

NOTES

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

Sunday, 5 April 2020

11:30 AM, via ZOOM

In attendance: Sarah Braik, Joyce Cassidy, Kathy Coughlan, John Hennessy, Mary Linneman, Seth Nelson, Lin Parsons, Liz Parsons, Barbara Ryland, Charles Skold

General Check-in

Since the COVID-19 pandemic has erupted, we chose to meet remotely and only once this month. Sarah Braik led the meeting and invited everyone to say a bit about how they were faring under the stay home directive.

Legislative and Diocesan Updates

- John Hennessy began his review by observing that the state health and human services infrastructure had already been under stress before the pandemic. How they are doing what they are now is truly remarkable. Moreover, there is inevitably more strain on behavioral and mental health providers these days as well. He asked us all to keep behind-the-scenes workers in mind.
- In the current unprecedented times, Maine Episcopal Network for Justice (MENJ) is taking advantage of relationships with organizations experienced on a variety of fronts. These include [League of Women Voters](#), [Episcopal Public Policy Network](#) and so on.
- [Faith Climate Action Week](#) has adapted its efforts to go online.
- During our discussion a question was raised as to how our own legislators were faring. John responded that they are consumed with pandemic-related work.
 - It is becoming increasingly unlikely that the legislature will return to session this year. There will, however, be a new legislature in January and we will have an opportunity to help shape its work via our advocacy efforts.
- The Diocese is attempting to obtain some of the resources being made available via federal legislation authorizing funds to support individuals and organizations during this time.

Ongoing matters

- Both the “Dawnland” screening and Wolf’s Neck Farm forum have been postponed due to the pandemic.
- Sarah suggested that if social-distancing measures remain in effect for a long time, PPEAT may want to consider doing more engagement online.
- This led to a discussion about offering a free screening of “[The Human Element](#)” online followed by a panel discussion. The intended audience would be Diocesan-wide.
 - We agreed to do this on Tuesday, 21 April.
 - Sarah will coordinate logistics; John Hennessy will moderate
- Sarah will also inquire as to whether or not an online Earth Day observance can be made since the 26 April worship service will not be held.
- We agreed to delay doing anything else with the Carbon Tracker program for now.

New/Other matters arising & good information

- Maine's League of Women Voters will offer a [webinar](#) on 8 April about how the pandemic might affect coming elections.
- Citizen's Climate Lobby will offer [a virtual Earth Day event](#) featuring climate scientist and Christian Katherine Hayhoe on 25 April.
- The [Environmental Voter Project](#) is working on getting more environmental advocates to vote.
- Liz suggested that transportation throughout the state could become a crossover (between social and eco-justice) focus of our advocacy just as voter registration/rights and gun safety are currently.
- Charles Skold has a relevant [article](#) on page 4 of the most recent *West End News*.
- He is also volunteering with [Mainers Together](#), which has arisen in response to COVID-19. Charles invited others to consider doing so and offered to be a point person for anyone who has questions or wants more information.
- Joyce suggested we could suggest to the parish and diocese some health habit developments (such as reducing trips to the grocery store) during this time, rather like the eco-tips that PPEAT has been publishing for a couple of years now. She offered to draft some talking points to circulate amongst the group.

Next meeting:

- Scheduled for Sunday, 3 May. Format will depend on whether or not the stay at home directive has been lifted. More to follow.