



Green Notes: There's Hope for Climate Activism!

First UMC's Faith & Justice Sunday School Class wanted to find hope amid the increasingly grim climate news – and succeeded. Last Sunday, members of the class discussed reasons for hope of meaningful climate action. Led by Carole Addis, the class produced a thoughtful and inspiring list.

Carole invoked the words of University of Montana climate scientist Steve Running: "We just have to keep on keeping on." After all, what is the alternative? Right now, much of that hope is at the local level, where each of us has a greater share of the decision making and more influence over the decision makers. When was the last time you attended a Monday night City Council meeting? They're virtual!

In Missoula, Carole said, solar power is booming. Our own First Church solar panel project could get the financial boost it needs next month, when NorthWestern Energy announces the next round of funding for its E+ Renewable Energy Grants. There are solar panels atop the new public library and on the regional jail, and the Missoula wastewater treatment plant will be mostly solar powered within the near future.

Linda Gillison, joining the class by Zoom from North Carolina, suggested we need to "simply proceed." Yes, she said, local activism and local

projects are crucial. “If we do our work, then we understand that other people are doing their work, all around the world.” Of course, she cautioned, hope is not a strategy. “But if you don’t have hope, you’ll never have a strategy.”

Jim Gillison, co-chair of First UMC’s Green Team, sounded a similar call to action: “When I take the clothes out of my washing machine and hang them on the clothes line, I feel better. I’m going to do my little bit and hope that others are doing their little bit.”

Missoula’s expanded Mountain Line bus service is one area where First Church members can make a difference. You can even ride the bus to church now, as the bus system added Sunday service for the first time in its history! And there are new, expanded nighttime hours. Public transportation is one way almost all Americans can help get carbon out of the atmosphere. In Missoula, that’s especially true because nearly all our buses are electric powered.

And how about voting? This fall, Montanans will vote on a wide-ranging slate of candidates – some of whom are climate deniers and some of whom are climate activists. Start your research now, because these elections truly mean something for how our country and our state address the warming planet.

Do your part today! Get involved in climate activism. You can start by joining First UMC’s Green Team: Email Jim Gillison at james.gillison@msn.com.