

NOTES

St. Luke's Public Policy & Environmental Action Team (PPEAT) meetings

Sunday, 5 January 2020

11:30 AM, Chapter Room

In attendance: Sarah Braik, John Hennessy, Lin Parsons, Liz Parsons, Marby Payson, Ted Poland

Tuesday, 14 January 2020

6:00 PM, Upper Parish Hall

In attendance: Connie Bingham, Sarah Braik, Ralph Cordes, Dominique Gabel, Landis Gabel, John Hennessy, John Leddy, Mary Linneman, Seth Nelson, Lin Parsons, Liz Parsons, Charles Skold

Legislative and Diocesan Updates

- John Hennessy distributed copies of the latest [Maine Episcopal Network for Justice newsletter](#). To sign up for the newsletter, follow the link just given and look under the section “Learn More about MENJ and Get Involved.”
- Approximately 450 pieces of legislation have been carried over from last year, about 150 of which are deemed “emergency” measures. Since the state ran a surplus last year, there is about \$130 million on the table so we can expect significant differences of viewpoint amongst parties as to what to do with the funds.
- The past year saw a remarkable turnaround in focus, values, and energies from the previous eight years, but there is much more to do. For example, nursing homes and mental health services continue to close down due to chronic underfunding; reimbursement rates haven't been increased in about 10 years. And we should not expect to see a tax increase in an election year.
 - By next week, more information should be available about bills of most importance to our work. See the Legislative Update for the latest information; this is available through the MENJ newsletter.
- The Maine Council of Churches will be following at least six pieces of legislation during the short session. Members of the Council's [Public Policy Committee](#) were stretched quite thin last year and more members would be most welcome. **See John if you are interested.**
- John also distributed a copy of the latest “Vote Faithfully Toolkit” (see attached) and urged us to organize a candidate public forum this fall specifically addressing faith and values matters. **See Liz Parsons if you are interested in helping with this.**
- Bishop Brown has appointed Dean Ben Shambaugh and Nathan Ferrell, Rector of St. Mary's Falmouth, to lead a Diocesan Creation Care Task Force. One of the first matters will be to bring the announced faith-based community solar farm project to fruition.
 - So far there have been over 30 expressions of interest but the Diocese is hoping to secure about 100 participants. Landis noted that State Street UCC will decide about their involvement on Thursday, 16 January.
- Bishop Brown has decided to take an interim step in response to our Team's request that the Diocese implement a carbon offset policy for all diocesan-related air travel. The

interim step is that all Loring House-related air travel will now be off set and this will involve the greatest amount of Diocesan related travel.

- Meanwhile, Gus Goodwin relayed in absentia his interest in eventually seeing that offset money remain in the Diocese, going to carbon reduction efforts in Maine. There was general agreement that this should be a longer-term objective. **See Liz if you are interested in working on this matter** since it will likely be dealt with more fully in the fall.

Ongoing matters

- Sarah Braik has given to Sallie Smith some prospective dates for the envisioned Wolf's Neck Farm presentation this spring. She and Sallie have also discussed the possibility of inviting several local farmers to participate. More information should be available next month. **See Sarah if you are interested in working on this event.**
- Sarah plans to talk with Portland's Sustainability Coordinators about linking the "secular" version of the [Carbon Tracker program](#) to the [One Climate Future](#) initiative. Lin Parsons and Sarah will talk with St. Luke's vestry in February about promoting the Carbon Tracker amongst Cathedral members.
- A draft tree preservation ordinance will go before the City's [Sustainability and Transportation Committee](#) on 26 February. Liz will attend and provide public comment in support; see her if you'd like to go, too. Landis and Dominique will offer written comments in absentia. In hopes that a tree preservation ordinance will be enacted, the next step will be to push for restoration of Portland's tree canopy. **See Liz, Landis and/or Dominique if you are interested in helping with this.**

New/Other matters arising

- Sarah intends to offer one of [Green Faith's Living the Change](#) suppers. She will report back to us afterwards.

Next meeting (members attend one or the other; not necessary to attend both):

- Tuesday, 11 February 6:00 PM, Upper Parish Hall¹

Dates of note:

- Saturday, 18 January, [Episcopal Peace Fellowship](#) meets in Bath
- Wednesday, 12 February, [Vote Common Good](#) tour stops in Maine

¹ Meeting on Sunday, 2 February will not take place due to St. Luke's annual meeting being held then.