



green light

The quasi-quarterly newsletter of Georgia Interfaith Power & Light

Volume 4, Number 1

April 2008

Executive Director's Note

Every time I think that we're going to have a nice relaxing month or so, new and exciting events and opportunities come up, and we're off and running again! Since our last newsletter, GIPL has been educating congregations, hosting famous authors, engaging in policy issues, encouraging energy efficiency and green power, and just generally doing our little part to save the world! Please take some time to catch up with all our comings and goings in this issue of Green Light and, as always, keep your eyes on www.gipl.org for upcoming opportunities.

We especially want to let you know about two changes to our GIPL family. Jennifer Downs, our much-beloved Associate Director is resigning to spend time with her new baby, Dexter. She will still be working with GIPL, especially in policy issues, but we've now brought on Presian Burroughs as our Interim Associate Director.



Earth Day Is Here—

How is your congregation celebrating?

If you, your pastor, and other congregational leaders need help in planning a worship service and sermon for Earth Day or any time you want to show your care for creation, check out GIPL's new online worship resource. You'll find suggestions for liturgy, bulletins, hymns, scriptures, and prayers as well as inspirations for sermons and even links to model sermons.

Check it out by visiting www.gipl.org/worship.

If you have suggestions or your own contributions, email us at info@gipl.org.

Meet Presian Burroughs: GIPL's Interim Associate Director

Yes, I'm a Duke fan! This photo depicts a lot about my family: my husband Brad and I met while attending Duke Divinity School, graduated with MDiv degrees in May '06, named our Boxer "Duke Blue Burroughs", and will return to Duke for me to begin a doctorate in theology in August. I'll study preaching, particularly the ways in which preachers have motivated their congregations to implement greening initiatives and life-style changes through sermons and spiritual formation. I am thrilled to have this amazing work opportunity at GIPL and anticipate learning lots of practical knowledge before sticking my nose in the books for years on end! I look forward to meeting you! (You can email me at pburroughs@gipl.org)



Make your efficiency changes today: Shop IPL!

ShopIPL.org is a new online shopping cart for Interfaith Power & Light congregations and their members. With ShopIPL, you can buy energy efficient products at a discount, helping you save money and the earth! Anyone can use the shopping cart, but IPL congregations and members get an extra 10% discount by using the promotional code **shopipl**. Visit today and green up for Earth Day!

Georgia Power's Green Energy Program Certified: Buy Your Green Energy Today

Last summer, Georgia Interfaith Power & Light reached an agreement with the Georgia Power Company and the Georgia Public Service Commission that Georgia Power's green energy program would achieve national Green-e certification. GIPL had requested this certification for several years, but it was only through the negotiations over the 2007 Integrated Resource Plan that the goal was finally reached.

Green-e certification is offered by the Center for Resource Solutions, an independent third-party organization, as a way of assuring the public that a utility's green products achieve a certain level of quality. It is a "Good Housekeeping Seal of Approval" for green energy products. Many utilities across the country have a Green-e certification. Georgia Power's product now also has this recognition.

Georgia Power's green energy is produced at a county landfill in south DeKalb County where methane gas is burned to generate electricity. The generators have a high level of efficiency and emit a low level of air pollutants. The electricity is then fed into the power grid and eventually into the homes of Georgia Power customers.

Customers can buy this green energy for \$4.50 per month for a block of 100 kilowatt-hours. This premium is in addition to the regular price one pays for electricity. This increased premium goes into a special Georgia Power program that accumulates money for future investments in green energy such as solar energy and wind energy. Customers can sign up for the green energy on [Georgia Power's website](#).

Many of us at Georgia Interfaith Power & Light currently purchase this green energy. Now that it is certified, we commend it to all our members as an important way to move towards a new society much less destructive of God's creation. Buy one block or buy enough blocks to equal your average electrical usage. Not only will Georgia Power and GIPL be appreciative, God will be also. —Woody Bartlett



Climate Candlelight Vigil

On March 27, Jennifer Downs (pictured, with baby Dexter in tote), Woody Bartlett, Trey Gibbs (Trinity Presbyterian) and Egan Short (Decatur HS), participated in the Climate Candlelight Vigil at Druid Hills Presbyterian Church. The speakers sounded an urgent alarm about the crisis of global climate change and the faith community's responsibility to act on the earth's behalf. Beyond individual and community action, however, the speakers and almost 60 participants also urged Congress to pass a bold climate bill in order to address this serious issue. (Photo by Sarah Tomaka)

GIPL Thanks our Student Partners!

GIPL has been blessed this year to have had two wonderful seminary students working with us. Cathie Crawford, whom we introduced in the last issue of Green Light, is finishing up at the Interdenominational Theological Center. She has been working on expanding our scriptural resources and has been challenging us to increase the diversity of our outreach efforts.

Alisa Wood is a senior at McAfee School of Theology and has been doing a mentorship with GIPL director Katy Hinman for the spring semester. Among other tasks, she is working on developing materials for educational lessons for children. She writes, "Hi! I am Alisa and will graduate from McAfee School of Theology on May 17th. Katy agreed to be my mentor so I have been at GIPL this semester. Along with the ten learning opportunities needed for my class, I am working on a Kid's Care for Creation lesson."

We have been so pleased to have both of these women working with us and look forward to sharing the fruits of their labors with you!

Bill McKibben Comes to Atlanta — Carol Bartlett

Bill McKibben, author of *The End of Nature* and *Deep Economy*, came to Atlanta at the invitation of GIPL on March 11. Having begun the day at 3:30 am in Austin, McKibben spoke at three Atlanta events: a lunch for clergy, a tea for environmental leaders and an evening lecture for the public at Holy Trinity in Decatur. Approximately 350 people attended this public event which was co-sponsored by Georgia Center for the Book.

It was a nourishing day, providing many substantial messages and challenges on which we might ruminate for months. In sum, McKibben explained:

- A. All of the information about global climate change is time sensitive. A time will come when it won't matter what we do to lessen our carbon footprint. At that point, the higher levels of carbon in the atmosphere will change our climate in dramatic and perhaps catastrophic ways. Therefore, **don't wait until your life is in order or your refrigerator is cleaned out to begin changing habits in earnest.**
- B. Changing light bulbs, while important, is not enough. **We have to change public policy**, legislation and regulations at the federal and state levels.
- C. **Going public**, getting out in the street, demonstrating will get attention and, if done well, can move public policy, new legislation and new regulations along.
- D. **Students** are interested in and challenged by big ideas and big actions. Together, we can come up with actions that can make a significant difference.
- E. There are two new coal burning power plants slated for Georgia. As McKibben said, if they work perfectly and there are no accidents, we will be living with coal plants delivering CO₂ and hazardous pollutants to us, our friends, our children and grandchildren for the next 40 years. **We need to do everything we can to block those plants being built in Georgia.**

We have a lot to do! But together, with talented and committed people in GA and across the country, we CAN make a difference!

GIPL Featured in the New Documentary *Renewal*

Renewal highlights the ways in which faith communities have tackled environmental problems. Each of the eight vignettes can stand alone, making the film an excellent vehicle for discussion in the classroom and by activist groups, religious and secular. The eight stories in *Renewal* are:

- A Crime Against Creation: Evangelicals bear witness to mountaintop removal and the destruction of Appalachia
 - Going Green: GreenFaith in New Jersey helps congregations take the first steps to environmental action
 - Food for Faith: Muslim tradition and charity forge bonds between urban communities and sustainable farms in Illinois
 - Ancient Roots: The Teva Learning Center and Adamah in Connecticut bring environmental education together with Jewish tradition
 - Compassion in Action: Green Sangha, a Buddhist community in northern California, leads a campaign to save trees
 - Eco-Justice: The Holy Spirit inspires a battle against industrial contamination in small-town Mississippi
 - Sacred Celebration: Catholics and Native Americans embrace religious ritual in a struggle to protect New Mexico's land and water
 - **Interfaith Power and Light**: Across America people of all faiths mount a religious response to global warming
- GIPL is working on getting copies of this film for all our congregations in the next few months, but if you can't wait to order the DVD, or just want more information, visit www.renewalproject.net.

Earth Hour



On March 29 from 8-9 pm the city of Atlanta went dark. As part of a worldwide demonstration of the need to take action on climate change, congregations, businesses, governments, families, and individuals all turned off their lights for one hour. Despite the foggy night, it was a sight to behold as some of the most famous and visible buildings in Atlanta shut off their lights. Congregations took part as well, turning off steeple lights, shutting down buildings, and encouraging their members to do their part.

You can visit <http://www.earthhourus.org> to see some great pictures from around the United States, from our own Bank of America building to the Golden Gate bridge in San Francisco. The next Earth Hour is March 28, 2009, so start planning now!



Episcopal Ministry Fair *The Episcopalians Do it Again!*

Warning to other faith groups: you may have some catching up to do! The Episcopal Diocese of Atlanta has been working hard to be on the forefront of environmental ministry and creation care. Not only have Episcopal churches won the Congregation of the Year GIPPY two years in a row, but the Cathedral of St. Philip was a beacon of non-light during Earth Hour and an interview with Dean of the Cathedral Sam Candler was aired as part of 11Alive's coverage of the event. As well, Bishop Neil Alexander has made the environment a primary focus for this year's ministry and the Diocesan Ministry Fair theme this year was "God's Creation, Our Response." We are proud to recognize the Episcopal Diocese of Atlanta as a founding member of GIPL and are excited by all the wonderful actions they and their member churches have taken.

May all our faith groups be so inspired and inspiring!

S.O.I.L. Alliance & GIPL

If it's true that you are what you eat, then maybe we should take a little more thought about what we're putting into our mouths. Much of our food is heavily processed and travels a long distance to get to our plates. This is an energy-intensive process that's not only less appetizing but also harmful to our planet. To help lessen the impact that our food choices have on our environment, GIPL has joined up with the **S.O.I.L. Alliance** to encourage the use of foods that are grown **Sustainably, Organically, Intentionally**, and **Locally**. Members of the Alliance include Georgia Organics, the Atlanta Community Food Bank, and the Cathedral of St. Philip.

The goal is to connect people more closely with their food, through community gardens, local farmers' markets, community supported agriculture, and educational programs. The S.O.I.L. Alliance is still in its early stages, but if your congregation is interested in learning more about making food choices that are healthy for people and the earth, then drop us an e-mail or give us a call (info@gipl.org or 404-588-9978) to get involved!

Aluminum Recycling—Dan May

That empty Diet Coke can you are about to throw in the trash – Don't do it!! It takes almost twenty times the energy to mine and manufacture a can from raw materials as it does to make one from a recycled can! No wonder practically all recycling programs include an aluminum can component; it's much cheaper for the aluminum manufacturers to use recycled materials, and it's much better for the environment too... less solid waste in landfills, less energy needed, and much less release of carbon dioxide, the main global warming gas.

Here are a few more aluminum facts.

- Recycling one aluminum can saves enough energy to run a television for three hours.
- Only about 50% of aluminum cans are recycled in the U.S. Americans throw away enough aluminum every three months to rebuild the entire commercial airline fleet.
- Tossing away an aluminum can wastes as much energy as pouring out half of that can's volume of gasoline.
- Recycling 1 ton of aluminum (about 49,000 cans) saves the equivalent in energy of 2,350 gallons of gasoline. This is equivalent to the amount of electricity used by the average home over a period of 10 years
- There is no limit to the amount of times aluminum can be recycled. Once an aluminum can is recycled, it's back on the grocery shelf as another aluminum can in 60 days.