

MINNESOTA INTERFAITH POWER & LIGHT

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Minnesota Congregations gather at State Capitol to Urge Action on Climate Change

Minnesota joins a massive global day of action Saturday

St. Paul, MN. More than 40 faith congregations came together at the State Capitol Saturday to send one message-taking action on climate change is a moral imperative and all people of faith should respond. Over 150 people of faith joined the 1,000 people already gathered for the “Moving Planet” rally at the Capitol grounds, sponsored by MN350 (www.mn350.org).

The interfaith procession, sponsored and organized by Minnesota Interfaith Power and Light (www.mnipl.org), was led by a giant blue-faced Heart of the Beast puppet holding a model of Earth and trailing a giant blue ribbon, representing a River of Solutions to the climate crisis that can be implemented now. The River of Solutions symbolized the shared wisdom we bring to the table as people of many different faiths and backgrounds.

Rev. Carol Tomer of Pilgrim Lutheran in St. Paul spoke to the assembled congregations:

“In order to love our earth and all the children of all species for all time, the choices are clear – and our need to repent and turn around is very clear. The earth can heal, but not with cheap grace. The earth will not heal if we simply feel forgiven for our past travesties of destruction and selfishness and pollution and consumption. The earth will show evidence of forgiving us only as we change and allow the earth to declare her forgiveness through her own healing from our abuse. We will hear the declaration of her forgiveness as we witness the healing of the earth.

*Faith communities are waking up and calling for action. So many faith groups have declared creation care to be one of our core commitments. My own denomination, the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America, back in 1993, called us to accept responsibility for our sinful treatment of the earth and to not despair, but to act. And the former head of the National Council of Churches has called climate change ‘**the** moral issue of our day.’*

Rev. Justin Schroeder of First Universalist in Minneapolis told the crowd:

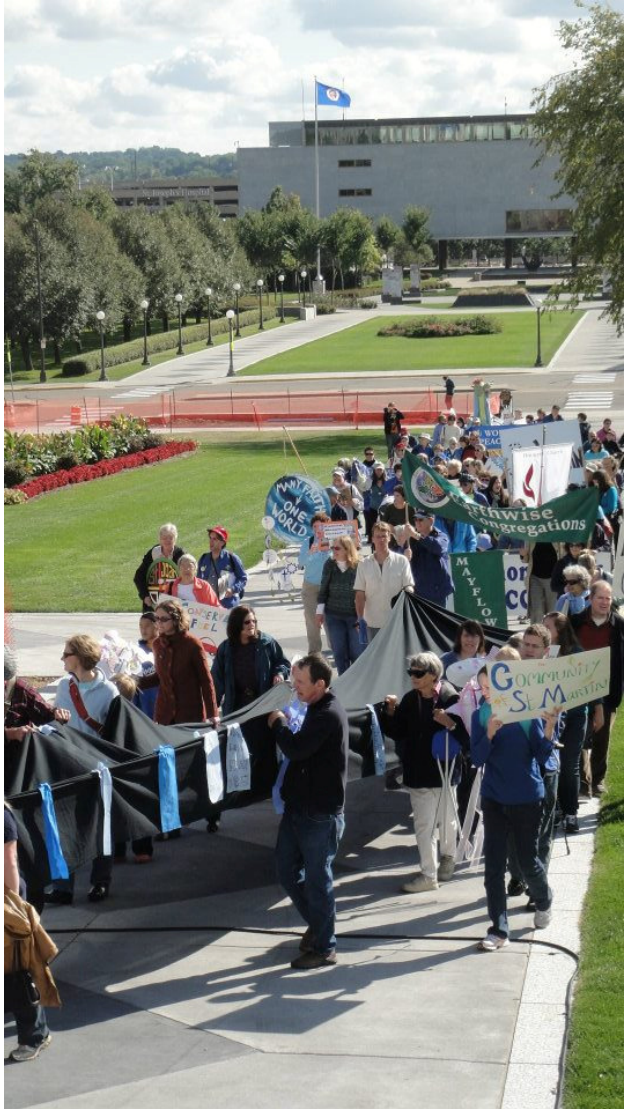
“We are speaking for the animals and the plants and the rivers and the oceans and the mountains and the generations to come that do not have a voice right now. And as people of faith that is a sacred holy responsibility to speak on behalf of those who do not have a voice.

“... I pray that we remember that working for this kind of massive change, moving off of fossil fuels, friends, it is impossible. It is as impossible as apartheid ending in South Africa. It is as impossible as the Berlin Wall falling. It is as impossible as the Arab Spring that we have just witnessed, where reform in Tunisia and Egypt and other places is afoot. It is as impossible as those things. And so what matters are the relationships we build with one another because we don’t know when we will hit this tipping point, when one more relationship or partnership or person doing earth stewardship tips the balance and a whole new paradigm is ushered in. And so, may we continue to reach out to others and invite them into this movement, may we be reminded by that source of life, of the preciousness of this blue green planet and that for its health and ours it is time to move beyond fossil fuels.”

Rev. Sarah Campbell of Mayflower UCC in Minneapolis challenged the crowd with her agitation of “Why aren’t there more people here?” and continued

“We have a golden opportunity to build this movement by cutting a clear issue and forcing Obama to make the right decision this year. The golden opportunity? The Keystone Tar Sands pipeline that is proposed to run through our neighboring states, the Dakotas. You do the research on why we need to stop this. And remember these bold, prophetic, Jeremiah-like words of Bill McKibben and Jim Hansen: The pipeline is ‘a fuse to the biggest carbon bomb on the continent.’ And: ‘the oil Keystone will deliver is essentially game over’ for the planet. (Mark Bittman, NYTimes, “Profits before environment”) Folks, we cut this issue, organize around it, claim our victory, and we’re on our way!”





Photos by Stefan Pomrenke, MD, MPH, MATS

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