

## Climate Commitment at Messiah College

Inspired by our Christian faith, Messiah College values and commits to ensuring fairness and prosperity for both people and planet, in current and future generations. We believe the College plays a crucial role in shaping a more sustainable church and society. The following commitment affirms the leadership role of the College in sustainability, and details the strong responsibility to practice and educate our community to create a more sustainable society.

It is well documented that climate is changing, and that humans are the primary cause of this change. The fourth National Climate Assessment reports that the average surface air temperature has increased 1.8° Fahrenheit and that human activity, primarily carbon dioxide, is the dominant cause.<sup>i</sup> While there are slight disagreements about what this warming specifically means for the global community, it is largely agreed upon that without a clear greenhouse gas mitigation strategy, life on the planet will be more difficult in the future with higher sea levels, more extreme temperature variations, and stronger storms affecting community wellbeing, food supply, and safety.<sup>ii</sup>

We believe challenges associated with climate change provide Messiah College with both an opportunity and responsibility to exercise leadership in education, research, and practice. Pennsylvania will experience some of the aforementioned difficulties associated with climate change; however, the impacts of climate change are distributed unevenly, with the most vulnerable populations experiencing the worst burdens. As such, action to mitigate the greenhouse gases at the College is both a wise investment and an obligation to care for our global community. By reducing campus emissions, we will be doing our part to stabilize a rapidly changing climate and providing educational opportunities to our students to become socially and ecologically engaged citizens who advance reconciliation.

For all the aforementioned reasons, the College will take action on climate change by committing to the following:

1. In accordance with standards set by the international community in the Paris Climate Commitment, the College will work to cut its campus greenhouse gas emissions 50 percent below 2008 levels by the year 2025. Further reducing to 80 percent below 2008 levels by 2040, and finally achieving carbon neutrality by 2050.
2. Develop and maintain a sustainability strategic plan to infuse sustainability education and practice across all areas of the College.
3. Bi-annually evaluate campus sustainability including, but not limited to, campus related greenhouse gases

\*Approved and adopted by President's Cabinet April 1<sup>st</sup>, 2019.

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<sup>i</sup> D.J., D.W. Fahey, et. al. (2017). Executive summary. In: Climate Science Special Report: Fourth National Climate Assessment, Volume I U.S. Global Change Research Program, Washington, DC, USA, pp. 12-34

<sup>ii</sup> Hayhoe, K., et. al (2017). Climate models, scenarios, and projections. In: Climate Science Special Report: Fourth National Climate Assessment, Volume I U.S. Global Change Research Program, Washington, DC, USA, pp. 133-160