

**PRESBYTERIAN MISSION AGENCY BOARD**  
**April 27-29, 2016**  
**Theology, Formation, and Evangelism Ministry Area**

**ITEM C.103**  
**FOR ACTION**

<i>FOR PRESBYTERIAN MISSION AGENCY EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR'S OFFICE USE ONLY</i>			
	A. Finance	E. Corporate Property, Legal, Finance	J. Board Nominating & Governance Subcommittee
	B. Justice	F. PC(USA), A Corporation	P. Plenary
X	C. Leadership	G. Audit	
	D. Worshiping Communities	H. Executive Committee	

**Subject: Comment to the 222<sup>nd</sup> GA (2016) – Overture 047 (Business Item #09-05) On Communicating Gratitude for the Study of the Encyclical “Laudato Si” - From the Presbytery of Santa Fe**

**Recommendation:**

**That the Presbyterian Mission Agency Board approve the following comment on Overture 047 (Business Item #09-05) On Communicating Gratitude for and Study of the Encyclical “Laudato Si”– From the Presbytery of Santa Fe**

**Comment:**

As the General Assembly considers this overture from the Presbytery of Santa Fe, the following information may be useful to commissioners:

*Laudato Si*, Pope Francis’ encyclical “On Care for our Common Home,” outlines the Holy See’s concern for “the environmental challenge that we are undergoing, and its human roots” (p. 5). Pope Francis explores the roots of the problem and he advances proposals for dialogue and action. *Laudato Si* is a long and detailed encyclical at 82 pages.

The most recent General Assembly policy paper is “The Power to Change: U.S. Energy Policy and Global Warming” (218<sup>th</sup> General Assembly (2008)).

The major concerns and calls to action of *Laudato Si* and “Power to Change” are consistent; however, there are some distinctions that should be noted: 1) there is a seven year gap between publications, thus the contexts are not identical; 2) each builds on the their own distinctive theological traditions; 3) each explores the causes and calls to action for the environmental crisis caused by climate change in detail—the level of detail means that the emphases and specific proposals diverge at points. Pope Francis invites everyone into “a new dialogue about how we are shaping the future of the planet” (p.5).

On June 18, 2015, Gradye Parsons, the Stated Clerk of the General Assembly, wrote a letter (<https://www.pcusa.org/news/2015/6/18/presbyterian-church-us-welcomes-papal-encyclical/>) commending Pope Francis for *Laudato Si*’ writing, “We celebrate the faithful witness and words of Pope Francis today as he encourages responsible, loving care for God’s creation in the release of his papal encyclical *Laudato Si*. We affirm its echo of the great St. Francis’ reverence for nature.” Parsons concludes his letter with these words:

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Pope Francis' leadership, wisdom, and pastoral care are evident in the encyclical, and we deeply appreciate this powerful, faith-filled encouragement for all people to join together to care for God's creation. We affirm the moral conviction that we must turn from individual and corporate practices that harm the creation and participate in healing, protecting, and caring for the world. We will continue to work in partnerships with other faith communities and in the public sector as we all seek to better care for all people and all creation. Finally, we applaud the inspiring leadership of Pope Francis and look forward to seeing what transformative commitments will result from this ethical mandate to care for creation.

Link to Overture - <https://www.pc-biz.org/#/search/6332>