

The Presbyterian Church (USA) invited their members (laity and clergy) to participate in a survey to determine members' attitudes and behaviors on climate change. This outreach yielded 413 responses total. The survey, fielded September 7-28, 2018, was part of a national survey sponsored by ecoAmerica and Blessed Tomorrow. The following report highlights key laity, clergy, and overall PC(USA) results and comparisons to a representative national sample of U.S. adults. Full findings and data can be found in the accompanying "toplines" report.

Note: PC(USA) respondents self-selected and may not reflect a representative sample of all church members. Also, the following are notable differences in key demographics of Presbyterians vs. the national sample:

- 90% consider themselves white/Caucasian (vs. 65%) and 1% consider themselves Hispanic/Latino (vs. 16%)
- 89% hold a college degree or greater (vs. 35% nationally)
- 85% do not have children under 18 years old living with them (vs. 68%)
- 64% are women (vs. 51%) and 31% are men (vs. 49%)
- 24% live in a suburb near a city (vs. 35%)
- 17% are from the East South Central region of the United States (vs. 6%); 8% from Pacific (vs. 16%)
- 28% are clergy (25% active and 3% retired) and 72% are laity

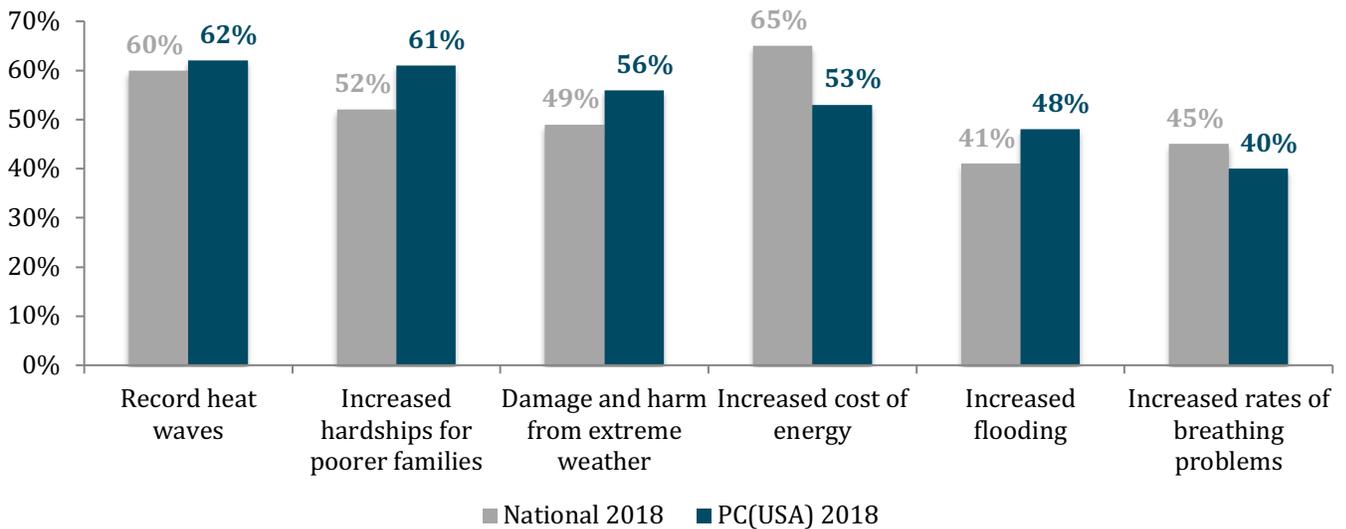
Notable climate change sentiments of surveyed Presbyterian Church (USA) members, laity and clergy, Fall 2018

- 1. BELIEF AND CONCERN: More than four in five surveyed Presbyterians understand that climate change is already happening and are concerned about it. Over three quarters of Presbyterians have noticed more severe weather in recent years.**
 - a. 89% believe climate change is happening (vs. 80% nationally)
 - b. 84% believe the effects of climate change have already begun to happen (vs. 60%)
 - c. 80% are concerned about climate change (vs. 73%)
 - d. 78% have noticed more severe weather and changing seasonal weather patterns over the last several years (vs. 81%)
- 2. CAUSATION: Surveyed Presbyterians acknowledge humans are the primary cause of climate change, at rates nearly twice as high as the national average. Less than one in ten attribute climate change to solely natural causes.**
 - a. 45% attribute climate change to a combination of both human activities and natural causes (vs. 53% nationally)
 - b. 43% attribute climate change mainly to human activities (vs. 23%)
 - c. 7% attribute climate change mainly to natural causes (vs. 16%)

3. IMPACTS: Over half of surveyed Presbyterians report being affected by climate-related impacts, including record heat waves, economic hardships and extreme weather.

- a. 62% are affected by record heat waves during the summer (vs. 60% nationally)
- b. 61% are affected by increased hardships for poorer families (vs. 52%)
- c. 56% are affected by more damage and harm from extreme weather like storms, hurricanes, and tornadoes (vs. 49%)
- d. 53% are affected by an increased cost of energy (vs. 65%)
- e. 48% are affected by increased flooding (vs. 41%)
- f. 40% are affected by increased rates of breathing problems, such as asthma (vs. 45%)

For each of the following issues, please indicate how much they are personally affecting you. 413 respondent(s) total nationally, % Total “A Lot / Some”



4. HARM: Surveyed Presbyterians understand that climate change will harm a wide variety of groups, including future generations, plants and animals, the world’s poor and Americans generally. They are more likely to believe climate change will harm communities that are distant from their families and themselves. Nearly two in three believe that they will personally be harmed by climate change.

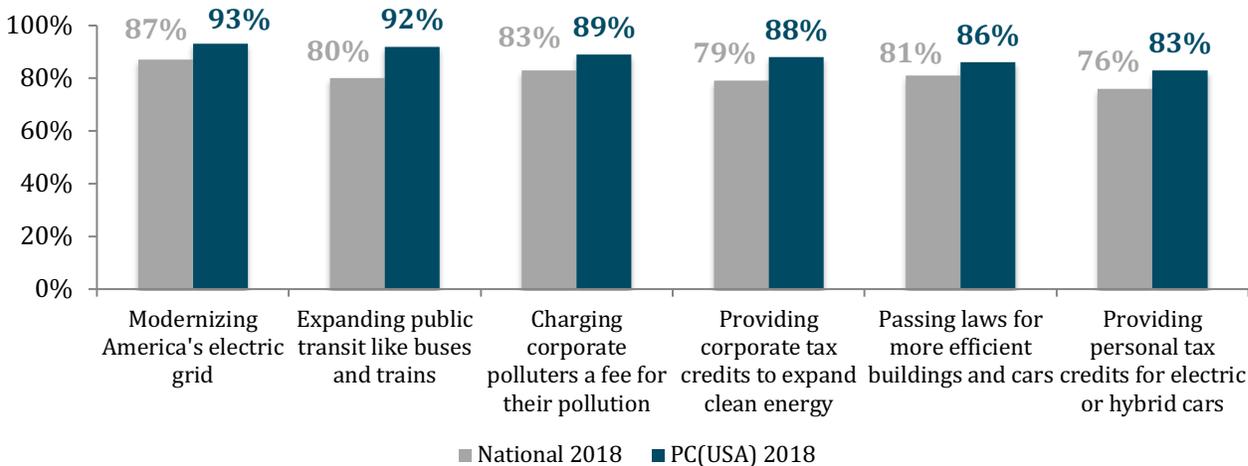
- a. 83% say climate change will harm future generations of people (vs. 78% nationally)
- b. 83% say climate change will harm plant and animal species (vs. 77%)
- c. 83% say climate change will harm the world’s poor (vs. 71%)
- d. 78% say climate change will harm people in the United States (vs. 71%)
- e. 70% say climate change will harm people in their community (vs. 61%)
- f. 65% say climate change will harm their family (vs. 56%)
- g. 58% say climate change will harm them personally (vs. 53%)

5. **BENEFITS: Surveyed Presbyterians see the benefits that climate solutions bring to health, the economy, and jobs. There is a misconception that climate solutions increase the cost of energy and an opportunity to educate on the competitive cost of clean energy.**
 - a. 71% say if the U.S. took steps to prevent future climate change, it would improve our health (vs. 66% nationally)
 - b. 60% say if the U.S. took steps... it would help the economy (vs. 61%)
 - c. 59% say if the U.S. took steps... it would increase jobs (vs. 56%)
 - d. 56% say if the U.S. took steps... it would increase the cost of energy (vs. 49%)

6. **VALUES: Surveyed Presbyterians are in consensus on the need for communities to prepare for floods and drought. Nearly all members believe clean air and water are personal rights for all people, and believe in a moral responsibility to act on climate. Most believe the government needs to protect people from extreme weather impacts.**
 - a. 97% say communities need to prepare for floods and droughts to minimize their impact (vs. 85% nationally)
 - b. 96% say clean water is a critical right for all people (vs. 91%)
 - c. 95% say clean air is a critical right for all people (vs. 91%)
 - d. 95% say we have a moral responsibility to create a safe and healthy climate for ourselves and our children (vs. 88%)
 - e. 75% say the government needs to protect all people from the impacts of extreme weather (vs. 74%)

7. **SOLUTIONS: Surveyed Presbyterians support a spectrum of climate change solutions, from modernizing the electric grid, to expanding public transportation, carbon tax, corporate tax credits to expand clean energy, more efficient buildings and cars, and personal tax credits for electric and hybrid cars.**
 - a. 93% favor a proposal to reduce climate change pollution by modernizing America's electric grid (vs. 87% nationally)
 - b. 92% favor a proposal to... expand public transportation, like buses and trains (vs. 80%)
 - c. 89% favor a proposal to... charge corporate polluters a fee for the pollution they create (vs. 83%)
 - d. 88% favor a proposal to... provide corporate tax credits to expand clean energy (vs. 79%)
 - e. 86% favor a proposal to... pass laws for more efficient buildings and cars (vs. 81%)
 - f. 83% favor a proposal to... provide personal tax credits for electric or hybrid cars (vs. 76%)

Below are proposals to reduce climate change pollution. Please indicate if you strongly favor, not so strongly favor, not so strongly oppose, or strongly oppose each one. 413 respondent(s) total nationally, % Total “Strongly favor / Somewhat favor”



8. URGENCY and AGENCY: A strong majority of surveyed Presbyterians feel an urgency to act and believe they and we can reduce the pollution that causes climate change. A majority prioritize climate action over economic growth. Very few believe the costs and sacrifices are too high to address climate change.

- a. 86% believe that *we*, and 83% that *they personally*, **can** reduce the pollution that is causing climate change (vs. 83% and 72% nationally, respectively)
- b. 86% believe that *we*, and 83% that *they personally*, **need to** take action now to reduce the pollution that is causing climate change (vs. 80% and 72%, respectively)
- c. 21% say we should prioritize economic growth over climate action (vs. 44%)
- d. 20% say we could address climate change, but the costs and sacrifices are too high (vs. 39%)

9. ENERGY: Nearly all surveyed Presbyterians believe the U.S. should produce more clean energy and less coal and oil, far more than national. There is a misunderstanding that fossil fuel energy is the more cost effective, pointing to an opportunity to educate members on the competitive cost of wind and solar.

- a. 98% say that the U.S. should produce more wind and solar energy, with 81% saying much more (vs. 89% and 69% nationally, respectively)
- b. 83% say the U.S. should produce *less* coal (vs. 61%)
- c. 75% say the U.S. should produce *less* oil (vs. 48%)
- d. 46% say the U.S. should produce *less* natural gas (vs. 28%)
- e. Compared to less sustainable sources, 31% believe wind and solar energy are the lowest cost for consumers (vs. 53%)

10. ENGAGEMENT: A majority of surveyed Presbyterians say their place of worship is conserving energy. Aside from this, they do not believe or are unaware that their place of worship is making efforts on climate change. Notably, many feel empowered to advocate for solutions.

- a. 68% say their place of worship is conserving energy: 44% wish their place of worship would do this
- b. 34% say their place of worship is having worship services that focus on creation care: 31% wish their place of worship would do this
- c. 24% say their place of worship is educating the public about climate change; 28% wish their place of worship would do this
- d. 18% say their place of worship is working to reduce climate impacts: 25% wish their place of worship would do this
- e. 9% say their place of worship is developing clean energy like wind or solar energy; 26% wish their place of worship would do this
- f. 46% say they feel empowered to help advance solutions to climate change within their community (vs. 39% nationally)

11. ACTION AND ADVOCACY: Surveyed Presbyterians believe it is important to advocate and are already discussing climate change with friends, family, and colleagues, more than national. They have contacted or voted for a climate candidate at rates double national. Most are conserving energy, and many more are willing to adopt other climate-friendly behaviors.

- a. 81% have upgraded appliances or lighting to conserve energy at home (vs. 55% nationally); and 16% more would be willing to do so (vs. 33% nationally)
- b. 77% have discussed climate change with family and friends and 54% with colleagues (vs. 57% and 33%, respectively); 15% and 28% more would be willing to do so (vs. 26% and 31%, respectively)
- c. 50% have contacted or voted for a candidate based on his or her support for taking action on climate change (vs. 21%); 31% more would be willing to do so (vs. 42%)
- d. 26% have shifted toward biking and walking (vs. 29%), and 45% more would be willing to do so (vs. 38%).
- e. 14% have shifted toward use of public transportation as a more energy-efficient form of transportation (vs. 22%); 53% more would be willing to do so (vs. 37%)
- f. 71% believe it is important to personally speak out to elected officials (vs. 55%)
- g. 68% believe it is important to personally speak out to their family (vs. 59%)
- h. 66% believe it is important to personally speak out to their friends (vs. 54%)

- 12. SOURCES:** Surveyed Presbyterians have heard or read about climate change from a diversity of sources, with rates over six times the national average from religious and faith leaders. They are hearing most from media, at rates 30-points higher than national, and through other channels at rates that are nearly double the national average.
- 90% have heard or read about climate change from the news and media recently (vs. 60% nationally)
 - 58% from their religious or faith leaders (vs. 9%)
 - 58% from friends and family (vs. 27%)
 - 50% from federal elected officials (vs. 26%)
 - 45% from professors and educators (vs. 23%)
 - 36% from health professionals (vs. 19%)
 - 35% from local community leaders (vs. 13%)
- 13. TRUST:** Surveyed Presbyterians trust scientists, health professionals, environmental organizations, and faith leaders for guidance on climate at rates that exceed national averages. They strongly distrust Congress and the President to guide them on climate.
- 88% trust scientists as a source of guidance about climate change (vs. 74% nationally)
 - 78% trust health professionals for guidance (vs. 62%)
 - 75% trust environmental organizations for guidance (vs. 63%)
 - 60% trust religious and faith leaders for guidance (28%)
 - 55% trust newspapers, TV news, and Internet news sites for guidance (vs. 40%)
 - 43% trust local community leaders for guidance (vs. 33%)
 - 15% trust federal elected officials for guidance (vs. 18%)
 - 8% trust Congress for guidance (vs. 15%)
 - 7% trust the President for guidance (vs. 23%)
- 14. RELIGIOUS MOTIVATIONS:** A large majority of surveyed Presbyterians agree that their faith compels them to address climate change and that their place of worship should do more to address climate.
- 96% say their faith compels them to address climate change because we must care for God's creation
 - 85% say their faith compels them to address climate change because climate impacts on the most vulnerable including children and the elderly
 - 84% say their faith compels them to address climate change because climate impacts those living in poverty more severely
 - 77% say their faith compels them to address climate change, with 55% strongly agreeing

- e. 74% say their place of worship should do more to address climate change as part of their care for creation, with 43% strongly agreeing
- f. 72% say their faith compels them to address climate change because climate impacts communities of color more severely
- g. 56% say their faith compels them to address climate change because climate impacts women more severely

15. PC(USA) SPECIFIC: Surveyed Presbyterians are in consensus that we should all make personal changes to care for creation. Less than half of members are aware of the climate-related resources, climate policies, and opportunities to engage in policy advocacy that PC(USA) provides to Presbyterians.

- a. 93% say we should all make personal changes to care for creation, with 72% strongly agreeing
- b. 48% are aware PC(USA) provides educational materials on issues of climate and energy
- c. 47% are aware PC(USA) provides Presbyterian policies on climate
- d. 47% are aware PC(USA) provides resources to green your church, such as Earth Care Congregations
- e. 46% are aware PC(USA) provides biblical resources on caring for creation
- f. 35% are aware PC(USA) provides ideas for lowering your personal carbon footprint
- g. 33% are aware PC(USA) provides opportunities to do public policy advocacy
- h. 39% are not aware of any of the listed PC(USA) resources

Notable differences in climate change sentiments between surveyed clergy and laity Presbyterian Church (USA) members, Fall 2018

Note: The following are notable differences in key demographics of surveyed PC(USA) clergy and laity. Notable differences exist between PC(USA)'s clergy and laity (117 vs. 296 respondents, respectively), pointing to clear opportunities for engagement and education.

- 99% of clergy have a college degree or higher (vs. 85% of laity)
- 51% of clergy are women (vs. 69% of laity) and 40% of clergy are men (vs. 28% of laity)
- 27% of clergy are aged 60-64 (vs. 14% of laity), 11% of clergy are 65-69 (vs. 22% of laity), 7% of clergy are 70-74 (vs. 18% of clergy)
- 25% of clergy have children under the age of 18 living with them (vs. 11% of laity)

1. BELIEF AND CONCERN: Clergy are more concerned than laity and believe climate change has already begun to happen.

- a. 91% of clergy believe the effects of climate change have already begun to happen (vs. 81% of laity)
- b. 66% of clergy claim to be very concerned about climate change (vs. 54% of laity)

2. **HARM: More clergy than laity are aware that climate change will harm future generations, the world's poor and them personally.**
 - a. 90% of clergy say climate change will harm future generations (vs. 81% of laity)
 - b. 89% of clergy say climate change will harm the world's poor (vs. 80% of laity)
 - c. 67% of clergy say climate change will harm them personally (vs. 54% of laity)
3. **BENEFITS: More clergy see climate solutions as benefiting our health and our economy at higher rates than laity. Clergy more strongly agree on need for local preparation.**
 - a. 81% of clergy strongly agree communities need to prepare for floods and droughts to minimize their impact (vs. 69% of laity)
 - b. 79% of clergy say if the U.S. took steps to prevent future climate change, it would improve our health (vs. 68% of laity)
 - c. 69% of clergy say if the U.S. took steps... it would help our economy (vs. 56% of laity)
4. **URGENCY AND AGENCY: More clergy believe that they personally need to take action to reduce the pollution causing climate change, but they are less likely than laity to prioritize economic growth over climate action.**
 - a. 89% of clergy believe *they personally need to* take action now to reduce the pollution that is causing climate change (vs. 81% of laity)
 - b. 14% of clergy say that we should prioritize economic growth over climate action (vs. 24% of laity)
5. **ENERGY: Clergy lead their congregations in desiring a reduction in coal and oil production. Laity are more supportive of nuclear energy than clergy.**
 - a. 91% of clergy say the U.S. should produce *less* coal, with 73% saying much less (vs. 81% and 62% of laity, respectively)
 - b. 83% of clergy say the U.S. should produce *less* oil, with 53% saying much less (vs. 72% and 41% of laity, respectively)
 - c. 30% of clergy say the U.S. should produce *more* nuclear power (vs. 41% of laity)
6. **ENGAGEMENT: Clergy feel more empowered to help advance solutions locally and are more aware of their congregation's climate efforts than laity.**
 - a. 76% of clergy say their place of worship is conserving energy (vs. 65% of laity)
 - b. 55% of clergy say they feel empowered to help advance solutions to climate change within their community (vs. 43% of laity)
 - c. 54% of clergy say their place of worship has worship services that focus on creation care (vs. 26% of laity)
 - d. 37% of clergy wish their place of worship used clean energy (vs. 22% of laity)
 - e. 33% of clergy say their place of worship is educating the public (vs. 20% of laity)

- f. 26% of clergy say their place of worship is working to reduce climate impacts (vs. 15% of laity)
- 7. ACTION AND ADVOCACY: Clergy believe that it is important to speak out on climate change and doing so, more than laity. They are leading political advocacy as well.**
- a. 78% of clergy believe it is important to speak to elected officials (vs. 68% of laity)
 - b. 75% of clergy believe it is important to personally speak out to their family about climate change (vs. 65% of laity)
 - c. 74% of clergy believe it is important to speak to their friends (vs. 63% of laity)
 - d. 68% of clergy believe it is important to speak to their co-workers (vs. 48% of laity)
 - e. 64% of clergy have discussed climate change with colleagues (vs. 51% of laity)
 - f. 59% of clergy have contacted or voted for an elected official based on their support for action on climate change (vs. 47% of laity)
 - g. 57% of clergy have discussed climate change at their place of worship (vs. 39% of laity)
 - h. 25% of clergy have spoken at a public gathering about the importance of doing something about climate change (vs. 8% of laity)
- 8. SOURCES: Clergy are hearing about climate change from religious or faith leaders at rates 27-points higher than laity.**
- a. 78% of clergy have heard or read about climate change from religious or faith leaders recently (vs. 51% of laity)
 - b. 65% of clergy have heard or read from friends and family (vs. 55% of laity)
 - c. 44% of clergy have heard or read from health professionals (vs. 33% of laity)
- 9. TRUST: Clergy are looking for guidance on climate from a more diverse group than laity.**
- a. 85% of clergy trust health professionals for guidance on climate (vs. 75% of laity)
 - b. 83% of clergy trust environmental organizations for guidance (vs. 72% of laity)
 - c. 80% of clergy trust colleges and universities for guidance (vs. 70% of laity)
 - d. 50% of clergy trust local community leaders for guidance (vs. 41% of laity)
- 10. RELIGIOUS MOTIVATIONS: Clergy are motivated towards climate action by a larger diversity of faith-based reasons than laity. There is an opportunity to educate both clergy and laity on impacts on communities of color and women.**
- a. 91% of clergy say their faith compels them to address climate change because climate impacts those living in poverty more severely, with 78% strongly agreeing (vs. 81% and 60% of laity, respectively)
 - b. 86% of clergy agree their faith compels them to address climate change, with 69% strongly agreeing (vs. 73% and 50% of laity, respectively)

- c. 83% of clergy agree their place of worship should do more to address climate change as part of their care for creation (vs. 71% of laity)
- d. 66% of clergy say their faith compels them to address climate change because climate impacts women more severely, with 39% strongly agreeing (vs. 52% and 24% of laity, respectively)

11. PC(USA) SPECIFIC: Clergy are nearly twice as aware than laity of the climate change services and resources PC(USA) provides its members.

- a. 74% of clergy are aware PC(USA) provides biblical resources on caring for creation (vs. 36% of laity)
- b. 73% of clergy are aware PC(USA) provides educational materials on issues of climate and energy (vs. 38% of laity)
- c. 73% of clergy are aware PC(USA) provides resources to green your church, such as Earth Care Congregations (vs. 36% of laity)
- d. 70% of clergy are aware PC(USA) provides Presbyterian policies on climate (vs. 38% of laity)
- e. 59% of clergy are aware PC(USA) provides ideas for lowering your personal carbon footprint (vs. 25% of laity)
- f. 57% of clergy are aware PC(USA) provides opportunities to do public policy advocacy (vs. 24% of laity)
- g. 15% of clergy are *not aware* of any of the listed resources (vs. 49% of laity)

Methodology

ecoAmerica and Lake Research Partners (LRP) designed and LRP administered a national survey, which was conducted online from September 14-18, 2018. The survey yielded a total of 800 adult responses, the sample was drawn from an online panel and respondents were screened to be over the age of 18. The sample was weighted slightly by region, age, race, and education. The survey for the Presbyterian Church (USA) was conducted by ecoAmerica online from September 7-28, 2018 and reached 413 adults, of which 117 were clergy and 296 laity. Respondents to the survey were recruited by outreach efforts from PC(USA).

The margin of error for the national sample is +/-3.5%. In interpreting survey results, all sample surveys are subject to possible sampling error; that is, the results of a survey may differ from those which would be obtained if the entire population were interviewed. The size of the sampling error depends upon both the total number of respondents in the survey and the percentage distribution of responses to a particular question. For example, if 50% of respondents in a sample of 800 respondents answered "Yes" to a particular question, we can be 95% confident that the true percentage will fall within 3.5 points, or from 46.5% to 53.5%. The table below represents the estimated sampling error for different percentage distributions of responses

Suggested Citation

Speiser, M., Kobayashi, N., Gutierrez, M., Lake, C., and Voss, J. (2018). American Climate Metrics Survey 2018: Presbyterian Church (USA). *ecoAmerica and Lake Research Partners*. Washington, D.C.

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