

**Public Policy and Environmental Action Team Agenda**  
**Jan 10, 2024 6-7 PM**  
**Via Zoom**

<https://us02web.zoom.us/j/82887198993?pwd=cS83TUlpK1NLM2UzUEtyOGFMMFBxQT09>

**Meeting ID: 828 8719 8993**  
**Passcode: 100294**

Facilitator: Ruth Roemer

Minutes: Charles Skold

Present: Ruth R., Charles S., Kathy C., Eleanor R., Sallie S., Laura L., Barbara R., Anna M., John H., Dick F.

The Cathedral of St. Luke sits on unceded Wabanaki territory. We acknowledge that we have benefitted from the exploitation and subjugation of those whom our forebears failed to understand and honor.

We also acknowledge the legacy of colonization embedded within the technology, structures, and ways of thinking we use every day, leaving significant carbon footprints and contributing to changing climates that disproportionately affect indigenous people worldwide.

Let us acknowledge all this, and take collective responsibility to make good use of our meeting time, and to work towards dismantling the ongoing legacies of settler colonialism, to preserve lands and waters for future generations, and to support indigenous sovereignty.

Reflection

From: Wiesel, E. (1999). "The Perils of Indifference."

"For the person who is indifferent, his or her neighbor are of no consequence. Their lives are meaningless. Their hidden or even visible anguish is of no interest. Indifference reduces the other to an abstraction. Over there, behind the black gates of Auschwitz, the most tragic of all prisoners were the 'Muselmanner' as they were called. Wrapped in their torn blankets, they would sit or lie on the ground, staring vacantly into space, unaware of who or where they were, strangers to their surroundings. They no longer felt pain, hunger, thirst. They feared nothing. They felt nothing. They were dead and did not know it... In a way, to be indifferent to that suffering is what makes the human being inhuman. Indifference is more dangerous than anger and hatred... Indifference elicits no response. Indifference is not a response. Indifference is not a beginning; it is an end. Indifference is the friend of the enemy."

1. Announcements
  - a. Welcome Eleanor Roberts, newest PPEAT member!!
    - i. Also first time attendees: Sallie Smith and Laura Lyons!
2. Diocesan and legislative updates (John Hennessy, Dick Farnsworth, Mary Linneman)
  - a. Update on Jan 3 advocacy event at the State House
    - i. Huge success. More than 1700 people. The vast majority were advocates of gun safety legislation – outnumbering the pro-gun presence. People

were standing out in the cold waiting to get through security into the building. Many Episcopalians including Bishop Brown were there!

- ii. Tomorrow John will meet with the new communications director to discuss how we can build on the enthusiasm and energy from the rally. Will have a focus on people telling their stories regarding gun violence and gun safety.
- iii. Once the specific bills are created, everyone will have an opportunity to write, show up, and advocate to the Legislature and Governor.
- b. New legislative session update and potential action needed from PPEAT
  - i. There will be 3-4 dozen bills that MCC weighs in on this session
    - 1. Drivers licenses for new Mainers, healthcare coverage for new Mainers
    - 2. Housing, poverty alleviation, racial justice, climate justice, etc.

## 2. Ongoing matters

- a. Review our [flier](#) (Charles and Ralph)
  - i. Status of flier update: Charles and Ralph still need to meet together, will have an update next time
- b. Housing town hall (Sarah)
  - i. Update regarding the invitation of Erik Jorgensen to host a town hall after the 10am service in February
    - 1. Have not gotten a response from Erik yet. John will think about other potential people who could host a conversation like this
- c. Good News Garden – any update from the October meeting?
  - i. Not able to pursue at this point
- d. Homelessness in Portland - all

- i. Status on homeless encampments

- ii. Of possible interest to follow some of the current events, <https://connectportland.com>

**“Connect Portland” - *Bridging the Divide*** is a volunteer grassroots effort to encourage open non-partisan and respectful dialogue through the civil exchange of ideas, accessible to all members of our diverse community, working together toward a Portland Maine that is authentic, inclusive and dynamic. **Disclaimer:** We are not a PAC, political committee or affiliated with any political action group or specific organization.

- iii. Bishop Brown was in attendance with other clergy in the morning before the encampment was recently cleared
- iv. Eleanor will look around for organizations and other opportunities for us to continue to stay involved with housing / homelessness
- e. Recycling/plastic/coffee hour composting (Sarah)
  - i. Currently, Tim Wilkins is taking the plastic recycling home with him to recycle
  - ii. Most of the plastic for recycling is coming from coffee hour

- f. Diocesan Climate Justice Council update (Barbara)
  - i. Working on a territory acknowledgement for the climate justice council
  - ii. Not all parishes have earthkeepers, but those that do are very active and committed
  - iii. Episcopal church solar farm – looking for a five acre location in the southern Maine area
  - iv. Rev Field is developing a program to do in a group around earth care
  - v. The Sunday 5:15 service is going to start up for a six week trial, and will take a lot from the previous World Too Beautiful services
- 4. New matters
  - a. ANY UPDATE/ or action to be taken?
    - i. Janene Gorham, Earth Keeper at St. Peter's will be inviting us and a number of other churches to tour Ecomaine. Date TBD
      - 1. Kathy will reach out to Janene to ask for an update
  - [Virtual Tour of Ecomaine](#)
  - b. Others matters?
    - 1. Pray for Bishop Michael Curry's recovery, currently hospitalized and in recovery from a recent surgery
- 5. Next meeting: February 13, 2024, 6-7pm via Zoom
- 6. Follow-up action items for future meeting:
  - a. [Solar Faithful](#) (Sarah) – No initial meeting will happen until Spring. Working on it, but taking longer than initially anticipated
  - b. Flyer update – Charles and Ralph
  - c. Coffee hour housing townhall – John will think about potential speakers
  - d. Housing organizations – Eleanor will look into it
  - e. Ecomaine tour – Kathy will reach out to Janene