



Semi-annual Green Committee Report – September 10, 2014 to April 8, 2015.

Members: Ann Akey, Paul Chestnut, Laura Chiu, Rosemary Gill, Laisz Lam, Gerard McGuire, and Katia Reeves

Accomplishments: Listed in St. Francis Pledge action format

Pray and reflect on the duty to care for God's Creation and advocate for the poor and vulnerable who are impacted by climate change.

1. We begin our meetings with a prayer to God to bless our work and protect the Earth and all those in it.

Learn about and educate others on the causes and moral dimensions of climate change.

2. This past fall, joined representatives from 11 local congregations to form the Peninsula Interfaith Climate Action. This group supports its members in developing effective strategies to protect the Earth from carbon emissions. This is an active group with a wide reach to resources and organizations dealing with climate change.

3. Through the experience, learned about the whole fund-raising process to pay for the solar panel installation at OLR.

Assess how we as individuals and in our families, parishes and other affiliations contribute to climate change by our energy use, consumption, waste, etc.

4. Conducted the Solar Initiative Pledge and determined our parish would be able to generate sufficient funds for the solar installation.

5. Calculated that 1,630 lbs. of CO₂ emissions are released during the 6 cold months the boiler operates for heating the OLR Church for daily Mass. The boiler and pump has to run for a minimum of 4 to 5 hours starting at around 4:30am to heat the church.

6. Conducted a survey of the daily Mass attendants to determine if, based on the CO₂ emissions, they would be agreeable to move daily Mass to Dermody Chapel during the winter months. The result was 12 for and 11 against the move. Due to these discouraging results, the Green Committee withdrew the proposal in January.

Act to change our choices and behaviors to reduce the ways we contribute to climate change.

7. As a result of the failure to move daily Mass to Dermody Chapel, we proposed plan B to try to reduce the energy used during the winter months by changing the old mechanical heating pump timer in the boiler room for a digital timer. This way, the amount of time the heating water circulates to the church radiators can be controlled better. This proposal was accepted by Building and Equipment Maintenance Committee, and Chuck Tully consulted with Degree Plumbing who were

already doing some work at SAG. Chuck ordered the timer and it is due for delivery at this time. Next winter we will be able to see how much difference this makes after tweaking the ON timing.

8. Continue to foster and implement the *Zero Waste is Possible* program by reducing plastic and styrofoam at parish events by using compostable utensils. Continue using the bins for recyclables, compostables, and landfill waste at all the sites.

9. For the third year veggie burgers were served at the Parish Picnic. There is always a demand for them. A committee member prepared a poster that was on display showing the environmental impact of beef production.

10. We held the third annual Free Market at the Parish Picnic which has proven to be a popular activity and gives new life to no longer needed items. The leftover books went to the Friends of the Library, and the rest went to St. Vincent de Paul Thrift Store.

11. We received some generous pledges for the Solar Initiative at the Picnic. We had a representative from Sunwork with a solar panel, a solar fountain, and a solar fan. Also had a hard copy of the Solar Powerpoint Presentation which was useful for informing interested parishioners and requesting pledges.

12. We organized an evening presentation by Sunwork at the OLR Hall about the proposed solar installation and to answer parishioner questions. (We had very low attendance even though we served nice refreshments.)

13. With the tremendous assistance of many parishioners, more than 70 generous donors, and the hard work by Green Committee members, we were successful in raising the funds for the Solar Panel Installation.

14. In December, we held one of the two solar installation training sessions held by Sunwork. Thirty-five individuals from all over the Bay Area, including our Parish, one from Taiwan, via Canada, came. Some of these volunteers helped with our installation.

15. Our solar installation took place from December 22 through December 31. This was the only time available when the ISTP school was not in session. The panels started producing solar energy the afternoon of December 31. The installation came under budget, and the rebate from the City was higher than we expected. The remainder funds (\$7,336) are being held for a potential future solar installation, possibly at SAG.

16. One of our Green Committee members sewed 26 Christmas gift wrapping bags and donated them to the Christmas Fair to encourage parishioners to reduce throw-away wrapping for their gifts. These sold out quickly.

17. During Advent we collected 99 pairs of eye glasses at the three sites. We turned these over to a parishioner Lions Club member for their eye missions throughout the world.

18. After the December rains along with the Building and Equipment Maintenance Committee (B&EMC) we decided to go ahead with some of the remainder of the Tree Planting Plan that was not implemented last year. According to Chuck Tully, the small trees are on order.

19. At the request of some B&EMC members, three of the Green Committee members met with Chuck to review the ISTP landscaping plans. In general, the plan looks fine, especially if ISTP installs their own water meter, as there would be significant additional water usage. The plan includes drought resistant trees and shrubs along the fence and a vegetable garden for the children that we consider very good things. The 11 blooming cherry trees are moderate water users once established, and they will be planted in recessed ground to better collect the water they receive. The additional trees and shrubs will help provide more foliage cover for songbirds which are increasingly being attacked by crows. The OLR site has had numerous large Monterey pine trees removed in the last few years, increasing the need for more trees.

Advocate for Catholic principles and priorities in climate change discussions and decisions, especially as they impact those who are poor and vulnerable.

20. For World Divestment Day (Feb 13), Green Committee members collected signed divestment letters from parishioners to go along with those the Peninsula Interfaith Climate Action group obtained from their congregations. These were presented at the Palo Alto City Council meeting on Feb 9. The Council unanimously passed a resolution to urge Calpers, which holds its pension funds, to divest from fossil fuel companies.

Peace and many blessings,
Katia Reeves