On Hope
(not the watered-down, sentimental version)

"[Hope is]... an orientation of the spirit... of the heart.
Hope is not the same as joy that things are going well,
or willingness to invest in enterprises that are obviously headed for success,
but rather an ability to work for something because it is good,
not just because it stands a chance to succeed." - Vaclav Havel

We have an unofficial tagline at Michigan IPL: "not just changing light bulbs, but changing hearts, as well."

As we work to create change in the world, we also aspire to foster inner changes in our selves. Creating a sustainable community is not only a matter of using the right technology and enacting the right policies, but is also about cultivating right relationships-- among people and between people and the earth.

Of course, these matters are interactive. Of course we work hard advocating for renewables over fossil fuels, for energy efficiency over energy waste. Similar to the (ongoing) Civil Rights struggles, we refuse to get sucked into the trap that you must first change hearts before you can change laws. No, you don’t. There’s plenty of evidence to show that different laws and policies helps change hearts, for good or ill. But we also know by now that changing laws does not guarantee a change of hearts, and that without changed hearts, old laws can be repealed and new, pernicious laws can be enacted.
I bring up the "changing hearts" goal as a reason why, for me, the world did not radically change on November 8. Like a lot of you, I got up the next day and went to work. Sleep-deprived and disappointed, yes, but not fundamentally changed. Some would call this a matter of faith. Because the word "faith" is so often associated with a written set of beliefs, I gravitate more to the word "hope." Not the watered-down, sentimental version of hope as a synonym for optimism. Rather, I like Vaclav Havel’s description. Havel, a writer, imprisoned dissident and first president of the Serb Republic, knew something of changing political winds.

So I go to work, buoyed by my coworkers, my colleagues in other states, and the many people like YOU who achieve daily victories, big and small (see below!).

I know I need to continue the work of changing hearts, including my own. It is a privilege to be part of this movement.

In hope,

Bob Chapman
Executive Director

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Energy Efficiency Helps Revive New Heart Church

"In May 2015, man came close to closing these doors forever, but God had other plans. May God make a way, as we at New Heart United Methodist Church seek to serve Christ in 2017." - Pastor Melene Wilsey

With its pews nearly empty, Saginaw's New Heart United Methodist Church (formerly West Michigan Ave. United Methodist Church) was on the verge of closing its doors. The tiny congregation simply couldn't keep up with the costs of operating the building and supporting the staff.
Today, the church is a hive of activity and a hub of community support.

Under the leadership of new Pastor Melene Wilsey, New Heart Church is now operating a food pantry, clothing closet, a center for teens, a tutoring program, and a summer sports camp. The church is most proud of its youth and children's ministries, which attract 50-70 kids each week. And right now the church is preparing for the grand opening of its latest venture: the HeBrews Community Coffee Shop.

With equal parts gratitude and wonder, Pastor Melene notes that the church's growth over the last year and a half has been nothing short of "supernatural."

Indeed, divine intervention works in mysterious ways.

One thing is certain, however: New Heart has seen real financial savings through energy efficiency. In the nine months since the church installed a new, efficient boiler, the church saved more than $3,000 on its utility bills.
And they're not done yet! In September, New Heart participated in our free energy efficiency program for houses of worship. When the old lighting in the sanctuary was replaced with new, ultra-efficient LEDs, the church's energy use in that space was cut by 90%-- from 4,000 watts to just 400 watts.

Based on the sanctuary lighting upgrade and other free efficiency measures provided by Consumers Energy, New Heart expects to save another $750 on energy in the next year.
A church cannot be sustained through energy efficiency alone. But for Pastor Melene and her congregation, it could help give New Hope a (more sustainable) new start.

(New Heart Church is still seeking resources to ensure its doors can stay open. To find out about how you and members of your congregation can volunteer or otherwise get involved, contact Pastor Melene at pastormelene@aol.com.)

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**Congregations are saving an average of $835 per year on their energy bills** after participating in our Consumers energy efficiency program. Over the life of the equipment (let’s say 15 years), these savings can add up to more than $12,000. Your congregation can sign up now for a **free energy analysis and efficiency upgrades** by reaching Jennifer at 248-463-8811 or projectmanager@miipl.org.

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**On Thursday, Nov. 9, after years of discussion, the state Senate approved a new energy package.** The renewable mandate was increased from the current 10% to a modest 15% by 2021. Clean energy advocates see this as a step in the right direction, but far short of Michigan’s potential. The House is expected to vote on the bills by the end of the year.

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In early November, **hundreds of clergy gathered at Standing Rock** to "to stand witness to water protector’s acts of compassion for God’s creation." The Standing Rock Sioux tribe is protesting the Dakota Access Pipeline because its route will cross sacred lands and burial sites and has the potential to pollute water sources. **Find out how you can be an ally.**

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"**We Stand With Our Muslim Neighbors.**" In response to rising anti-Muslim bigotry, Interfaith Action for Human Rights has created the 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](http://salsa4.salsalabs.com/o/50836/c/65/t/0/blastContent.jsp?email_blast_KEY=1325816).

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**UUs Stand in Solidarity with Black Lives Matter.** Unitarian Universalist congregations are showing their support for the dignity of black lives by displaying #BlackLivesMatter banners, engaging with their communities on the issue, holding anti-racism workshops, and more. Find #BlackLivesMatter resources for your congregation (UU or not!) [here](http://salsa4.salsalabs.com/o/50836/c/65/t/0/blastContent.jsp?email_blast_KEY=1325816).
Upcoming events:

No DAPL National Day of Action, 11/15/16 (Detroit)

WMEAC Annual Meeting, 11/16/16 (Grand Rapids)

InterFaith Leadership Council of Metropolitan Detroit, "Exploring Religious Landscapes," fall and winter events (Metro Detroit)

InterFaith Leadership Council of Metropolitan Detroit, "Multi-Religious Conflict Transformation Training," 12/7/16 (Birmingham)

Resources

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

Love Our Work?

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

Become an Advocate

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

Connect with Us

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