

## Mount Olive's Journey Toward Climate Justice

- **June 2015.** Mount Olive Missions Committee explores what Pope Francis's environmental encyclical (<http://www.catholicclimatecovenant.org/encyclical>), issued a month earlier, means for people of faith – and what it could mean for Mount Olive.
- **December 2015.** Under Missions Committee leadership, Mount Olive becomes a partner congregation of Minnesota Interfaith Power & Light (MNIPL), a non-profit organization dedicated to bringing together faith communities to advance climate justice as an integral part of spiritual life and social justice.
- **December 2015.** Language of the Paris Agreement (<http://parispledgeforaction.org/read/>) is adopted by consensus by 195 nations. The agreement within the U.N.'s Framework Convention on Climate Change deals with greenhouse gases emissions mitigation, adaptation and finance, starting in the year 2020.
- **Early 2016.** The Mount Olive Property Committee establishes a task force to research a heating/cooling/ventilation system and recommend energy updates for the building, keeping in mind a growing call for air conditioning in the sanctuary and undercroft. The committee enlists a solar energy vendor and an architecture firm to develop recommendations and estimates.
- **February 2016.** Minnesota Interfaith Power & Light encourages Mount Olive to apply for a state-funded grant to support the purchase and installation of solar panels on the Parish House roof. MNIPL assists Mount Olive in applying.
- **April 2016.** Mount Olive wins the state solar funding grant. The congregation votes unanimously to move forward with solar panel installation.
- **April 2016.** The Mount Olive Missions Committee submits a recommendation to the Vestry that calls for the church to follow the nation – and the world – in adopting the Paris Agreement.
- **May 2016.** The Vestry requests that the Missions Committee establish a task force to determine how the church might “live into” the environmental goals of the Paris Agreement.
- **Summer 2016.** The Missions Committee establishes a Climate Justice Task Force to examine how Mount Olive might adopt – and achieve – the principles and goals of the Paris Agreement. The Task Force is to deliver a proposal for how the congregation might move forward. The Task Force:
  - Produces “Gentle with the Earth,” a theologically based rationale for committing, as a congregation, to the Paris Agreement.

- Provides a list of resources that the congregation and its members might use to guide more environmentally friendly decisions and actions.
- Recommends that the Vestry establish a committee or task force to guide and support the congregation in adopting climate justice attitudes and behaviors.
- **September 2016.** President Barack Obama joins the U.S. with 190 other nations in signing the Paris Agreement. His remarks are here: <https://obamawhitehouse.archives.gov/the-press-office/2016/10/05/remarks-president-paris-agreement>
- **Fall 2016.** The Vestry votes to approve “Gentle with the Earth” and present it to the congregation for a vote.
- **November 2016.** The Paris Agreement goes into effect, having been signed by enough countries that produce enough of the world’s greenhouse gases for the agreement to enter into force.
- **December 2016.** The Vestry establishes a Climate Justice/Gentle with the Earth Advisory Committee, to serve as a “think tank” and resource for ideas for the Vestry and the church’s committees and members.
- **February 2017.** The Missions Committee highlights climate justice at its annual “Taste of.....” event, which features sustainable recipes. An Adult Forum features the MNIPL staff leading a climate conversation. (Several other Climate Justice speakers conduct Adult Forums in 2016-2017.) The Passport for Climate Justice Journey kicks off. The initiative invites members to go on a seven-week journey to change patterns, grow in understanding, lend support to each other and have fun exploring ways to lower environmental impact.
- **Spring 2017.** Members of the Climate Justice Advisory Committee meet with committees of the congregation to encourage climate justice and environmental stewardship in future decisions and actions – and to urge them to look to the Advisory Committee for ideas, resources and support.
- **March 2017.** Mount Olive members approve a capital campaign to assess the ability and willingness of the congregation to fund building improvements, including a geothermal heating, air conditioning and ventilation system for the church and undercroft, among other projects.
- **April 2017.** The Congregation votes to adopt the Paris Pledge.
- **June 2017.** President Donald Trump cancels U.S. involvement in the Paris agreement.
- **June 2017.** The Congregation approves the geothermal project.