



MASSACHUSETTS Interfaith Power & Light

PRAY | ACT | MOBILIZE

FAITH IN ACTION FOR CLIMATE JUSTICE

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May 2022

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In Praise of Air

Dear friends,

Spring is in the air!

May is National Clean Air Month, a time to celebrate the far-reaching impacts of the Clean Air Act passed in 1970, *and* a time to remember there is still much to accomplish to guarantee clean, healthy air for all people, regardless of the zip codes where they live, work or worship.

We know climate change is already having an amplifying effect on poor air quality and existing inequities; sadly, this is expected to become even worse in the coming years, especially during periods of extreme heat. As people of faith, let us do all we can in our communities and personal lives to reduce air pollution year-round: slash carbon emissions; respond to the expressed needs of those most impacted by environmental and climate injustices; and advocate tirelessly for climate-friendly legislation and a just transition to clean energy.

This month, we are pleased to share an update on MassIPL's Faith Action Network (FAN) for Climate and Environmental Justice, mobilizing multi-faith local teams to work on strategic statewide campaigns and local issues. We are excited to welcome our first official member, Worcester Congregations for Climate and Environmental Justice. And, to share with you the FAN Toolkit! Read more, below, from Rev. Fred Small and Miriam Cohen, our capable and inspiring FAN leadership team.

We encourage you to follow legislative happenings at the state and federal level and stay tuned these next months for timely Action Alerts. We expect increased activity on Beacon Hill as legislators begin picking up the pace to reach the finish line of the current legislative session. And, we expect the Senate will likely be working on draft language for the Build Back Better plan this month, with a vote possible in late May or early June.

Can you take a moment to thank your climate-friendly state legislators and US Senators Warren and Markey for all they do to protect our common home and our children's future? Your note, email or phone call of appreciation and encouragement might just be the breath of fresh air that keeps them going!

In fact, why not use this month to strengthen a practice of breaking climate silence? Reach out to your friends, relatives and colleagues in other states who have less climate-friendly legislators and urge them to contact their senators, too!

Here is a sample letter to use and share if you wish:
[Action alert to email your Senators to pass Build Back Better](#)

Blessings to you and yours,



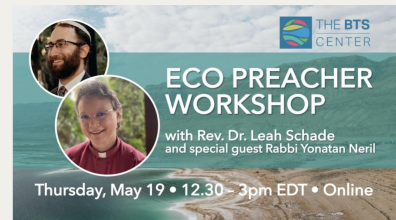
Rev. Cindy Davidson

Pray

Connect environmental justice to your faith tradition through prayer, worship, and reflection

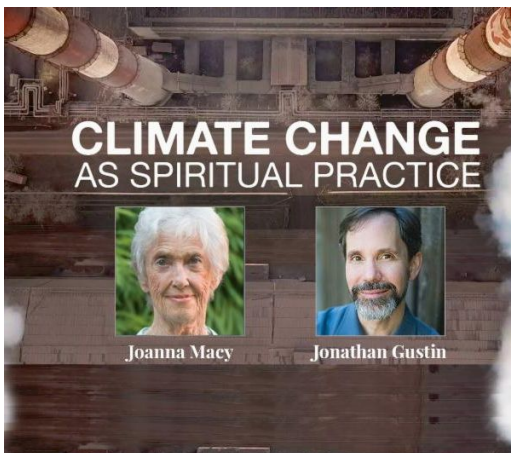
Eco Preaching Workshop

Sponsored by BTS Center
Thursday, May 19, 12:30 – 3:00 pm Eastern
Online (\$25)



In these times of accelerating climate change and devastating losses, we need spiritual leadership that is strong enough to speak prophetically to the challenges at hand, yet tender and nuanced enough to allow the message to resonate. Those of us who preach regularly, or even occasionally, can feel at a loss as to how to incorporate climate change into our sermons and reflections, complex and painful as these subjects are. And yet, the need for preaching in a climate-changed world is profound. Knowing the importance of ecological preaching, The BTS Center partners with **Rev. Dr. Leah D. Schade** and **Rabbi Yonatan Neril** for this workshop so participants gain tools to become “EcoPreachers” in their contexts.

For more information and to register, [click here.](#)



Climate Change as Spiritual Practice: Transforming Anxiety into Empowerment

Tuesday, May 10
3:00 – 5:00 pm Eastern • Online (free)

Join **Joanna Macy**, author of *Active Hope*, and **Jonathan Gustin**, the founder of Purpose Guides Institute, to discover your authentic place in the world and to offer your soul-level purpose as a gift of service to life in this time. Can't make it? Sign up for free and receive a recording.

For more information and to register, [click here.](#)

Act

Lower the carbon emissions of your house of worship and your home

Recap: Solar for Houses of Worship Open Forum

On April 7, MassIPL hosted a webinar that featured three

houses of worship who are currently in the process of evaluating and installing solar. They described their challenges and how they are working through them. An "open forum" time followed, with a wide range of questions addressed. The two most intriguing insights related to:



- **Historic commissions:** These groups often have objections to installing solar panels on buildings where they feel it would violate the historic character of the building. The discussion addressed several examples and provided tips on how to deal with this situation.
- **Financing with funds from congregants:** One member described how his congregation worked with a generous member who provided the up-front funds for the system. The donor, who essentially "owned" the system was able to claim the federal tax credit. The house of worship repaid the donor over time, and then the donor donated the system to the house of worship once they had been fully repaid, then claiming the tax-deductible charitable contribution.

You can [view the entire Solar Open Forum webinar here](#). The description on the YouTube page includes a listing of all the questions addressed with the timing of when they were discussed so you can jump right to the topic that most interests you.

There are always challenges with a big project like this and there are particular challenges with the state's SMART incentive program (which are also discussed).

Has your faith community has ever considered solar? Now is the time to move ahead, and we can help guide you through the process!

Email MassIPL with your Solar Inquiry

Mobilize

Promote policies for a more just and sustainable world



The Faith Action Network is sprouting like May flowers!

MassIPL's Faith Action Network for Climate & Environmental Justice ("FAN" for short) is spreading across the Commonwealth. FAN is reaching across boundaries of denomination and religious tradition to lift up faithful voices, build power, and bring real change to the climate and EJ landscape of Massachusetts.

Hot off the (virtual) presses—the [Faith Action Network Toolkit!](#)

The Toolkit outlines FAN program goals and provides step-by-step guidance on how to organize a Faith Action Network Team in your community! With expert input from the FAN Planning Team, this is a living document that will evolve and grow with lived experience and your feedback. Please let us know what you think by emailing Miriam at mcohen@massipl.org.

Right now FAN is concentrating its organizing on Worcester, Woburn, Lowell, and the South Shore, where lay and ordained activists are working alongside MassIPL to grow capacity and develop relationships with their legislators.

On May 1, Worcester Congregations for Climate and Environmental Justice voted unanimously to join FAN. This decision follows their tremendously successful April 4 Zoom conference with area legislators. 67 participants joined the conversation, including all three senators (Chandler, Gobi, Moore), six representatives (Donahue, Keefe, Kilcoyne, LeBoeuf, Mahoney, O'Day), and their staff. Several local activists shared their personal stories and explained why they supported specific climate justice bills. One satisfying outcome was that Senator Harriet Chandler agreed to sponsor an amendment championed by our [Burning Question coalition](#) to sharpen and expand the Mass Save retrofit program. David Coyne of Temple Emanuel Sinai deserves special thanks for his leadership in organizing and publicizing the teleconference.

In Woburn and Reading, Middlesex 30 Faith & Values Voters has convened activists representing five congregations either located in the Middlesex 30th legislative district or serving its residents. Led by Sue Swanson, they've already met twice with Rep. Richard Haggerty to advance climate justice priorities in the legislature.

Whether or not you live in these communities, we invite you to join the Faith Action Network! Contact Miriam at mcohen@massipl.org for more information or fill out our interest form.

Fill out our Faith Action Network Interest Form

JOIN the #LetUsBreathe Virtual Rally 2022 TODAY
Tuesday, May 3 by ZOOM at 5pm!

Join the Green Justice Coalition and allies for their annual virtual rally on Asthma Justice!

WORLD ASTHMA DAY

#LetUsBreathe

In Massachusetts, low-income and communities of color have a high prevalence of asthma and are disproportionately impacted by pollution and climate change. Now more than ever, we need to fight for clean air, affordable transit, and equitable legislation that will address our health and environmental concerns. This free event will bring to light the expertise of health professionals, legislators, and inspiring grassroots leaders who are working to improve the health of Massachusetts' Environmental Justice Communities. Learn how you can take action on these intersecting issues on World Asthma Day!

[REGISTER HERE](#) for the Zoom link!

STOP THE PEABODY PEAKER MASS ACTION

Thursday, May 26th
11am - 3pm

Construction on the new Peabody gas plant has started.
We cannot allow this. Join us in telling the Baker Administration:
They must do the environmental and health studies they have been avoiding.

More details on RSVP form: bit.ly/pp-mass-action

Logos: 350 MASS, COMMUNITY ACTION WORKS, M-CAN Mass Climate Action Network, breathe

SAVE THE DATE!
Peabody Peaker Call to Mass Action!
Thursday, May 26
11 am - 3 pm

Join Breathe Clean North Shore and allies for this family-friendly event. Speakers and other details still in the works!

[RSVP HERE](#) to stay informed!

Legislative Update-- and what you can do now!

On April 14, the Massachusetts state Senate passed an omnibus climate bill. It's called An Act Driving Climate Policy Forward, and as [this article](#) puts it, does drive climate policy forward-- but not fast enough. The bill is missing key provisions that the climate movement has been pushing for: cleaning up our energy grid, building retrofits, green jobs, and more.



Before the legislative session ends on July 31st, the House will put forward their own climate bill, which will be reconciled with the Senate's. In the next three months, we need to tell our legislators that the final law must meet the moment.

Mass IPL is a member of the Burning Question campaign, which is fighting to prevent gas utilities from being able to dictate our energy future.

[Find out more about the campaign and what you can do to help](#)



TAKE ACTION... on AIR POLLUTION!

Air pollution knows no borders. EPA has a comment period open on their proposed "Good Neighbor" plan **now through June 6th**. The proposed rule requires reductions of air pollution emitted by power plants and industrial sources in 26 upwind states that then blows into downwind states like Massachusetts. This is an important step to protect residents of downwind states from

unsafe levels of ground-level ozone (smog) pollution because upwind polluting industries have failed to reduce harmful air pollution.

If finalized, the rule will significantly improve air quality and public health, avoiding one thousand premature deaths and more than one million asthma attacks each year. Smog pollution harms millions of people, including the country's most vulnerable people -- children, communities of color, low-income families, and the elderly. Many of these improvements will be felt almost immediately.

Submit your "Good Neighbor" comment here via Interfaith Power & Light

Inspiration

In Praise of Air

I write in praise of air. I was six or five
when a conjurer opened my knotted fist
and I held in my palm the whole of the sky.

I've carried it with me ever since.

Among the jumbled bric-a-brac I keep
a padlocked treasure chest of empty space,
and on days when thoughts are fuddled with smog
or civilization crosses the street
with a white handkerchief over its mouth
and cars blow kisses to our lips from theirs

I turn the key, throw back the lid, breathe deep.

My first word, everyone's first word, was air.

-- Simon Armitage

Learn more about this catalytic poem that fights air pollution [here!](#)



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