2027 Task Force Covenant between Albany Presbytery and the Peacemaking Task Force Task Force

Task Force Chair(s): Nancy Pienta, First Presbyterian Church of Valatie, nwpienta@gmail.com

Members of the Task Force: *[Name and Church Affiliation]*

- Susan Hawkes-Teeter: State Street Presbyterian Church
- Paul Randall: Westminster Presbyterian Church
- Earl Johnson: member Albany Presbytery
- Andrew McPherson: Broadalbin First Presbyterian Church
- Jahnn Swanker: Johnstown First Presbyterian Church
- Laura Faulke: Saratoga Springs - United Church of Christ
- Lois Wolff: Lake Luzerne-Rockwell Falls
- Laura Mitchell: Chaplain Albany Presbytery
- Roger Ellis: United Church of Granville

How often and when/where do you meet?

We meet on the third Monday of the month at 1:15, either via Zoom or occasionally a hybrid meeting at Amsterdam Church.

What are the goals of your Task Force?

Educate ourselves and Presbytery on pertinent issues. Our main focus is on how Climate Change is affecting God's creation and what we can do to help mitigate the desecration of our beautiful earth, caring for all God's creation along with environmental justice issues. Our second focus is Gun Violence. We work on educating ourselves and others about this issue.

What were your accomplishments in the past year?

1. We put together a presentation on Gun Violence Prevention, including a worship service and workshop, led by Rev. Margery Rossi, Minister of Gun Violence Prevention for he Presbyterian Peace Fellowship.
2. Members lobbied in NYS legislature for environmental bills
3. We brought forward climate issues and gun violence information to the Presbytery, using time at Presbytery and through the Presbyterian Post to educate our Presbyterian brothers and sisters.
4. We made connections with our Mission Partners, NYS Council of Churches Environmental Justice Committee.

What obstacles or challenges did you face in meeting your goals in the past year?

1. The Packaging Reduction and Recycling Infrastructure Act (PRRIA), as well as other environmental legislation were never brought up for a vote by the NYS Assembly Leader. PRRIA in particular was targeted by big corporations fighting it.
2. We need to educate ourselves and keep up to date on climate issues, as well as other concerns that come before us so that we are in a better position to bring important information to members of our Presbytery.

What is your work plan for the coming year?

- Continue to focus on environmental legislative issues.
- Share information on following topics:
    - AI concerns and Data Centers
    - Reading Energy bills
    - Electrical Battery Storage
    - Clean Energy Hubs
- Continue our connection with NYS Council of Churches

What budget do you need to do your work?

We have asked for $1,000 dollars for the past few years, using it for scholarships to educational events or contributing said dollars to organizations supporting environmental and gun violence issues. This past year we spent ~$700 for Gun Violence Prevention presentation, costs including speaker, travel, personnel at Westminster for space and food.

What resources can congregations provide to support and/or participate in your work?

Share the information that the task force provides from Presbytery meeting reports and the Presbytery Post about our work to your churches. We would like to make connections with individual churches and hear what they are doing in their churches and community to assist in mitigating climate change.

Also, we look for support in letter writing and phone calls to legislators for environmental issues and other areas that the task force brings to the Presbytery's attention.

What else should the Presbytery know about this Task Force?

The members of this task force share great concern for the health of our planet. We gather together to learn from each other, striving to understand many of the environmental issues that are facing us. Many of these issues require us to educate ourselves first on complex subjects that address technical, scientific, health and justice concerns.

Beyond the work on the task force, members contribute to their local communities and organizations to further the work being done to care for our earth home. We are happy to share our knowledge and we are hoping to bring in speakers via zoom to churches in our Presbytery. Please don't hesitate to reach out. We welcome others to our task force. Also feel free to join us for a one time visit to check us out!