

Remarks concerning the
“Accord to Establish a Midwestern Greenhouse Gas Reduction Program”
of the Midwest Governors’ Association
Milwaukee, Wisconsin
Thursday, November 15, 2007
Bishop Paul Stumme-Diers

Good afternoon, I am Bishop Paul Stumme-Diers of the Greater Milwaukee Synod of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America. Thank you for the opportunity to speak with you this afternoon and to share a few comments regarding the Governors’ Accord.

As a religious leader, I applaud the intent of this accord, and believe that it reflects the concerns residing within the people in our congregations. There is the recognition that we need to address with urgency the environmental concerns before us, and that we do so in a collaborative manner. **As global warming melts the ice at the earth’s poles, so now must the ice melt in the polarization of red and blue viewpoints, red and blue states. This will reveal that our common destiny is as green states, united in responsible stewardship of God’s good creation.** It is my hope that this Midwest Governors’ Accord will further that vision.

This promise made today by our governors resonates with the faith community, where we find the walls of denominational difference broken down by a common concern for our earthly home. It connects with the young people in our churches, in our colleges and universities: Their commitment to justice for creation permeates our congregations, our communities, and our collective consciousness. Young voices insist that we follow through on these promises made today in order to ensure a sustainable future.

It is clear in the work of the Midwestern Governors’ Association that we have the means of reducing our carbon footprint, we have the resources to turn back the tide of ecological degradation. The faith community asserts that we also have the will, that we in the churches and mosques and synagogues can promote the spirit to realize necessary change. I applaud the Gas Reduction Program, but feel we need an accompanying Mass Production Program, mass transit, mass commitment, mass hope. In that way we might increase the sense of common purpose surrounding this challenge.

The Lutheran congregations of the Greater Milwaukee Synod are committed to reducing energy consumption, reducing waste, diminishing our carbon footprint. But we also believe that even more importantly we must increase our spirit of wonder, our spirit of community, our spirit of joy as we delight in this amazing world God has created. Today our prayer is that such a spirit accompanies the promises made by our governors.