Why Should Places of Worship be Concerned about Stewardship of the Earth?

Burning fossil fuels for electricity and heating/cooling creates air pollution. Reducing energy consumption, and promoting clean, renewable energy in houses of worship and related buildings is a responsibility of faith institutions as leaders in the community, because:

1) Places of worship often have older buildings with large sanctuaries, with inefficient lighting, and heating/cooling systems. Wasting energy also means wasting money that congregations donate.

   “Faith without action is dead.” — James 2:17

2) Environmental Justice: Low income people and children are often among the most vulnerable to the adverse impacts of global warming, air pollution, and pesticides.

   “Treat not others in ways that you yourself would find hurtful”
   —The Buddha, Udana-Varga 5.1

3) The community of faith plays a key part in addressing the fundamental questions about the meaning of life ... it guides what is truly important and what should be our most basic values.

   “Greater indeed than the creation of humankind is the creation of the heavens and the earth.”
   — Qur’an 40:57

Helping your place of worship to be a good steward of the earth

Background and What We Do

The Long Island Interfaith Environment Network (LIIEN) formed in 2006 from a small group of interested individuals and places of worship around Long Island. The response has been overwhelmingly positive. In 2007, 2008, & 2009 LIIEN held successful educational workshops that attracted over 100 people of multiple faiths, and was featured in a Newsday Editorial and the Long Island Catholic. We work to help places of worship make use of utility incentive programs, and also to encourage places of worship to get the word out to their congregations through workshops, bulletins, etc. LIIEN sees itself as part of a larger national movement of awareness of earth stewardship by faith groups around the country.

MISSION STATEMENT

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 and renewables, and to urge places of worship to lead by example by making improvements in their own buildings and practices.
What Faith Communities Are Saying around the Globe

The predicted effects of global warming include increased storms and more frequent droughts of longer duration. Climate experts believe that these occurrences are likely to more greatly impact the world’s poor populations.

“If left unabated, global warming will displace 1 Billion people...We will have lost our humanity if we ignore an issue of this magnitude.”
— Christian Aid, a British Humanitarian Group

In January 2007, a group of scientists and evangelical leaders issued “An Urgent Call to Action” stating that they found a “Shared sense of moral purpose”:

“We agree that our home, the earth, which comes to us as that inexpressably beautiful and mysterious gift that sustains our very lives, is seriously imperiled by human behavior...One fundamental motivation we share is concern for the poorest of the poor...the natural environments in which they live, and where so much of the Earth’s biodiversity barely hangs on, cannot survive the press of destitute people without other resources and with nowhere else to go...We believe that protection of life on earth is a moral imperative”.

“Global warming is one of the greatest moral issues of our time,”
— Reverend S. Bingham, Episcopal Grace Cathedral, San Francisco, Executive Director of the Interfaith Power & Light climate change campaign

The impacts of climate change, and the relationship between faith and the environment have been documented recently by the mass media, with coverage appearing in National Geographic, Time magazine, and on televised programs such as Bill Moyers’ NOW on PBS, and CNN’s Anderson Cooper.

In response to these issues many groups have formed such as Greenfaith in NJ, Interfaith Power & Light, with chapters in several states, COE:JL- Coalition on the Environment and Jewish Life, Interreligious Eco-Justice Network, National Religious Partnership for the Environment, and others.

LIIEN serves as a similar resource for LI.

Who are we?
(The group is always expanding but as of now it is...)
Beth Fiteni, Sustainability Institute at Molloy College
Keith Mainhart, St. Martin of Tours Parish Outreach, Amityville
Rev Tom Goodhue, LI Council of Churches
Frank Morris & Nikki Coddington, NY Interfaith Power & Light
Christine Keihm, Homecoming, Sophia Garden & Learning Center
Tom DeFrancisci, Diocese of Rockville Centre
Steve Kaplan, The Community Synagogue, Port Washington
Habeeb Ahmed, Islamic Center of LI, Westbury
Elaine Peters, Unitarian Universalist Congregation, Shelter Rock
Susan Kahoud, Roundtable for Environmental Stewardship
Vivian Viliah Fisher, Unitarian Universalists of Stony Brook
Ronald & Janet Thomson, First United Methodist Church, Amityville
Guy D’Angelo, Network Alliance of Congregations Caring for Earth
Jim Tresner, Community United Methodist, Massapequa

Solutions!

If the Nation’s 300,000 houses-of-worship were to come together and cut energy consumption by just 10%, preventing 2 million tons of CO2 from polluting the air, it would achieve the equivalent of taking 400,000 cars off the road.- --- Energy Star for Congregations, US EPA

Most congregations can cut energy costs by up to 30% by investing in efficient equipment, facility upgrades and maintenance.

Our local utilities offer programs to help both congregations and homeowners achieve energy efficiency. See LIIEN.org for tips.

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Please join us!

I would like to be informed of LI Interfaith Environment Network’s upcoming events.

I would like to be part of LI Interfaith Environment Network’s Steering Committee (meets several times per year)

I am interested in having a presentation at my place of worship from LI Interfaith Environment Network about what we can do as a faith community and at our own homes.

Name ______________________
Address_____________________
Town _______________________
State______ Zip______________
Phone______________________
Email_______________________

My Place of Worship is:

___________________________
Located in:
(town)

Return to: Beth Fiteni, Sustainability Institute, 7180 Republic Airport, NY, 11735
Fax: 631-777-8281