



~~What can I do?~~ What can we do?

Bill McKibben, founder of climate action group 350.org, gets one question more than any other: "What can I do?"

But, according to McKibben, the question should instead be: "What can we do to make a difference on climate?"

Since our founding 15 years ago, Michigan IPL has helped hundreds of congregations reduce their carbon footprints and be better stewards of God's Creation through energy efficiency. (And we're still doing it with our [Light the Way program](#)!) But we would be fooling ourselves if we thought that this was, by itself, *enough* to meaningfully address climate change.

McKibben writes: "Job one is to organize..." *Then*, "if you have some time left over after that, by all means make sure your lightbulbs are all LEDs."

Personally, I believe that practical sustainability action can be a great first step, if it's a gateway to greater involvement in Earth advocacy. But McKibben's point is well-taken. Climate change will not be sufficiently addressed through the individual, voluntary actions of the minority of people who have the knowledge, resources, and motivation to do them. Building the movement-- to demand that fossil fuels stay in the ground, to hold polluters accountable, and to pressure lawmakers to get serious about climate-- is our best, our *only*, hope for righting this ship.

That's why we at Michigan IPL work on multiple levels: Action, Education, and Advocacy. We help houses of worship be more energy efficient and consider renewable options... AND we educate the faith constituency

about energy and the environment... AND we amplify faith voices, and endeavor to grow and add moral weight to the larger movement for clean energy and climate action.

This past Earth Day gave us hope on the movement-building front. The March for Science on April 22 and the Peoples Climate March on April 29 showed that hundreds of thousands of people-- in hundreds of local marches in the U.S. and around the world-- are willing to take to the streets to defend our planet. These marchers come from *all* religious backgrounds and political persuasions who share a common goal: to leave a healthy planet for future generations.



We're proud that Interfaith Power & Light had a strong presence at the Washington Climate march, with its bright parachute banner held aloft by dedicated IPL-ers from many states.

Earlier that week, Bob Chapman and I also had the chance to discuss the protection of our air, land and water meet with the staff of several of Michigan's elected leaders in Washington, DC (something we do every year).



To our delight, the staff for Reps. Walberg (R-Jackson) and Bergman (R-Marquette) both indicated concern about human-caused climate change. As recently as 2013, I was advised by a Republican political strategist to avoid even using the words "climate change" with conservative lawmakers, since it was likely to shut down the conversation. This change is a *big deal*.



So what can we do? We can start by recognizing that we are a "we." We are connected with this community of people who care so much about the fate of our planet that we're marching in the streets. We're a part of the national Interfaith Power & Light network, which reaches nearly 20,000

congregations across the country. And many of us are also parts of our own local faith communities.

Congregations can be tremendous building blocks for social action. Religious leaders have always played a role in movements for abolition, women's suffrage, and Civil Rights. Today, we're called to join the movement for climate action.

And we want to hear: how is your congregation heeding the call? In what ways have you been, or do you want to be, involved in advocacy for the care of God's creation? Send an email or give me a call: at outreach@miipl.org, 248-376-4603 (mobile)!

Yours,



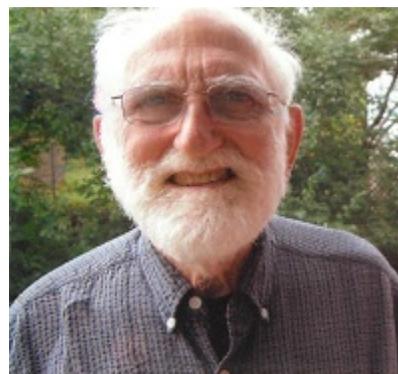
A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Leah".

Leah Wiste
Director of Outreach & Advocacy

Remembering Max Heirich, 1931-2017

Max Heirich, Professor Emeritus at the University of Michigan, joined our work as a Board member in early 2013. He died on April 27 at age 85.

Max approached the work of climate action with tremendous curiosity, humility, and vigor. His most recent contribution to Michigan IPL-- with generous financial support from the Ann Arbor Friends Meeting, the Quaker community of which he was a part-- was



beginning a [Carbon Fund](#), a pool of money meant to help economically disadvantaged congregations reduce their carbon footprints.

While many of us get stuck in periods of anger and despair in the movement for clean energy and climate action, Max had a well of hopefulness that kept him moving forward. His warmth, buoyant spirit and deep optimism gave much-needed comfort and inspiration to us and those around him.

May we march onward in the spirit of hope and kindness he so elegantly modeled for us.

[Read more about Max's wide-ranging career and full life in his obituary in the Ann Arbor News.](#)

Save the Date for Michigan IPL's 2017 Conference:

Friday, October 6 in East Lansing





"We can use the energy savings for outreach in the community.

And that's really what it's all about. Being a church and serving out in the world."

Bob Long, Church Council
Our Savior Lutheran, Saginaw

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

In other news:

Our NEW 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.



[Michigan IPL is hosting this month's GLBD film screening and discussion, Monday, May 22 from 6:30-8:30pm at the MSU Detroit Center.](#) Join us for *Catching the Sun*, a 2015 documentary that connects issues of environmental justice, jobs, global economic forces and national politics. The event is free and free, safe parking is available at the MSU lot on Simpson and Woodward.



[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.](#)



[Great Lakes Bioneers Detroit is seeking proposals for youth and adult learnshops and tours for its fall 2017 conference.](#) Submission deadline is Wednesday, May 24.

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:

5/22/17: [Great Lakes Bioneers Detroit's monthly film screening and discussion, hosted by Michigan IPL, *Catching the Sun*](#), at the MSU Detroit Center, 6:30-8:30pm.

6/5/17: [Presentation: Why not have 3 bottom lines instead of just 1?](#) at the Great Lakes Research Center, Houghton, 6-8pm.



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.

[Donate >>](#)

Become an Advocate

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

[Advocate >>](#)

Connect with Us



Michigan Interfaith Power & Light
 15900 W. 10 Mile Rd., Ste. 206
 Southfield, MI 48075
 248-537-9175 |
MichiganIPL.org

UNSUBSCRIBE