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# Earth Care e-News

bringing Hoosiers of faith together to help curb global climate change

Bloomington, Indiana, January, 2012

## Highlights of this issue

- News from last year's Task of the Month campaign
- Congregational Events: Carbon Emissions and Climate Change
- Noted Online
- MLK Day Service Opportunity: Volunteer now!
- New Downtown Recycling Center
- Move to Amend: WILPF to sponsor planning meeting

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## Task of the Month

Several local Earth Care congregations, including the Unitarian Universalist Church, First United Church, First Presbyterian Church, and Congregation Beth Shalom, recently completed full-year cycles of Earth Care's Task of the Month Program. (And other groups are taking up the program this year.) We hope to have more reports of their experiences. But in the meantime we have the following inspiring story about the prize-winning work accomplished at Beth Shalom.

## Earth Care Makes National News Setting an Important Bar

In news picked up by the Chicago Tribune, Fox News and media outlets from Connecticut to Texas, an Earth Care congregation received first prize in a national competition for its work "inspiring congregants to lower their energy use at home". Over a third of Congregation Beth Shalom's members reduced their energy use by at least a seventh – as in, "On the seventh day God rested" - while numerous leaders of the congregation reduced their energy 40% or more. This work was achieved using Earth Care and Hoosier Interfaith Power and Light tools, from the Task of the Month Toolkit to the Seventh Day Initiative. In fact, several other Earth

Care congregations are on this same path and Hoosier Interfaith Power and Light is promoting its Seventh Day model for its work statewide.

Setting a high national bar –in terms of the breadth of community involvement and the level of individuals' energy reduction – is an urgently important accomplishment.

Although recent climate and policy news is dark, we together are lighting the way forward. We are effectively and significantly reducing our reliance on fossil fuels by embracing hope, setting our aims high, and working together.

And we are not alone. Other individuals, communities and groups are doing the same across the country and around the world.

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## Congregational Events

### Carbon Emissions and Climate Change

**Save the date:** On January 22 at 7 p.m. Congregation Beth Shalom's Sunday Night Forum will present *Carbon Emissions and Climate Change: A Report from IU Scientists*. All interested people are invited to attend.

The program will present a panel of Indiana University scientists discussing how their research reflects issues concerning climate change: Bennet Brabson, a physicist who has specialized in the physics of climate change since 1996; John Rupp, a fossil energy scientist and Senior Researcher for the Indiana Geological Survey, who studies technologies for carbon sequestration; and Scott Robeson, chair of the department of Geography, who works on atmospheric science and especially climatic change.

These IU experts will discuss their own research and some of the ways it impinges on global climate change. Don Lichtenberg, professor emeritus of physics, will moderate the discussion.

There will be a dessert reception. This program is cosponsored by Beth Shalom's Tikkun Olam and Till and Tend committees, Earth Care Bloomington, and Monroe County Religious Leaders. For anyone hoping to understand the science behind the debates about global warming, this program should be useful and informative.

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## Noted Online

### New figures for CO<sub>2</sub> growth during 2010

The results are in: Global emissions of carbon dioxide from fossil-fuel burning jumped by 5.9 percent in 2010, the largest amount on record.

This was almost surely the largest absolute jump in any one year since the Industrial Revolution, and certainly the largest percentage increase since 2003.

The increase solidified a trend of ever-rising emissions that scientists fear will make it difficult, if not impossible, to forestall severe climate change in coming decades.

For more information Google the phrase "Global emissions of carbon dioxide from fossil-fuel burning jumped by 5.9 percent".

## **Intelligent life from other planets?**

Click to see [Pulitzer Prize winning cartoonist Tom Toles's take](#) on "Why we haven't been contacted by intelligent life from other planets."

## **Harnessing the Sun's Energy for Water and Space Heating**

The pace of solar energy development is accelerating as the installation of rooftop solar water heaters takes off. Unlike solar photovoltaic (PV) panels that convert solar radiation into electricity, these "solar thermal collectors" use the sun's energy to heat water, space, or both. China in particular is making great strides. There is much promise for this technology in developing countries. For more see [The Earth Policy Institute](#).

## **Utility Subsidy of Energy Star Appliances**

Instead of using rebates on appliances, some energy companies are actually paying the producers of appliances to reduce their prices on Energy Star products. The results are overwhelmingly positive along the east coast. For more about this effective alternative to rebate programs see the [article](#) at *Climate Progress*.

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## **Community Events**

### **Martin Luther King, Jr., Day Service Opportunity**

#### **Earth Care folks are encouraged to volunteer!**

*MLK Day energy efficiency team leaders needed!* IU, the City of Bloomington, and South High School are partnering to recreate last year's "Energy SWAT Teams" to implement energy efficiency measures in local homes, and to provide residents with suggestions for further improvements. Earth Care is supporting this effort and Earth Care folks are invited to take part. Time commitment will largely be confined to MLK Day. Want to know more? Email [sustain@bloomington.in.gov](mailto:sustain@bloomington.in.gov).

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## **Downtown Recycling Center Now Open for Business**

A new recycling center has opened downtown Bloomington in the parking lot behind the Showers Building on 10th Street. The center is part of a collaboration of the City of Bloomington, Monroe County Solid Waste Management District and Pedal Power

owner Chad Roeder to make recycling more sustainable and accessible to downtown residents.

The recycling center is open Monday through Saturday from 7:30 a.m. to 5:30 p.m. Materials accepted at the center include: • Steel and aluminum cans (no scrap metal) • Plastics #1-7 • Clear and colored glass bottles and jars (no window glass, mirrors, light bulbs, etc) • Mixed paper/fibrous products (junk mail, newspaper, office paper, paperboard, etc) • Corrugated cardboard

All materials must be free from food contamination, and paper and cardboard products must be dry. The center does not currently accept hazardous materials such as paint, aerosols, poisons or batteries, but these items may be taken to the Monroe County Recycling Center at 3400 S. Walnut Street.

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## **Move to Amend**

On January 21, 2010, with its ruling in *Citizens United v. Federal Election Commission*, the Supreme Court ruled that corporations are persons, entitled by the U.S. Constitution to spend unlimited amounts of money on political advertising. The Court declared more than 30 years ago that spending money is a form of speech, and that corporations had a First Amendment right to speak that way. But there were still limits, particularly in the area of political speech, where there is a century-old tradition of controlling the influence of corporations on the electoral process. *Citizens United* took away those limits. According to the Court, if human beings are allowed an unrestricted right to free speech, then corporations must have the same right.

*This unprecedented corporate power can and does also affect the United States government's decisions on environmental and climate change issues.*

All across the country citizens and local governments have endorsed a constitutional amendment to overturn *Citizens United* and restore elections to the 99%. The latest was the City of Los Angeles. The Move to Amend organization is urging citizens to sign their petition and to start a group in their community. You can read their proposed amendment and more information at: [MovetoAmend.org](http://MovetoAmend.org).

WILPF members invite you to come to a public meeting on Thursday, January 19, to help organize an amendment campaign in our community. The meeting will be held in the Monroe County Public Library, Room 1B, from 6-8 p.m.

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## **News from Hoosier Interfaith Power & Light**

The national Interfaith Power & Light has an exciting event coming up over Valentine's Day weekend called the National Preach-In on Global Warming. The materials will be distributed free of charge to those who sign up, on a first come first serve basis (while supplies last). The goal is to support clergy and interested green

teams and lay leaders as they give sermons and / or hold activities. IPL President Sally Bingham explains it pretty well here:

[www.interfaithpowerandlight.org/preachin](http://www.interfaithpowerandlight.org/preachin) .

As the date approaches, IPL will send a variety of support resources to those who register, including:

- Denomination-specific liturgical and thematic notes to help in the preparation of sermons, reflections, devotionals, Bible studies, and youth activities
- Revised Common Lectionary, Roman Catholic Lectionary, Lectionary guides for the Jewish Torah cycle, Muslim, Unitarian and Baha'i connections
- Ready-to-go sample sermons on global warming
- Global warming fact sheet and bulletin inserts
- Valentine's Day postcards for policy makers (Love Creation, with a support clean air act message to Senators)
- Preaching for the Planet 30-minute film in DVD format

Resources will be sent in January to those who register. Deadline for sign-up is **January 13th**.

**Event Dates:** February 10, 11, 12, participants choose the best date and activities for them.

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*Earth Care e-News Editors: Allan Edmonds (First Presbyterian) and Ria Collee (Friends Meeting)*

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