



green light

The quasi-quarterly newsletter of Georgia Interfaith Power & Light
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Executive Director's Report

Greetings! My name is Katy Hinman, and I'm the new Executive Director of Georgia Interfaith Power & Light.

I've been on board since November and am looking forward to working with all of you in our exciting work protecting creation. I am currently a student at Candler School of Theology, in the second year of the Masters of Divinity program and am on the ordination track in the United Methodist Church. Before starting at Candler, I worked for the Arizona Game and Fish Department (ask me about bats sometime!) and got my PhD in Ecology and Evolution from the State University of New York at Stony Brook. I'm very excited to get the chance to combine my two areas of study in my work with GIP&L. We've got a lot of exciting things planned for the next year and beyond. We hope you'll join us!

Second Anniversary Celebration!

Can you believe it's been two years?

It's time for our 2nd Annual Meeting and Anniversary Celebration, and you're invited!

When: March 8, 2005, 7:30 pm

Where: Central Congregational United Church of Christ, 2676 Clairmont Road, NE, Atlanta, Georgia.

What: An opportunity to celebrate God's creation, to hear what GIP&L has been up to, to vote on steering committee members, to honor some congregations that have been working to protect our planet, and to meet other GIP&L partners.

Who: You!

Energy Audits

One of our most exciting new initiatives is our energy audit pilot program. We have performed two audits so far and have three more in the works. The congregations that have signed up for this program get an energy audit performed on their buildings by Southface Energy Institute and a consultation with Expo Energy & Environmental on energy rate structures and cutting energy bills. As we perfect this program, we hope to expand it to allow more congregations to take advantage of this opportunity.

Informational Materials

We are developing a CD of informational materials for all of our partner congregations. Included on the CD will be information about GIP&L, educational materials about energy conservation, tips for cutting your own energy usage, and materials for including environmental messages in your services. If you would like to get a copy, please let us know!

Need More Info?

If you need more information on anything you've seen in this newsletter or anything that GIP&L is up to, check out our website: www.gipl.org; drop us a line at info@gipl.org; or give us a call at 404-588-9978.

Kyoto Protocol Goes Into Effect

On February 16, the Kyoto Protocol went into effect for all the signatory nations. This treaty is aimed at decreasing the production of greenhouse gases and slowing global warming. The United States has refused to sign on to the Kyoto Protocol. The following is an article we wrote to draw attention to the fact that people of faith must act to protect creation, both in our own homes and congregations and on the regional, national, and international level

Environmental Stewardship is a Moral Value

Concern for the earth is at the heart of religious tradition. Christians and Jews reflect on God's creation of the world and recall humanity's responsibility to care for all of this creation. Muslims understand humanity's role as stewards as an act of submission to Allah. Buddhists recognize the interrelatedness of all forms of life. Hindus revere nature as expressions of divinity. Despite the differences in faith and language, each of these religions shares a common concern for the health and welfare of the entirety of creation. Our calling as people of faith is to protect and sustain the creation that, in turn, supports and nurtures humankind.

Global warming is one of the biggest threats facing our earth today. Though some wish to doubt the existence or magnitude of this threat, we understand that the study of global warming is science in progress. However, sufficient evidence exists for us to understand that the effects of global warming threaten both human health and overall environmental integrity. Man-made greenhouse gases, produced from such human activities as the burning of coal and oil, are implicated as important contributors to global warming. As we are contributing to the problem, so are we instrumental in the solution. Concerted global effort is needed to address this threat to creation.

By signing the Kyoto Treaty, 128 nations have committed themselves to a global effort. As of February 16, when the treaty goes into effect, these nations will be engaging in an international cooperative effort to reduce the production of greenhouse gases. Had the United States signed this treaty, reduction of greenhouse gas emissions would be mandated for this country as well. Unfortunately, so far we have declined to do so. However, as people of faith, we need no such mandate to act. Care for others is a moral value. Our behavior affects those for whom we have a moral responsibility. Not only does global warming threaten our entire planet, but the effects are disproportionately felt by those in developing nations, those who can least afford the disruptions in water and food supplies that come from environmental degradation.

The full impact of human-caused changes on our climate cannot be known with certainty, but this is true of any attempt to predict the future. Many use this uncertainty to advocate delays in making decisions on how we should proceed. Is this a chance we are willing to take? There are simple, practical steps we can take now to reduce our contribution to global warming. In Georgia, faith communities are performing energy audits on congregational meeting places and worship spaces, encouraging the development of alternative energy options in the state of Georgia, and educating individuals and congregations on the ways in which they can reduce energy usage and, thus, greenhouse gas emission.

We have a religious and moral duty to care for creation. This duty comes not only from a respect of the ecosystem's role in our own health and well-being, but also from a realization of the right of all creation to enjoy integrity and wholeness. It is immoral to ignore our own responsibility toward this world and toward the rest of humanity and future generations. Denying the reality of this global crisis risks our lives, our earth, and the future of our children.

Solutions are available; we must embrace them. We commend the nations that have signed the Kyoto Protocol and the States that have begun adopting policies to set limits to their production of greenhouse gases. We urge the United States as a nation to take similar action. People of faith must answer the call to stewardship of creation for the sake of all those who live on this earth. We praise and bless those around the world who are answering this call.