



WOMEN'S HISTORY MONTH

Women Taking the Lead to Save Our Planet

Katy Hinman: We know it's too big to accomplish on our own, but God will help us.

To some, Georgia Interfaith Power & Light sounds like the electric company; but its power and light comes from a higher source. Georgia Interfaith Power & Light (GILP) engages communities of faith in Georgia toward working together in a shared stewardship of God's Creation.



In 1998 the Interfaith Power and Light campaign mobilized a national religious response to global warming while promoting renewable energy, energy efficiency and conservation. Today groups representing 28 states and 4,000 congregations have an opportunity to put their faith into action and help reduce the devastating effects of global warming.

Dr. Katy Hinman has been the executive director of GILP since 2004. Before that she was a bat biologist (Yes, bats need biologists, too!) for the Arizona Game and Fish Department. As she learned more about the connection between religion and science, she was called to enter seminary.

She left the bats and soon will complete her ordination process in spring 2009. Hinman holds a doctorate in ecology and evolution and a master of divinity degree from Candler School of Theology at Emory University. Her work with GILP includes helping congregations learn ways to be involved in caring for the Creation, helping understand their part in this complex, unique puzzle.

"A powerful thing occurs when we tell people that most energy comes from coal fire plants, burning coal. One thing that strikes them is how we get that coal. It's a process called "mountaintop removal" and it's just that. They blast the entire top of a mountain, so they can get to the coal underneath. These beautiful mountaintops are being blasted off so we can get coal. That sort of info makes people think twice



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when they turn on the light switch. It makes a difference when you know where your power supply comes from, where your food comes from, and what happens when you throw things away.”

Even though news stories, movies and websites may overwhelm us with the amount of damage that has been done, she believes people of faith should not let that discourage their efforts.

“If you don’t have that message of hope, it’s very difficult to believe change will happen or to even take a simple step. But people need to know that change on their part will have an effect. The faith community brings suggestions to the congregation and we step out on faith. We can step out on faith knowing there are things much too difficult for us to handle individually, and know that God will bless our efforts.

Hinman is a candidate for ordination and is a member of Oak Grove United Methodist Church. For more info on the Georgia Interfaith Power and Light, visit www.gipl.org.

A provocative movie that affected Hinman:

Garbage Island a documentary featuring an enormous “island” of trash, which consists of 80 percent plastics and weighs some 3.5 million tons, say oceanographers, and which floats where few people ever travel, between San Francisco and Hawaii.

TRUE OR FALSE: Carbon dioxide from coal-fired power plants damages forests.

Answer: TRUE: Carbon dioxide (CO₂) is the principal gas that trees and other plants need to survive, just like oxygen (O₂) is the principal gas that humans and other animals require. Trees absorb CO₂ and release O₂—animals inhale O₂ and exhale CO₂.

QUESTION: In which of the following ways do people increase the concentration of greenhouse gasses?

- » Cutting down trees
- » Burning coal to create electricity
- » Driving gasoline-power automobiles
- » All of the above

Answer: All of the above

TO DO:

Research mountaintop removal and discuss this in your Sunday school or other classes.

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MARCH IS WOMEN’S HISTORY MONTH!

For the 2009 Women’s History Month project, the General Commission on the Status and Role of Women honors women who have taken the lead in the environmental or green movement. As we rethink how we live, we understand more and more that taking care of the earth and reversing some of the damage our civilization has done to the earth is inextricably connected to our commitment to God. It’s more than changing light bulbs, switching from paper and plastic to reusable bags, and recycling. It is recognizing that God has entrusted us with the world’s resources, with the condition that we use them according to God’s directions and to God’s glory.



The General Commission on the Status and Role of Women was established by The United Methodist Church in 1972 to advocate the full inclusion of women in the life of the denomination and to monitor the Church at all levels for gender bias. The Commission offers training at district, annual conference and churchwide events on organizing and empowering women to find their voices and ministries in the Church; works with bishops, superintendents and other church leaders to understand and eradicate institutional sexism; and educates church laity and clergy on dealing with professional sexual misconduct. For more information and resources, visit the Commission’s website at www.gcsrw.org, or call (312) 346-4900.

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