

Minnesota Interfaith Power & Light

Climate Justice Congregation

Certificate Program



Welcome to the MNIPL Climate Justice Congregation program!

Welcome! Climate Justice Congregations are faith communities who are committed to living out their faith through effective and sustained action on Climate Justice. This year-long process will help you and your community gain the focus, resources and support that can help galvanize



your faith community into committed climate action. We invite you to join a growing number of faith communities doing the same - joining together across many faiths, raising a collective voice, and driving concrete projects for faithful action on climate justice.





Introduction

The mission of Minnesota Interfaith Power and Light (MNIPL) is to grow an interfaith climate justice movement. We do this through providing leadership development, organizing training, and consulting for individuals and faith communities who want to take action on the climate crisis. We then use this knowledge to take action and promote climate justice. Like a three-legged stool, climate justice actions are practical, systemic, and based on relationships.

The Need for Climate Justice

What does it mean to advocate for climate justice? Across the world, there is a burgeoning movement to address the climate crisis, with powerful leadership by

youth and front-line communities who stand to face the worst impacts. The people who are already experiencing the hardest consequences from the fossil fuel industry are often disadvantaged communities and people of color.

We believe in a vision where together, in partnership with frontline communities, we implement solutions that address systemic problems and co-create a just and sustainable world. This is why an equity framework is foundational for energy policy, movement-building, and practical solutions such as solar energy. Faith communities have long been at the forefront of movements for justice, and today, people of faith have a unique and vital role to play in the climate justice movement.



Becoming a Climate Justice Congregation

What's involved?

This certificate program provides resources and a map to deeply engage your faith community in the work of climate justice and make a concrete plan for climate action. To be certified, your congregation will participate in most of the following activities:

Create an action plan: Develop an annual or on-going Three-Legged Stool action plan (see page 6) which includes engaging specifically in your area or region on issues relevant to you as well as on a systemic level through participating in MNIPL events.

Be the Spark: Have one or more people from your faith community attend the two-part Be the Spark Leadership Development and Organizing Training, held annually in February-March.

Community Connector: Maintain at least one active Community Connector who serves as a liaison between your congregation and MNIPL. This is as simple

as having the Community Connector receive monthly MNIPL newsletter emails, staying informed on MNIPL updates and events.

Host an MNIPL programming event in your community. Based on the needs and interests of your community this could be a Climate Conversation, a Just Solar House Party, an event to support Native American communities resisting the Line 3 pipeline, or host a tailored Be the Spark organizing training. You will schedule the event, extend invitations, and provide the space.

Sustaining Congregation: To provide essential support to your community's participation in the program, we ask that you become a Sustaining Congregation by donating annually, with a suggested level of \$500 or an amount that is financially possible for your community. Thanks in advance for your partnership and support.

Steps to becoming a Climate Justice Congregation:

❑ **Step 1:** Fill out the interest form available online at mnipl.org/cjc

❑ **Step 2:** Connect with us! We will contact you and set up an initial phone call. We'll then set up a meeting with you and other people, whether from an existing environmental group in your congregation or other individuals from your congregation who are interested in working with you on the certification process. We will send you an assessment to complete prior to our meeting.

❑ **Step 3:** Work with your team to complete your certification plan and submit it to MNIPL:

- If you are totally successful how will your congregation embody climate justice in 10 years from now?
- Please describe the assets that your congregation brings to the climate justice movement (list them, or write a narrative)
- What are your SMART Goals for the current year related to:
 - Building relationships in your congregation
 - Deepening spiritual commitment to an integrated and embodied movement for root change

- Promoting practical change and lowering carbon emissions
- Promoting systemic or policy change?

❑ **Step 4:** Become a Sustaining Congregation either through donating or helping to recruit financial support for our work.

❑ **Step 5:** Participate! We will offer monthly gatherings (with video links for people in Great Minnesota to join in) for you to meet with other folks from faith communities participating, to share ideas and advice, and to learn more about ongoing campaigns and resources available to you.

❑ **Step 6:** Report and Celebrate! At the end of each year you will fill out a form to report your accomplishments. You will receive your certification, which includes statewide recognition of your accomplishments and status. We will create a press release and report that celebrates all of the communities doing this work, compiles the numbers of how much carbon we have saved, and shows the number of people who have been positively impacted by your work!

❑ **Step 7:** Review and renew your plan!

Three-legged Stool of Climate Action

How do we respond to the climate crisis in ways that are both effective and life-giving? We have found that effectively action requires a three-part approach. As with a three legged stool, all three approaches are necessary!

SYSTEMIC CHANGE AND MOVEMENT BUILDING

In this leg of the stool, we advocate for policy rooted in climate justice, organize to grow the climate movement, and build institutions and structures that ensure a livable future for all. We recognize that transformative action must be rooted in equity to address systemic problems that we face. Examples include policy campaigns like the 100% Campaign, mobilizations like the People's Climate March and the Stop the Line 3 fight, and more!



PRACTICAL SOLUTIONS

By conserving energy, promoting solar, recycling, and gardening, we can make tangible change toward stewardship of the earth and reducing carbon emissions. MNIPL helps connect faith communities with affordable, accessible solar opportunities and energy efficiency improvements. This includes consultations, solar house parties, and energy audits--all free!

SPIRITUAL AND RELATIONAL ACTIONS

The relational leg of the stool speaks to the ways we call on our faith traditions and communities to provide wisdom and sustenance for the work we are doing to create a just and sustainable world. It also involves the ways we can work to bring balance and health to our relationships with ourselves, each other, and the natural world. We can do this vital work together through inclusion of climate justice in worship, book groups, community gatherings, and nature experiences, as well as through the 'way' that we organize.

SMART Goals

As your team creates a three-legged stool action plan to become a certified MNIPL Climate Justice Congregation, we ask that you identify at least one goal under each leg of the stool. Once you make this goal a "SMART" Goal, please identify tactics or actions you will use to reach this goal.

WHAT IS A SMART GOAL?

As we work towards our vision for the world--the just and sustainable world we hope for--it is important to identify goals that will help us, step by step, to get there.

A SMART Goal is:

Specific: Clear, defined, and often using numbers to make it specific.

Measurable: You are able to assess when it has been done, measure the results.

Activating: Worth doing! Inspiring! Moves us towards our vision.

Reasonable: At the same time we can see *how* using our resources we can reach the goal.

Time-bound: Nothing builds a movement like winning! The goal should be able to be accomplished in a timely manner that will build on your and your group's success.

Example Action Plan

PRACTICAL SMART GOAL: *Lowering our Carbon Footprint and Becoming More Sustainable*

Goal: 10 families in our congregation will sign up for residential solar subscriptions.

Tactics (actions we will take) that will help us reach our goal:

- Spread the word about this opportunity in our congregation through announcements in worship, in bulletin and through personal conversations between our green team, and potential interested families.
- Host a “Solar House Party” (facilitated by MNIPL staffperson Emily Minge) to give information, inspiration, and resources for getting signed up.
- Follow-up with attendees of house party and support individuals’ solar application processes.
- Celebrate our progress collectively, announcing our success and how much carbon we are saving, through a community celebration gathering after worship.

SYSTEMIC SMART GOAL: *Linking Individual Actions Together to Impact Culture and Policy*

Goal: Our congregation will recruit 50 people to engage in the 100% campaign.

Tactics (actions we will take) that will help us reach our goal:

- Set up a table after worship once a month to educate and build support for taking action.
- Make monthly announcements in worship, online, and in the bulletin.
- With MNIPL support, set up a meeting with our state senator and bring community members.

RELATIONAL AND SPIRITUAL SMART

GOAL: *Deepening Community Understanding of the Impacts of Climate Crisis*

Goal: Our congregation will engage 100 congregants in deepening their experience of how our faith directs our commitment to climate justice.

Tactics (actions we will take) that will help us reach our goal:

- We will host one worship service in which we celebrate and connect our faith teachings to the natural world.
- We will host a leader from the coalition of Native organizations working to stop Line 3 and other oil pipeline projects to learn about the impacts and how we can take action.
- We will host a multi-generational garden planting day to involve the whole community and share how our garden is helping the environment.



Create Your CJC Action Plan

If you are totally successful how will your congregation embody climate justice in 10 years from now? _____

Please describe the assets that your congregation brings to the climate justice movement (list them, or write a narrative) _____

What are your SMART Goals for:

Building relationships in your congregation? _____

Deepening spiritual commitment to an integrated and embodied movement for root change? _____

Promoting practical change and lowering carbon emissions? _____

Promoting systemic or policy change? _____

**Enter your answers into this online form: <https://bit.ly/2KI4jxk>
and someone from MNIPL will get back to you soon!**



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