

Sun

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working to establish Interfaith Power & Light programs in every state.”

In New England, Massachusetts, Vermont and Maine all have ILP affiliates.

A month from now, from May 6-9, all the IPL state leaders and affiliates will gather in Washington, D.C., to discuss national goals and strategies, share community and participate in bipartisan visits with senators and representatives to further climate change policy.

The idea of Interfaith Power and Light is a natural fit – obvious evidence of a synergy between science and spirit. Inherently based on group intention, faith congregations traditionally support each other, give to the common good, understand and embrace stewardship and service. ILP extends that reach to advocate for stewardship of the Earth itself.

It also is natural timing for solar synergy here in Nashua at this moment. In January, Michael Reinke, executive director of the Nashua Soup Kitchen & Shelter, acting on his core belief that “food rescue” is linked to environmental stewardship, imagined and instigated the installation of the city’s first solar-powered nonprofit.

Last week, Nashua Mayor Jim Donchess and the newly formed Nashua Environment and Energy Committee built upon this positive energy, announcing an initiative to find solar energy partners to generate 100 new solar building projects in Nashua. What if the faith communities of Nashua – there are more than 40 of them – joined in with their own “solar stewardship” initiative?

Climate change is not a myth. In Scientific American this month, Jennifer A. Francis, in her article “Melt-down,” refers to the Arctic Ocean as the canary in the cave. The divergent findings of 20 different Arctic researchers form the missing pieces to the same puzzle, “The Arctic climate is changing rapidly, breaking at least a dozen major records in the past three



Courtesy photo

years. Sea ice is disappearing, air temperatures are soaring, permafrost is thawing and glaciers are melting. The swift warming is altering the jet stream and the polar vortex, prolonging heat waves, droughts, deep freezes and heavy rains worldwide.” In other words, though the Arctic may seem like it is a distant galaxy, it is not “out there.” All this extreme weather we are experiencing across the globe is connected – and it is, by its nature, LOCAL to us here in Nashua and in New Hampshire.

Change happens when we imagine it. Smithsonian Magazine writer Brian Greene, in his article “How the Higgs Boson was Found,” explains the discovery of the “Higgs” field and the “Higgs-Boson” particle – referred to as the “God particle” by some physicists, “Before the elusive particle could be discovered ... it had to be imagined.” No one could figure out how particles obtained mass. Thinking outside the box, physicist Peter Higgs imagined a field – the “Higgs field” – in which particles acquire mass through interaction with other particles and the field itself, gaining momentum through interaction. Higgs was initially rejected and reviled for his imagined solution. Then, in July 2012, the “Higgs” particle was discovered by the Large Hadron Collider (atom-splitter) in Geneva.

This revolutionary idea was as obvious – in one way – as it had been mysterious – like a fish coming to comprehend water. In fact, physicists use a parable about fish investigating the laws of physics to explain this momentous discovery. At first, the fish struggle to explain the gentle swaying of plants

and their own locomotion with laws that are complex and unwieldy. Then one day, one fish has a breakthrough – maybe simple laws create a complex environment – resulting in a viscous, incompressible, pervasive liquid – the ocean.

Are we all prone to be blind and clueless fish ignoring the “ocean” of our environment? Science is the “breakthrough” fish pulling the veil away from nature to reveal both its grandeur and the results of our negligent interaction with it. The “field” – where atoms, protons and electrons collide – is both physical and metaphysical, both science and spirit.

Imagine the potential synergy Nashua could create if the thousands of people in local faith communities embraced individual environmental stewardship by responding to the mayor’s visionary proposal. Nashua could lead the way in forming New Hampshire Interfaith Power & Light, becoming the 41st state to do so, thereby creating an organization to help congregations reduce their individual carbon footprints – solar synergy and solar stewardship.

In his book, “The Language of God,” Francis S. Collins reminds us that science is a lens that allows us to see evidence of spirit – whether it is in forming the universe or each human being. “The God of the Bible also is the God of the genome – and of Creation. He can be worshipped in the cathedral or in the laboratory. His creation is majestic, awesome, intricate and beautiful – and it cannot be at war with itself. Only we imperfect humans can start such battles. And only we can end them.” For more information, visit www.InterfaithPowerandLight.org.