



MEDIA RELEASE
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Church Takes Climate Pledge

Urbandale United Church of Christ becomes first church in Urbandale to adopt the Paris Climate Pledge

Last Sunday the Urbandale United Church of Christ voted to take the first step of the Paris Pledge, committing itself to reduce the carbon pollution from its church building by 50 percent by 2030. The church is the first congregation in central Iowa, and the first UCC church in Iowa to take such action.

“Our church wants to make a public witness that the earth is God’s and the fullness thereof,” said church moderator Tom Rendon, echoing lines from Psalm 24. “We, as Christians, have a moral responsibility to those affected by rising sea levels and by the extremes of climate change such as floods and forest fires. This is a religious act.”

The Paris pledge was developed by Interfaith Power and Light to encourage congregations to take action to meet the Paris climate change conference goal to limit global warming to less than 2 degrees Celsius. The Urbandale church has raised funds for a feasibility study to outline options to reduce their carbon footprint by 50%. Potential options include tighter insulation and weatherization, equipment and appliance upgrades and controls, upgraded lighting, resource-efficient building operations practices, detailed monitoring, and solar panels.

The Urbandale church has sponsored workshops by the Iowa Interfaith Power and Light, including Cool Congregations—to help members calculate and reduce their household energy use—and Food, Faith, and Climate—to learn how food choices impact climate change. The group, named the Green Boat Crew, began as a result of a study of Mary Pipher’s book, “The Green Boat.” Members also participate in monthly meetings of the Green Coalition, a group of metro churches interested in environmental action. The ultimate goal is for the congregation to endorse the full intent of the Paris Pledge, which is to become carbon neutral by 2050.

The vote follows a history of social justice commitments by Urbandale UCC, including voting to be Open and Affirming in 1993 and a Just Peace Church in 1989. Open and Affirming churches are officially recognized by the United Church of Christ as affirming the full inclusion of gay, lesbian, bisexual and transgender persons (LGBT) in the church's life and ministry. Just Peace Churches make a public commitment to identity as a justice-doing, peace-seeking church.

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Other resources:

- Gail George, Urbandale UCC Green Boat Crew member
- Elaine Lundstrom, Urbandale UCC Green Boat Crew member
- Sarah Paulos, Iowa Interfaith Power & Light, programs@iowaipl.org, 319-883-0349, www.iowaipl.org