



# Massachusetts Interfaith Power and Light NEWS

January 2010

Dear MIP&L members and friends,

## What is MIP&L?

A good question to start the year. MIP&L is at base **mutual ministry**. Consistent with every faith tradition, we join to help each other, in daily actions that make a difference for the earth, now and for succeeding generations. The term *Environmental Stewardship* captures the essence. We are stewards of creation, both built and natural environment.

So this month's Newsletter provides guidance, and prompts for specific action of *Environmental Stewardship* including..

### [A Roadmap](#)

### [Preach-In](#)

### [After Copenhagen](#)



## What's your Environmental Stewardship roadmap for 2010?

2009 saw **climate change** become a front-page issue in the news, a top priority for both state and federal government, and, from the activity of participants in the MIP&L community, an area of increasing focus for faith communities. We're already seeing signs that this will only continue in 2010, especially as energy prices begin to rise again as the economy revives.

So what should you do?

## EDUCATE



Most of you are knowledgeable about climate change issues but one of the most common questions we hear is, "How do I get the rest of my congregation to support environmental action?" There lots of educational information at the web site. [Case studies](#) and [Everyday Environmental Stewardship Briefs](#) are a good place to begin.

Also, MIP&L is collaborating with Andover Newton Theological School to educate young seminarians on the faith basis for environmental action, so they can lead their congregations. In 2010 we're expanding our capabilities to offer this kind of "Speakers' Bureau" service to congregations. You can start by joining the [Preach-In](#) this February.

## EVALUATE

MIP&L is proud that 167 congregations have joined our community, pledging to begin their environmental stewardship journey, using tools like our [Utility Use & Cost spreadsheet](#) to get started.

We also just conducted our [115th Environmental Stewardship Assessment](#), providing clear actions for congregations to take.



## ACT



Congregations like Boston Synagogue completed major upgrades with energy savings of 27%. [Click here](#) to download the Case Study.

MIP&L is also going beyond recommendations through new partnerships with energy contractors and financing providers for large capital projects. Of course, start with gas and electric company rebates. Most "low-hanging fruit" is quick, easy and has a huge ROI ("return on investment") in both dollars and reduction in environmental impact. Also, make use of the cost reductions possible through bulk purchase of [gas and electricity](#) and [oil](#).

A view from the front of Boston Synagogue with the new Heat Pump

## SPEAK-OUT

Elected and appointed officials at every level of government need to hear the voice of the faith community to develop and enact strong climate change policies and legislation. In 2009, MIP&L met with state environmental officials to represent the faith community's demands for policies that protect creation from the worst effects of climate change.



We mobilized MIP&L pledging congregations around the October International Day of Climate Action. Many of you rang bells and took other action with 350.org. This year, we will collaborate closely with partners like the Massachusetts Climate Action Network to lend the faith community's support for strong climate change legislation.

## PLEDGE



We're very proud that more congregations than ever have pledged to support the movement MIP&L represents, both in committing to actions and in financial support.

If your congregation is not yet part of the MIP&L community, [click here](#) to find out how you can join your fellow people of faith. In addition, individual contributions are a growing part of what enables MIP&L to educate, evaluate, act and advocate. We would welcome your contribution here.

If you or your congregation hasn't started your environmental stewardship journey yet, take some of these steps this year. If you have, take a moment to assess where you are and where your next steps should take you. Continue to tap into MIP&L for the information, advice and support that abounds in this community committed to environmental ministry.

## NATIONAL PREACH-IN on ENVIRONMENTAL STEWARDSHIP



All Massachusetts faith communities are invited to participate in a National Preach-In the weekend of **February 26-28, 2010**. Make **Environmental Stewardship** the topic for the sermon at the service at your House Of Worship.

Why? The Copenhagen negotiations and the US Senate consideration of legislation have focused world and national attention on **climate change**. The Economist, a mainstream, business oriented periodical recently declared that there is general agreement that the scientific and economic challenges of climate change can be met. The challenge they say is a political one. We agree, and add that the issue is primarily a moral one.

Can we as individuals, faith communities and as a society, change our energy consumption fast enough to preserve God's creation for future generations?

**At MIP&L our mission is to spread the word that all the world's faiths share the core value of caring for God's creation.**

We invite all clergy, rabbis, and imams to raise their voices on February 28th — or whatever day before or after the 28th works for you. Check out the faith resources at [www.MIPandL.org](#) if you need inspiration. To purchase a copy of our CD "Preaching for the Planet" contact Vince Maraventano at [maraventano@MIPandL.org](mailto:maraventano@MIPandL.org).

To register for the Preach-In and access additional resources, log on to: [InterfaithPowerandLight.org/PreachIn](#)

Send us copies of your sermons, articles, reflections, and pictures of your events so we can share it with others! There are 30 state IPLs with over 5,000 member congregations. Please [join MIPandL](#), if you haven't already. **"If the people lead, the leaders will follow"**.

## COMING OUT OF COPENHAGEN

## UPCOMING EVENTS



Last month, countries from all over the world gathered in Copenhagen, Denmark to negotiate a new treaty to address the growing threat of Climate Change. Working under the auspices of the United Nations, this gathering of nations had the ambitious goal of establishing a binding agreement for both industrialized and developing countries to reduce their carbon emissions. While expectations were downplayed going into the summit, grassroots and non-governmental organizations from all over the world had high hopes that for the first time all of the world's nations would make a binding commitment to keep average global temperatures below 2 degrees Celsius. This would require major emitters of CO2 to cap their emissions by 2020 and then make reductions from there of at least 50% by 2050.

What happened in Copenhagen was quite telling. During the second week of the summit, grassroots organizations (including religious groups) were not allowed in the main hall. In the end, a small group of the world's largest emitters (including the U.S., China and India) refused to agree to any binding commitments and instead approved a more general final statement.

It is clear that President Obama's negotiating position was weakened by the lack of any regulation here in this country. While the House of Representatives passed a bill that regulates emissions last June, the Senate version has yet to come up for a vote. It is estimated that for every member of Congress, there are 4-5 lobbyists from the coal and oil industry urging opposition to any regulation of CO2.

**There is a religious and moral imperative here.** If the assessments by the World Meteorological Organization and the Nobel Prize winning Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change are correct, the U.S. needs to reduce its carbon emissions by 50% or more in the next 30 years. To choose not to do this is to risk leaving our children and grandchildren with a potentially very dire set of environmental circumstances.

People of faith need to bring their consciences to this issue in the 21st Century, energy and emissions. To be religious here in the 21st Century must involve finding ways to care for the Creation and live more lightly on this planet. Sustainability must be a part of our spirituality. When we do this, we not only serve the Holy in this world but also stimulate the development of a new clean-energy, low carbon economy. There are risks but there are also significant opportunities when we are good stewards of our planet as well as our pocketbooks.

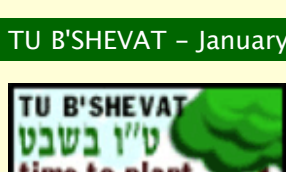
To learn more about Copenhagen and see the final agreement, click here: [http://unfccc.int/meetings/cop\\_15/items/5257.php](http://unfccc.int/meetings/cop_15/items/5257.php)

To learn about what lies ahead for international negotiations, click here: [http://www.ucsusa.org/global\\_warming/solutions/big\\_picture\\_solutions/the-copenhagen-accord.html](http://www.ucsusa.org/global_warming/solutions/big_picture_solutions/the-copenhagen-accord.html)

To learn about what organizations are doing, click here: <http://theregenerationproject.org/>

To learn more about climate change and the international consensus on the phenomenon, click here for information at the World Meteorological Organization: [http://www.wmo.ch/pages/about/wmo50/e/world/climate\\_pages/global\\_warming\\_e.html](http://www.wmo.ch/pages/about/wmo50/e/world/climate_pages/global_warming_e.html)

## TU B'SHEVAT - January 30



For those who think environmental stewardship is of recent origin, consider **Tu B'Shevav**, the **"new year for the trees"** in Jewish tradition.

"The tree of Eternal Life: a symbol of the abundance of nature, an Eternal source of sustenance for all of use who live in this garden we call the earth."

It may be the middle of winter in Massachusetts, but planting trees is a daily activity, metaphorically, and via our connections with others throughout the world, literally, especially as carbon offsets.

It is not by chance that **MIP&L's Utility Use and Cost spreadsheet** calculates the environmental impact of a **House of Worship** and of **(1) the homes** we live in by two measures: (1) cars needed to be taken off the street, and (2) trees needed to be planted.

Make this year's **Tu B'Shevav** one in which your "New Year's Resolution" is tree planting in all the ways you can - and keep that resolution!



Peace and blessings,  
Your friends at MIP&L

## 2010 MCC Annual Meeting

Saturday January 23  
9 AM to 1 PM

Assumption College,  
500 Salisbury Rd.,  
Worcester, MA 15005

From Copenhagen to Wellesley  
**"Learn the Way Forward from Copenhagen"**

with Anne Kelley,  
Director of Governance Programs,  
CERES

Saturday January 23  
9AM to 12 PM

Wellesley Hills Congregational Church  
[liz@wellesleyvillagechurch.org](mailto:liz@wellesleyvillagechurch.org)  
781-235-1988

**LIFE, HOPE, WORK:**  
**Facing the Environmental Crisis as Communities of Faith**

Presentation by Roger S. Gottlieb,  
Professor of Philosophy,  
Worcester Polytechnic Institute

Sunday, January 24  
7 PM

First Church Sterling  
On the Common, Sterling Center  
Sterling, Massachusetts 01564  
[office@firstchurchsterling.org](mailto:office@firstchurchsterling.org)  
978-422-6657

RI Interfaith Power & Light  
Annual Meeting  
**Improving Our Stewardship of Creation: Where are the Resources We Need?**

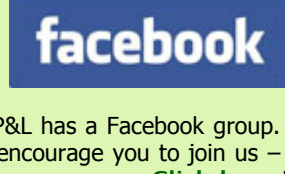
La SALLE ACADEMY,  
612 Academy Providence, RI

Thursday February 11, 2010  
4:30 pm - 9:20 pm

A conference for clergy, lay leaders, parents, educators, business people, students and other interested persons.

To register obtain form at: [www.riipl.org/flyer2010.pdf](http://www.riipl.org/flyer2010.pdf)

## Find MIP&L on Facebook!



MIP&L has a Facebook group. We encourage you to join us - [Click here!](#)

Beyond being able to share information with you on a more timely basis, it allows you to share information with each other.

Have a question about what energy-saving projects have been most successful? Start and discussion and as your peers in other congregations! Want to know the best ways to find the money for energy upgrades - ask others who have done it.

## Know Somebody Who Should Receive This Newsletter?

Let us know. We're happy to add all to the list. And of course, **just forward it now!** (use the forward link at the bottom of this newsletter).

To add to our list, visit [our web site](#) and fill the **Sign Up for Our Newsletter!** box on the homepage.

Or send us an email at [MIPandL@MIPandL.org](mailto:MIPandL@MIPandL.org) with the email addresses to be added to our mailing list. Write "add to MIP&L email" in the subject line.