

Minutes
Public Policy and Environmental Action Team
January 14, 2025 6-7 PM
via Zoom

Facilitator: Charles Skold

Minutes: Sarah Braik

Present: Eleanor Roberts, Charles Skold, Ruth Roemer, Sarah Braik, Mary Linneman, Barbara Ryland, John Hennessy, Dick Farnsworth

1. Territory Acknowledgement and Reflection: Charles
 - a. “Let us be dissatisfied until America will no longer have high blood pressure of creeds and an anemia of deeds. Let us be dissatisfied until the tragic walls that separate the outer city of wealth and comfort from the inner city of poverty and despair shall be crushed by the battering rams of the fires of justice. Let us be dissatisfied until they who live on the outskirts of Hope are brought into the metropolis of daily security. Let us be dissatisfied until slums are cast into the junk heap of history and every family will live in a decent, sanitary home. Let us be dissatisfied until the dark yesterdays of segregated schools will be transformed into the bright tomorrows of quality integrated education.” Martin Luther King
Where Do We Go from Here: Chaos or community
2. Diocesan and legislative updates (John, Dick)
 - a. 2000 new bills to be considered. The list has not yet been released. John participated in a Maine Council of Churches (MCC) call with 135 people on immigration and how faith communities will organize and operationalize their work. Bishop Brown spoke for the Episcopalians. Maine churches got a lot of compliments from those who do not live in Maine. This follows last night’s webinar with 480 attendees how we welcome and care for transgender immigrants and those fleeing states where they are not welcome. Maine is one of them. We are expecting transgender families to move to Maine. Some sanctuary ministries are being put in place. The National Cathedral is one. The Responsiveness Committee at the Cathedral will work with the sanctuary ministries and an organization called Walking Together. John thinks we are in a much better place than we were a couple of years ago. We don’t need to recreate the wheel. The Responsiveness Committee has invited all the Episcopal parishes to a meeting to make sure we are connected seamlessly Saturday January 25 at Loring House from 10-noon. There is solid support from George and the vestry. [Environmental Priorities Coalition priority bills](#) will be voted on at MCC tomorrow. Rev. Jill

Saxby is the lead on environmental issues. John suggested she attend a DCCT meeting. Sarah will invite her.

3. Ongoing matters

- a. Looking for new PPEAT Co-Chair to serve this year alongside Charles
 - i. Talk to Charles if you are interested. Ruth can tell you what it entails.
- b. Update on review/update of our [flier](#) (Charles)
 - i. Charles and Dick will be meeting this week to review
- c. Window Dressers? (Sam)
 1. Since the Window build is ending in a few days we decided to remove this from the agenda
- d. Creation Care Team (Barbara)
 - i. Solar Faithful is launching January 15 with a solar array in Fairfield ME. The Diocesan Creation Care Team will be in charge of recruiting Episcopal parishes.
- e. Truth, Healing and Repair; A Christian call to environmental justice and solidarity with Indigenous Peoples (Sarah)
 - i. <https://www.creationjustice.org/truthhealingrepair.html>
 - ii. This was an FYI at our last meeting so we decided to remove it from the agenda.
- f. Review [St. Luke's Covenant to Care for Creation](#) (Sarah)
 1. To add
 - a. Convening a 'Love God: Love God's World program at St. Luke's
 - a. Testimony before government bodies in the advocacy section
 2. We haven't yet had a harvest supper or a multigenerational environmental service project but would like to do these this year.
 3. Composting has been working well except for coffee hour (with the exception of coffee grounds. Sarah will create a cardboard tent with a laminated message with an arrow pointing toward the green countertop compost bins. She will also ask Meredith if coffee hour hosts could announce. We can also remind people if we see them throwing food or napkins in the trash.
 4. We did the nature walks but this might well be an annual event.

5. The composting program is working so it can be removed.
6. Sarah will put another announcement in encouraging parishioners to subscribe to the [Episcopal Public Policy Network](#) (EPPN) and [Maine Episcopal Public Policy Network](#) (MEPPN) to learn about and support church policy
7. We need to step up our work on legislative advocacy.
8. The Interfaith Power and Light pledge will be removed as it is outdated.
9. We haven't managed to find a way to reduce plastic bag use at St. E's but will continue thinking about this.
10. The other goals are going well and will be ongoing.

g. Food Waste

i. St Luke Composting (Ruth & Mary)

1. We propose beginning with the 2nd quarter for planning purposes, given the potential focus of attention that may be needed in the 1st quarter.
 - a. Quarter 2 - Composting – possible coffee hour demo, contact local grocery stores, e.g., Hannaford's, Whole Foods, Shaw's
 - b. Quarter 3 – Garbage to Garden contact, EPA's Sustainable Management of Food, Food Stewards Tool Kit
 - c. Quarter 4 – Low Income housing extra food not used; explore redistribution via food pantries
2. Mary and Ruth will meet to discuss going ahead with the Q2 plan even though we haven't called a new dean yet.

ii. Legislative bills (Charles & John)

1. Senator Brenner has introduced a bill, working with NRCM, CLF, and Zero Waste applies to those with 2 tons of waste weekly. Could we invite her to speak to us for ten minutes? This was Paige Ziegler's bill last year. Bill hasn't been published yet. We'll discuss this next month when hopefully we will have more details..
2. Maine is the only state in New England without some kind of organic recycling law – is this of any interest to PPEAT for any type of action?

h. Prayers of the People (Sarah)

- i. Will pursue discussion with George about adding to weekly Prayers of the People a prayer for the earth.
- ii. Sarah talked with George who said he will do so.

- i. White Christian Nationalism – is this a topic for further PPEAT consideration? (Dick)
 - i. Two books of interest to pursue; *Bad Faith: Christian Nationalism's Unholy War on Democracy* by Hamilton Fish and *Baptizing America: How Mainline Protestants Helped Build Christian Nationalism* by Brian Kaylor & Beau Underwood
 - ii. Watch the sermon preached by Rev. Josh Hill, Rector of St. Alban's Episcopal Church in Cape Elizabeth on November 24, 2024, Christ the King Sunday (sermon begins at minute 25:00)
<https://www.youtube.com/live/XhyafoOnrfk?feature=shared>
 - iii. Resources from Sojourners <https://sojo.net/resources/countering-christian-nationalism>
 - iv. Dick has not talked with George yet but he will. The idea is to sponsor a speaker at a coffee hour. We may at some point do a book discussion group on it.
 - v. Barbara shared this James Talerico [sermon on White Christian Nationalism](#)
 - j. Possible book discussion *Citizen: Faithful discipleship in a partisan world* by Andrew C. Doyle (Sarah)
 - i. Sarah will pursue hosting a discussion group for this book starting in January or February with approximately 6 sessions.
 - k. Preparedness Committee update (Ruth) –
 - i. Recent meeting held on Jan 12
 - 1. Approved by vestry to continue until some time after the new dean starts. It is now called the Responsiveness Committee. There is a long list of community partners with whom we will form relationships to understand what's going on and bring it back to the Committee for discussion and possible action. We can volunteer with various actions organized by our community partners.
4. Charles suggested adding a topic for a future agenda regarding the desire of the PPEAT group relative to the focus of our advocacy, local vs broader.
5. New Topics:
- a. PPEAT advocacy focus: local Maine or broader USA or both?
 - i. Sarah urged all of us to follow the Episcopal Public Policy Network, which sends out opportunities to contact our legislators re: federal legislation

relating to social and environmental justice issues. We agreed to pass along legislation we learn about that we should either support or oppose.

- ii. Sarah urged all of us to contact our representatives and ask them not to cut the Inflation Reduction Act.
 - iii. John urged us to view Sen. King's remarks on Pete Hegseth, "as a Christian." John will send the clip if he can find it.
 - iv. We are all urged to contact our legislators re: the nominees for Cabinet posts. Mary will forward her husband's letters to King and Collins.
6. Sarah can write the agenda for our next meeting.
7. Next meeting: February 11, 2025 6pm

Respectfully submitted,

Sarah M. Braik