



# MASSACHUSETTS Interfaith Power & Light

PRAY | ACT | MOBILIZE

FAITH IN ACTION FOR CLIMATE JUSTICE

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Dear friends,

I am so pleased to join the staff of MassIPL and look forward to working closely with you and its committed and talented staff and leadership! You will find more about my background at the end of this newsletter. I join with the hope that, together, we realize MassIPL's mission as we Pray, Act and Mobilize for environmental and climate justice.

My own introduction to MassIPL came years ago as a congregant leading the Green Sanctuary Committee at First Parish in Lexington. From the Environmental Stewardship Assessment process through the many climate vigils, rallies, workshops, and letter writing campaigns, MassIPL and the interfaith community have been a key part of my own call to ministry. After moving out of the area for a few years to pursue that late-in-life call, I am delighted to have returned to the state I called home for twenty-plus years.

Today, my heart carries a prayer for the people of Ukraine as I wonder, what more can I do? If you have not already seen it, I commend to you [Bill McKibben's recent editorial in The Guardian](#) in which he exhorts readers, "If you want to stand with the brave people of Ukraine, you need to find a way to stand against oil and gas." He writes:

*"So now is the moment to remind ourselves that, in the last decade, scientists and engineers have dropped the cost of solar and wind power by an order of magnitude, to the point where it is some of the cheapest power on Earth. The best reason to deploy it immediately is to ward off the existential crisis that is climate change, and the second best is to stop the killing of nine million people annually who die from breathing in the particulates that fossil fuel combustion produces. But the third best reason – and perhaps the most plausible for rousing our leaders to action – is that it dramatically reduces the power of autocrats, dictators, and thugs."*

Let us Pray steadfastly that people of Ukraine be kept from harm's way, and let us continue to Act and Mobilize for energy independence. Consider engaging our suggested actions. Use your voice, here in this country and state, to demand not just that our leaders Build Back Better, but to insist that *now* is the time to Build Back Fossil Fuel Free.

Blessings,

## Pray

*Connect environmental justice to your faith tradition through prayer, worship, and reflection*

### Heal our Plan(et) Webinar

Join the Diocese of Worcester on March 12 from 11am - 12:30pm EST in this **Webinar** to learn more about environmental justice and how we are called by Catholic Social Teaching to care for our brothers and sisters by caring for our Common Home! Hear about actions Catholics are taking to build the Vatican's "**Laudato Si' Action Platform**" globally and right here in Massachusetts in response to the Pope's encyclical. Local parishioners will describe their experiences as they enroll in the Platform and begin to plan their 7 year journey toward sustainability in the spirit of Laudato Si'.



### Faith Climate Action Week: Featured Film

YOUTH v GOV is the story of America's youth taking on the world's most powerful government. Armed with a wealth of evidence, twenty-one courageous leaders file a ground-breaking lawsuit against the U.S. government, asserting it has willfully acted over six decades to create the climate crisis, thus endangering their constitutional rights to life, liberty, and property. If these young people are successful, they will not only make history, they will change the future.

This film is the featured film of Interfaith Power & Light's Faith Climate Action Week, April 22-May 1, 2022. The theme this year is "Sacred Trust: Our children's right to a livable future." We will examine our responsibility to safeguard our Earth for future generations, and how our faiths call us to respond with bold and just solutions to climate change.

Register [here](#) to be notified when screening registration opens!

## Act

*Lower the carbon emissions of your house of worship and your home*



### New MassSave Incentives Promote Heat Pumps

MassSave has begun a new 3-year cycle of incentives, with a major change in dramatically increasing rebates for heat pumps. If your house of worship -- or your home -- needs a new heating system, heat pumps are the right choice.

In homes, you can get up to \$10,000 if you remove your fossil fuel heating system and rely 100% on air source heat pumps, or \$15,000 if you install ground source heat pumps (often called 'geothermal'). If you keep the fossil fuel system as a back up, you still receive \$1250 per ton of cooling capacity. This technology has advanced dramatically in the past few years so it can handle even the single-digit temperatures we have had this winter. [To learn more about heat pumps](#), The Massachusetts Clean Energy Center has a good primer [here](#).

For commercial buildings, the rebate is \$2500 - \$4500 per ton of cooling capacity depending on the specific equipment.

Another big change is that the amount you can borrow through the 0% interest HEAT Loan

program increases to \$25,000 -- and this is available to houses of worship. This is a great way to finance much of this work without asking for additional donations from your congregation.

MassSave continues to cover 100% of the cost for air sealing and 75% of the cost of insulation.

There are additional incentives for customers with incomes below the levels detailed in [this chart](#).

Houses of worship don't fit neatly into the MassSave categories of "residential" and "commercial" buildings, though generally it is determined by the rate class for your electric or gas bills. And we have already experienced cases where the contractor isn't fully aware of the new rebate structure. MassIPL can help you navigate the complexities of the program. If you encounter problems, email [info@MassIPL.org](mailto:info@MassIPL.org) and we'll work with our contacts in the program to help you get the most from it!

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## Community Solar Available



Many houses of worship can't install solar power: they may not get enough sun or financing the installation may be challenging.

MassIPL has a new partner for our members to buy solar electricity from local solar farms: Hampshire Power, a Massachusetts based community solar group. They currently have capacity to connect hundreds of houses of worship and their congregations served by Eversource and National Grid to local community solar projects that are built and operating in Massachusetts today.

Because of the additional incentives in the state's solar incentive program, SMART, houses of worship in low income communities can save as much as 20% compared to your utility's rates.

### What you get:

- Guaranteed savings, up to 20% on your electric bill
- Easy sign up, no fees
- Easy cancellation, no fees
- Solar projects are offsite and remote. There is no need for installation on the property.
- Customer portal to track your savings over time

Typically, the capacity of solar farms sells out quickly, so we encourage you to contact Hampshire Power now. You will be asked to share a copy of your electric bill and then will receive a proposal for connecting you to a local community solar project.

**To learn more, go to:** <https://hampshirepower.com/community-solar/> or contact Stephen Condon at [stephen@hampshirepower.com](mailto:stephen@hampshirepower.com)

Be sure to mention that you heard about Hampshire Power from MassIPL!



## Massachusetts Remains #2 in the Country for Houses of Worship with Solar Panels!

Interfaith Power & Light (IPL) completed its third survey of congregations in the United States with solar. Once again, Massachusetts is second only to California.

IPL's survey found:

- A total of 1,250 congregations with PV systems in 48 states and the District of Columbia.
- The 480 congregations added in the past two years exceeds the 400 additions identified in the 2019 biennial survey.
- The combined PV capacity of congregational PV systems is 105 Megawatts (MW), approaching the installed solar capacity of Facebook, the 10th largest commercial user based on most recent SEIA data.

IPL's website has a number of resources and the full list of all solar congregations [here](#).

Here in MA, the Commonwealth's solar program, SMART, recently reopened to offer incentives for new installations. MassIPL has helped over 50 over our members go solar with our partner installers. Contact [solar@MassIPL.org](mailto:solar@MassIPL.org) to see if installing solar is right for your congregation!

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## Mobilize

*Promote policies for a more just and sustainable world*

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### Stop the Peabody Peaker Plant!

On Tuesday, February 15, MassIPL joined the online Teach-In and Action sponsored by Breathe Clean North Shore, Jewish Climate Action Network, UU Mass Action, Community Action Works, 350 Mass North Shore, and other allied groups opposing the **gas-and-oil-fired peaker power plant proposed for the environmental justice community of**

**Peabody**. The proposed plant menaces both the global climate and the health of local residents.

We join these organizations in urging you to **contact your state legislators and the gubernatorial candidates today and ask them to call upon Governor Baker to order an immediate environmental impact review and community health impact assessment** of this proposal.

To **take action** on this important issue, please read this [information sheet](#) (including talking points, email addresses, and sample messages). You can watch a compelling six-minute [video](#) explaining the proposal and why community groups oppose it.

Thank you for lifting your voice to protect God's creation and our vulnerable neighbors!

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### Introducing Rev. Cindy Davidson, MassIPL's new Executive Director!

MassIPL welcomes Rev. Cindy Davidson as our new Executive Director!

Cindy joins us after having served as a Board member and Chair of the Unitarian Universalist Ministry for Earth. She earned her M.Div. from the Meadville Lombard Theological School, is a GreenFaith Fellow, and holds a BMusic from the Mannes College of Music.



Cindy herself is thrilled to be returning to Massachusetts to join the MassIPL staff after her ministerial journey took her to New York where she served as ministerial intern at the Community UU Congregation of White Plains and minister to the Fourth Unitarian Universalist Congregation of Westchester (Mohegan Lake). She credits her years of congregational leadership at First Parish in Lexington, where she was chair of the Green Sanctuary, Social Action and Music Committees, with launching her call to a ministry of faith-based environmentalism.

Cindy envisions a clean and healthy environment for all the children (of all ages!) of the world, present and future. She believes in the restorative power of nature and that people of faith, working together, really can move mountains to create environmental and climate justice.

Cindy welcomes hearing directly from you at [cdavidson@massipl.org](mailto:cdavidson@massipl.org).

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# Inspiration

Dear Mother Earth,

I bow my head before you as I look deeply and recognize that you are present in me and that I'm a part of you. I was born from you and you are always present, offering me everything I need for my nourishment and growth. My mother, my father, and all my ancestors are also your children. We breathe your fresh air. We drink your clear water. We eat your nourishing food. Your herbs heal us when we're sick...



Each species has its own language, yet as our Mother you can understand us all. That is why you can hear me today as I open my heart to you and offer you my prayer.

I promise to keep the awareness alive that you are always in me, and I am always in you. I promise to be aware that your health and well-being is my own health and well-being. I know I need to keep this awareness alive in me for us both to be peaceful, happy, healthy, and strong. Sometimes I forget. Lost in the confusions and worries of daily life, I forget that my body is your body, and sometimes even forget that I have a body at all.

Unaware of the presence of my body and the beautiful planet around me and within me, I'm unable to cherish and celebrate the precious gift of life you have given me. Dear Mother, my deep wish is to wake up to the miracle of life. I promise to train myself to be present for myself, my life, and for you in every moment. I know that my true presence is the best gift I can offer to you, the one I love.

Written By: Thich Nhat Hanh

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