idea from this section, what would it be? (Please reference a line number for each suggestion.) (See Appendix B for comments.)

Overall Questions About the Draft

41. How helpful did you find the draft in thinking about the Earth's climate crisis from a faith perspective and about what we can do to address the issue?

1-not at all	2	3-somewhat	4	5-very	Don't know	Mean
15.7	5.8	12.2	15.4	49.4	1.5	3.78

42. Overall comments about the draft as a whole: (See Appendix B for comments.)

Demographic Questions

43. I am:

42.2 Woman

49.7 Man

1.4 Non-binary

6.6 Prefer not to answer

44. Age:

0.0 under 18

0.6 18-24

6.3 25-34

6.5 35-44

8.6 45-54

19.3 55-64

37.2 65-74

21.4 75 or older

45. Race/Ethnicity:

0.6 African American/Black

0.0 African National/African Caribbean

0.6 American Indian/Alaska Native

0.0 Arab/Middle Eastern

0.3 Asian/Pacific Islander

0.0 Latino/Hispanic

1.2 Multiracial

88.1 White

9.3 Other

46. What is your zip code?

47. Highest level of academic achievement:

0.3 Less than high school

1.2 High school or GED

5.9 Some college

1.8 Associate's degree

25.5 Bachelor's degree

44.6 Master's degree

20.8 Doctorate or professional degree

48. Are you:

20.8 A minister of Word and Sacrament

1.2 A minister of Word and Service

66.6 A lay member and/or participant of a congregation in the ELCA

11.4 Other

Appendix B
 Frequencies: Comments
 Draft of a Social Message on Earth’s Climate Crisis
 Final Report (N = 530)

Section 1: How are Christians called to care for creation?

4. If you could *add* one idea to this section, what would it be?

Comment	Frequency (n = 126)
Biblical reference that isn’t Genesis	20.6% (26) ³
Humans are interdependent with all creation	18.3% (23)
Climate change is not real/too political	17.5% (22)
Focus on stewardship	12.7% (16)
Line 78-81, translation of the Hebrew “have dominion over” and “subdue” not accurate	11.9% (15)
Line 83-87, alternate translation of Hebrew shamar, “serve and protect”	4.8% (6)
Overpopulation as a cause	4.0% (5)
Focus on an action plan	3.2% (4)
Rejecting the idea that humans have the right to exploit the earth	2.4% (3)
More about thanking God the creator for the earth	2.4% (3)
Simplify, too complicated and wordy	1.6% (2)
Young people should be encouraged to care for creation	0.8% (1)

5. If you could *delete* one idea from this section, what would it be?

Comment	Frequency (n = 55)
All of it / should not be a social message / not fact	29.1% (16)
Line 78-81, change translation of “have dominion over” and “subdue”	23.6% (13)
Line 94, climate change is not the pinnacle of the curse of creation	16.4% (9)
Remove comments about racism	7.3% (4)
Rework discussion of the role of sun and moon	5.5% (3)
Line 73, delete “innovative”	3.6% (2)
Omit “liturgical poetry”	3.6% (2)
Too long, consider a fact sheet with key points	3.6% (2)
Too much pathos, e.g., “wondrously”	3.6% (2)
Line 461-464, I like the idea of recycling and repurposing	1.8% (1)
Line 34-71, cut in half, people already know creation story	1.8% (1)

3 Numbers shown in parentheses represent the number of people who wrote each comment.

Section 2: Why are changes in Earth’s atmosphere affecting our climate?

9. If you could *add* one idea to this section, what would it be?

Comment	Frequency (n = 88)
One-sided, present other arguments	29.5% (26)
Line 126, industrialized nations and the U.S. are the worst emitters	13.6% (12)
Too many charts/graphs; facts, examples and consequences have more impact	13.6% (12)
Line 115, although there are many gasses that contribute to the warming effect, some are more potent than others	8.0% (7)
The church should stay out of politics	5.7% (5)
Paragraph explaining the Keeling curve chart	5.7% (5)
Line 188-193, discuss the human impact of excessive use of fossil fuels	4.5% (4)
Identify the impact of alternative development on the environment	3.4% (3)
Explanation of how we know the power of greenhouse gasses	3.4% (3)
Chemical pollution of the earth	3.4% (3)
Line 201-207, show sources that show an unbiased account of extreme weather	2.3% (2)
Statement that the charts are nonpartisan	2.3% (2)
Line 128, graph is unclear, CO ₂ does not seem to be stable around 280 ppm, looks like 200 ppm	2.3% (2)
Line 108-109, explain how carbon is being released from “peat-rich soils”	1.1% (1)
Line 103, explain the difference between weather and climate	1.1% (1)

10. If you could *delete* one idea from this section, what would it be?

Comment	Frequency (n = 51)
Too long, brief summary with references to data	31.4% (16)
Delete the whole section	21.6% (11)
Biased, only presents one side	11.8% (6)
Line 112, “perfectly calibrated 14 degrees Celsius” is misleading	7.8% (4)
Charts look like screenshots, not professional	7.8% (4)
Delete anything not from the Bible or Luther’s teachings	3.9% (2)
Line 138 charts, deceptive due to truncated y-axis	3.9% (2)
Line 101-102, delete “miraculous/wondrous,” over-sweetened language	3.9% (2)
Delete the use of the word “fossil” for fuels	2.0% (1)
Line 138, the additional pollutants are important but not well-explained	2.0% (1)
Line 119, typo “If” should be lowercase	2.0% (1)
Line 138, Figure 2, delete boxes that say “view full size image”	2.0% (1)

Section 3: What are the impacts of global warming and climate change?

14. If you could *add* one idea to this section, what would it be?

Comment	Frequency (n = 104)
Too focused on humans, talk more about effects on plants and animals	26.0% (27)
Provide evidence from other side of the debate	19.2% (20)
Need more concrete examples	13.5% (14)
Line 214-215, how the rich have options could be emphasized more	11.5% (12)
Focus on the issue of justice resulting from climate	7.7% (8)
The font could be bigger on the chart (Fig. 4), white text hard to read	6.7% (7)
What steps can be taken at the congregational level	3.8% (4)
Too long and academic	3.8% (4)
Line 195, add that climate change is a stress multiplier across every area of human life	1.9% (2)
Line 159, clarification on how the oceans have stored over 90% of the excess heat	1.9% (2)
Processed foods contribute to decline in health and climate change	1.0% (1)
Have links to videos showing how small changes will make an impact	1.0% (1)
Spell out the top three countries that release the most CO ₂	1.0% (1)
Line 201, add that climate change is also causing record cold temps	1.0% (1)

15. If you could *delete* one idea from this section, what would it be?

Comment	Frequency (n = 45)
Line 169, delete Figure 4, seems deceiving	24.4% (11)
Line 209-215, delete references to racism, off-topic	24.4% (11)
Delete the whole section	13.3% (6)
Line 195-199, delete climate anxiety	11.1% (5)
Too much data	8.9% (4)
Line 217, seems out of place by itself	6.7% (3)
Line 213, change “women” to gender-neutral word, not always women who get water	4.4% (2)
Line 188-93, fossil paragraph not tied to climate change	4.4% (2)
Line 213-214, “flood victims with no insurance” sounds like victim-blaming, change to renters	2.2% (1)

Section 4: Are we facing a critical moment with regard to Earth’s climate?

19. If you could *add* one idea to this section, what would it be?

Comment	Frequency (n = 69)
Remove kairos concept, not a crisis moment	30.4% (21)
Stronger emphasis on the urgency of the crisis	21.7% (15)
Line 248, provide biblical references of kairos	11.6% (8)
Add resources and books to read about how to take action	8.7% (6)
Too academic, will confuse or turn people off	5.8% (4)
Line 255-256, add examples of reformers (Martin Luther and others) urging for action	5.8% (4)
Introduce the term kairos earlier in the document	4.3% (3)
Line 220-234, confusing with differing temps (1.5 degrees, 2 degrees, 2.4 degrees)	4.3% (3)
Shorten to one paragraph or box	1.4% (1)
The Jewish concept of Tikkan Olam is more appropriate	1.4% (1)
Line 245-265, move to beginning of section	1.4% (1)
Line 223-226, more specific about how deep and swift the reductions must be	1.4% (1)
Line 266, we should take time to plan before taking action to avoid wasting money on things that don’t work	1.4% (1)

20. If you could *delete* one idea from this section, what would it be?

Comment	Frequency (n = 36)
Delete the whole section	27.8% (10)
Not a crisis	19.4% (7)
Remove the kairos discussion	16.7% (6)
Line 254, “salvific” context is confusing and not defined	13.9% (5)
Too long, line 245-250 not needed	8.3% (3)
Poor understanding of kairos	5.6% (2)
Edit line 220-240 to one paragraph	5.6% (2)
Line 261, paragraph falsely states there is a point of no return	2.8% (1)

Section 5: How should Christians begin to respond to this kairos moment?

21. If you could *add* one idea to this section, what would it be?

Comment	Frequency (n = 120)
Suggestions for individual lifestyle changes, concrete actions	32.5% (39)
Offer a counter perspective/stay out of politics	17.5% (21)
Line 285-286, need to address job retraining for fossil fuel workers	8.3% (10)
Prayer and faith in God's direction	8.3% (10)
Line 268, response must begin with confession and forgiveness	6.7% (8)
Line 307, replace "industrialism" with "capitalism"	4.2% (5)
Christians alone can't solve the problem, other faiths too	3.3% (4)
Support for aggressive governmental policy changes	3.3% (4)
Line 342 and 368-371, no mention of the need for sustainability as it applies to the human population	2.5% (3)
Line 400-404, add a few historical examples of Christians engaged in previous kairos moments that resulted in actual change	2.5% (3)
Too long and wordy	1.7% (2)
Line 274, not enough to say "wildfires" and "severe storms," need to name unprecedented extremes due to climate change	1.7% (2)
Line 281, explicitly use the term "climate migration" and include examples outside of the Americas	1.7% (2)
Better communication and follow-up, not just an academic exercise	1.7% (2)
Line 299, our obligation to succeeding generations	0.8% (1)
Focus on theology and let the congregations carry it forward	0.8% (1)
Line 461-465, repurpose and recycle instead of throwing away	0.8% (1)
Clarify how ELCA defines renewable energy	0.8% (1)
Line 300, "failure" is too strong, many have worked hard and made great gains against global warming	0.8% (1)

22. If you could *delete* one idea from this section, what would it be?

Comment	Frequency (n = 43)
Delete the whole section	23.3% (10)
Tone down the guilt and blame	20.9% (9)
Line 307, delete "colonialism," will alienate some people	14.0% (6)
Line 278-283, immigration is a different topic and will distract focus	9.3% (4)
Line 267, "should begin to respond" implies nothing has been done	7.0% (3)
People employed by fossil-fuel businesses will be upset if we pursue the change to renewable energy	7.0% (3)

Drop terminology and focus on action	4.7% (2)
Line 346, moral principles section confusing	4.7% (2)
Line 494, climate anxiety	2.3% (1)
Need to make sure the efforts to reduce CO ₂ actually help	2.3% (1)
Line 301, lacking a nonsubjective definition of “environmental injustice”	2.3% (1)
Line 281, who takes a harvest for granted?	2.3% (1)

Section 6: What insights from ELCA social teaching are helpful?

30. If you could *add* one idea to this section, what would it be?

Comment	Frequency (n = 62)
Line 346-371, all forms of life are important, not just humans	21.0% (13)
Delete the whole section	16.1% (10)
Better explanation of the four moral principles, root in Scripture	12.9% (8)
Line 368, to have sustainability we need to shift every system and narrative	9.7% (6)
Line 359, use the full quote, hold oil and gas industry responsible	8.1% (5)
For participation/sustainability, acknowledging the need for restraint and reducing consumption for the top 10%, especially U.S.	6.4% (4)
Line 386-387, give an example or reference of “those who have done the least to produce it bear the greatest consequences”	4.8% (3)
Simplify the core concept	4.8% (3)
Line 370, preferential option for the poor should be emphasized more	4.8% (3)
Pray for ourselves and future generations	3.2% (2)
Priesthood of all believers, we are all called and empowered to do this work	3.2% (2)
Should be focusing on other social problems	1.6% (1)
Teach these principles at every level	1.6% (1)
Admit that the real world has never had sufficiency	1.6% (1)

31. If you could *delete* one idea from this section, what would it be?

Comment	Frequency (n = 43)
Delete the whole section	27.9% (12)
Line 389-394, delete precautionary principle, unworkable as stated	18.6% (8)
Line 334-344, wording is clumsy regarding three dimensions of climate justice	14.0% (6)
Line 359, “this church will be in solidarity with industry” is confusing	11.6% (5)
Line 373-387, out of place and brings in extraneous arguments	7.0% (3)
Line 323, what is connection between “creator of the world” and “civil authorities” as God’s hands?	4.7% (2)
This section has a lot of terminology that isn’t helpful to the overall document	4.7% (2)
Change text regarding “sustainable,” goal is to improve sufficiency with an end goal for it to be sustained	2.3% (1)
Line 353-355, other life forms are not as important as humans	2.3% (1)
The four principles overlap a lot, could be fleshed out more	2.3% (1)
Line 516, delete comparison with Martin Luther’s reformation	2.3% (1)
Use only this section since it is the only environmental set of principles authorized by the ELCA	2.3% (1)

Section 7: How does the ELCA teach that climate change should be addressed?

38. General comments about these convictions:

Comment	Frequency (n = 138)
This perspective doesn't represent the consensus of ELCA membership	26.8% (37)
Concrete ideas can be put to use, great section	19.6% (27)
These are admirable goals but difficult to implement	18.8% (26)
Until the world addresses the issue it will only have a slight impact	9.4% (13)
Add something about climate optimism, especially for young people	5.1% (7)
Too academic and complicated for the average person	4.3% (6)
Item B is not very clear, especially if the reader misses "rejects"	4.3% (6)
Mitigation strategy is used incorrectly and given short shrift	1.4% (2)
Add the need for the ELCA, congregations and members to divest from fossil fuel industries	1.4% (2)
Line 488, change "refuse" to "fail"	1.4% (2)
Line 435-6, unsure about UN Green Climate Fund, give examples of their work	1.4% (2)
Line 404, climate change is not only a political issue but also economic	1.4% (2)
Too specific to climate change, take a broader look	0.7% (1)
Rename the document "ELCA's teaching on climate change"	0.7% (1)
Line 527, should be "alternate" not "alternative"	0.7% (1)
Need to send this document to all energy, tech, industrial and governmental leaders for change to happen	0.7% (1)
Line 469, not clear what is meant by "securing and protecting the land rights of Indigenous peoples" or how this would help adaptation to climate change	0.7% (1)
1B, say "electric vehicles," not "electrification of transportation"	0.7% (1)

39. If you could *add* one idea to this section, what would it be?

Comment	Frequency (n = 54)
Specific things each person can do in their home and church to reduce our negative impact	22.2% (12)
Church should not be involved in politics	13.0% (7)
Hope that all this information will get down to each congregation and be ongoing communication	11.1% (6)
Add something more specific about working to address and combat climate justice-related issues	7.4% (4)
Support strategies that enable adaptation to climate change, including retraining fossil fuel workers to work in the "green energy" sector	7.4% (4)

Comment	Frequency (n = 54)
Line 426, governments of all nations	5.6% (3)
Must talk about sustainability of human population growth	3.7% (2)
Line 438, since we don't use metric, put the actual standard U.S. uses	3.7% (2)
Line 461-464, include reduction in plastic usage	3.7% (2)
Line 483, add "likewise, this church rejects beliefs, goals and policies that" dismiss the need for climate immigrants to seek asylum	3.7% (2)
Too long, need to have a shorter version people will read	3.7% (2)
Make specific goals for the ELCA, e.g. by 2040 we want 40% of ELCA congregations using solar or wind or geothermal as power sources	1.9% (1)
Line 461, add the idea of growing some of your own food and/or purchasing locally grown and produced foods	1.9% (1)
A section on how the economy is the solution	1.9% (1)
Line 473, make that "capitalist nations"	1.9% (1)
Line 526, something about faith, including not living in fear	1.9% (1)
Add something about supporting technological innovations to help with climate change	1.9% (1)
Line 410, should say "countries" plural, ELCA is more than one country	1.9% (1)
Challenge congregations to rethink the impact of their "traditional" worship styles on the environment	1.9% (1)

40. If you could *delete* one idea from this section, what would it be?

Comment	Frequency (n = 30)
Delete the whole section	30.0% (9)
Delete 484-489, "raise searching questions" seems very low-commitment	23.3% (7)
A lot of points in A, B and C are inflammatory and echo political campaigns of the most progressive	13.3% (4)
Delete 435-437, the message said we can agree on ends and disagree on means, then goes out of its way to awkwardly force-fit this highly specific proposal	6.7% (2)
Delete 400-404, what is the point?	6.7% (2)
Line 416, where does "humility" enter the argument?	6.7% (2)
Take out most of B, C and D	3.3% (1)
Remove lines 418-421 or rewrite	3.3% (1)
Delete 494-495, climate anxiety	3.3% (1)
ELCA landholdings?	3.3% (1)

Overall Questions About the Draft

42. Overall comments about the draft as a whole:

Comment	Frequency (n = 207)
Well done, thank you	41.5% (86)
Too political / should not be a social message / will drive members away	18.8% (39)
Too long, need executive summary	10.6% (22)
Need more specific actions people can take	9.2% (19)
Draft is good but one-sided	3.4% (7)
More about overconsumption and greed	3.4% (7)
Long overdue	2.9% (6)
Focuses too much on harm caused to humans and not the rest of creation	2.9% (6)
Will probably not convince those who don't believe in climate change	2.4% (5)
Difficult for pastors in small country churches to preach on climate change	1.4% (3)
It would be good to add that our ecumenical partners have come to similar conclusions	1.0% (2)
This is a global issue and not just Lutherans living in the U.S.	1.0% (2)
More focus on social justice	1.0% (2)
Stay focused on climate change, take out topics related to immigration, poverty, colonialism, etc.	0.5% (1)

Appendix C
Differences in Mean Ratings by Gender Identity⁴

Question	Women (n = 146)	Men (n = 172)
1. In the introductory paragraphs, how well is the purpose of this social message, regarding climate change, conveyed?	4.37	4.04
2. In Section 1, how well did the section present the biblical basis for humans to care for creation?	4.44	4.18
3. How helpful do you find having the biblical texts along the side for convenience?	4.27	3.99
6. In Section 2, how clear is the explanation of why changes in the Earth's atmosphere affect climate?	4.4	3.96
7. In Section 2, how fairly do you think the scientific facts are represented?	4.44	3.81
8. How helpful do you find the charts in providing an explanation about changes in the Earth's atmosphere?	4.27	3.7
11. In Section 3, how clear is the explanation of the impacts of global warming and climate change?	4.39	3.9
12. In Section 3, how fairly do you think the facts are represented?	4.31	3.76
13. How helpful is the chart (Figure 4) in explaining the link between climate change and human health?	4.24	3.53
18. From the standpoint of faith, how useful do you find the concept of kairos for explaining the character of the moment and the Christian calling regarding climate?	4.19	3.49
23. In Section 6, how helpful is the explanation of intragenerational climate justice?	3.83	3.48
24. In Section 6, how helpful is the explanation of intergenerational climate justice?	3.91	3.55
25. In Section 6, how helpful is the explanation of intersectional climate justice?	3.85	3.37
26. In Section 6, how clear is the explanation of participation?	4.19	3.72
27. In Section 6, how clear is the explanation of solidarity?	4.14	3.68
28. In Section 6, how clear is the explanation of sufficiency?	4.15	3.7
29. In Section 6, how clear is the explanation of sustainability?	4.21	3.75
32. In Section 7, how clear are the convictions outlined for the ELCA to address global warming and climate change?	4.36	3.91
33. Please rate how important Item A is in the message:	4.41	3.83

⁴ Due to the small number of participants identifying as “non-binary,” those responses were not included in this analysis.

Question	Women	Men
34. Please rate how important Item B is in the message:	4.26	3.76
35. Please rate how important Item C is in the message:	4.27	3.56
36. Please rate how important Item D is in the message:	4.52	3.78
37. Do you think that pursuing these goals and actions will make a difference in the overall problem of the Earth's climate crisis?	3.89	3.24
41. How helpful did you find the draft in thinking about the Earth's climate crisis from a faith perspective and about what we can do to address the issue?	4.27	3.6