



Environmental Sustainability for Faith-Based Organizations

ECOFaith Santa Barbara was formed in 2008, with the encouragement of US Congresswoman Lois Capps and a grant from the James S. Bower Foundation. ECOFaith is a local faith-based initiative mobilizing churches, synagogues, mosques, temples and other religious communities to eliminate local causes of global warming in their buildings and practices.

These institutions are making explicit the implicit environmental imperatives contained in their traditional scriptures, doctrines and ethical precepts. ECOFaith mobilizes and supports their efforts by providing expert consultants and a comprehensive process for energy efficient design, planning, building and renovation, water-saving landscaping, and educational activities for diverse congregations.

The momentum toward the creation of an environmental coalition of diverse faith communities in Santa Barbara was seeded during the planning and implementation of a Faith and Politics Summit on June 3, 2007, organized by Karin Quimby, District Representative for Congressperson Lois Capps. One of the major topics of the summit was the environment.

The momentum built further when Rep. Capps invited faith leaders from her Congressional district to meet with the Democratic Congressional leadership as part of a special Faith Day in Washington DC. At that meeting, several prominent members of Congress eloquently articulated the relationship between religion, politics, and the environment. Following these talks, Ed Bastian asked the California Central Coast faith leaders if they would support the formation of an interfaith environmental coalition when they returned back home. Everyone in the room replied in the affirmative.

On February 13, 2008, Karin Quimby and Ed Bastian convened a meeting hosted by Steve Jacobsen at Goleta Presbyterian Church. The meeting was attended by about 16 people representing a cross section of Santa Barbara Faith Communities. They supported the formation of a coalition and about six participants agreed to meet again to draft a mission statement and action plan for the coalition. In this initial phase close to 20 faith communities joined the coalition, including three historically black churches, Jewish and Muslim congregations, and Catholic and Protestant denominations. We continue to seek the participation of Latino congregations as well as more conservative evangelical congregations.

In August 2012 ECOFaith became a standing committee with Interfaith Initiative of Santa Barbara County (IFISBC), which is a 501(c)(3) non-profit organization.

CONTACT INFORMATION

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