



WELCOME

to the interfaith climate movement

A MESSAGE FROM OUR PRESIDENT & FOUNDER



Welcome to California Interfaith Power & Light, the originator of the national Interfaith Power & Light campaign that began in 2000 and is now in 39 states. By signing the CIPL congregation covenant you become part of a diverse network of climate minded congregations in California committed to working together to protect our common home.

This Welcome Guide is intended to help you and your faith community become acquainted with our resources, learn from some of our network's leading congregations, and be inspired to take action for a healthier planet.

Each year in mid-November we gather for our Cool Climate Awards honoring the exemplary California congregations working to address the climate crisis. We hope this guide, these resources, and the network we've built together will help your congregation become among the greenest in the Golden State.

Please know our staff and volunteers are eager to support you and your congregation in your efforts toward climate mindfulness and action.

In faith & with hope,

The Rev. Canon Sally Bingham, President & Founder



WHO WE ARE

Every major faith tradition calls on us to love our neighbor and to protect the Earth for our children and future generations. Since 2001, California Interfaith Power & Light's network of diverse faith communities has been responding to this call, working together to address the crisis of global warming as a moral issue. Amid the threats to our health and well-being posed by pollution and environmental degradation, our congregations are putting their faith into action.

We rely on the wisdom and love of our rich faith traditions to inspire and model the changes we know are needed for the health of our common home. By becoming more energy efficient, installing solar arrays, planting community gardens, and advocating for strong climate policies across our state, faith communities can and will continue to make a real difference.

Now that your congregation has become a member of CIPL, you have access to the many helpful resources linked to in this guide, and the wisdom of a diverse network of faith leaders to support you. We know your faith community will have ideas and resources to share, connections to make, and many opportunities to help advance climate action in California.



Zahra Billoo and friends from the Muslim American Society, 2009 CIPL Honorees

"As stewards of God's creation, we are called to make the Earth a beautiful garden for the human family."

- Pope Francis



EDUCATION



SUSTAINABILITY



REDUCING
POLLUTION



CLIMATE
JUSTICE

OUR WORK

CIPL's mission is simple: to be faithful stewards of Creation by responding to global warming as a moral issue. Our work spans four broad categories: education, sustainability, reducing pollution, and climate justice. Over the years, we and our network member congregations have:

Sent thousands of emails to legislators urging stronger climate policies

Marched and petitioned

Spoken at local, state, and national government hearings

Fought against dirty energy (and won!)

Conducted energy audits of houses of worship

Upgraded lighting and insulated facilities

Installed solar systems and electric vehicle charging stations

Replaced concrete with greenery

Planted trees and vegetable gardens

Preached hundreds of sermons on care for Creation

Our impact can be felt across the state and beyond. Whether it's championing the first-in-the-nation cap on carbon, or calling for an end to new fossil fuel infrastructure projects, we, along with our member congregations, have been growing the interfaith movement to protect our common home.

To be faithful stewards of Creation, we must understand how humanity is altering the climate. Our congregations share this understanding with others through preaching on environmental issues, hosting film screenings, organizing seminars and workshops, and leading by example. From worship resources and recommended speakers, to up-to-date information on the science of global warming, we are here to help you get started.

EDUCATION

We resist an unsustainable culture that sees Creation as something to be exploited and discarded. Our member congregations have started recycling programs, planted gardens, and divested from fossil fuels. From energy efficiency to driving less, our congregations model what a sustainable lifestyle can look like.


SUSTAINABILITY



Photos from left:

Clockwise from right:
Sustainable agriculture at Urban
Adamah, Berkeley; Kids participate
in solar blessing at Christ Church,
Portola Valley; EcoFair organized
by South Bay Muslim Green Team





REDUCING POLLUTION

Although California has historically been a leader in the environmental movement, our state is still one of the largest polluters in the world. We know that the climate crisis is being caused by the massive amounts of greenhouse gasses being released into our air from the cars and electricity we use every day. Our member congregations have committed to dramatically reducing their carbon footprint through the use of renewable energy, greater energy efficiency, and changes in their transportation and food choices.

Climate change and environmental destruction disproportionately affect the poor and those who have contributed the least to the problem. We advocate for, and partner with, communities hardest hit by pollution and climate injustice. This includes organizing preach-ins, supporting equitable climate legislation, and, perhaps most importantly, building deeper relationships between communities. [Click on the image below](#) to read about how CIPL is partnering with a diverse coalition of community, faith, and industry leaders to bring green jobs to the East Bay.

CLIMATE JUSTICE



Faith Leaders stand as part of the No Coal in Oakland Campaign, 2016

FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS



Q: What does it mean to become a member?

A: CIPL Members don't pay dues; by becoming a member your congregation commits to living by at least one of the principles on our [Congregational Covenant](#). As a member, you will have access to information, resources, and inspiration to help you respond faithfully to climate change.

Q: How many members do you have?

A: CIPL is growing quickly as the thousands of faith communities across our state awaken to the need to be better stewards of the planet. For an up-to-date list of our member congregations, go to www.interfaithpower.org/members

Q: How is CIPL structured?

A: CIPL is a 501(c)3 nonprofit organization with offices in Southern and Northern California. We are the state affiliate organization of Interfaith Power & Light, a campaign of the Regeneration Project. To learn more about IPL National, go to their website at www.interfaithpowerandlight.org

Q: How can I give?

A: 30% of our funding comes from congregations and individuals like you.

Online: [Click Here](#) to give online,

By Mail: 369 Pine Street, Suite 700 San Francisco, CA 94104

Q: Do you really mean "interfaith"?

A: Yes! CIPL's network is diverse and people of all faith backgrounds are welcome. We have members from Baha'i, Buddhist, Christian, Hindu, Jewish, Muslim, and Unitarian Universalist traditions, as well as many others.

Q: I want to get more involved in climate advocacy, but my congregation isn't ready.

A: That's fine! We realize that not everyone has accepted the reality of global warming, and that not every congregation is ready to unite behind environmental action. Often the most important step is starting the conversation. We firmly believe that our faith traditions provide a rich resource when talking about issues of climate and the environment. For theological and educational resources, from films to sample sermons, go to www.interfaithpowerandlight.org

Q: Do you have an email list?

A: Yes! By signing up as a member, your congregation's primary contact is now on our list. We will send you the latest in climate news, and actions that you can take to speak out for Creation.

Q: Will CIPL put solar on my roof?

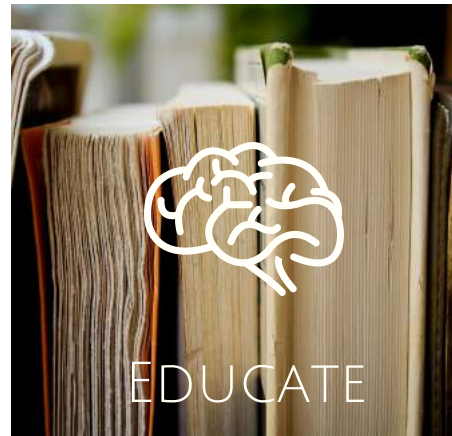
A: CIPL is not a solar installer; however, we can connect you with congregations who have successfully installed solar. You can also [Click Here](#) to access our Solar Resource Guide. It's a great place to start with information on energy audits, solar financing, and testimonials from solar congregations.

GETTING STARTED

As your congregation commits to taking action on climate change, you might be wondering, "well now what?" The next few pages will help you get started, with a guide to CIPL's resources, information on how to start a Green Team, and inspiring stories from a few of our member congregations.



Congratulations! By joining CIPL and signing the congregational covenant, your congregation is now part of the statewide movement to protect the Earth for our children and future generations.



We have resources to share, connections to make, and volunteer opportunities for you to help advance climate action in California. On the next page of this guide you'll find some links to help you get started.



With good organizing, every congregation can make significant steps toward making our state more sustainable and equitable. Starting a Green Team and joining a regional interfaith working group will set your faith community up for success.



After discerning how your faith is calling your congregation to respond to the climate crisis, it's time to act! Read some of the inspirational stories from our member congregations.

EDUCATIONAL RESOURCES

RELIGIOUS
STATEMENTS ON
CLIMATE CHANGE

PRAYER &
WORSHIP
RESOURCES

FACTS ON
GLOBAL
WARMING

CIPL IN
THE NEWS

SOLAR
RESOURCE
GUIDE

PUBLIC POLICY

COOL
CONGREGATIONS

FILMS & DVDS

FAITH CLIMATE
ACTION WEEK

Here are a few resources to get you started. From ideas on how to incorporate concern for the Earth into your congregation's worship, to a comprehensive guide to installing a solar array, CIPL has a wealth of information and stories to share. **To get started, simply click on a square that interests you.**





Ms. Margaret Gordon, Paul Rockwell, and other faith, community, and government leaders meet as part of the Oakland Green Jobs Summit, 2016

"Inevitably, there will be setbacks. These changes are not always easy, but thanks to the hard work of a few members of our congregation, the rewards will be felt for generations."

-Rev. Eileen Altman, First Congregational Church of Palo Alto

ORGANIZING

Coordination is crucial to the success of making "green" changes in your faith community, and one of the best ways to organize your congregation's efforts is through a **Green Team**. Here are some tips to help you along:

1. **A Green Team should have 5-8 engaged members, be diverse (in terms of age, vocation, gender, etc.), and gather regularly.**
2. **Create a work plan or a timeline for suggested green projects.**
3. **Stay in touch with other administrative leaders in the congregation.**
3. **Identify one main contact for your congregation to put in contact with the CIPL outreach director in your region.**
4. **For further ideas and resources, go to www.coolcongregations.org**

Having an effective group of people working together can lead to big accomplishments. [Click Here](#) to watch a video on the inspiring work of the Green Team at the First Congregational Church of Palo Alto.

OUR MEMBERS

Our member congregations drive our work. Spanning the state from Chico to San Diego, Mono Lake to Monterey Bay, our congregations are putting their faith into action by becoming more energy efficient, installing solar arrays, planting community gardens, and advocating for strong climate policies locally and in Sacramento.

Representing over **40 faiths and denominations**, our members have used the wisdom of their rich traditions to model the changes we know are needed for the health of our common home. Read some of their inspiring stories in the next few pages.



BETH CHAYIM CHADASHIM



Rabbi Lisa Edwards and Ira Dankberg stand with BCC's solar array

A GREEN SYNAGOGUE

- Solar panels that supply 85% of their energy needs
- Efficient lighting and appliances
- Solar Shading
- Drought-tolerant landscaping and low-flow toilets
- Recycling and food composting
- Electric Vehicle (EV) charging station

Started in 1972 as the world's first synagogue founded by, and with an outreach to, lesbians and gay men, Beth Chayim Chadashim's vibrant LGBT+ community outgrew their old space and were determined that their new one would be designed and built to the highest standards of sustainability.

Their beautiful new building—a repurposed warehouse on Pico Boulevard in West Los Angeles—is LEED certified and includes a host of features meant to reduce their demands on the environment and prevent waste.

Reflecting on the space that they have created in which to live and worship as a Jewish community, Rabbi Lisa Edwards states:

"As a rabbi, as a Jew, it makes sense that we do this...if we are going to be good citizens of this Earth, and of this city and country, we need to take as much care as we can."

The BCC community serves as a model to all people of faith who seek to live in a way that cherishes and protects the gifts of Creation. [Click Here](#) to watch a video honoring their accomplishments as part of the 2016 CIPL Cool Climate Awards.

ALL SAINTS EPISCOPAL CHURCH

"How can we worship the Creator without honoring and caring for Creation?" asks the Rev. Justin Cannon when talking about the "greening" of All Saints Episcopal Church, where he serves as rector. Passionate about eco-theology, he has spent a lot of time thinking about how we can turn a spirituality deeply rooted in environmental stewardship into action.

Ultimately, relationships—with the environment, with God, and with others—form the foundation of the environmental work of All Saints, which has taken significant steps in reducing its environmental footprint and reaffirming the sacredness of the Earth we've been given.

All Saints has had a longstanding commitment to recycling, but recently moved to make their house of worship much greener. Inspired by the work of other local congregations, they installed a new energy-efficiency furnace and a solar array that provides 83% of their energy needs. Beyond the reduction in carbon emissions, however, is the story of how the community at All Saints came together to make this happen, volunteering their time to help install the panels themselves, and forming a Green Team to continue their environmental work into the future.

This communal commitment to the Earth is also evident in the worship at all All Saints. Rev. Cannon leads a weekly Celtic Green Mass, and started an organization called Holy Hikes which aims to, "help individuals be renewed in their love-relationship with the Earth, the universal church, and with their Creator," and, ultimately, to heal the "shattered relationship between the human community and the Earth."

**"How can we worship
the Creator without
honoring and caring for
Creation?"**



Installation of solar array on roof of All Saints Church



ACHIEVEMENTS

- Installed 33 solar panels
- Replaced inefficient furnaces
- Created take-home "green tips" for parishioners
- Holds weekly Celtic Earth Mass
- Sponsors the eco-ministry Holy Hikes
- Engaged Green Team is planning future efforts

WEST SIDE MISSIONARY BAPTIST CHURCH

When a massive new coal export terminal was announced in the neighborhood of West Oakland, the Rev. Ken Chamber knew he had to act. As Rev. Chambers later explained during hearings with the Oakland city council, "West Oakland already bears a disproportionate burden of pollution, of toxic contamination from diesel exhaust spewing from thruways crisscrossing through the community. Life expectancy of West Oakland residents is far below the life expectancy of residents in the Oakland hills, and West Oakland tenants are twice as likely to visit emergency rooms for asthma as the rest of Alameda County."

Indeed, many of his congregants would have lived less than a mile from the proposed terminal. To fight this injustice, West Side partnered with a diverse coalition of local clergy, as well as interfaith, environmental, and labor groups to push for the city of Oakland to ban coal. After a two year struggle, this coalition, of which West Side and CIPL were a part, succeeded.

This victory is a testament to the resilience of West Side's faith community and the interfaith coalitions of the East Bay, but as Rev. Chambers says, "the defeat of this project was more than just one regional success; it epitomized the local and global demand for climate justice and a just transition to clean energy."

Click Here to watch a video honoring the
work of Rev. Chambers and West Side
Missionary Baptist Church



Top: Rev. Chambers speaking at a rally before Oakland City Hall; photo courtesy of Brooke Anderson

GIVING

We hope that you'll consider giving to CIPL. Our work is made possible by the generous support of congregations and individuals like you.

ABOUT ME

Over the past ten months, I've had the honor of completing a service year through the Episcopal Service Corps, living in intentional community and working with the CIPL team to advance climate action in California.

While our state is often considered to be at the forefront of combatting global warming, there is still much that can be done, and many ways in which injustices are propagated through harmful legacies of pollution and neglect. The religious community provides a unique and badly needed voice in these divisive times, where scapegoats seem to come much easier than solutions.

I created this welcome guide and **video** to give you the tools to help you get started. Getting involved in the environmental movement can be overwhelming at first (it was for me), but know this: you are not alone. If I've learned anything in my time here, it's that the interfaith community has a deep well of wisdom and relationship to draw upon. Everywhere you look, there are inspiring stories of people of faith coming together to move us toward a more just and healthy world.

No matter the obstacles, there will always be people along the way eager to help you move forward.



Sincerely,
Daniel Naftel