



green light

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

Whew! It's been a busy several months! Sorry for the long delay between newsletters, but rest assured that we haven't been sitting around twiddling our thumbs. A number of new congregations are coming on board. High utility prices this winter have really gotten people to start working harder at energy efficiency and conservation, which is good news both for their energy bills and for God's creation!

Although our Energy Audit Pilot Program is finishing up, we are working on new ways to help congregations get energy audits. Our new Power Lite program is gearing up for implementation. And we've been doing education classes all around the metro Atlanta area. If your congregation would like to get involved in any or all of these programs, just let us know! (info@gipl.org)

Along with the normal reports of what we've been doing, this newsletter has lots of Action Tips scattered throughout to help you and your congregation become more energy efficient. Look for the light bulb (a compact fluorescent, of course) to find great energy saving ideas and other activities!

Katy Hinman, Executive Director

Georgia Interfaith Power & Light engages communities of faith in stewardship of God's creation as a direct reflection of our faithfulness through worship, education, and the sustainable generation and efficient use of energy.

Annual Meeting

You are invited to GIPL's third annual meeting at noon on Wednesday, February 22 at Druid Hills United Methodist Church (1200 Ponce de Leon Avenue, Atlanta, GA 30306 – at the corner of Ponce de Leon and Moreland Avenue). We will welcome our newest Steering Committee members, and Steering Committee Officers will be elected. GIPL's four action committees – Audit Committee, Membership Committee, Policy Committee, and Congregational Activities Committee – will report on their activities. Refreshments will be provided.

If you are interested in serving on one of the action committees, please contact Katy Hinman at khinman@gipl.org.

Kilowatt Ours: A Plan to Re-Energize America

GIPL sponsored one of three local showings of the wonderful short film "Kilowatt Ours" on October 7. This film looks at the effects of energy generation on the environment and details specific ways in which individuals and families can cut their energy use. It is a compelling and entertaining film. The film-maker Jeff Barrie was on hand to participate in a panel discussion about the issues brought up in the film along with Katy Hinman, GIPL's Executive Director, and Dabney Dixon, professor at Georgia State University. We had a great crowd and a lively discussion.



If you missed out on the showing or would like to see the full hour-long version, The Turner Foundation is sponsoring a showing on **Wednesday, March 1, at 6:15 pm at the Carter Center**. The film will be followed by a discussion with film-maker Jeff Barrie. If you haven't seen this wonderful film, be sure to check it out!

If you would like to show the film to your congregation, we have copies of it on both DVD and VHS in the GIPL office that we can give you on short-term loan. Just call or e-mail us!

GIPL Receives Challenge Grant

Georgia Interfaith Power & Light has received an \$11,000 challenge grant from the National Interfaith Power & Light office for the purpose of hiring a part time outreach worker to work with local congregations to get them involved in our program. With a matching \$11,000 we can move immediately to interview and hire someone to lead this program. This person would coordinate our efforts to enroll more congregations in our program. He or she would develop systems to contact congregations, help each of them move to a commitment to be effective stewards and get them started on a program to actually start reversing some of the damage we have been doing to the creation.

We now need matching funds. If you or anyone you know might like to make a partial or total contribution to this effort, contact us immediately. We can answer questions and work out details. We are applying to some foundations for this match but would much rather individuals receive the satisfaction of helping us build this movement to our eventual vision – a faith-based, grass roots, energy revolution.

GIPL in the News!

GIPL and GIPL congregations have been featured in many articles in both the online and print media!

The cover article from the December 7, 2005 edition of The Atlanta Jewish Times, "[How Green is My Shul](#)" prominently featured Congregation Bet Haverim's Climate-Neutral Holiday Services (featured on p. 2 of this newsletter) and One For Each Night campaign, as well as highlighting GIPL's efforts within the faith community.

Congregation Bet Haverim was also featured in the article "[Stemming the Tide](#)" in The Forward. And the national Interfaith Power & Light movement was featured in an article on SustainLane.com entitled "[Green Churches Save Green](#)."

You can also find links to these articles on our website – www.gipl.org. Give us a click!

Climate-Neutral Holiday Services: Building on "One for Each Night"

Congregation Bet Haverim celebrated a milestone December 11: the successful completion of the first Climate-Neutral High Holiday campaign. The campaign is a follow-up to the "[One for Each Night](#)" Hanukkah compact fluorescent light sale Bet Haverim pioneered with GIPL two years ago, to promote saving energy. The 2003 campaign received local and international attention, and the synagogue was honored with a Creation Care Award from the National Religious Partnership on the Environment.

This year, Bet Haverim, invited congregants to offset the CO₂ emissions generated during its High Holidays services. (The services are held at the lovely facilities of GIPL member St. Bartholomew's Episcopal Church.) Why choose holiday services as a benchmark for progress? Because preserving a livable planet is a worthy topic for High Holidays reflections. A climate-neutral Rosh Hashanah is a birthday gift to the world, a commitment to guard Creation. A climate-neutral Yom Kippur points out that stewardship sometimes involves sacrifice. The Day of Atonement is honored by recognizing the concept of having enough.

Between August and December, congregants reported trading in their cars for ones with better gas mileage, joining DeKalb's new curbside recycling program, carpooling to work, and buying energy-saving dishwashers and washing machines. They also responded in droves to the third annual compact fluorescent light bulb sale. All told, 16 tons of CO₂ were averted, more than six times the estimated amount generated in four days of High Holidays Services.

To celebrate, children at the Bet Haverim religious school performed a skit about curbing climate change. The skit compared the current risk to the world's climate with a game of "spin the dreidel". The children concluded it would be better to take energy-saving actions than to leave the results to chance. Afterwards, a drawing for prizes rewarded those who had participated in the Climate-Neutral campaign. Winners took home a programmable thermostat, a rake (the no-emissions alternative to the leaf blower), shade-grown organic bars of chocolate, and a water filter pitcher (to spare hauling bottled water).



If your congregation would like to try holding Climate-Neutral services, GIPL can help you set goals, track your progress, and educate your congregation on ways to save energy and carbon dioxide. Drop us an e-mail and we'll get you on the road to Climate-Neutrality!

Attack of the Energy Vampires! Saving Energy and Money Around the Home

A November 2005 article in the New York Times by Matthew Wald entitled “I Want to Drink Your Vatts” talked about the “Energy Vampires” around your home – appliances that continue to draw energy even when they are not in use. TVs, microwaves, DVD players, computers, DSL and cable modems – all kinds of things around the house that we think are “off” are in fact just in “standby” mode and continue to draw power. Don’t think it happens to you? Try this simple experiment: turn your lights and appliances “off” and wait for your refrigerator to hit the idle part of its cooling cycle then go outside and look at your electric meter. Has it stopped spinning? I didn’t think so! What can you do about this steady trickle of electricity (and money) (and carbon dioxide)?



1. Buy energy efficient appliances, especially things that are rated with the government’s EnergyStar rating. These appliances are more efficient all around, including when they are idle.
2. Unplug chargers when not in use – cellphone, laptop, iPod and other chargers continue to draw a current even when they are not connected to what they are supposed to charge. Don’t believe me? Touch the charger when it’s plugged into the wall. Is it warm? It’s drawing power.
3. Use power strips for computer equipment, including modems and printers. At the end of the day when you turn off your computer, just flip the switch on the power strip and you’ve cut off a whole slew of energy vampires from sucking away your money.

Want to know how much you’re losing to Energy Vampires? Use a Kill-A-Watt. Just plug your appliances into this handy gizmo and it will tell you just how much energy they are using when they appear to be off. GIPL has Kill-A-Watts to lend out to churches. Just give us a call. You can use it around your house and find out who the biggest energy-sucking culprits are, then pass it on to other folks in your congregation.



Up to \$500 Tax Credit For Saving Energy!

Did you know that you can get up to a \$500 tax credit on your federal taxes in 2006 and 2007 for energy efficiency improvements to your home? Improving your insulation, building “envelope,” doors, windows, roof, or heating and cooling equipment may qualify you for this credit. We are still waiting for official IRS guidelines on qualified improvements, but make sure you keep your receipts for any energy efficiency steps you take and watch the GIPL website for more information as it becomes available!



DeKalb County Begins Curbside Recycling

Hey DeKalb County GIPLers!
Did you know that you can now subscribe to DeKalb County’s curbside recycling program? The new program takes mixed paper, plastics #1-7, glass, aluminum cans, and tin cans.
To find out more call (404) 294-2900, e-mail sanitation@co.dekalb.ga.us or visit www.co.dekalb.ga.us.

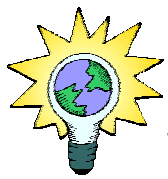
St. Bart’s Pledges to Save Energy!

St. Bartholomew’s Episcopal Church in Atlanta found a great way to get its congregation to save energy – they included it in their annual stewardship campaign! When congregants made their financial pledge to the church’s mission for 2006, they also had the opportunity to make a pledge to save a certain number of pounds of carbon dioxide in 2006.

Pledge cards listed a number of suggested actions as well as the number of pounds of carbon dioxide they would save. See below for an example:

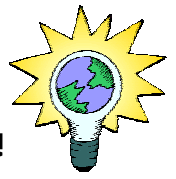
Action	#s of CO2 saved per year
– Caulk, weatherstrip around doors and windows	650
– Set thermostat 2 degrees lower in winter, higher in summer	350
– Replace 6-60W incandescent bulbs with 15W CFL bulbs	500
– Install Low-flow shower head	350
– Drive 500 miles less per year (25 mpg car)	3920
– Switch from 25 mpg car to 40 mpg car (drive 15,000 mi/yr)	4410
– Set water heater 20 degrees lower	100
– Avoid one domestic round-trip flight per year	1800
– Reduce trash by half (30 gallons) per week	300
– Recycle 2 aluminum cans per day	300

Total #s of CO2 I / we will save this year _____



Mark Your Calendar!!!!

EARTH DAY IS APRIL 22!!!



Want help planning a special celebration with your congregation? Call us!

Seal Your Home Against Energy Leakage!

You've probably noticed the rise in energy prices this winter. It may have been considerably more expensive to heat your home. Many of us, particularly those with houses at least ten years old, also suffer from energy inefficiencies due to leaky ductwork. It is the number one source of energy loss in the typical home. We are often heating our attics and crawl spaces as well as our homes.



In an effort to save energy, reduce pollution, and help families save money, GIPL is offering a Duct Sealing Program in cooperation with several utility companies and Southface Energy Institute. If your congregation chooses to participate, Southface will help choose a specially trained and certified contractor to offer home inspections and remedial work in the homes of the members of your congregation. The homeowners will foot the repair bills, but financing is available. However, with the money you save on your energy bills, experience shows that payback will occur in just a few years. And through combining work in a number of homes in your congregation, we stand to get some attractive volume discounts.

If you would like to know more, call or e-mail us!

Another Congregation Saves \$\$ with Energy Efficiency!

Atlanta Friends Meeting recently replaced its six conventional exit lights, which used 75 watts each, with LED versions that use 2.9 watts. Exit lights are on 24/7, so they can be a big energy user. The calculated savings in electricity of 3800 kilowatt-hours per year is 6% of the meeting house's electricity budget. At current Georgia Power rates, that's \$407 a year. With the cost of the six signs begin only \$170, the payback is only 5 months. Annual savings of carbon dioxide, a harmful greenhouse gas, are over 6000 pounds a year!



Putting in LED exit signs is a simple and cost-effective way to get lots of energy savings in not a lot of time. Want to learn more about LED exit signs? Give us a call!

Victory for Green Power!

Back in the spring of 2005, the City of Savannah petitioned the Georgia Public Service Commission to change the criteria of Georgia's new green energy program so that the burning of municipal solid waste would be an allowable source for generating electricity. Because municipal solid waste is not recognized as an environmentally clean source for a green energy program anywhere else in the country, Georgia Interfaith Power & Light intervened in the case to oppose the petition.

If this petition had been granted, it would have been impossible ever to get our program certified as green by an independent third-party agency such as The Center for Resource Solutions and its Green-e Program. Nearby power companies such as TVA and Santee Cooper in South Carolina have their green energy programs certified by Green-e. Georgia Power has yet to apply, but we are hopeful that they will. The inclusion of trash incineration would have gutted the green energy program and made it impossible to ever get certification.

As interveners, GIPL's Steering Committee Chair Woody Bartlett and Policy Committee Chair Reneé Kastanakis appeared on several occasions during the hearings on the case. They argued that, while burning municipal trash might be more acceptable than burning coal, it still did not meet the criteria for a premium green energy program. Premium programs require that consumers pay extra on their electrical bill to pay for the heavy start-up costs of such a new and clean sources of electricity.

Woody and Reneé warned that GIPL would not be able to market the green energy program if it had the inclusion of waste incineration. Reneé cross examined the witnesses from the City of Savannah and got them to agree in the end that the inclusion of their program would cause everyone to lose. It was a stunning piece of legal nimbleness, reminiscent of Perry Mason at his finest.

On November 16, 2005, the City of Savannah withdrew their petition. We think that they saw that a majority of the commissioners would not support their cause. With the withdrawal, we won!

Episcopal Church of the Epiphany Holds Green Sunday Service

By Brenda Lloyd

Our Green Sunday at Episcopal Church of the Epiphany was held April 17, just before Earth Day, an appropriate timing to drive home the message of protecting our resources and conserving energy.

We decorated the Parish Hall and nave with green balloons, which the children loved and took home with them, and we served a simple breakfast of bagels, a fruit salad of green grapes and green apples, kiwi and honeydew melon, plus a few strawberries to vary the color scheme. Epiphany buys Bishop's shade-grown caffeinated and de-caffeinated coffee, so we served that with a choice of regular milk and soy milk.

Katherine Yntema (she and her husband, John, helped with the work) made two beautiful Earth posters, one of which we put at the entrance to the nave and the other in the Parish Hall near the adult education classrooms.

Carol Bartlett brought boxes of fluorescent light bulbs, which sold extremely well. Even as she was leaving, people were coming up to here with requests for the energy-saving bulbs.

Our adult education forum was in the middle of a seven-week series entitled Ethical Dilemmas in Science and Technology. Woody Bartlett spoke to one of the classes about Georgia Interfaith Power & Light (GIPL), of which Epiphany is a member. One of the issues he brought up during his talk and the ensuing discussion was that of how church families can create their own Kyoto Treaty environment.

Our assistant rector, Jim Kee-Rees, continued the Green Sunday theme that Sunday in his sermon, first pointing out the green balloons hanging from the ceiling and explaining why they were there. Our choir sang an anthem and a communion motet about the beauty of God's creation, and our hymns that day were carefully chosen to reflect the Creation.

The Epiphany staff was behind the Green Sunday from the moment I introduced the subject. Jim Kee-Rees and David Houston, our music director, were both excited about being involved. We encouraged parishioners to ride their bikes or walk to church that day, and many did. We also encouraged them to wear green, and many did.

Epiphany's enthusiasm about the Green Sunday made it much easier to plan the event, which we plan to do annually.

If your congregation is interested in having a Green Worship service, GIPL can help!

Drop us an e-mail (info@gipl.org) or give us a call (404-588-9978)



Prayer for Creation (from <http://saintandrewkokomo.org/>)

Blessed Creator, we thank you for the earth.

Awaken our awareness as stewards and give us a reverence for your whole creation.

In our consumption, may we replenish. In our use may we not consider it our own, but nurture and preserve it for the sake of our children and children's children. Help us to always be gracious guests upon Earth, and to be thankful and generous hosts in your name and to your glory and honor.

Help us to see your beauty throughout creation and be daily reminded of your presence and power.