



California  
Interfaith  
Power &  
Light

# Bearing Fruit

Congregational Emissions  
Reduction Report  
2012-2013

## Bearing Fruit

Like a tree planted in fertile soil, California Interfaith Power & Light and its 600 member congregations' actions to steward Creation are bearing fruit – the fruit of energy savings. Whether retrofitting their facilities, installing solar on rooftops, or just being more conscious stewards of energy, CIPL members are keeping millions of pounds of global warming pollution out of the atmosphere. This report shows the cumulative impact we are having together as congregations around the state join the religious response to global warming.

But the impact of CIPL congregations' work extends beyond even the impressive results quantified here. Through advocacy, preaching, and teaching, they are also inspiring their congregants, neighbors, and communities to be better stewards of energy, and influencing state and national policy. And they are encouraging efforts for cleaner, healthier neighborhoods, especially those highly-impacted by poor air quality.

California's clean energy revolution has begun, and statewide emissions are down to early 1990s levels. The goal codified in AB 32, of reaching 1990 emissions levels by 2020, is in sight.

There is still much to be done toward our mission of creating a sustainable society and healthy communities. CIPL's work is to build a new relationship with the Earth, one that recognizes all of Creation as interconnected, essential, and sacred.

CIPL began sowing our seeds of energy stewardship 13 years ago, when the organization was formed. Since then, faith communities have become drivers of change, and this report shows that CIPL congregations continue to reap the fruit not only of negawatts, clean megawatts, and dollar savings, but of spiritual renewal.

## Continued Action to Protect Creation

Each year, CIPL surveys its member congregations to find out what specific actions they are taking for a healthier planet.

**In 2012, their actions prevented more than 27,600,000 pounds of CO<sub>2</sub> emissions.**

That's the equivalent of:

- 1,408,504 gallons of gasoline consumed
- 74,132 barrels of oil consumed
- 2,399 cars taken off the road
- Planting 2,675 acres of trees

Since 2000, CIPL member congregations have prevented 144,487,285 pounds of carbon dioxide from entering the atmosphere.



Advocating for climate solutions: Members of First Unitarian Universalist Church of Oakland march for funding for public transit.



### Action Item:

Did You Know? Water = Energy

An estimated 20% of California's energy usage goes just into moving water around the state. So saving water – a precious resource – also saves energy and reduces greenhouse gases.

"Church of Our Saviour sees caring for Creation as part of our Gospel mandate to tend to the needs of all whom God loves with compassion and generosity. The Risen Christ, Our Savior, defeats death not only for humanity but all living things and the universe itself. By faithfully stewarding our natural resources with concern for the future and the wider community, we mindfully participate in this saving grace."

— Rev. Br. Richard Helmer – Rector  
*Episcopal Church of Our Saviour, Mill Valley*



Let the Light Shine! St. John's Episcopal Church, Oakland dramatically improved the quality of light in their worship space and saved energy by switching to dimmable energy efficient lighting.

## Energy Efficiency and Conservation

Energy efficiency is a form of conservation, and conservation is the simplest, fastest, and cheapest way to curb emissions. The first step on the path to better energy stewardship is conservation, whether through energy audits, lighting retrofits, heating and cooling system overhauls, rain water irrigation systems, and the use of drought-resistant landscaping. The results? Decreased energy use, living more lightly on the Earth, and saving money that can be put back into congregation ministries.

**The Episcopal Church of Our Saviour, Mill Valley** took advantage of many resources open to congregations. It enrolled in its utility energy-efficiency program, from which it still buys renewable energy. It then had a comprehensive energy audit, which led to a substantial lighting and efficiency retrofit to its facility. 2012 saw a continuation of energy-reduction measures, including the placement of new and better-insulated windows, and the installation of a 12.2 kilowatt solar system, which, since May 2012, has generated over 24 megawatts of clean electricity. Church of Our Savior's actions don't stop at the church doors; it also holds events such as Earth Day fairs so that its members can learn about and adopt similar energy-saving measures at home.

**St. John's Episcopal Church, Oakland** has a long commitment to environmental education and advocacy, as well as energy efficiency. The Rev. Scott Denman and the Green Team, which was formed over 15 years ago, have provided practical information for its church and parishioners to lower their carbon footprints, including sermons on energy and climate issues, events and workshops on stewardship, conservation initiatives such as planting drought-resistant landscaping, and the installation of a 19.7 kilowatt solar system in 2010. Recently, they replaced high-energy lighting in the sanctuary with brighter, more energy-efficient lighting that is dimmable, and which has longer unit life. The result has been a dramatic improvement in the quality of the worship space.



90% of congregations responding to the 2012 survey had audits performed on their facilities to see how they could reduce their carbon footprint.



### Did You Know...

CIPL provides solar energy information to congregations? We have offered seven Solar Night presentations in various parts of the state in the last three years. Check out our Solar Resource Guide at [www.interfaithpower.org](http://www.interfaithpower.org).



Fun At Energy Fair: Local energy experts educate folks about home energy use at a fair sponsored by Church of the Brethren, La Verne.



Who Says It Can't Be Fun? When First Congregational Church of Bakersfield went solar, they celebrated with a special worship service that included a rousing rendition of "I'm A Solar Man" a la Blues Brothers!

## Renewable Energy

**Church of the Brethren, La Verne** considered installing solar, and its members approved with one stipulation: that it cover 100% of the church's electricity needs. The congregation had already established its commitment to energy efficiency through a comprehensive energy audit, a lighting retrofit, and other conservation measures. So Church of the Brethren agreed to implement an impressive 48 kilowatt system, and so far the members' demand has been met, with the annual average clean energy produced meeting 100% of the church electrical needs. It has also become a renewable energy leader in the broader community, advising other houses of worship in going solar.

After undergoing a thorough energy audit and lighting retrofit, **First Congregational Church of Bakersfield** was ready to consider going solar. First, the church formed a committee, naturally called a "Solar Panel", to research the possibility of solar for the church, and to elicit feedback from the congregants. After doing a cost analysis and getting support from the church's membership, the Solar Panel decided to move ahead, naming the 44 kilowatt project "God's Light Powers the Future." There was huge cause for celebration at the solar system's dedication service since FCC Bakersfield is the first and only (so far) house of worship in that city to go solar. In the first nine months of operation, the system produced 69% of the church's total power use. Recently the system has created more energy than it can use, causing the meter to run backward and providing clean electricity for the grid. The project also inspired four parishioners to install solar in their homes, including Pastor Rev. David Stabenfeldt.

“We believe that God calls all of us to be careful stewards of our earth. Part of caring for God’s people both at home and abroad means caring for where they live, and that starts here in our own community. Our efforts are but a modest beginning in this ongoing mission.”

— Rev. Kelly Love, Pastor, Davis United Methodist Church



Inter-generational Experience: Children and adults alike tend to Davis United Methodist Church's organic garden.



Spreading Seeds of Peace: Community of Christ, Orange, shares their organic garden harvest with the children's camp and community members.

## Education

From teaching about climate change science to hosting film screenings and discussion and sponsoring community events, CIPL members are active in bringing alive the commonly-held faith value of caring for Creation.

**Davis United Methodist Church** and its Green Team are serious when it comes to educating their parishioners and the wider community about climate change. Its approach is multi-faceted and includes educational events and opportunities, workshops, youth education, and sermons on the importance of caring for Creation by Pastor Rev. Kelly Love. Two particular ways in which Davis UMC “walked the talk” in the last year was by offering the Low Carbon Diet program, which encourages simple living, and donating a half-ton of vegetables from its on-site organic garden to the local food pantry.

A central tenet of the Community of Christ faith tradition is that all of Creation is interconnected, and **Orange Community of Christ** is living out that principle in a number of ways. The church holds various educational programs, and incorporates Earth care themes into its liturgies, encouraging church members to reflect on Creation and to strive to reduce their carbon footprints. One such program is the church’s organic vegetable garden. Local organic gardens reduce pollution from shipping and eliminate emissions associated with fossil fuel-based pesticides. Not only is the church’s abundant harvest shared with its surrounding community, Orange Community of Christ also hosts “Peace Camp,” a summer camp for children, a hands-on initiative that includes teaching about Earth care, fair trade, organic foods and food ethics.



Speaking from the pulpit is one of the best ways to spread the good news about faith communities caring for Creation. Of the congregations responding to the 2012 survey, an impressive 90% provided a special sermon on this topic.

Close to 1,000 congregations from 40 states signed up for Interfaith Power & Light’s 2013 National Preach-In on Global Warming. California had the strongest showing with 74 entrants.

California IPL has been critical in mobilizing the faith community to help pass California's landmark legislation on climate and energy.

Religious leaders are making the moral case for taking care of our environment while we put people back to work at clean energy jobs.

We need the faith community's active involvement to...allow California to continue to lead the way to a clean energy future.

— California Senator Fran Pavley



Heading to the Capitol: CIPL joins with state IPL affiliates from 38 states for a national conference and lobby day for clean energy and climate policy.

## Advocacy

While individual and congregational actions are important to live our values, in order to effectively curb global warming we need large-scale policy change. CIPL's annual visits to our state and federal legislators help to make the "faith case" for just policies that clean up our energy sources, protect lives, and create a more sustainable future.

## Making a Difference in City Planning

**First Unitarian Universalist Church of Oakland** is a great example of how one house of worship can strengthen a city's move to cleaner energy sources and improved public health. In addition to establishing Victory Gardens in its city, the church was a founding member of Oakland's Climate Action Coalition. The Coalition wrote and helped pass Oakland's Energy and Climate Action Plan, which is considered the strongest local climate plan in the country. The congregation has also advocated for transportation solutions, such as East Bay Bus Rapid Transit, and promoted low and zero emission buses as part of the fleet.

## California's Global Warming Legislation Strengthened

AB 32, California's historic Global Warming Solutions Act of 2006, took two steps forward legislatively in 2012 with the passage of two bills aimed at expanding clean energy and protecting public health, especially in areas most hard-hit by poor air quality and regional climate change. AB 1532 authorizes funds generated by pollution emissions auctions to be used for clean energy, low-carbon transportation, natural resource protection and for research of clean air technologies. SB 535, long favored by a multitude of environmental justice, health, and policy organizations, requires 25 percent of emissions revenues to be spent in highly-impacted areas. CIPL continues to follow the implementation of AB 32 closely, working to ensure that the policies adopted maximize public health and access to clean energy solutions.

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[www.interfaithpower.org](http://www.interfaithpower.org)

Front Cover: 48 kilowatt system at Church of the Brethren, La Verne  
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