

Caring for our Common Home through energy improvements

June 12, 2024



Michigan
**Interfaith
Power & Light**



Mission

... to inspire and equip people of faith to exercise stewardship of and love for all Creation.



Leah Wiste


Executive Director
Michigan IPL

- at Michigan IPL since 2013
- “climate change will impact us”
“climate destabilization is
impacting us now...”
- Spiritually eclectic



Agenda



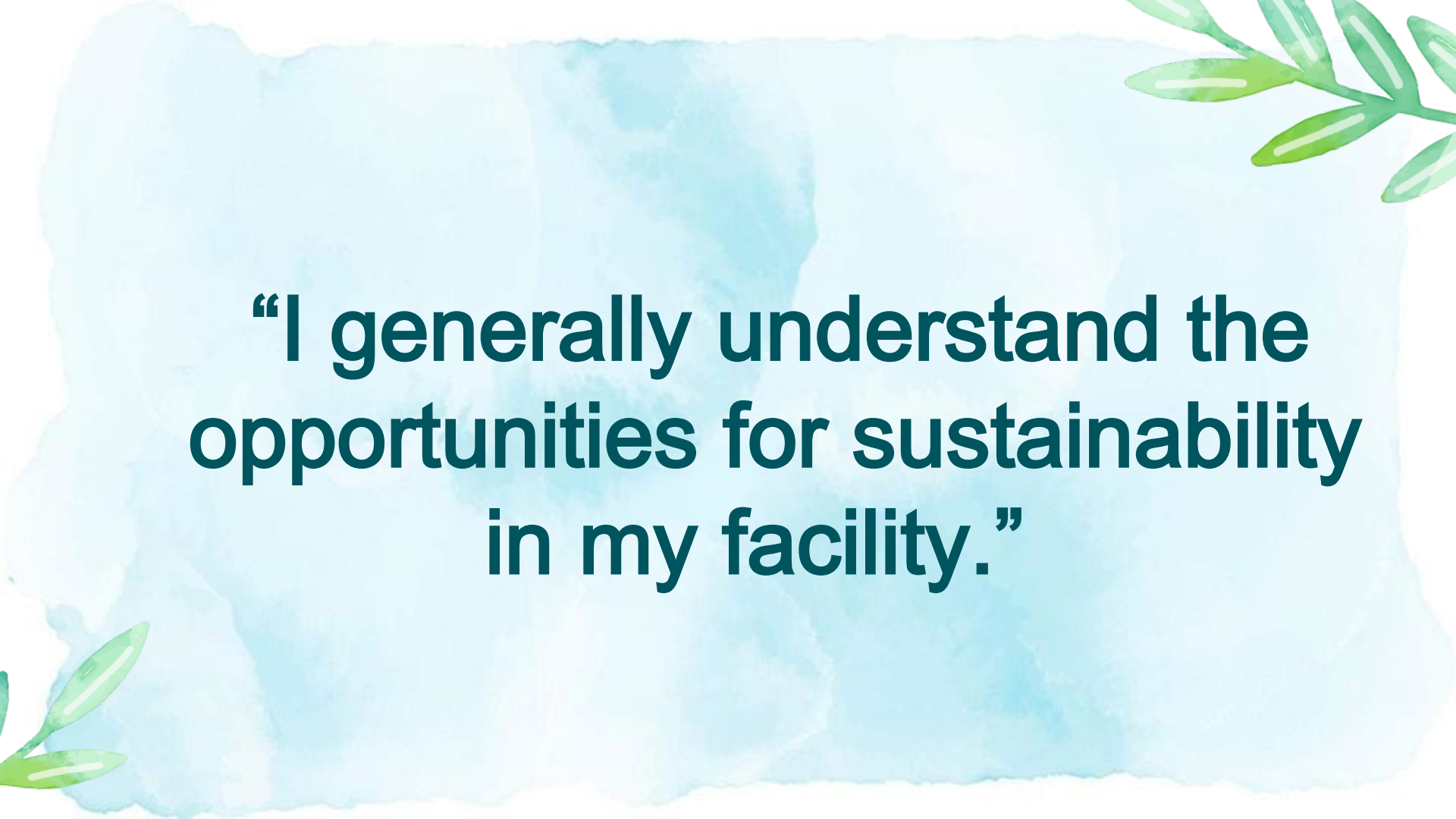
1. Exercise
 2. Levers for Change
 3. Sustainability Stories
 4. Break!
 5. Energy resources
 6. Fishbowl conversations + report back
 7. Closing exercise + commitments
- 

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**“Responding to the cry
of the Earth is a top priority
in our parish.”**

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**“My congregation hears about
Earth care from the pulpit.”**

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“I generally understand the opportunities for sustainability in my facility.”

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“The main barrier to sustainability in our parish is... the lack of money.”

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“The main barrier to sustainability in our parish is... getting people on board.”

Grounding in Gratitude

Take a moment of silence to feel into our gratitude for Creation :

- “Some things I love about being alive on Earth are...”
- “A place that is magical to me is...”

Share at your table .

Notice : what does it feel like in your body?

Why gratitude?

In her book *Active Hope*, Joanna Macy says that Gratitude helps us:

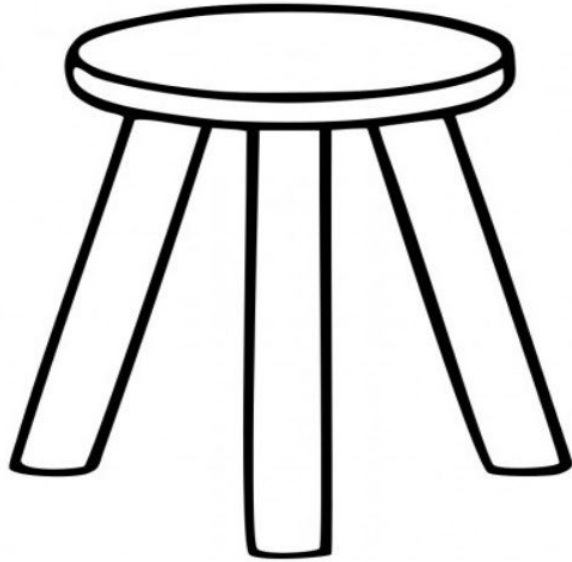
- become aware of the abundance that is
- get out of scarcity mentality
- build a context of trust and psychological buoyancy that supports us to face difficult realities



Levers for change:

3- legged stool

Practical



Spiritual/
Relational



Systemic





**Social/systemic
change**



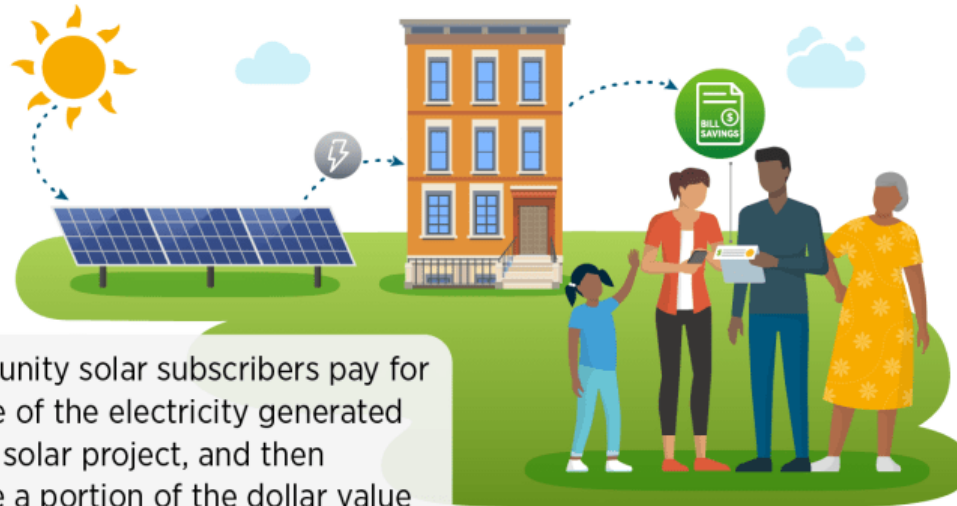
**Social/systemic
change**

Social/systemic change

Current opportunity: Community solar legislation in Michigan

How does it work?

Community solar projects generate electricity from sunlight and the electricity flows to the electricity grid. Project owners can sell this power to their local utility.



Community solar subscribers pay for a share of the electricity generated by the solar project, and then receive a portion of the dollar value generated by the project as a credit.



“... without a conversion of the spirit and trusting only technological advances, we will not witness an ecology that is truly human, an essential ecology at the service of Creation.”

**Spiritual/relational
change**

Spiritual/relational change





Practical Changes: Energy Improvements

St. Elizabeth's, Wyandotte



- Late 1990s energy audit
- Weather stripping
- Boiler upgrade
- Replacing incandescent lights with CFLs
- \$8,000 year in energy savings
- Used savings for solar and wind
- \$20,000 annual savings

St. Elizabeth's, Wyandotte



“On the day we installed [the solar panels and the wind turbine], I felt exhilarated. I had written a blessing for solar and wind power, and I went up on the roof with my vestments and the holy water. At the exact moment the holy water hit the wind turbine, a gust of wind blew and it started turning, and the whole crowd gasped.”

IHM Motherhouse, Monroe



- Completed 2003
- Geothermal heating and cooling system
- Graywater recycling system
- Restored original wood windows
- Interior materials and finishes are sustainable
- Converted 5 acres of lawn to meadow and prairie

Sacred Heart Church, Detroit



- Green stormwater infrastructure (GSI)
- 49% green credit on monthly drainage fee
- Captures 1.5 million gallons of stormwater
- Native plants absorb water and support pollinators
- Funds from The Nature Conservancy, Ralph C. Wilson, Jr. Fdn.

Madonna University, Livonia



- Geothermal heating and cooling
- Solar
- EV charging stations
- Water bottle filling stations
- Native plants

Gesu Catholic Church and School, Detroit



- 2018 solar project
- Raised \$250K and got a matching funds from Ford and the UAW
- 4/10 students on the green team had asthma – clean air became a personal issue
- “To get things done, talk to anyone who will listen. Tell your story.” – Anita Sevier, Development Director

Read their story:
https://www.miipl.org/gesu_detroit_solar

St. Suzanne's, Detroit



- GSI: rain and pollinator gardens
- Reduces monthly drainage charge
- funded by National Wildlife Federation, National Fish and Wildlife Foundation
- Working on energy efficiency now!


Sacred Spaces



New Mount Hermon Missionary Baptist Church
Deacon Wilson Moore

Take-aways



- Congregations and organizations all around you have been doing sustainability work for a long time – you have peers to learn from!
 - They are finding creative ways to pay for it (donations, grants, starting with small efficiency measures and reinvesting savings)
 - Playing the long game pays off
 - When in doubt, follow the nuns
 - What else? (crowdsource)
- 

“People are aware that they cannot continue in the same old way but are immobilized because they cannot imagine an alternative. We need a vision that recognizes that we are at one of the great turning points in human history when the survival of our planet and the restoration of our humanity require a great sea change in our ecological, economic, political, and spiritual values.”

- Grace Lee Boggs





Exercise: Envisioning sustainability at your congregation/org

- What would it feel like in your building/grounds?
- ... smell like? ... sound like? ... look like? (details)
- What kind of ministries could it enable?



Silent reflection/writing + table discussion

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Break

Resources



HOME

ABOUT US ▾

GET INVOLVED ▾

ENERGY RESOURCES

EVENTS

BLOG

DONATE

CONTACT US

Energy Efficiency And Savings For Your Congregation

Don't wait to access energy savings and efficiency options for your community of faith! Put your faith into action and take steps today that will benefit for your congregation and creation tomorrow!

Top Projects To Complete To Move Forward With Energy Efficiency

1. **Lighting** projects pay for themselves in a year or two and result in huge savings. Aside from changing out incandescents for LEDs or fluorescents for T-LEDs, consider motion sensors.
2. **Weatherization** such as caulking and air sealing is relatively low-cost and can reduce drafts, improving the comfort in your building, and reduce heating costs 10 to 25 percent.
3. **HVAC** projects take planning and an investment but result in long term benefits. However, maintenance like a



<https://www.mipl.org/save-energy>

Top easy steps

1. Sign up for your utility's free energy efficiency program (you can often participate once every few years) and get acquainted with their discounts and rebates
2. Lighting, weatherization (door sweeps, caulk) are great places to start
3. Boiler tune ups
4. Wifi thermostats

<https://www.miipl.org/save-energy>





University Lutheran Church, East Lansing accessed huge savings by connecting to their utility provider's savings programs!

Utility programs offer free energy assessments, rebates and incentives on projects and instant discounts on qualified purchases.

For University Lutheran Church in East Lansing the rebates with their utility:

1. covered 50-75% of the cost of upgrading the interior lighting throughout the building
2. replaced their parking lot lighting for just \$1,000 on a job for which a contractor quoted them \$25,000
3. covered \$3,000 of the church's \$3,600 annual boiler maintenance

Financing

Contractor/NGEN Login



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Tabernacle Missionary Baptist Church

We're doing the right thing.

"This project is a good statement about our stewardship of God's house." —
Kerry Caliman, chairperson, Tabernacle Missionary Baptist Church

Solar Faithful



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A faith-based solar power initiative.

Solar Faithful is a 501(c)(3) organization

We envision a world where houses of worship and faith-based nonprofits are leaders in clean energy adoption.

Together, we can make it happen.



Solar Faithful

Benefits include:

- \$0 upfront cost
- 10% savings on the electricity generated by the solar panels
- Maintenance is provided for 25 years

Join our webinar tomorrow to learn more!

Thursday, June 13 at 7pm

Register at miipl.org/events



Inflation Reduction Act

The Inflation Reduction Act (IRA) can provide you with 30% or more back on specific project costs through the direct pay (also known as elective pay) program.

Included in the IRA are rebates for:

- Solar projects
- Backup battery storage
- Electric Vehicle charging stations
- Geothermal Heat Pumps
- Weatherization such as insulation

More info at: <https://interfaithpowerandlight.org/federal-funding/>

Federal Grants

THE WHITE HOUSE



MENU



OPEN FUNDING OPPORTUNITIES



CLEAN ENERGY

Since President Biden signed the Inflation Reduction Act into law on August 16, 2022, his Cabinet has hit the ground running to implement billions of dollars in grant and loan programs and other

INVESTING IN
AMERICA –
CLEANENERGY.GO
V

<https://www.whitehouse.gov/cleanenergy/open-funding-opportunities/>



Federal Grants

- Unclear if individual parishes will be competitive, but opportunities at collective/diocese level
- Emphasize service to community, and meeting the needs of the most vulnerable
- Technical assistance is available
 - 5 Lakes Energy is one TA provider



2001

**1 solar panel
+ 1 small wind
turbine**

= 1.14 kW

2016

**1,032 solar
panels**

378 kW





2016

solar at 5
Felician sites

**2,000 kW
(2 MW)**



Fishbowl Conversations

- Rob Rafson, Solar Faithful
- Todd O'Grady, Michigan Saves
- Steve Wasko, St. Suzanne's
- Michael Edgar, Archdiocese of Detroit

Instructions:

- ✓ Join a table, based on your interest
- ✓ Ask questions, listen in on the conversations others are having, move around
- ✓ Opportunity to get contact info



Closing Exercise:

1 thing you learned today

1 thing you need

1 action you will take in the next week

Writing + Table discussion + Report out

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Thank you!

Leah Wiste
Michigan IPL
director@miipl.org