



## December 2015 E-Newsletter

### ADVENT CALENDAR

This is the annual Advent daily calendar created by PCUSA Environmental Ministries (Presbyterian Hunger Program). As we await the celebration of Christ's birth this Advent Season, we give thanks that God sent Jesus Christ for the good of all the world. This daily calendar invites you to take a few moments each day for a simple action, practical change or reflection. You are invited to sing through the hymn *It Came upon a Midnight Clear*, to read, reflect, act, and connect with God's good world. Peace be with you this Advent!

Download your Advent Calendar today at:

<http://www.pcusa.org/resource/advent-daily-calendar-2015-care-gods-creation/>

### WV's CLEAN POWER PLAN: WV's response to the Clean Power Plan and the President's Power Plus initiative

#### PUBLIC COMMENTS REQUESTED FOR WV's CLEAN POWER PLAN

How should West Virginia regulate its carbon dioxide emissions to reduce CO<sub>2</sub> from existing fossil fuel-fired electric generating power plants? The WV Department of Environmental Protection (DEP) is asking citizens, groups, and businesses to send comments and data to its office about a feasibility plan to reduce CO<sub>2</sub> emissions. With the help of Marshall University researchers, the DEP is working on the feasibility of developing a state plan to comply with the US Environmental Protection Agency (EPA)'s "Clean Power Plan." The feasibility study was required by the 2015 WV Legislature, via House Bill 2004. This legislation requires the study of the potential effects of complying with the Clean Power Plan on the state's people and economy.

The goal of EPA's Clean Power Plan by 2030, is to cut carbon pollution from the power sector 32 percent below 2005 levels in order to reduce climate change emissions. Along with most of the world's scientific community, we believe Climate Change is a global catastrophe on a historic scale that will change the global course of human life. Confronting climate change means trying to reverse the effects of rising tides, protecting us from dangerous extreme weather, and cutting dangerous pollution. The impacts of climate change are costly and harm those, who can least afford it the most; our country cannot afford to put off action any longer. Carbon pollution is the number one contributor to climate change and fossil fuel powered electric plants are the largest source of industrial carbon pollution in the U.S. The Clean Power Plan will protect public health, create thousands of efficiency-related jobs, reduce electricity bills for Americans and deliver power reliably.

The proposed feasibility plan must be submitted to the WV legislature for its approval before submitting it to US EPA by September 6, 2016. If the state decides not to prepare its plan, the Environmental Protection Agency will prepare a plan for West Virginia.

The deadline for submitting public comments is Dec. 31, 2015 and may be sent to [dep.comments@wv.gov](mailto:dep.comments@wv.gov) with “Clean Power Plan Study Comments” in the subject line.

We know that some will ask: “What about jobs?” There is a lot of misinformation being promulgated on this subject. The truth is that economic forces and decisions made by fossil fuel corporate executives have caused West Virginia’s coal-related jobs to decline for well over a decade. Gas drilling jobs are beginning to experience a decline as well, due to market conditions. The other truth is that Renewable Energy sector job opportunities are expanding at a very rapid rate in many parts of the nation, including West Virginia. Job creation in the solar industry, for example, is rising at a rate that far outpaces the national average statistics on job creation in almost every other sector. Even so, there is a plan, which could be helpful to West Virginians, who are experiencing unemployment due to the continued economic decline of fossil fuel related jobs. This plan is called the Power Plus Plan and would bring millions of dollars into West Virginia for job retraining and job development. To read the Plan, see: [http://www.whitehouse.gov/sites/default/files/omb/budget/fy2016/assets/fact\\_sheets/investing-in-coal-communities-workers-and-technology-the-power-plan.pdf](http://www.whitehouse.gov/sites/default/files/omb/budget/fy2016/assets/fact_sheets/investing-in-coal-communities-workers-and-technology-the-power-plan.pdf)

For more information on this plan, and to read about an organization that is helping put economically challenged young adults to work, in West Virginia, see: <http://appvoices.org/tag/power-plus-plan/>

### **PCUSA Foundation Loans: Refreshing New Financial Options**

Could your facility use some energy upgrades? There is a new low interest Presbyterian Foundation loan fund, which just might provide the ticket to accomplish what you need – from better-insulated windows, to a more energy efficient roof or HVAC system. These loans could also be used for a really revolutionary upgrade: solar panels!

Here is information on these loans:

Loans to encourage energy efficiency: In collaboration with the Presbyterian Investment and Loan Program, a portion of the Church Loan Funds (for which the Foundation is the fiduciary) have been made available for loans that help PCUSA congregations and ministries implement renewable energy or carbon reduction solutions. The Restoring Creation Loans provide lower interest rates and flexible terms, which can match the length of the return on investment. The goal is to provide loans to congregations to renovate their buildings using energy-efficient products in order to conserve energy, thus saving on costs and reducing carbon emissions.

For more info: Find your Ministry Relations Officer using the search feature at [www.PresbyterianFoundation.org](http://www.PresbyterianFoundation.org) or call 800-858-6127.

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**See more at:** <http://www.presbyterianfoundation.org/Our-Services/Ministry-Relation-Programs/Region-Search.aspx?region=East#sthash.6zhZOGvX.dpuf>

The PCUSA Foundation also now has Fossil Free Investment Solutions through the New Covenant Trust Company, so be sure to ask about that when you speak to the Ministry Relations Officer.

If your faith community is interested in finding out what it would take to install solar panels, please contact Dan Conant, with Solar Holler – a WV based solar company, which is geared to help non-profit groups, like churches, pursue financially feasible options for solar installations. Dan is the designer of Shepherdstown Presbyterian Church's award winning solar project. He is very interested in finding churches in the central and/or southern part of West Virginia that would like to pursue solar projects. He may be contacted at: via the Solar Holler website (<http://www.solarholler.com/>).

Here is more information about Shepherdstown Presbyterian Church's award winning solar panel project: <https://www.pcusa.org/news/2014/9/11/going-solar-west-virginia/>

### **Guide for Congregations: Saving Energy for Posterity**

Would your church community be interested in saving its members money AND earning some dividends that could be used for energy upgrades? If so, and you are located within AEP/ApCo's service area, please check out this new program. In a nutshell: this program involves a "competition" to get churches and other nonprofit entities to encourage their members to sign up for FREE home energy audits. The energy audits will save your community members money, and provide some basic energy upgrades (such as energy efficient light bulbs, sink diffusers, etc). For every family that completes an energy audit on their home, your church (or other nonprofit entity) gets a \$10 credit or refund towards an energy efficient upgrade of your choice. If you would like to organize a forum in your community to learn more about this program, please contact Robin Blakeman.

See the **following** flyer with more information.

### **What did the Pope really say?: The Pope's Encyclical**

A series of three Pope's Encyclical discussion sessions were held in early October at the Charleston library. These were sponsored by OVEC, WV Interfaith Power & Light, Citizens' Climate Lobby, WV [350.org](http://www.350.org), Energy Efficient WV, and the Catholic Community for Appalachia and Catholic Charities. During the first session, [Catholic] Father John Rausch and a Presbyterian minister, Reverend Jim Walther, led the discussions. They identified multiple themes in the Pope's encyclical, including the following:

- 1) Understanding creation requires a spiritual perspective. Every year billions of flowers bloom that people never see. There are billions of stars that we cannot see. The immensity of creation puts us in our place. A spiritual perspective is required for us to understand our place.
- 2) The poor are disproportionately affected by pollution and environmental catastrophes. 100 million people live within a vertical meter of the sea. The wealthy will relocate. The poor will enter a cataclysmic migration or worse. So climate change is a moral issue. We must stabilize the climate, acting in love for humanity.
- 3) Everything is connected. Our actions reflect our values. To fix the way we manage our resources, we have to examine what we value. We seem now to value leisure above all else--having everything easy. But work is a human need. From work, we desire to provide sustenance

for our families, to have a way to improve ourselves, and have a way to contribute. Correctly valuing work will align us with the necessary principles for righting our economy.

4) Without global cooperation we cannot progress. The wealthiest nations benefited from burning fossil fuels; they must provide the leadership in the remedy.

5) We are called to change our lifestyle. There is spiritual satisfaction in living simply. This change can be experienced in simple, small ways by each of us.

These “lunch and learn” sessions occurred in the week following the Pope’s visit to the United States. Rev. Walther noted that he was most impressed with the way that the Pope interacts with common people he encounters in his travels, and that he does so with such an appearance of joy on his face. He also mentioned being impressed with the Pope’s scientific and economic academic background; he has really studied all the complex issues that are inherent in Climate Change.

The other two discussion sessions focused on local issues of concern, and on action steps that we all can take to help alleviate these issues and to decrease our personal carbon footprints. These sessions were led by Jeannie Kirkhope, (Catholic Committee for Appalachia), Robin Wilson, (WV [350.org](http://350.org), WVIPL and CCL), Kate Kosydar (Catholic Charities of WV), and Rick Wilson (Quaker rep). An average of about 20 people attended each “lunch and learn” session, and actively participated in some lively discussion. Energy Efficient WV representatives discussed the current options for ApCo energy audits, and WV Interfaith Power and Light provided information about upcoming meetings.

There are current efforts to have similar discussion groups in the Huntington area soon, so watch for announcements about this, or contact Robin Blakeman for more information.

If you would like to lead your own discussion, here are some resource links that may be helpful to you:

From Interfaith Power & Light:

<http://www.interfaithpowerandlight.org/resources/pope-francis-encyclical-preview-and-resources/>

This link will allow you to do everything from finding a copy of the Encyclical in print or online, to hearing from other faith leaders about it and taking some action after reading it.

From the Presbyterian Peace Fellowship:

<http://presbypeacefellowship.org/laudatosi#.Vk-TPHarTIV>

This link contains a study guide for use with the Encyclical

From Rebecca Barnes' blog:

<http://www.pcusa.org/blogs/eco-journey/2015/6/23/papal-encyclical/>

This blog link contains various resource links, including commentaries on the encyclical, as well as action options and study guide links.

## Upcoming Events

The **2015 United Nations Climate Change Conference**, COP21 or CMP11 will be held in a Paris, France suburb from November 30 to December 11, 2015. It will be the 21st yearly session of the Conference of the Parties (COP 21) to the 1992 UN Framework Convention on Climate Change and the 11th session of the Meeting of the Parties (CMP 11) to the 1997 Kyoto Protocol. The conference objective is to achieve a legally binding and universal agreement on climate, from all the nations of the world. (From Wikipedia)

The following events are included in the Creation Justice Ministries “Capsules” e-news:

<http://www.creationjustice.org/capsules.html>

- \* Ecumenical Ministries of **Oregon Earth Care Summit**: January 30-31 in Portland, OR
- \* **Preach-In for Global Warming**: February 14 - April 22, 2016 in your congregation
- \* Celebrate **Earth Day Sunday**: April 17 or April 22, 2016 in your congregation
- \* Caretakers of God's Creation **United Methodist** conference: April 8-9 in Decatur, GA
- \* **Ecumenical Advocacy Days**: April 15-18 in Washington, DC

## SCMT members/contacts

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## **GUIDE FOR CONGREGATIONS: SAVING ENERGY FOR POSTERITY**

*A New Pilot Program to Help Communities of Faith*

### **What is this new program?**

**Faith-based communities receive rewards when congregants take control of their own energy bills.** In order to encourage greater participation in Appalachian Power's home energy assessment program and to help the faith communities start to save on their own energy bills. Everybody "wins" something, but there is a competition component to the program.

### **How does it work?**

**A community of faith signs up to participate, encourages members and friends to get a free home energy assessment from Appalachian Power, and wins a free energy upgrade for its own building.** Specifically, the congregation will get a chance to win a \$10,000 energy efficiency upgrade, but will at least get \$10 worth of energy efficiency improvements for everyone's home that gets a home energy assessment. Here are the steps that a community of faith needs to take to participate:



*Churches and other congregations can free up resources by upgrading their house of worship's efficiency and cutting bills.*

1. Attend an educational training held by Appalachian Power. EEWV is planning several training sessions throughout Appalachian Power's service territory.
2. Sign a simple memorandum of understanding with Appalachian Power.
3. Encourage your congregants and friends to get their HomeSMART Energy Assessments and let you know once they got their assessment.
4. Issue the names and addresses of participants to Appalachian Power quarterly in the upcoming year.
5. In the summer of 2016, your congregation will receive a credit for energy efficiency upgrades equal to \$10 for each Appalachian Power customer that received an upgrade. The congregation with the most assessments (minimum 100) gets \$10,000 worth of efficiency upgrades for the building.
6. Make the upgrades to your house of worship and start saving money on your energy bills!

## **Why would a congregation want to participate?**

**Cuts costs for your congregation.** Most buildings can use efficiency upgrades that earn back their costs within three years, and are essentially a monthly contribution of lower bills starting after that. Through participating in this program, your congregation can start saving immediate, and/or greatly cut back on the “payback period.”

**Makes your house of worship more comfortable.** By addressing air drafts in your place of worship, spaces will be more comfortable for congregants.

**Helps your congregants save money.** Appalachian Power’s HomeSMART Energy Assessments are an effective first step for families to take control of their energy bills. The HomeSMART Energy Assessment will give your congregants a report that explains ways to save money and a kit of modern lightbulbs and other free energy conscious supplies. This will empower them to take better control of their own finances.



*Sealing around windows and doors will help increase comfort in your places of worship.*

**Energy efficiency builds jobs and protects creation.** Energy efficiency upgrades are made by well-paid, local construction workers. Additionally, many faiths are committed to preserving the natural world and creation.

## **How do I get started?**

Contact Emmett Pepper at Energy Efficient West Virginia, to learn of the next scheduled training and/or to inquire about hosting a training at your congregation. Emmett can be reached at 304-346-5891 or [emmett@eewv.org](mailto:emmett@eewv.org).

## **Resources**

HomeSMART energy audits page:

**[TakeChargeWV.com](http://TakeChargeWV.com)**

Energy Efficient West Virginia:

**[eewv.org](http://eewv.org)**

WV Interfaith Power & Light Facebook page:

**[facebook.com/WVIPL](https://facebook.com/WVIPL)**

National Interfaith Power & Light page:

**[interfaithpowerandlight.org](http://interfaithpowerandlight.org)**

Tracking Energy Wasters Can Save You Money article:

**<http://bit.ly/1OhJ5R8>**