GREENING THE FAITH:

A LONG ISLAND ENVIRONMENTAL STEWARDSHIP REPORT

Presented by
We are very grateful for the efforts of all those involved in the Long Island Interfaith Environment Network (LIIFEN) and to all those whose efforts have led to the creation of this report. This report is the first of its kind for Long Island, and the purpose is to document success stories from places of worship in our region who have put their faith into action in the area of environmental stewardship. Many of these places of worship are pioneers here on Long Island for their efforts and serve as an example to other places of worship and to their own congregations and members, both adults and especially children.

As you’ll see, many places of worship from different faiths have taken noteworthy and inspiring actions and are to be commended. Some formed stewardship or “green” committees, while some have one or two people that “spearhead” the efforts, but clearly such actions demonstrate leadership and commitment within their community. Many have taken the time to research and implement changes in lighting, renewable energy, recycling, use of greener cleaners, and more.

To collect their stories, we sent out the survey to several hundred places of worship that we had in our collective contact lists, so there may be many we missed. We look forward to hearing from more and more places of worship about their efforts, successes, and even failures—we can learn a lot from sharing those experiences of facing obstacles and how we overcame them.

Thank you and feel free to contact LIIFEN for resources on how to get started, if you would like a presentation on this at your place of worship, or if you would like to become part of the committee.

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LI Interfaith Environment Network
Mission and History

Mission of the Long Island Interfaith Environment Network

The Long Island Interfaith Environment Network (LIIEN) strives to work with places of worship of all faiths on Long Island to encourage the education of their congregations to the benefits of energy conservation, efficiency, renewables, and environmentally benign products, and to urge places of worship to lead by example by making improvements in their own buildings and practices.

LIIEN brings together leaders of the diverse faith community on Long Island with representatives from energy providers and the business community to facilitate environmentally friendly programs that would benefit religious institutions. Since these institutions are tax-exempt, other incentives have to be offered to advance environmentally safe practices within houses of worship.

Since most houses of worship have very limited budgets for environmental improvements, LIIEN has focused on reducing energy costs by taking simple steps. LIIEN has called for every house of worship to get a free energy audit. We advocate taking small but significant actions such as replacing incandescent light bulbs with fluorescent or LED lighting, using energy efficient heating and cooling systems and appliances, and if possible, utilizing alternative energy sources.

The LIIEN Steering Committee meets throughout the year to develop ideas for houses of worship and plan for the annual conference which educates religious leaders and plant managers on the various programs in existence that their institution may qualify for.

History of the Long Island Interfaith Environment Network

LIIEN formed in 2006 from a small group of interested individuals from different faith communities on Long Island, convened through the environmental organization, Neighborhood Network. The response was remarkable and is a testament to the recognition by many faith traditions that responsible stewardship of the earth is something that we are all morally called to be part of. In May 2007, LIIEN held a successful educational workshop that attracted over 80 people of multiple faiths, and was featured in a Newsday editorial and The Long Island Catholic. In 2008, LIIEN held its second conference which attracted over 100 people. Once again media coverage was positive as in addition to Newsday and The Long Island Catholic, the event was covered by community papers, Telecare, and WLNY TV 55 News. We continue to work with the Long Island Power Authority (LIPA), National Grid, and other energy suppliers to help houses of worship make use of incentive programs, and also encourage the faith community to spread the word through their congregations, bulletins, etc. LIIEN sees itself as part of a larger national movement of awareness of environmental stewardship of Creation by faith groups across the country, as is revealed by LIIEN being mentioned in the Chesapeake Bay Journal in 2008. Currently, LIIEN is housed under the Sustainability Institute at Molloy College.
**St. Martin of Tours R.C. Church, Amityville**

**Building Efficiency & Retrofitting:**
- Conducted an energy audit through LIPA
- Redesigned the lighting in the parish conference room, replacing recessed lighting utilizing incandescent bulbs, with T5 fluorescent bulbs and CFL bulbs. This has resulted in a 70% reduction in wattage use in this much used room.
- Replaced all illuminated EXIT signs with LED signs in all buildings
- Upgrading the lighting incrementally throughout the entire plant.
- Replacing old heating system in one building with energy efficient one suggested by National Grid.

**Renewable Energy Sources:**
- In the process of considering a location for photovoltaic (PV) solar panels and solar water heating.

**Policy, Decision-Making, and Outreach:**
- Staff conservation policy to turn off equipment at night (Adopted 2008)
- Purchase only Energy Star labeled office equipment
- Promotes environmental awareness through the Social Justice page of the weekly Parish Bulletin

**Other Eco-stewardship Initiatives:**
- The school’s janitorial staff is using nontoxic, “green” cleaners
- The Outreach Program uses non-toxic cleaners for the office and Thrift Store
- The town of Babylon does not pick up recyclables from churches, but we do manage to recycle cans and cardboard. The school is trying to start up a recycling program for bottles.
- The planting of a native garden using only indigenous flora. This type of garden requires less water than standard gardens and little to no fertilizer. We have named it the Blessed Kateri Tekakwitha Native Garden and it is prominently located in front of our school. Blessed Kateri is the Patroness of the Environment, and a Native American from New York. The dedication seemed perfect!
- Outreach Program started giving out re-usable canvass bags, instead of plastic bags, to regular clients to carry their food allotment in.
- Started an environmental group jointly with St. Rose of Lima in Massapequa called the Roundtable for Environmental Stewardship which organized events that promoted ecology in everyday life.
Our Lady of the Snow R.C. Church, Blue Point

Building Efficiency & Retrofitting:

• Conducted an energy audit through LIPA
• Upgraded insulation
• Upgraded lighting to use only energy-efficient bulbs

Policy, Decision-Making, and Outreach:

• Staff conservation policy to turn off equipment at night (Adopted 2005)
• Purchase only Energy Star labeled office equipment
• Promotion of recycling at social justice events by giving free samples of reusable bags and bottles donated from local businesses.

Other Eco-stewardship Initiatives:

• Reduced their indoor and outdoor pesticide use and are implementing organic methods.
• Recycles bottles, cans, paper, etc
• Tries to use china dishes and glasses in the Rectory, although at large events they have to provide disposable china and glassware.
• Discontinued the use of small bottled water.
• The Town does not pick up recyclables from churches and rectories. However, with the help of a Town employee, OLSN was able to obtain containers for the recycling of glass, metal, and plastic bi-weekly.

Ss. Cyril & Methodius R.C. Church, Deer Park

Building Efficiency & Retrofitting:

• Conducted an energy audit through LIPA
• SSCM plans to upgrade their heating/cooling system, windows, lighting, and insulation

Policy, Decision-Making, and Outreach:

• SSCM has printed in their Bulletin that they would no longer, as a parish, use bottled water and are recycling paper, cardboard, and bottles.

Other Eco-stewardship Initiatives:

• Janitorial staff is using nontoxic, “green” cleaners
• Recycles bottles, paper, and cardboard
• Use of biodegradable cups & plates and have reduced the amount of Styrofoam and other disposables at events
**Hewlett-East Rockaway Jewish Center, East Rockaway**

**Building Efficiency & Retrofitting:**
- Installed light sensors in many offices
- Replaced incandescent light bulbs in chapel with energy efficient bulbs
- Placed tinted film on windows

**Renewable Energy Sources:**
- Installed a 20.4 KW Solar Electric Photovoltaic system, consisting of 120 solar panels which are expected to generate 24,000 kilowatt-hours of electricity annually, representing approximately 5% of the current electricity requirements of the synagogue, thereby producing $4500 annually.

**Policy, Decision-Making, and Outreach:**
- Adopted environmental policy that recognizes the contemporary understanding of Jewish values Tik-kun Olam (repairing the world) and Tzedek (justice).

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**Malverne Jewish Center**

**Building Efficiency & Retrofitting:**
- Conducted an energy audit through LIPA
- Upgraded building lighting to CFL’s and energy efficient fixtures in 2006 under LIPA’s RECAP program. Included were sanctuaries, classrooms, offices, hallways, storage areas and other common areas. They are realizing a return of almost 30% on our investment

**Policy, Decision-Making, and Outreach:**
- Staff conservation policy to turn off equipment at night

**Other Eco-stewardship Initiatives:**
- Uses only recycled paper for their office copy machine
Reconstructionist Synagogue of the North Shore, Manhasset

Building Efficiency & Retrofitting:
- Conducted an energy audit through LIPA
- Upgraded their windows

Policy, Decision-Making, and Outreach:
- Staff conservation policy to turn off equipment at night
- Only purchases Energy Star labeled office equipment

Other Eco-stewardship Initiatives:
- Janitorial staff is using some nontoxic, “green” cleaners
- Recycles bottles, cans, etc. Staff members take recyclables home to save the cost.
- Uses only recycled paper for the office
- Uses biodegradable cups & plates that are made from sustainable products such as corn and potatoes

Unitarian Universalist Congregation at Shelter Rock, Manhasset

Building Efficiency & Retrofitting:
- Conducted an energy audit through LIPA
- In the process of upgrading the lighting of their house of worship

Renewable Energy Sources:
- In the process of considering a location for photovoltaic (PV) solar panels and solar water heating

Policy, Decision-Making, and Outreach:
- Formed the Green Sanctuary Committee, which is committed to help the congregation’s environmental programs and become a certified participant in the national Green Sanctuary Program
- Staff conservation policy to turn off equipment at night (Adopted 2006)
- Only purchases Energy Star labeled office equipment
- Promotes the sale of fluorescents and other eco-friendly products after Sunday services, and during environmental programs they often sell reusable bags, etc.

Other Eco-stewardship Initiatives:
- Janitorial staff is using some nontoxic, “green” cleaners
- Uses no pesticides.
- Compost bins and only organic matter are used in our Community Garden.
- Recycles bottles, cans, paper, etc. Everything is sent to a recycling plant and they send these items to suitable sites.
- Uses recycled paper for our office copy machine
- Planning to purchase a natural gas van for member transportation as needed
Good Shepherd Lutheran Church & School, Plainview

Building Efficiency & Retrofitting:

• Conducted an energy audit through LIPA
• Improved insulation throughout the plant
• In the process of upgrading heating and cooling systems and lighting
• In the process of upgrading windows

Policy, Decision-Making, and Outreach:

• Established a goal of 50-75% reduction in energy use. So far achieved 25% reduction, representing a savings of about $18,000 in energy costs.

Other Eco-stewardship Initiatives:

• Recycles bottles, cans, paper, etc.

The Community Synagogue, Port Washington

Building Efficiency & Retrofitting:

• Upgraded lighting throughout the plant. Incandescent and high pressure sodium fixtures were replaced with compact fluorescent or LED fixtures, consuming a fraction of the energy
• Installed astronomic timers to all outdoor lights
• Replaced manual light switches with high performance occupancy sensing switches to turn on and off lights as needed
• Installed a timer on the hot-water re-circulating pump
• Installed thermostats that are programmed to heat the buildings and rooms as needed.
• Installed a solar-powered Eternal Light

Renewable Energy Sources:

• In the process of investigating photovoltaic (PV) solar panels and solar water heating.

Policy, Decision-Making, and Outreach:

• Creating a self-funding plan encouraging congregants to loan money for green projects. Loans would be paid back utilizing the savings from the reduced energy costs. Once loan is paid, savings belong to the synagogue. As a result all projects would cost nothing as they would be paid by the savings.

Other Eco-stewardship Initiatives:

• Recycles bottles, cans, paper, etc.
• Purchasing environmentally friendly supplies
Cenacle Retreat Center, Ronkonkoma

Building Efficiency & Retrofitting:

- Constructing a new “Green” building, due to be completed in 2010. The new building will be a highly rated LEED-certified structure. While the initial cost is more, it will pay for itself in the long-term.