



"I sent you a canoe."

A lot of people are talking about the President's disappointing but predictable announcement that the U.S. would withdraw from the Paris Climate Agreement... More on *that* in another email.

This email is about a different disappointing climate-related thing that happened last week-- one that has particular relevance to those of us who act on climate because our moral values compel us to do so. At a town hall meeting in Clearwater, Tim Walberg, Congressional Representative from Michigan's 7th district (Monroe, Jackson, Eaton County), offered his reason for not addressing climate change:

"I believe there's been climate change since the beginning of time..." Do I think man has some impact? Yeah, of course. Can man change the entire universe? No... **As a Christian, I believe that there is a creator in God** who is much bigger than us. **And I'm confident that, if there's a real problem, he can take care of it."**

If Rep. Walberg, a former pastor, genuinely believes believes this, he's certainly entitled to that. But emphasizing the futility of human action is... a strange view for a lawmaker to advocate. Not incidentally, it's also a convenient way to rationalize inaction on climate. And cloaking fatalism in piety is a good way to buffer yourself from critique.

The comment reminded me of the [story](#) about the pious man who died because he misunderstood how God works. You've heard some version of this:

A faithful man was caught in rising floodwaters. He climbed onto the roof of his house, praying to God to rescue him.

*A neighbor came by in a canoe and called out,
"The waters will soon be above your house. Hop
in and we'll paddle to safety."*

"No thanks!" replied the religious man. "God'll save me!"

A short while later, the local police came by in a motor boat. "The waters are rising fast. Get into our boat so you don't get swept away."

"No thanks!" replied the religious man. "God's going to take care of me!"

Shortly after that, a rescue helicopter hovered overhead. Through a megaphone, the safety officer called down, "The waters will soon be above your roofline. Climb this ladder and we'll fly you to safety."

"No thanks!" replied the religious man. "I've prayed to God, and I'm sure he will save me."

The floodwaters continued to rise...

And the religious man drowned.

When he arrived in heaven, he asked: "God, why am I here in heaven? I prayed for you to save me. I trusted you to deliver me from that flood!"

God replied: "Yes, my child. I sent you a canoe... then a boat... and finally a helicopter. But you never got in!!"

The main lesson in this story has already wholoped you over the head, but here's our bottom line: It's not just that we *should* get in the canoe to save ourselves. It's that we *have to* get in the canoe and bring all our friends. It's that we must keep up the pressure on our lawmakers to stop their excuses and get in the dang canoe, too.

Faith communities bring such promise to the climate action movement, I believe, because of their deeply held moral values don't *excuse* them from action but *call them* to it. The good ones don't point to their beliefs to abdicate moral responsibility but to remind themselves of the depth of that responsibility and the strength of their commitment to it.

If you haven't already done so, or if it's been a while, take a moment to reaffirm your commitment to our shared mission-- to care for Creation and create a cleaner, healthier, more just world-- by signing our [Covenant](#). I especially encourage congregations to do this and to use the slow summer months to discern how you will respond to this call.

Onward together,



Leah

Leah Wiste



Director of Outreach & Advocacy

Save the Date for our 2017 conference!

Heeding the Call: Faith, Hope & Climate Action

This event will feature Keynote speaker Rev. Dr. Ambrose Carroll, Sr., head of [Green The Church](#), an initiative designed to tap into the power of the African American church community and to expand the role of churches as centers for environmental and economic resilience.



The conference will feature congregations and individuals on the front lines of climate action sharing their stories about solar, energy efficiency, water protection and water justice, ethical eating, and advocacy.

WHEN: Friday, October 6

**WHERE: University United Methodist Church
1120 S Harrison Rd, East Lansing, MI**

*Sponsorship opportunities are available for businesses and non-profits.
To inquire about sponsorship, contact Paige at intern@miipl.org.*



Your congregation could continue to waste money on inefficient lighting... Or you could do more of your vital mission-- like running a food pantry or reaching out to the community. The choice is yours.

What good works could your congregation do with an extra \$500/year in energy savings?

Sign up for Light the Way and start saving if your congregation:

- is a Consumers Energy customer
- is located in the Kalamazoo, Muskegon, Grand Rapids, Jackson, Flint or Saginaw areas
- hasn't participated in the program before

Or reach Jennifer at projectmanager@miipl.org or 248-463-8811. *Pssst:* pass it on!

Sign up online

Voices for Earth Justice-- a Detroit-based nonprofit that is committed to building interfaith community around prayer, education and actions that deepen our sense of wonder, responsibility, and gratitude for all creation-- is seeking a **part time Executive Director**.



In other news:



[Our Guidebook for Congregations Going Solar is here!](#) The guide includes case studies of two churches (First Unitarian of Ann Arbor and Edgewood United Church in E. Lansing), plus information about permitting, financing, emissions factors, and solar installers and contractors here in Michigan.



[Green Living Science, a Detroit nonprofit, can help your metro Detroit congregation or business start recycling!](#) They'll provide an on-site assessment and connect you with a recycling vendor, a dumpster, and pick-up service for a single stream recycling program. Contact info@greenlivingscience.org or (313) 871-4000, ext. 3, for more.



[Interfaith Action for Human Rights is continuing its Banner Project--](#) an initiative meant to foster solidarity with Muslims and to enable non-Muslim congregations to take a stand against Islamophobia. [Banners are available for sale here.](#)

Don't forget to check out our new initiative!

Build your business's Triple Bottom Lines with [MIGreenLine](#), your direct line to energy solutions.



Upcoming events:

6/19/17: FREE Great Lakes Bioneers Detroit Film Screening & Discussion of [The Time Is Now](#), at the MSU Detroit Center, 6:30-8:30pm. (Free, safe parking is available at the MSU lot on Simpson and Woodward.)

6/23-25/17: [MI Clean Energy Conference and Fair](#), Traverse City

6/25/17: Interfaith Panel on Climate Change, Bharatiya Temple of Metropolitan Detroit, Troy, 3-5pm



Resources

Check out our free resources-- from energy efficiency manuals to study guides on the spiritual foundations of earth care.

[Resources >>](#)

Love Our Work?

Your support enables us to help faith communities become more sustainable through action, education, and advocacy.

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Become an Advocate

We have a moral responsibility to protect the Earth and love our neighbors. Help us make systemic change!

[Advocate >>](#)

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