



# green light

The quasi-quarterly newsletter of Georgia Interfaith Power & Light

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## Executive Director's Note

This has been an amazing couple of months for Georgia Interfaith Power & Light! The success of our Spotlight on Global Warming events, showing *An Inconvenient Truth* in over 100 faith communities around the state, is just one of the highlights. I hope you'll take the time to look over this whole issue of Green Light to read about some of the inspiring things that have happened and even more great opportunities that are coming up!

I want to highlight a few dates to put on your calendars (see the rest of this issue for information about these events):

**October 26** – Rev. Sally Bingham, co-founder of Interfaith Power & Light, will join us for People of Faith, People of Action: A Religious Response to Global Warming and the First Annual GIPL Awards

**October 30** – Deadline to order Advent and Hanukkah kits of compact fluorescent light bulbs

**November 3** – *The Great Warming* opens in theaters

**November 4 and 5** – Earth Care Training events for anyone and everyone who would like to get their congregation involved (or more involved) with GIPL

**November 7** – Election Day! Don't forget to find out where your candidates stand on creation care!

We hope that you will join us for these events and let us know how we can help you and your congregation be faithful stewards of creation!

## GIPL Earth Care Training



Just getting started with Georgia Interfaith Power & Light and not sure the best way to move forward? Already plugged in, but need help in determining the next step to take from here?

Come to our training sessions on November 4 or 5 to learn what resources GIPL has to offer, how you can get an Earth Care Team started in your congregation, and meet up with folks in other congregations who share your interests.

During this event, we will educate you on every step of the process on how to proceed and mobilize your community to conserve energy and care for creation.

**Who:** YOU

**What:** Action Training!

**Where:** Location TBA, check [www.gipl.org](http://www.gipl.org)

**When:** Saturday, November 4, 9 am to noon, OR Sunday, November 5, 1 pm to 4 pm (the training will be repeated both days, so you only need to come to one session)

**Why:** To learn how you can mobilize your congregation to be responsible stewards!

## People of Faith, People of Action: A Religious Response to Global Warming AND the First Annual GIPL Awards! October 26 at The Temple

You are invited to join with the Rev. Sally Bingham, executive director of The Regeneration Project and co-founder of Interfaith Power & Light, in an evening of fun and inspiration as she speaks about the religious community's responsibility to address global warming and challenges us here in Georgia to take action as faithful stewards of creation. Rev. Bingham is a priest in the Diocese of California and a nationally recognized speaker on environmental and faith issues.

Not only will you hear this wonderful speaker, but you will also be witness to the very first GIPL Awards! Help us honor congregations that have been leaders in faithful environmental stewardship.

Dessert and coffee will be provided.

**Who:** You and all your friends!

**What:** The Rev. Sally Bingham AND the First Annual GIPL Awards

**Where:** The Temple, Schwartz-Goldstein Hall, 1589 Peachtree St, NE, Atlanta, GA 30309

**When:** October 26, 2006 at 7:30 pm

**Why:** To be inspired and challenged (and to eat yummy desserts and win fabulous door prizes)!



## ***The Great Warming*** **Coming to Theaters, November 3!**

*The Great Warming* is a beautiful and empowering documentary that reveals how climate change is affecting the lives of people everywhere. It is uplifting examination of the real and hopeful actions that we can take to address global warming – and unique in suggesting that climate change is a moral, ethical, and spiritual issue.

*The Great Warming* will be opening in theaters around the country on November 3. Here in Georgia it will be showing at the Regal Hollywood 24 Theater on the I-85 North access road. We highly encourage you to go see this film and to take members of your congregation with you! If we get enough people out to this one theater on opening weekend, they will offer the film in other Regal cinemas in the area. Coming as it does right before election day, this is a great opportunity to help educate people you know about the reality of global warming and our responsibility to address it.

Georgia Interfaith Power & Light will have a display at the theater and will be giving away door prizes to folks who attend the film! Come join us!

## **GIPL Shopping Cart Now Online!**

That's right, you can now shop for energy-efficient products right from the comfort of your own home. Visit our newly updated website and click on Shop on the menu at the top of the page. That page will link you to our new online shopping cart, run in partnership with Michigan Interfaith Power & Light. On their opening page, choose Georgia as your state, then pick your congregation's name off the list and start shopping! The shopping cart is available to members of all congregations that are participating members in GIPL. If you would like your congregation to be included, drop us an e-mail ([info@gipl.org](mailto:info@gipl.org)) or give us a call (404-588-9978) to find out how you can use this great resource!



You can buy compact fluorescent bulbs, programmable thermostats, energy efficient exit signs, low-flow massaging shower heads, even energy efficient holiday lights! And more products are continuously being added. Visit the shopping cart today!

## **Advent / Hanukkah Kits Now Available! Order by October 30!**

GIPL is offering Hanukkah/Advent Kits to get your congregation using Compact Fluorescent Light bulbs (CFLs) and to help them towards a greater understanding of how their faith calls them to care for creation.

The **Advent kit** includes 5 CFLs and the study guide *Preparing for a New Light*. Congregants change one light in their house to a CFL every Sunday of Advent and on Christmas Eve, when they light the candles in their Advent wreath. The study guide includes scripture passages, a prayer, and information on the environmental impacts of energy use for each Sunday, as well as page of Christian light bulb jokes.

The **Hanukkah kit** includes 8 CFLs and the study guide *One for Each Night*. Congregants change one light to a CFL every night of Hanukkah when they light the candles in their menorah. The study guide includes a prayer, a Jewish light bulb joke, and information on the environmental impacts of energy use for each night of Hanukkah.



Each kit comes in a cloth bag. Consider selling these kits as a fundraiser for your environmental ministry or other missions of your church. They make great gifts too!

Contact us for more information and to order kits for your congregation. Please order by October 30 so we can get the kits to you before the holidays! \$20 per kit for Advent kits and \$32 per kit for Hanukkah kits. Call 404-588-9978 or email us at [info@gipl.org](mailto:info@gipl.org).

## **Clergy see *The Great Warming***

On September 21, Georgia Interfaith Power & Light, with support from Zoo Atlanta and the Turner Foundation, hosted a special showing of *The Great Warming* for clergy. This showing was one of several planned events for clergy to educate them about the threat of global warming and to encourage them to bring this message to their congregations. It was a great success! Nearly 70 people attended and were treated to a delicious lunch and a screening of the film, as well as a discussion afterward with Rev. Dr. Gerald Durley, Rev. Woody Bartlett, Dr. Katy Hinman, and Brent Blackwelder, director of Friends of the Earth. The event kicked off a new chapter of GIPL's outreach and is just the beginning of a new effort in engaging clergy as well as laity to care for God's creation. Thank you to everyone who attended and especially to Dr. Durley, Pastor of Providence Missionary Baptist Church, Rev. Sam Candler, Dean of the Episcopal Cathedral of St. Philip, Alan Jenkins of the Presbytery of Greater Atlanta, and the leadership of Concerned Black Clergy for their help in bringing a diverse group of clergy to this fantastic event! We look forward to many more like it in the future!

## Voting Green

With elections just around the corner, there are some important questions we need to be asking our candidates:



*Are they embracing technology that improves energy efficiency?*

*Will they encourage the use of renewable, clean energy sources?*

*Do they recognize that climate change and global warming are real threats?*

*Are they working towards improving our state's and our country's energy policies so that we might move into a cleaner, greener future?*

These are big questions—and not knowing the answers to these questions can leave us feeling like we aren't making informed decisions at the polls. Georgia Interfaith Power & Light wants to make sure that you know the importance of letting your voice be heard by voting. Become informed about the candidates on the ballot this November and ask them to represent your interests in protecting creation and having a clean, green earth to pass on to your children.

### *What can you do?*

- **Let your voice be heard.** This is especially important during election season. Find out where candidates stand on energy policies and renewable energy, then tell them your concerns and how you want to be represented.
- **Make sure you know where to Vote.** Go to [http://www.sos.state.ga.us/elections/elections/voter\\_information/](http://www.sos.state.ga.us/elections/elections/voter_information/) to find your polling place and identify your elected officials.
- **Vote!—and bring a friend!** Make sure you find time **Tuesday, November 7** to vote and remind friends and family to vote as well!

## Voting Update: The Georgia Public Service Commission – by Renee Kastanakis

Among other things on the ballot this November are two spots on the Georgia Public Service Commission (PSC). Most people don't know that the work the PSC does and decisions they make affect the lives of all Georgians every time we turn on a light, ignite a gas burner or pick up a telephone. If they have that much effect on our daily lives, what can we do to make sure their decisions are ones we support? **VOTE!**

The Georgia PSC consists of five Commissioners, who are elected on a statewide ballot. Current Commissioners are Robert “Bobby” Baker, David Burgess, H. Doug Everett, Angela Speir and Stan Wise. Biographies of the Commissioners are available at <http://www.psc.state.ga.us/>. The Commissioners serve staggered six year terms with Commissioners Wise and Burgess running for re-election this year. Annually the five select a different chairperson, based upon seniority. The chair this year is Commissioner Wise. The PSC is supported by approximately 94 staff.

The responsibilities of the PSC include wide-ranging regulation of Georgia Power Company, which provides electricity in Georgia as a regulated monopoly. The more rural EMCs and municipal power companies are not regulated by the PSC. The PSC decisions encompass the rates Georgia Power charges its ratepayers; the resources Georgia Power purchases in order to supply our electricity; and the programs Georgia Power engages in to promote efficient use of electricity. GIPL has been active in several proceedings before the Commission and has encouraged the Commission to support the inclusion of renewable resources in Georgia Power's supply mix; to promote energy efficiency programs and to create a Green Power program that includes Green-e certification.

As a consumer and/or a congregation, you can email or send letters to the Commissioners. You can be heard in any case being considered by the Commission – they take consumer testimony at the beginning of every hearing. You can make sure that the people you elect to the PSC care about the issues that are important to you!

## Bioneers Forum: *Visionary and Practical Solutions for Restoring the Earth*

GIPL's Jennifer Downs is teaming with Rob del Bueno of *ReFuel* to moderate a session on alternative energy during the Bioneers Southeastern Forum at Agnes Scott College, October 20<sup>th</sup>-22<sup>nd</sup>. This conference brings people together from diverse backgrounds and professions to engage visionary and practical solutions for restoring the Earth. GIPL's session, *Indigenous Energy Transformations: Innovators, Entrepreneurs and New Ideas*, will take place on Friday, October 20 from 9:15-11 AM, and focuses on local alternative energy solutions and the communities that generate and sustain them. From solar and wind power to biodiesel and green roofs, this session celebrates creative solutions that have risen to the challenge our global energy crisis presents, and by doing so have inspired others to join with them in restoring the earth. Panelists from the Southern Alliance for Clean Energy, the Georgia Solar Energy Association, the SOPA Bicycle Coop and Greenroof.com will talk about how to encourage the emerging alternative energy solutions in our midst!

Jennifer will also be a panelist on Sunday, October 22, at 9:15 AM for *Beyond Stewardship: In a Sustainable World, What Role Will Humans Have?* See [www.inspiringfutures.org/bioneers](http://www.inspiringfutures.org/bioneers) for more info about the conference.

## On Giant Pandas and Hope – by Katy Hinman

At the risk of over-dramatizing, I must confess that I have a new addiction. Ever since the birth of a new panda cub at Zoo Atlanta, I have become addicted to Panda Cam. The zoo's website has a 24 hour a day video feed from the panda habitat showing Lun Lun and her new cub, and I am an avid watcher. I open the website and just let it run in the background of my computer so I can click over any time and check in on the new mama and her, as yet unnamed, baby. For the first couple of weeks, it was very rare to even get a glimpse of the cub, so carefully was she protected by her mother (not to mention the fact that compared to big bear Lun Lun, the cub was about the size of a stick of butter when she was first born). Now, however, the cub is a little larger and can quite frequently be seen more easily, cuddled up to her mama or rolling on the floor when Lun Lun goes to eat (as I'm typing this, Lun Lun has gone off for a snack and the baby is experimenting unsuccessfully with standing up). Her black markings are coming in and she's gotten a fair coat of fur, so she's basically the cutest thing you can imagine.

But cuteness is not the only reason for my addiction. I find myself clicking over to check on the pandas when I've just read the latest study about the devastating effects global warming or heard for the hundredth time that the faith community shouldn't be involved in "political issues" like environmental stewardship. Watching the miraculous growth of this baby panda is a pick-me-up, a reminder of why we're doing this work. In many ways, we humans have not been good stewards of our fragile planet. The endangered status of the giant panda is just one result of that. But the birth of this baby is a reminder that we can work together to reverse some of the damage we've caused.



When we were preparing for last month's screening of *The Great Warming*, Jennifer and I went by the zoo to make arrangements. While there, we saw a sign they had up showing their two adult pandas, Lun Lun and Yang Yang. The caption on the photo said "Some things make the world a better place just by being in it." What a necessary reminder! We so frequently get caught up in the "politics" of stewardship, the economics of stewardship, and the costs and benefits of taking this or that action that we sometimes forget that it is *not* all about us. The creation itself has value and worth beyond any economic or health benefit to people. We have a responsibility not only to our fellow humans, but also to the rest of creation and its Creator, to preserve and protect this fragile planet for future generations of people *and* pandas, not to mention birds, trees, frogs, mushrooms, and sea urchins. The rarity of the birth of a baby panda at Zoo Atlanta is a reminder of the ways in which we have not lived up to that responsibility, but it is also a sign of hope. We *can* work together to reverse the destruction we have caused. We have the power and the means, now all we need is the will. Next time you are feeling overwhelmed or weak or hopeless, click on over to Panda Cam. Watch the amazing growth of this precious creature and remember that we can and must be agents of change and hope in this world.

Need a panda pick-me-up? Visit [www.zooatlanta.com/animals\\_panda\\_cam.htm](http://www.zooatlanta.com/animals_panda_cam.htm).

## Spotlight on Global Warming a Resounding Success!

*Wow! What a response!* When we first offered you the chance to show *An Inconvenient Truth*, we had no idea just how eager you would be for this opportunity! We were most pleasantly surprised and are excited to announce that over 120 faith communities throughout Georgia saw *An Inconvenient Truth*, beginning important conversations about how to engage their faith and their community in conserving energy and caring for creation.

We are truly grateful for all of you who took part in this important project and organized your congregation to show the film. We are especially appreciative that you were patient with us as we negotiated details as the number of participants grew and grew! We hope that you had a chance to engage in discussions around the film and have identified some energy (pun intended!) to capitalize on. We look forward to following up with you to see how GIPL might help you further the conversation and translate your that energy into action. Call us to get started!!