

Faith Alliance for  
Climate Solutions

FaithForClimate.org

# ANNUAL 2020 REPORT



# MESSAGE FROM BOARD CHAIR

2020 was a year many of us were glad to leave. The killing pandemic. Lost jobs and closed schools. Long lines at food banks. The pain of racial injustice. The stressful Presidential election and unrest that led to the attack on the Capitol. In addition, climate chaos was just as bad: fires in the West, heat waves in Europe and the Arctic, hurricanes in the South, drought in the Midwest. Our pain stretched beyond heartbreak. Pope Frances said, “the effects of the pandemic are themselves global, touching all the countries and peoples of the world, helping to aggravate deeply interrelated crises like those of the climate, food, the economy, and migration.”

But in 2020, we saw uplifting signs of renewal and hope. The selflessness of health care and other essential workers. The Virginia legislature passed laws to eliminate fossil fuel power plants and to expand solar and wind power. Fairfax County Supervisors and School Board Members were climate heroes, taking concrete steps to cut carbon pollution. Throughout the region, elected leaders and grassroots organizations took up the challenge of climate action.

His All-Holiness Ecumenical Patriarch Bartholomew spoke to the faith that moves us to work for a better world in 2020 and in the years to come: “This unprecedented crisis has revealed the power and value of love and solidarity, which transcend human standards and bear the seal of God’s grace. The pandemic has reminded us that the world is larger than our individual concerns and ambitions, larger than our church and faith communities, and larger than our political powers and national interests.”

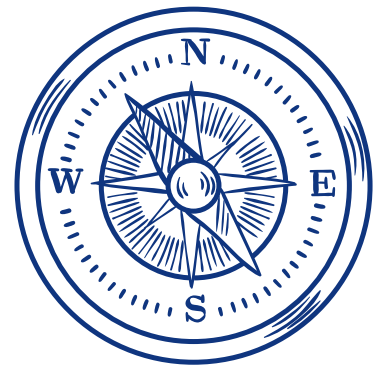
The 2020 FACS annual report shows how we came together in trying times. COVID-19, very much like the climate crisis, teaches us to listen to and learn from one another. Of being humble enough to care for and share with one another.

In peace and commitment,

**Eric Goplerud**

CHAIR

# OUR PURPOSE



The Faith Alliance for Climate Solutions (FACS) was formed to create opportunities for people to act together effectively from their values, moral, spiritual, and religious beliefs. The faith community's ability to organize large numbers of people who might not otherwise engage in advocacy makes it a critical asset to advancing climate justice solutions. Many people aren't aware of decisions made at the local level that impact climate policies, yet that is where effects of climate change are felt most keenly. Persistent, local advocacy grounded in morality is how FACS makes an impact.

## FACS BOARD OF DIRECTORS

Dr. Eric Goplerud, Chair  
Mr. Scott Peterson, Co-Vice-Chair  
Ms. Shyamali Roy Hauth, Co-Vice-Chair  
Rev. Sarah Scherschligt, Treasurer  
Mr. David Kepley, Secretary  
Mr. Philip Bane  
Mr. Joe Cohen  
Mr. Donald Craig  
Ms. Ani Fête Crews  
Mr. Anthony Granado  
Dr. Neelu Tummula  
Rev. Dr. Jean Wright  
Ms. Erika Yalowitz

## WELCOME NEW BOARD MEMBERS!



**Philip Bane**  
Managing  
Director, Smart  
Cities Council



**Anthony Granado**  
Vice President,  
Government  
Relations, Catholic  
Charities USA



**Dr. Neelu Tummula**  
Physician, George  
Washington University  
School of Medicine and  
Health Sciences



**Erika Yalowitz**  
Court Officer, Juvenile &  
Domestic Relations  
District Court, Arlington  
County

# ADVOCACY HIGHLIGHTS

## GROWING INVOLVEMENT SHOWS RESULTS

Our advocacy team structure and growing participation by our supporters continued to show its strength in influencing elected officials, staff, and policy. Through advisory panel participation, constituent meetings, and emails, the voice of the faith community in matters of climate and energy was heard. Our accomplishments included:

- Leading the effort to build-in strong carbon pollution reduction goals in the County-wide Energy and Climate Plan, now under development.
- Advocating successfully for full funding by Fairfax County of the first Climate Adaptation and Resilience Plan.
- Pressing successfully for Fairfax County Public Schools to establish net zero and carbon saving goals.
- Inviting widespread participation by our supporters through use of a new tool, the FACS Advocacy Alert.
- Meeting with state legislators for the first time.
- Advocating successfully for passage of Solar Freedom legislation, eliminating eight roadblocks to the growth of solar energy in the Virginia Code.

## WELCOME NEW STAFF!



**Natalie Cain**  
Digital Organizer



**Sashia Scott**  
Community  
Organizer, Prince  
William County

## IMPACT



**80+ Faith  
Communities**



**2500 supporters  
and climate  
activists**



# PROGRAM HIGHLIGHTS

## PUBLIC AWARENESS, EVENTS, & COMMUNITY OUTREACH

- FACS held its annual **Advocacy Workshop** in January, hosted by Little River United Church of Christ.
- FACS hosted its **Third Annual Sustainability Champion Awards** in June. Fairfax County Board of Supervisors Chair, Jeff McKay, and Fairfax County School Board Chair, Karen Corbett Sanders, were both keynote speakers and recipients of a Legacy Award. More information about the other awardees is included in this annual report.
- FACS hosted the **Fifth Annual Virginia Climate Crisis Forum: Reducing the Energy Burden in Post-Pandemic Virginia** with four panelists and a conversation with Senator Mark Warner.
- FACS hosted a dozen webinars on topics including Faith and the Environment, Energy Justice, and Advocacy Training.

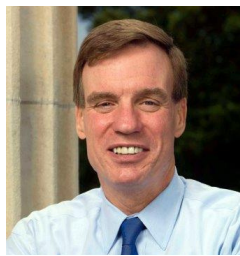
## FIFTH ANNUAL VIRGINIA CLIMATE CRISIS FORUM



Delegate Charniele Herring, Majority Leader of the Virginia House of Delegates



Chase Counts, Senior Director of Operations of Community Housing Partners



U.S. Senator Mark Warner (VA)

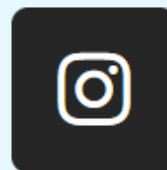


Harrison Godfrey, Executive Director of Virginia Advanced Energy Economy



Trieste Lockwood, Senior Policy Advisor to Governor Ralph S. Northam

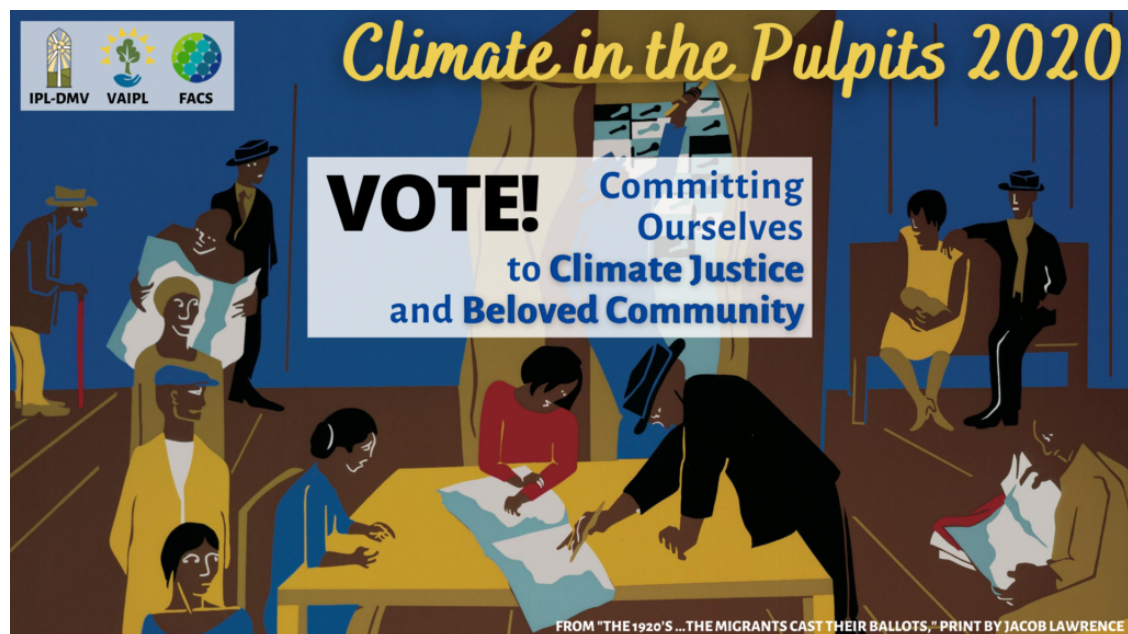
## FOLLOW US



# PROGRAM HIGHLIGHTS

## FAITH-BASED ACTION

- **Tree of Life Program:** FACS launched this new program to recognize, motivate, and inspire the sustainability actions of faith communities and at all levels.
- **Advocacy Teams:** FACS organizes advocacy teams in Fairfax County, which meet monthly to discuss priorities, and meet with their elected officials twice annually. This year, new FACS hubs formed in Arlington County, the City of Alexandria, and Prince William County.
- **Support Gatherings:** FACS hosted four webinars at the onset of the coronavirus pandemic, providing a space for reflection and solidarity for our network.
- **Climate in the Pulpits:** FACS, together with Virginia IPL and IPL (DC.MD.NoVA), offered this program in Virginia. 60+ faith communities participated, reaching more than 4,000 people through worship or hosted events with a climate focus.



# SUSTAINABILITY CHAMPIONS



Faith Alliance for  
Climate Solutions

## CONGRATULATIONS TO OUR 2020 CHAMPIONS

### Individual Champion: Debra Jacobson, JD

Debra brings great technical and organizational expertise to her advocacy and advice for Fairfax County. Debra is a member of the Fairfax County Environmental Quality Advisory Council representing the Dranesville District. She was a contributor to the Green Building Policy for county facilities, Chair of the Clean Energy for Fairfax Now Campaign of the Great Falls Group, and Member of Legislative and Executive Committees of the Sierra Club Virginia Chapter. Her focus is on energy efficiency, renewable energy, and climate issues at the local and state levels working through the Sierra Club Great Falls Group, whom she credits immensely for recent advancements in the county.



### Faith Community Champion: Mount Vernon Unitarian Church (MVUC)

The entire congregation of MVUC voted to be a part of a year-long focus on solutions to climate change, which is organized by the Climate Action Team (CAT) created in January of 2019.



This effort includes education on the issues, action projects, advocacy, spiritual support, and outreach. During its first year, the CAT organized nearly 50 events and projects with more than 1100 participants. The overarching goal for CAT is that a carbon neutral lifestyle becomes the default norm on church grounds and that the church serves as a hub and inspiration for members to live their own earth stewardship values at home.



# SUSTAINABILITY CHAMPIONS



Faith Alliance for  
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## CONGRATULATIONS TO OUR 2020 CHAMPIONS

### **Elected Official Champion: Karl Frisch, Providence District Representative on the Fairfax County Public Schools (FCPS) Board**

Elected in autumn of 2019, Karl is one of two members of the FCPS Board serving on the Joint Environmental Task Force which coordinates County and School operations to increase environmental sustainability. Karl was integral in the development and approval of an amendment to the 2021-25 Capital Improvement Plan which calls for a study of the movement to net zero energy operations, and has been a leader in exploring the transition to electric school buses. Karl understands the “big picture” in terms of the great

responsibility FCPS faces in dealing with the climate crisis. Karl will be fundamental to making FCPS an excellent example of what a school system can accomplish with strong leadership.



### **Local Business Champion: GreenFare Restaurant in Herndon Virginia**

Gwyn Whittaker, owner of GreenFare, works to reduce carbon emissions through a plant-rich diet while putting people and the planet ahead of profits. GreenFare is certified organic, uses renewable energy, features locally sourced food and all compostable containers, while paying a living wage.

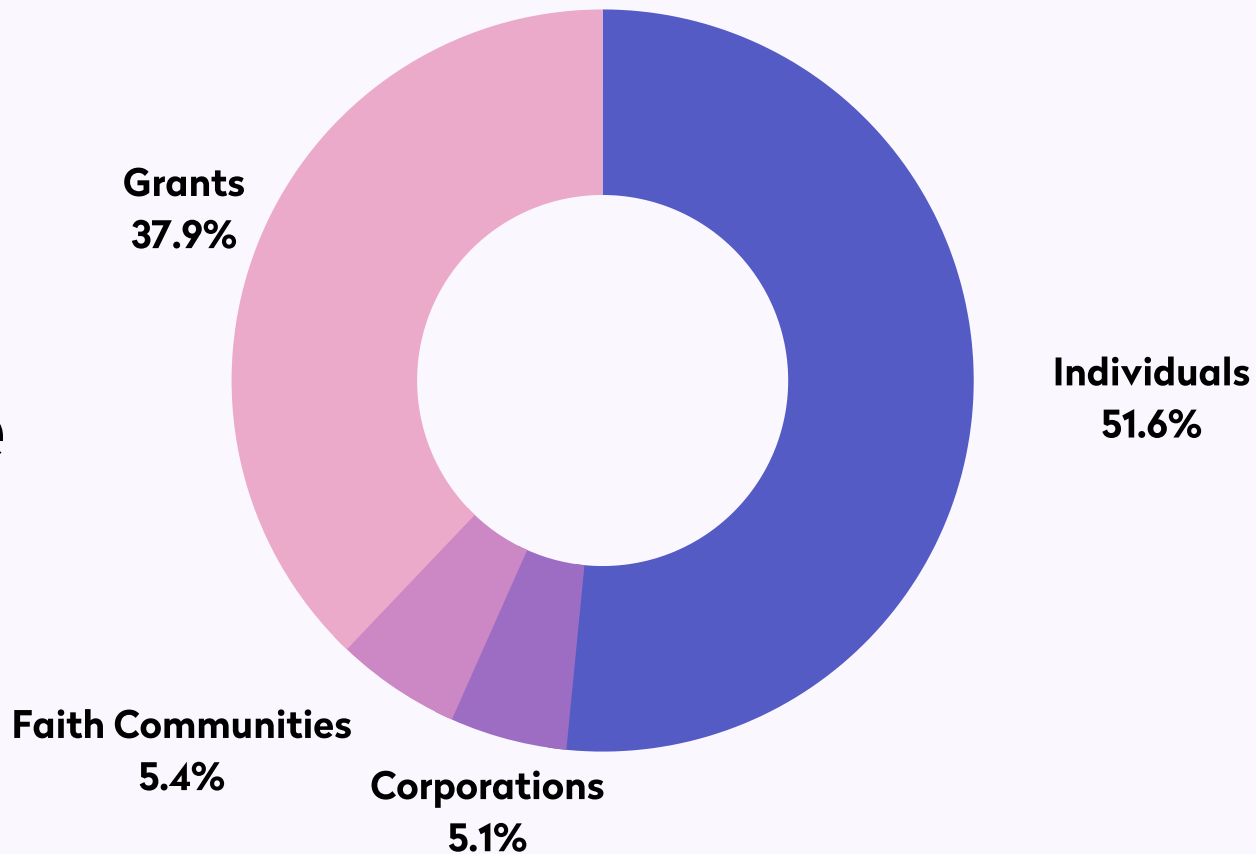


As an “education restaurant” Green Fare offers cooking classes, dinner and a movie, author book signings. In response to the recent COVID-19 crisis, Gwyn started a non-profit, GreenFare Health and Wellness (a certified 501(c)(3) that had three projects: the now Virtual Fairfax Veg Fest, meal donations for medical workers at three local hospitals, and a new mask making activity that provided about 20,000 masks to Fairfax County as well as employment to about 40 Makers.

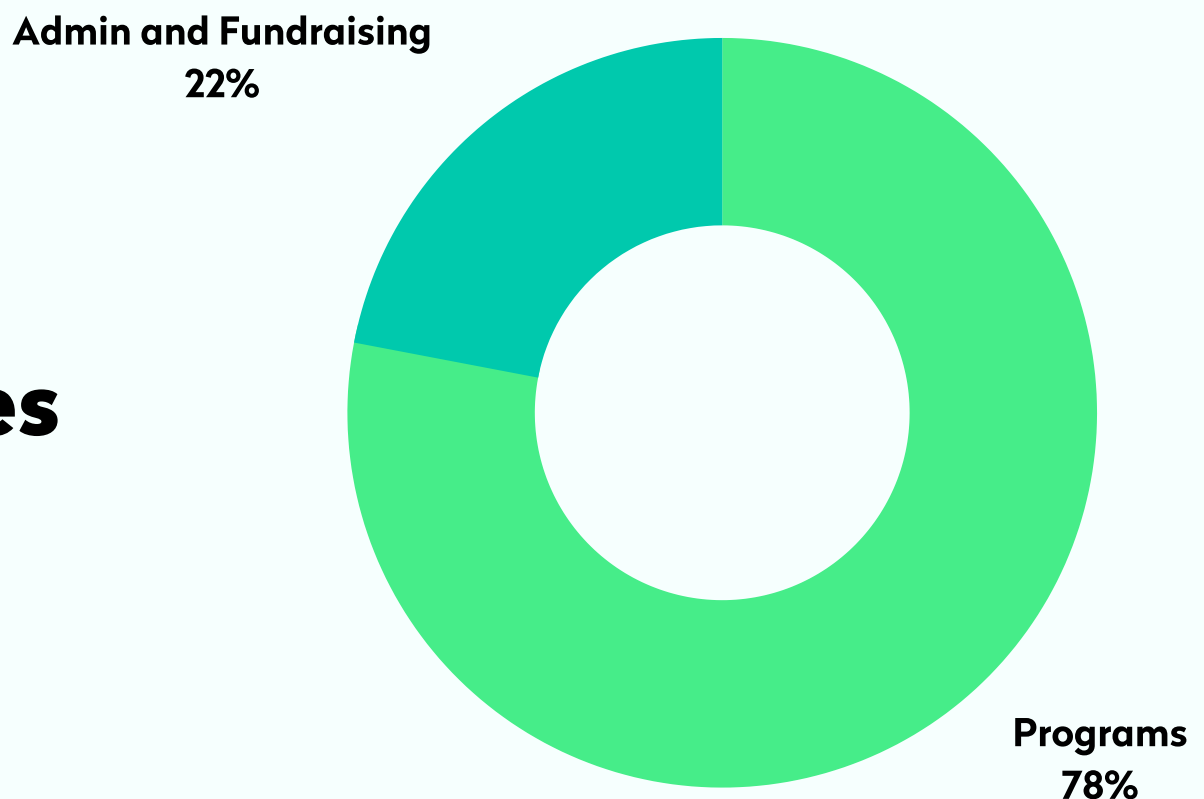
# FINANCIAL MANAGEMENT

Thanks to the generosity of our donors, and successful grants, FACS' total revenue for 2020 was \$150,142. Individual giving accounts for over 50% of our funding. Thank you!

## Income



## Expenses





# GET INVOLVED

We have five hubs of activity and advocacy: Fairfax County (our flagship), Prince William County, Arlington County, the City of Alexandria, and Montgomery County.

- Are you ready to join an advocacy team and put faith in action?
- Is your faith community interested in participating in an eco-actions program?
- Are you interested in volunteering your time and passion to help support FACS' operational, outreach, and/or program activities?

Visit [FaithForClimate.org/Advocacy](https://FaithForClimate.org/Advocacy) or email [info@faithforclimate.org](mailto:info@faithforclimate.org).

Interested in giving options? Visit [FaithForClimate.org/Give](https://FaithForClimate.org/Give).

## THANK YOU

Many thanks to all of our volunteers and partners! We work today for a better tomorrow, and together we are stronger.

“The Social Action Committee of Northern Virginia Hebrew Congregation is very impressed by FACS' visible engagement on the issue of climate change. FACS organizes its members to meet with their local politicians and advocate for a thoughtful climate agenda. This educates the politicians and motivates them to work in the area of climate change. We view FACS as an organization that is worthy of our support.”