

Leah Wiste

From: Leah Wiste, Michigan Interfaith Power & Light <director@miipl.org>
Sent: Thursday, May 28, 2020 1:06 PM
To: Leah Wiste
Subject: May e-Newsletter



The Peace of Wild Things by Wendell Berry



When despair for the world grows in
me
and I wake in the night at the least sound
in fear of what my life and my children's lives may be,
I go and lie down where the wood drake
rests in his beauty on the water, and the great heron feeds.
I come into the peace of wild things
who do not tax their lives with forethought
of grief. I come into the presence of still water.
And I feel above me the day-blind stars

waiting with their light. For a time
I rest in the grace of the world, and am free.

We hope you and your families remain well. Enjoy our May e-newsletter!

Love,

A handwritten signature in cursive that reads "Leah".

Leah Wiste
Executive Director

Energy Justice and Coronavirus-- We need your voice!

A graphic with a dark blue background. At the top, three portrait photos are arranged horizontally. Below each photo is the name of the person. At the bottom center is the logo for the Michigan Public Service Commission (MPSC), which includes a white outline of the state of Michigan on a green background, with the letters "MPSC" in white on a green background, and the full name "Michigan Public Service Commission" in white text below.

In Michigan, low-income households spend an average of [22% of their income on energy bills](#). Coronavirus has only added to the economic uncertainty that families face, yet our [Public Service Commission](#) (the

appointed body that regulates utilities in Michigan) has been unwilling to put a moratorium on utility shut-offs during the pandemic.

The three Commissioners joined a small group of us from the [Work for Me, DTE campaign](#) for an hour long conversation earlier this month. We are grateful that they were generous with their time and thoughtful about the discussion, but I gotta tell you: I don't think they understand that energy *assistance* is not enough, and that we need real energy *affordability*.

The MPSC has opened a docket on the COVID-19 crisis as it relates to energy. We need the Commissioners to help create a real, just recovery to this crisis!

[Join us in Demanding Energy Justice from the Public Service Commission!](#)

Here are our 3 asks:

1. **Turn it on, keep it on!** Every family deserves guaranteed energy access through #StayAtHome and the recovery.
2. **Affordable Energy, Fair Bills.** We need energy affordability during COVID-19 and the recovery.
3. **Resilient Solar Energy.** Now is the time to invest in resilient energy for our communities.

Coronavirus increases demand on food pantries, leading to higher energy costs-- we can help!



Michigan food pantries have seen [intense demand](#) as the Coronavirus pandemic unfolds. Because of increased demand, many food pantries are facing higher costs for refrigeration and operations. For pantries connected with congregations, these higher costs can be harder to absorb because quarantine has led to lower tithes and the loss of other income (such as space rental).

Is your congregation struggling with energy bills because donations are down or expenses are up? We can help!

Haslett Community Church is one congregation that's found a way to turn energy savings into good works.

After making their building more energy efficient and installing solar panels in 2017, the church saves about \$3,000 each year on electricity-- money they put toward the [Haslett Food Pantry](#) (pictured above), including powering the numerous freezers and refrigerators that keep the food fresh.

Would you rather pay high utility bills or help neighbors in need?

If your congregation operates a food ministry, let us help you save on energy bills.

Volunteer with our Faith Climate Voter Campaign



The 2020 election will set the nation's course on climate change.

That's why-- from now until the November election-- Michigan is teaming up with IPLs in 6 other states to help members of our communities mobilize to elect candidates who will take real action on climate.

Can you help? We are looking for volunteers who can support our socially-distanced, non-partisan get-out-the-vote efforts by:

- Encouraging friends and members of your congregation to sign our Faith Climate Voter Pledge
- Sharing our Faith Values Voter guide
- Helping register people to vote, including youth
- Organize candidate forums or town halls
- and more

Whatever your gifts and predilections, there is a role for you in this campaign :)

[Sign up here](#) to learn more about being a Faith Climate Voter Volunteer.

We'll follow up with more about the campaign and the digital tools we're using to organize during this time of social distancing, and we'll provide training on how to do voter engagement in a non-partisan, 501(c)(3)-compliant way.

Connecting Virtually: Climate Conversations



Seven in 10 Americans understand that climate destabilization is real and happening now. But fewer than 40% of us are talking about it on a regular basis.

This presents a profound opportunity! To normalize the reality of climate disruption and move our society to bold action, we need to talk about it.

In this 1-2 hour, interactive Zoom videoconference, we will facilitate a heart-based, values-based Climate Conversation. We will begin by sharing stories of connection and aliveness, then articulate together the realities of our changing climate, and finally discuss how to take faithful action together.

The goals of the conversation are to help your community:

- recognize and collectively process some of the emotional barriers to climate action
- strengthen relationships and collective commitment to climate action, rooted in the theology of your tradition
- begin discerning how to move forward together

Want Michigan IPL to facilitate a *virtual* Climate Conversation in your community? [Sign up here.](#)

Sacred Grounds Mini Grant Program is Open for Detroit Houses of Worship Through June 8



As we continue to experience the ongoing uncertainty of this pandemic across, we can find solace in the fact that #natureisopen and all people have a right to enjoy the beauty and healing power nature brings.

Through the [Sacred Grounds Program](#), the National Wildlife Federation (NWF) works with faith communities to create wildlife habitat, actively link faith practices and caring for the environment, and disseminate these practices through the community. Participating faith communities will receive funding and technical support from NWF Great Lakes Regional staff and Detroit Collaborative Design Center (DCDC) to create a native plant garden on site. Webinars and technical support will be provided virtually.

Applications are due on June 8. For application materials, contact NWF Habitat and Education Coordinator Tiffany Carey: CareyT@nwf.org.

Although we are facing difficult times across our world, we stay encouraged and inspired to take action to grow healthy habitats and healthy communities!

Coronavirus Resources



For as long as the Coronavirus is impacting our day-to-day, we're going to keep offering a few links you may find useful:

- So you're thinking about re-opening? [A Jewish Values Matrix from Rabbi Joe Black](#)
- [Spiritual and Communal Responses to Covid-19: A Group for Clergy and Faith Leaders](#) (Facebook)
- [Congregations Responding to Coronavirus group](#) (Facebook)
- [MI COVID-19 Community Response](#), where you can find tons of information, opportunities to advocate, and Mutual Aid forms and spreadsheets for: [Detroit](#), [Lansing](#), [Kalamazoo](#), [Grand Rapids](#), and [more](#)
- Religious organizations CAN apply for Small Business Administration loans. [Read the FAQs.](#)
- ["How to Live-Stream Church for Free" guide](#)
- [How to Keep Uninvited Guests out of Your Zoom Event](#)

Stuff to look forward to

Saturday 5/30: Great Lakes Renewable Energy Association (GLREA) Spring Online Fundraiser, with Rep. Yousef Rabhi and Sen. Jeff Irwin. Email John Freeman to RSVP: jfreeman13@comcast.net.

Sunday 5/31: Solar Faithful Online Workshop: Investing in Solar Panels at your House of Worship. [Register here.](#)

Sunday 5/31-Thursday 6/4: [The Wilds Beyond Climate Justice](#) online gathering

Tuesdays in June: [Voices for Earth Justice](#) will be livestreaming interviews with faith and Earth leaders

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OR mail a check to the address below.

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