



*Your Mission Co-Worker:
Rev. Katherine Pater*

A Call to Climate Consciousness

*"Around the globe, governments are confronting the reality that as human-caused climate change warms the planet, rising sea levels, stronger storms, increased flooding, harsher droughts and dwindling freshwater supplies could drive the world's most vulnerable people from their homes. Between 50 million and 200 million people — mainly subsistence farmers and fishermen — could be displaced by 2050 because of climate change, according to estimates by the United Nations Institute for Environment and Human Security and the International Organization for Migration."*¹

It grieves us to report that this climate change-driven displacement has already begun in earnest here in Central America, mostly due to the 2015 drought. Many people have left Berlin, or even El Salvador, seeking work because they can no longer grow enough food to feed their families. Most of the people who have left are leaders in their communities, so this displacement of people has disrupted the work of the community organizations. It is always the best, the brightest, and the bravest—those who would have been the most active agents of change in their own communities—who leave first.

El Salvador experienced the driest wet season in living memory last year, and while May began with cloudy skies, cooler temperatures, and a few sprinkles, that does not mean that the severe drought affecting our region is over. Climate scientists indicate that the 2015 drought was caused by an El Niño strengthened by anthropogenic climate change, but they warn that Central America will remain extremely vulnerable to global warming regardless of established semi-annual oscillations of the Pacific Ocean's temperature. Salvadorans alone can do very little about climate change as a global problem, seeing as most carbon emissions are produced by larger, industrialized countries and regions such as the United States, China, and Europe. We simply cannot let this continue, nor can we continue to live in communal denial about it.

We would never tell you who to vote for in the 2016 election season; that would clearly be unethical and go against the Presbyterian values of democracy and mutual forbearance. But we beg you: *please consider voting for only those candidates, whether for local, state, or national office, who understand that anthropogenic climate change is real and threatens the very fabric of human civilization.* There are viable options across the political spectrum. If your favorite candidate does not "believe" in climate change, *please consider informing them that your vote for them depends on them changing their position.* Organize other people to do this with you. Candidates take well-organized faith-based voters seriously. Please ask God's guidance in deciding who to vote for, and please include in your thoughts and prayers the "least of these" who will be hit first—and hardest—by climate change and its social, economic, and political effects.

¹ Source: NYTimes.com, "Resettling the First Climate Refugees." Retrieved 5/3/16

EQUIPO PASTORAL
La Casa Pastoral
Berlín, Usulután, El Salvador



*Your Pastoral Team Members:
Margarita, Idalia, Jesús,
Balmore, Blanca, Cecilia*

If you consider yourself a Democrat/progressive/liberal, please keep in mind that all other social justice issues—education, women's rights, public health, nutrition, water access—are connected to climate change. If you consider yourself a Republican/Tea Partier/conservative—particularly if you proudly consider yourself pro-life, as many members of the Pastoral Team do—please consider that climate change is a threat to human life at all stages of development, particularly as climate change-linked diseases such as Zika rout already-vulnerable regions. People are already dying; this is a pro-life issue.

Please keep Central America, and missions like *Our Sister Parish* who serve with the people in this region, in your prayers.

~Rev. Katherine Pater

Compañeros Delegation

In April, a group of five Compañeros members traveled to El Salvador to visit at the Pastoral House with Katherine and the Pastoral Team members. It was a week full of community visits and meetings. It was a deeply meaningful week shared with prayer, food and fun. Those who traveled this time were: Rev. Linda O'Connell, Marcia McAdoo, Mark McAdoo, Alisha Lundberg & Kathy Bassett.

It was also a week filled with worry about the water situation in Berlin: many springs have dried up, and several communities connected to the local potable water project haven't received water for TWO MONTHS.



Be sure to read Katherine's blog: <https://womanbetweenworlds.wordpress.com/>

COMPAÑEROS
Presbytery of Des Moines
Urbandale, Iowa, U.S.A.