

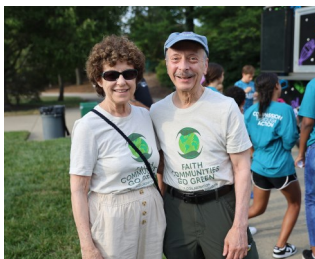


FCGG Newsletter

Volume 1, Issue 3

Fall 2024

“Faith communities have a powerful voice to offer as the world confronts climate change.”



YES on Issue 1

by Ariel Miller

The Citizens Not Politicians constitutional amendment gives Ohioans a tremendous opportunity to restore accountable government for our state by stopping partisan gerrymandering. Ohio is one of America’s ten most gerrymandered states. Issue 1 will prohibit elected officials - who have a built-in conflict of interest - from serving on Ohio’s redistricting commission. Our current commission - all elected officials - produced seven maps all ruled unconstitutional by the Ohio Supreme Court in 2021-22 for gerrymandering.

Issue 1 includes provisions to ensure public input and transparency in creating

electoral districts. Please inform your congregation and community of what’s at stake, and arm them against the flood of misinformation they will see in ads and the ballot summary written by the Ohio Ballot Board.

The Aug. 26 Citizens Not Politicians Festival of Faiths webinar shows how Ohio’s General Assembly - elected from gerrymandered districts - is passing policies that defy the views of the majority of Ohio voters on the importance of teaching students about US racial history, on gun safety, and on the environment. Our speakers explain how Issue 1 will stop gerrymandering. You can show

this recording to your congregation or request a speaker from the Fair Districts coalition. Issue 1 is endorsed by the Ohio Council of Churches, the League of Women Voters, Common Cause, the Ohio Environmental Council, and myriad other nonpartisan civic groups.

The Ballot Board is composed almost entirely of elected officials led by Ohio’s Secretary of State Frank LaRose, who approved our current unconstitutional maps. He opposes Citizens Not Politicians. The Ballot’s Issue 1 ballot summary states that the Commission created by the amendment would be
cont’d on p. 2

Why Should Faith Communities Consider Solar?

by Monica Niehaus, Melink Solar

With available incentives and increasing electricity rates, solar is a financial strategy to protect religious organizations against utility spikes while helping them sustain their mission and honor creation.

Reasons Congregations

Are Going Solar: ☐

- **Electricity Costs:** Energy prices are skyrocketing, and utilities are requesting rate hikes to maintain their infrastructure while supporting in-

creasing demand. PJM, a regional transmission organization that manages distribution of electricity and transmission reliability, announced a 6.6% average annual increase of 54 forward
(cont’d on p.3)

Make Your Home Energy Efficient

The Ohio Air Quality Development Authority (OAQDA) will receive an award of \$156 million through the U.S. EPA's Solar for All program to install solar that benefits residential households in traditionally underserved communities. Final program details are being negotiated between the state and EPA, but it is anticipated that the program will be approved by the end of 2024. In the meantime, OAQDA is working to reach residents interested in participating in the future program.

If you are an interested homeowner,

you can fill out their homeowner solar survey now. [Link to survey](#)

This isn't an application, but it will help OAQDA capture valuable data to inform program efforts.

To learn more about the solar for residential households, attend the FCGG webinar: **Incentives to Make Your Home Energy Efficient** on

November 13, 2024, at 7 pm ET.

In this virtual program, our guest speaker will inform us about the Inflation Reduction Act (IRA) signed into law in 2022.

The IRA program is designed to save American households money while reducing climate change and air pollution. It contains cost-saving incentives for adding energy upgrades in your home such as, heat pumps, efficient air conditioners, insulation, windows, and doors and more.

Register for this free program at www.fcgg.org.



YES on Issue 1 cont'd

“required to gerrymander” congressional and state legislative districts. The [summary includes many other distortions](#). Issue 1 supporters sued to correct this misinformation, but the Ohio Supreme Court ruled 4-3 on a party line vote that the ballot summary can stand with only minimal changes.,

What Ohio voters supported:

- In 2022, 65.5% of Ohio voters thought human activity such as the burning of fossil fuels contributes to global climate change.

- 71% supported tougher restrictions on power plant emissions.
- Only 46.2% supported fracking as a way of increasing the production of natural gas and oil in Ohio.,

But our legislators:

- Killed Ohio's energy efficiency and renewable energy programs (HB 6).
- Passed coal plant subsidies that cost Ohio ratepayers \$100 million

annually.

- Designated natural gas as “green energy”.
- Required Ohio to grant oil and gas drilling leases under state land.
- Created obstacles for wind and solar and other forms of generation don't face.

Source: 2022 Ohio Pulse Poll

Working Groups

Join our NEW Membership Engagement Working Group !

This new working group was created to ensure a great membership experience for all our members. Membership Engagement volunteers will support the FCGG mission, actions, and programs organized by our FCGG volunteer leaders.

To join please complete the Join Us form HERE: <https://fcgg.org/fcgg-interest-form/>

To reach out to our Membership Engagement leader, Donna Turner, please contact her at fcggmembers@gmail.com if you wish to volunteer.

The Facilities Working

Group created and kickstarted the Energy Efficiency Initiative (EEI) in January 2024. Sixty-four faith communities are now participating in the initiative. The City of Cincinnati selected ten EEI houses of worship from disadvantaged/ underserved neighborhoods to participate in their C-SITE Department of Energy grant application. (cont'd on p.3)

Why Consider Solar? cont'd

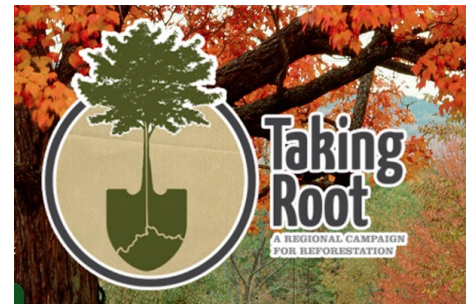
- months of energy futures.
- Solar Pricing and Tariffs:** The cost of solar may not stay as low as it is now, which makes it a good time to consider a solar investment. Both Biden and Trump administrations have implemented and increased tariffs on solar panel manufacturing in Asia, potentially doubling the fees on imported solar cells. □ Incentives and Financing: Under the Inflation Reduction Act (IRA), religious organizations can qualify for 30% Direct Pay, Energy Community Bonus, and the Low-Income Credit, significantly reducing the net system cost. Additionally, financing solar projects are easier with the adoption of PACE (Property Assessed Clean Energy) and Power Purchase Agreements.
 - Environmental Impact:** Solar significantly reduces carbon emissions. By generating clean energy, faith communities can offset the equivalent of millions of gasoline car miles, or sequestering carbon by thousands of trees planted. □
 - Marketing Benefits:** Embracing solar not only protects Mother Nature but also allocates much-needed resources towards supporting organizations' missions. It demonstrates a commitment to sustainability, enhancing the community's public image and attracting like-minded individuals and donors. For more information on solar for house of worship visit <https://www.melinksolar.com/solar/solar-resources/>

"Trees for Me" Program by Susan Fox

Taking Root, a non-profit that promotes the education and inspiration around trees, also gives away actual trees or money for trees. Our "Trees for Me" program gives away trees for people's homes, at neighborhood scale. Our "Mini-grant" gives money to houses of worship, parks, schools, etc. for trees. We emphasize underserved communities. A well placed tree can

reduce cooling costs as well as just cooling an area for the community, trapping pollutants to help with asthma, etc. Maybe you know of a bus stop that could use some shade. Providing care to the trees (especially watering) is important! We only give grants to groups who promise to take care of their trees. If interested, please check us out at :

<https://takingroot.info/>



Working Groups cont'd

Though Cincinnati was not awarded the Grant, we continue to seek grant funding to help make the faith community facilities more energy efficient, thereby lowering their utility bills and reducing air pollution.

The Advocacy Working Group urges all voters to vote Yes on Issue 1: The Citizens Not Politicians constitutional amendment gives Ohioans a tremendous opportunity to restore accountable government for our state

by stopping partisan gerrymandering.

Ohio is one of America's ten most gerrymandered states. Issue 1 will prohibit elected officials - who have a built-in conflict of interest - from serving on Ohio's redistricting commission.

The Education/Lifestyles Working Group educates and inspires members of the various faith and civic communities to change their lifestyles.

This group helps places of worship start Green Teams, hosts webinars and workshops; has Movies & Discussion nights; offer opportunities to participate in Eco Challenges 2-3 times a year as a member of our Faith Communities Go Green Team, and much more.





To learn more and join Faith Communities Go Green, a Green Umbrella and EquaSion collaboration, go to : www.fcgg.org

Join a Working Group

Advocacy: Contact Ariel at Advocacy@fcgg.org

Facilities: Contact Ken at Facilities@fcgg.org

Education/Lifestyles: Contact Becca at Education@fcgg.org

Membership Engagement: Contact Donna at fcggmembers@gmail.com

Recommendations

Books

Newell, John Philip. *The Great Search: Turning to Earth and Soul in the Quest for Healing and Home*. Harper Collins, 2024.

Woodley, Randy. *Becoming Rooted: One Hundred Days of Reconnecting with Sacred Earth*. Broadleaf Books, 2022.

Websites

talkingclimatenewsletter@172836257.mailchimpapp.com

The is climate scientist Katharine Hayhoe’s website and offers excellent up-to-date information on climate change.

<https://www.drawdown.org>

Project Drawdown is a leading resource for information and insight to climate solutions as well as multiple educational resources.

Care for Our Common Home
by Ted Bergh

“Despite all attempts to deny, conceal, gloss over or relativize the issue, the signs of climate change are here and increasingly evident. No one can ignore the fact that in recent years we have witnessed extreme weather phenomena, frequent periods of unusual heat, drought and other cries of protest on the part of the Earth ...”

- Pope Francis

Amid the triple planetary crisis of climate change, biodiversity loss, and pollution, many are beginning to despair and suffer anxiety. As people of faith, we are called to a hope that embodies the concrete ways of prayer, study, reflection and action to restore and protect God’s creation.

Human emissions of greenhouse gases are primarily responsible. Burning

fossil fuels and changing land use are major causes of climate change. Less forests and grasslands reduce the amount of CO2 removed from the atmosphere.

Moving to a low carbon sustainable economy is not the sacrifice it was 20 years ago. Wind power and solar power are now less expensive than fossil fuels. The US was getting 55% of its energy from coal. That number is now 20%. Wind and solar power now produce close to 15% of US electricity.

Economic growth and emissions reductions are no longer incompatible but are complimentary. Per capita emissions have fallen by 1/3 in the US, UK and Germany since the 1970s, by 1/2 in France and by 2/3 in Sweden. This energy conversion contrib-

utes to economic growth.

The goal of the UN Paris Accords on Climate is to maintain developed countries standards of living and increase standards of living everywhere while bringing the world to net zero carbon pollution by 2050. This is fully possible without crashing the

economy, requiring everyone to drastically limit lifestyles, and to be net carbon neutral in this generation.

