

# CTUCC Environmental Ministry Team

## Meeting Minutes

### Dec. 6, 2016 Conference Call

Present: Ian Skoggard, George Stone, Katherine Freygang, Pam Arifian, Cynthia Willauer, Barbara Johnson, Ed Meyer, Walter Grant, Jon Leckerling

While some expressed anxiety about the election results with respect to our work on caring for Creation, others saw a lot of opportunity, as it is now up to the States to act on climate change and renewable energy.

We discussed various environmental issues including recycling (recycling rate in CT is low, at around 30%), banning plastic bags and bottles (room for CT to expand incentives to bring bottles back for recycling), banning fracking waste, toxic chemicals, alternative energy, conservation of energy, and public transportation. We ended up by focusing on three not mutually exclusive issues: banning fracking waste, transparency bill for gas pipeline construction, and supporting our resolution passed at 2016 Annual Meeting (Resolution of Implementation to Help Achieve State Mandated Reduction in Greenhouse Gas Emissions and Support the Increase in Renewable Energy Resources in CT).

#### Fracking Waste

Although there is no fracking being done in state, there are companies interested in importing fracking waste from New York and Pennsylvania and selling it as filler for various products, including highway materials and as road de-icer.. There are four sites identified that could accept fracking waste in the state, including among them Bristol, Meriden and Bridgeport. While there is a moratorium on bringing fracking waste into the state, it expires July 1, 2017. Afterwards it is up to DEEP to decide what to do: either ban it outright or regulate restricted use. While DEEP says, "We're really responsible here and will do the right thing. Need a statewide approach." We agreed that it was a timely issue and we need to encourage DEEP indeed to do the right thing and ban fracking waste in the state. Fracking waste is a toxic mix of chemicals that have no place on our roads exposing drivers and contaminating ground water with runoff. Also, the sites chosen to store and process the waste are in the poorer urban centers in our state, some with a majority population of communities of color; Clearly a case of environmental justice. Some towns are acting on their own to restrict fracking waste, though some thought that this was inefficient. We need to attend DEEP hearings, send them the "Institutes of Sustainability" reports and educate the public on the dangers of fracking waste. Education is a good grassroots organizing tool. We also need to connect with other churches and organizations, the so-called "enviros," who are fighting this battle, too. State legislators to contact would include Ted Kennedy and James Albiss, co-chairs of the state legislature environment committee. Highlighted importance of in-person meetings with legislators.

## Transparency Bill

There is little public awareness regarding pipeline construction in Connecticut, which is being done piecemeal to seemingly abide by government regulations and avoid restrictions. Cricket Valley in Dover NY and Torrington have all had poorly attended public forums on pipeline construction projects. Little public awareness. New Milford was able to rally public awareness enough to shut out the proposed natural gas power plant. Katherine suggested a transparency bill, to require fossil fuel companies to be more transparent to public. Katherine said she would research other state bills, including NY and PA, and Ed said he could help facilitate getting it to the right people at the Capitol. The names of Lonnie Reed, Bob Klee and Gary Bent were also raised as knowledgeable who might be able to help us with this issue and fracking waste.

## Support for the Resolution of Implementation to Help Achieve State-Mandated Reduction in Greenhouse Gas Emissions and Support the Increase in Renewable Energy Resources in CT (CTUCCC EMT Resolution passed at 2016 Annual Meeting)

The group briefly discussed advocacy in support of the resolution. Pam reminded the group of the nascent CTUCC Advocate Corps, which is being developed by CTUCC Legislative Advocate Michele Mudrick. The group discussed having Michele lead another workshop on the best way to approach legislators. Pam will send out more info on the CTUCC Advocate Corps.