Good afternoon. My name is Edward Wolff. I am a retired pastor of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America, representing the Southeastern Synod, which covers four states: Alabama, Georgia, Mississippi, and Tennessee.

As Lutherans we deeply believe that this earth has been provided to us through God's grace. As reported in the first chapters of Genesis we are to be stewards of God's creation, to care for it, and to provide for all humanity through life that is generated by creation.

Something is happening that is scary, threatening, and, what we believe to be, against God's will and purpose. Humanity is destroying this gift of God.

While all of humanity is identified by its culture, its nation, its heritage, and location, the dynamics of change have created a global village where all humanity is now connected. In this global community, we are not separated from the earth to do what we wish. We are interconnected with the earth. Accordingly, what happens to the air, the seas, under the seas, and all that is impacted by land affects both our earth and us.

What is happening to the earth, and therefore to us, cannot be explained in a brief period of time. Suffice it to say, briefly:

- Last April, the average CO2 concentrations in the earth's atmosphere exceeded 400 parts per million on a sustained basis for the first time in 800,000 years.
- Thirteen of the fourteen hottest years ever measured with instruments have occurred in this century.
- This past May was the hottest year ever in the history of the earth.
- The collapse of a portion of the West Antarctic Ice sheet is not only underway; it is irreversible, causing a continued rise in the earth's waters.
- The Northeast part of Greenland has been losing more than ten billion tons of ice per year for the decade.
- This April rain in Pensacola, FL brought two feet of water in twenty-four hours.
- One hundred percent of California is in a severe, extreme, or exceptional drought. The fire season is two and one-half months longer than thirty years ago.
- A trigger of the civil war in Syria has been identified as the drought from 2006 to 2010, where sixty percent of the farms and eighty percent of the livestock were destroyed.
• A Pentagon advisory committee has described the climate crisis as a "catalyst for conflict" that may cause governmental and societal collapse.

Many of the above facts do not affect our nation directly. Yet, whatever happens on this earth, affects all of us as global community. The United States, as the self-proclaimed world leader, has a responsibility to be a model for responding favorably and decisively to what is happening to Mother Earth.

Honestly and personally, I'm scared, but the fear is not about me. I will not be here to see the results of a scarred earth if we continue down the same path. I am concerned for my grandchildren, all seven, and the great grandchildren that will come after. I am also concerned for this great nation. Catastrophic events, caused by climate change, can weaken and/or destroy any democracy, for all democracies are fragile, at best.

The ELCA and I are totally in favor of the Executive Order that was given that requires a reduction of 30% in carbon emissions over the next 30 years. (Our Presiding Bishop and the Presiding Bishop of the Episcopal Church in America have issued a joint statement to that effect.) Carbon emissions, and their effect on the atmosphere, are one of the major drivers of climate change that is warming this planet.

When we look at the universe, this small orb called earth is an incredible creation of God, however we understand God. We are the stewards of this creation. We are responsible for its nurturing, growth, and productivity – not just now, but for all the generations after us.

There is no Plan B.