

## Executive Director's Note

I'm sure that you all know that October is Squirrel Awareness Month, but did you know that it is also Energy Awareness Month? We are actually hearing a lot about energy lately, especially in light of recent gasoline shortages. Challenges to meeting our energy needs are cropping up everywhere, from long lines at gas stations to rising natural gas prices to proposals to build more coal-fired power plants. We need energy to get us from place to place, to refrigerate and cook our food, to heat and cool our homes, to light our offices, to run our computers (how else could you read our fascinating e-newsletter?). But we also need to be aware of where our energy comes from, how we're really using it, and what this means to our beautiful world.

Take some time this month to find out where your energy comes from. You can start with electricity. Visit [www.epa.gov/powerprofiler](http://www.epa.gov/powerprofiler) to find how your electricity is generated (coal, nuclear, hydro, etc.). Then go even farther back at [www.ilovemountains.org](http://www.ilovemountains.org) to find out how your light switch may be connected to mountaintop removal. If you don't like what you see, take steps to change your energy use. There are lots of bright ideas (marked with a CFL) in this newsletter and on our website ([www.gipl.org](http://www.gipl.org)) on how to become more energy efficient. Not only will this help God's creation, it also save you money - money you can use for all sorts of things... like celebrating Squirrel Awareness Month!

## Newsletter Spotlight

There is so much in this newsletter we expanded to **6 pages!** Prepare yourself!

- Coal Campaign? Check out Jennifer Downs article on Pg 2.
- Want to green your Halloween? See Pg 3.
- Need more info on the upcoming elections? Pg 4.
- Egan the Youth Intern? Pg 5
- Congregational Updates? Pg 5
- Power Credit? Pg 6.
- Spotlight on Change-Kilowatt Ours? Pg 6

## GIPL Welcomes Alexis Myers!

Greetings! I am joining GIPL as the new Communications & Outreach Director. I have my Masters of Divinity from San Francisco Theological Seminary and I am on the road towards ordination in the Episcopal church. I teach Sunday School and play softball, badly, at St. Luke's Episcopal Church. I grew up in a small town in Kentucky and have lived all over the country: Boston, New Hampshire, San Francisco and now Atlanta. I live in Decatur with my spouse and my dog—life is pretty good. You can get in touch with me at [amyers@gipl.org](mailto:amyers@gipl.org) or 404-588-9978.



## Energy Audits Update by Woody Bartlett

Since the audit program started a little over a year ago, the GIPL audit team has audited almost 40 congregations and it is growing by leaps and bounds. The audit consists of a two-hour walk-through assessment of your congregational facilities, led by a volunteer professional energy expert looking for energy drains from the bottom to the top of your buildings such as: inefficient lighting and exit signs, thermostats and office equipment, holes in insulation and in the building envelope, and heating and air conditioning systems. We also look at water conservation. From this audit your congregation will receive a report of the findings as well as many helpful tips to save energy, money and God's creation.

Recently, the new Episcopal Church's Task Force on Environmental Stewardship decided to ask every church in the diocese to undertake an audit. Because of that decision, GIPL and the task force are recruiting additional auditors with an emphasis on areas outside the metro Atlanta area as well within.

To make the whole audit program even sweeter, a major foundation has given two grants to GIPL so that we can now make matching grants of up to \$25,000 to congregations to do the efficiency improvements recommended by the audit. If your faith community would like an audit or if you have the desire to be an auditor, email GIPL at [info@gipl.org](mailto:info@gipl.org) to get started. To learn more about our grants, visit [www.gipl.org/grant](http://www.gipl.org/grant).

## Help Make Clean Energy the Way Forward for Georgia by Jennifer Downs

GIPL is mobilizing its membership (you!) to work beyond our immediate faith community to engage environmental concerns across Georgia. Specifically, we want to assemble faithful voices to speak out in favor of clean energy rather than more coal fired power plants in our state. There are currently two new coal plants proposed for Georgia: one in Early County and another in Washington County. GIPL is working to educate our membership and their communities across the state about the alternatives to coal as an energy source. We want to encourage and promote energy conservation, energy efficiency and the use of green energy technologies that keep our air and water clean so that we can curb our dependence on fossil fuels that pollute God's creation and contribute to the warming of our atmosphere.

The 850 Megawatt coal fired power plant proposed for Washington County is to be built by a partnership of 10 Electric Membership Cooperatives (EMCs); Cobb EMC, Diverse Power, Greystone Power, Jackson EMC, Washington EMC, and Snapping Shoals EMC (you can find out more about this plant at [www.powerforgeorgians.com](http://www.powerforgeorgians.com)). GIPL is looking for people of faith in each of these EMC territories who can speak to their neighbors, their faith communities and to their EMC leadership about dangers of coal fired power, the need for programs that encourage energy conservation and efficiency and the need to invest in renewable energy technologies.

Why is this so important? If another dirty coal fired power plant is built, the health of all Georgians will be put at risk. Coal plants emit smog-forming nitrogen oxides, toxic mercury and soot-forming sulfur dioxide, all of which have a negative effect on Georgia's air and water quality. Coal plants are also a drain on Georgia's already strained water supply. The Washington County plant will need between 13 and 16 million gallons of water per day for operation. Not only will Georgians suffer from the water and air pollution, but the proposed Washington County plant will release approximately 6-7 million tons of global warming pollution, Carbon Dioxide gases (CO<sub>2</sub>), into the atmosphere every year. This means that not only will Georgians be put at risk, but that the effects of this plant will be felt around the world. As those called to be good neighbors, faithful people must be concerned and must take action. We must consider not only our immediate needs for electric power, but the lasting effect building a dirty coal fired power plant will have on this and future generations of Georgians.



***You can get involved*** and help us in this very large undertaking! Coal has been the way that our public utilities and Electric Membership Cooperatives have provided power to their customers and members for a long time. However, we know that there is a healthier and greener way forward. But this path will require education, persuasion and relationship building at every level—neighbor to neighbor as well as conversations with our elected leaders. We are all in this together—this is not a fight or a battle. This is about citizens, customers and EMC members letting those who provide their power know that cleaner energy is a possibility and they want it! It is imperative that those who know that clean energy is the way forward spread the word and help educate others so that we leave a legacy of clean air, clean water and a healthy world.

There are many opportunities to join this effort! Please contact Jennifer Downs at [jdowns@gipl.org](mailto:jdowns@gipl.org) for more information.



# green light

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## This Halloween, Think Green

We are moments away from Halloween and every holiday is another occasion to celebrate the ways we can all care for creation and think green. Here are a few tips to keep the energy vampires at bay.

- 1. Trick or Treat with Reusable Bags**—Cloth or canvas shopping bags, which can be decorated and personalized, or even pillowcases, make terrific eco-friendly alternatives to paper or plastic bags.
- 2. Make Your Halloween Party Eco-Friendly**—Serve healthy and seasonal foods and buy pumpkins, apples and other seasonal items from a local farmer's market. Produce bought at farmer's market will not only taste better but saves energy. Use re-usable plates, cups, utensils, napkins and tablecloths. Paper party goods can be expensive and just add more clutter to our nation's landfills.
- 3. Make use of all pumpkin parts**—After carving a pumpkin, make sure to save the seeds. Bake them and serve them to party guests or feed them to the birds. If possible, bury or compost the carcass.
- 4. Make Do-It-Yourself Costumes**—Make your own costume or buy one at a second-hand shop. Can't find anything suitable in the house? Use Goodwill's [online store locator](#) to find a thrift store near you or shop at the online auction.
- 5. Give Eco-Friendly Treats**—Give out healthy treats. Finding nutritional treats has to be one of Halloween's challenges. But with some serious thought, it can be done. Some ideas that come to mind include: Hand out individual microwave popcorn packs. Newman's Own Organic has three varieties of organic popcorn. Pick up some honey sticks or fruit leather. There's also plenty of healthy candy bars and organic chocolate on the market these days.
- 6. Teach your children well**—Teach them not to litter. Tell them pumpkin jokes. My favorites:  
What's the ratio of a pumpkin's circumference to its diameter? Pumpkin Pi  
How do you mend a broken Jack-O-Lantern? With a pumpkin patch  
What is a pumpkin's favorite sport? Squash.  
Good Times.
- 7. Keep Halloween Clean**—Teach your children to keep candy wrappers in their [reusable trick-or-treat bags](#) until they return home, or to dispose of them in trash cans along their route. Take along an extra bag when you take the kids out, and pick up litter along the way to help clean up the neighborhood.
- 8. Walk, Don't Drive**
- 9. Reuse and Recycle**—If you don't already compost, Halloween is a great time to start. You can add post-Halloween jack-o-lanterns to your compost bin, along with [fallen leaves](#), food scraps, and other organic, biodegradable yard and household waste. Instead of throwing away your Halloween decorations each year, store and reuse them year after year, just as you do decorations for many other holidays, such as Christmas and Hanukkah.
- 10. Keep it going**—An eco-friendly lifestyle and reducing waste and pollution should be a daily event, not a special occasion. With a little thought, you can apply the strategies you use to have a green Halloween to the way you live every day. Experience nature. Visit a pumpkin farm. Pick fresh apples. Talk a long walk outside. Look up at the sky. Notice the moon. Remember, it's Halloween and the Great Pumpkin might be watching.

## 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/locator.htm> to find your polling place and identify your elected officials.

**Vote!—and bring a friend!** Make sure you find time **Tuesday, November 4** 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 the 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. And this year, they will be deciding if two new nuclear plants can be built in Georgia. 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 Chuck Eaton, Robert "Bobby" Baker, 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. This year, Commissioner Everett is running for re-election against John H. Monds and 3 candidates: Lauren McDonald Jr., Jim Powell and Brandon Givens, are running to succeed Angela Speir. Annually the five Commissioners select a different chairperson, based upon seniority. The chair this year is Commissioner Eaton. 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 and to promote energy efficiency programs. 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!

## New youth group curriculum-by Egan Short

Drawing from the GIPL middle school youth group curriculum as well as other more specialized curricula, I am creating a high school level youth group curriculum. The lessons combine religious and secular texts as well as YouTube videos and documentaries like *Kilowatt Ours* to explore a variety of environmental concerns. The curriculum includes steps from Low Carbon Diet, emphasizing action in addition to education. The lessons also incorporate activities that encourage students to educate others as they begin the journey toward a more faithful relationship with creation. After the curriculum's completion, I hope to have it reviewed by other high school students, including those from GIPL's new Youth Advisory Committee.

## Congregational Updates

### Glenn Memorial United Methodist Church

Glenn Memorial United Methodist Church is having a "**Festival of God's Creation**" on **Sunday, October 26th**. In this year's Festival of God's Creation, at the 11:00 service, the church will dedicate a new chalice and paten, which was created from an oak tree that stood outside the church. Glenn's Environmental Task Force will present a festival of booths on the lawn from 10:30am-1pm covering many environmental opportunities. Outside organizations including Georgia Interfaith Power and Light, Sierra Club, and Glenn's own Scout Troop 18 will add their expertise on these and other environmental topics.

On October 26th, some of the Sunday School classes from 9:45-10:45am will be focusing on environmental topics. The Glenn youth will be making sandwiches in the afternoon for Atlanta's homeless and spending time appreciating public green space at Piedmont Park. For the Wednesday Night Supper leading up to the Festival of God's creation, Glenn members will watch and discuss *Kilowatt Ours*.

For more information on these events, see [www.glennumc.org](http://www.glennumc.org).

### Episcopal Diocese of Atlanta

To see what some local Episcopal Churches are doing (and read a great profile of GIPL's founders) , check out the newest issue of the Episcopal Diocese of Atlanta Magazine, [Pathways](#).

## Congratulations to our 2008 GIPL Grant Award Recipients!

This year's projects include HVAC system and control replacements, window replacements, insulation projects, CFL purchases, ceiling fan installation, attic fan removal and many more.

Please join us in congratulating our first round of 2008 GIPL Grant Award recipients:

All Souls Fellowship, Greater Deliverance Baptist Church, Chattahoochee Valley Episcopal Ministry, Morningside Presbyterian Church, Holy Trinity Episcopal, Druid Hills United Methodist Church, Congregation B'nai Torah, North Decatur Presbyterian Church, and Columbia Theological Seminary.

## More GIPL Grant Awards Available!

### Application Due Date: November 15, 2008!

Through generous support from the Kendeda Foundation, GIPL is offering matching grants of up to \$25,000 for faith communities to make energy improvements to their facilities. Visit our [Grant Page](#) for information and an application. The next round of applications are due **November 15, 2008!**



## Power Credit for Every Congregation-by Marti Breen

Georgia Interfaith Power & Light and Georgia Power have teamed up to add new life to the Power Credit program by giving faith communities a way to make signing up their members pay off. Now, any church, synagogue, mosque or other community of faith that signs up congregants for the Power Credit program gets a \$20 rebate—in addition to the \$20 rebate the congregant gets. It's a great way to earn money for youth groups or other ministries.

All Saints' Episcopal joins Sacred Heart Catholic and the Friends Meeting as early participants in the program. We began by publicizing the program in church publications (All Saints' has a Monthly in addition to Sunday bulletins) late in the summer and kicked off the program on Start Up Sunday, September 7. We have a table where we give out Power Credit brochures and collect congregants' email and phone numbers. Then we email them the form for sign-up—it requires their Georgia Power account number so we felt this would be the easiest way to get people signed up.


Taking a page from Sacred Heart's hymnal, we've also used the table to sell reusable shopping bags emblazoned with the All Saints' Earth Stewards logo.

So far, it has worked pretty well, although we are finding that follow up is essential to success. To date more than 60 people have signed up and we've received 26 completed forms—that's a total of \$520 in additional donations to our outreach ministries earned through the program.

If you're interested in running a program in your community, GIPL has resources you can customize for your group. Contact [amyers@gipl.org](mailto:amyers@gipl.org) for your starter kit.

..... Spotlight on Change-Steps Toward Energy Efficiency Proudly Presents:  
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## Kilowatt Ours A Plan to Re- Energize America



Follow film maker Jeff Barrie as he searches for solutions to some of today's most pressing environmental issues: mountain top removal, mercury contamination, climate change and childhood asthma. The answers are easier than you think and will save you money!

Georgia Interfaith Power & Light is asking your faith community to sponsor a showing of this amazing film. GIPL has copies of the film and an Event Host Packet so that you have a wonderful event. [Contact us today](#) to get started. *Kilowatt Ours* has also gone national, check out the [Kilowatt Ours site](#) for air times in your neighborhood.