



Vermont Interfaith Power & Light
A faith-based response to global warming

Green Mountains, Blue Water

Earth Care News

April 2020 Happy Earth Month!

Faith Climate Action Week - Love Made Visible



During Earth Month, may we remember that we truly ARE Nature. As we witness the natural world recovering during the devastating COVID-19 pandemic, perhaps we can also take heart in realizing that as Nature is healed, at least on some level, so are we.



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Faith Climate Action Week Goes Virtual

VTIPL could never have imagined that we'd be inviting you to go virtual with your Faith Climate Action Week Sacred Activism event. But COVID-19 makes for extraordinary times. This year's theme could hardly be more appropriate. "Love Made Visible: Engaging in Sacred Activism" virtually allows us to do the work we are called to do while accomplishing two important goals: protecting the people we love and acting on behalf of those most impacted by climate change. The photo above shows VTIPL Board member Rev. Rachel Field feeling the love from one of her laying hens. Rev. Rachel says "the hens work in cooperation with the apple trees in the background to build soil, sequester carbon, and provide yummy food."

Faith Climate Action Week is the nationwide movement of people of faith and conscience acting on climate. We encourage you to creatively use your digital networks and our Faith Climate Action Week resources to make your love visible. The Faith Climate Action Week kit includes a Sacred Activism guide on the importance of people of faith taking part in civic engagement, suggestions for activism challenges, and a Sacred Activism Art Guide to create eye-catching banners and placards with faith-based messaging. Banners include IPL affiliate contributions from across the U.S. from September's climate strikes.

Resources/ideas in the kit include info on:

National Earth Day Climate Prayer Invite members of your congregation to download the prayer to recite at 12 Noon local time on Earth Day, April 22.

Remember: this year's Earth Day theme is Climate Action.

Plant trees virtually through the For Love of Trees campaign by donating to IPL's Carbon Covenant program to plant trees in the Global South through faith-based programs. \$5 will plant one tree that will live to maturity offsetting one ton of carbon emissions.

Collect Faith Climate Voter Pledges during Faith Climate Action Week from members of your congregation to vote with the climate in mind

through IPL's Faith Climate Voter campaign using an online form. Print the postcard in the kit with the message, *I'm a Faith Climate Voter* and post to social media a photo holding the postcard with the hashtag #FaithClimateVoter.

Show your Love! Encourage members of your congregations or other organizations to post pictures on social media featuring placards with moral calls to act on climate during Faith Climate Action Week using the hashtag #FaithClimateActionWeek and tag @interfaithpowerandlight.

VTIPL asks you to share brief stories about what you will have done during Faith Climate Action Week. Please send them and Love Made Visible photos to: info@vtipl.org We'll include some in our next newsletter and website. Why not share a selfie in a place or with folks that remind you that Love is Visible? Please submit photos by April 28. We'll (attempt to!) create a virtual selfie quilt showing all the love in Vermont. Check the National IPL Faith Climate Action Week website for details and links to multiple great resources.

[FCAW kit](#) & [FCAW site](#)

Earth Day+50 & Building a Better Future prompted by the COVID-19 crisis

April 22 marks the 50th anniversary of Earth Day! It is hard to believe it's been 50 years since the first Earth Day in 1970. We could never have guessed what we'd be facing now. This year's theme is Climate Action. (For Earth Day resources, visit [The Earth Day website](#).)

What the Coronavirus Means for Climate Change

There are many compelling articles emerging connecting responses and lessons related to the COVID-19 Crisis and implications for humanity as we face the undeniable Climate Crisis. Here is a link to a thought-provoking opinion piece by Meehan Crist, writer in residence in biological sciences at Columbia University. [Read full article.](#)

GreenFaith Weekly Faith Community Calls for Care and Resilience

GreenFaith has been holding Weekly Faith Community Calls for Care and Resilience. During this time of high stress and concern, Participants

are invited to join with others from around the world to be in community and listen to an inspiring faith leader, to share and be heard. In a recent call, Rev. Leo Woodberry shared that, "The old world, the old ways are changing, and we must come up with new ways....that our connection, belief and faith are the light of the world." We were also reminded to take what we need and share what we have. Go to GreenFaith's Facebook page to access these offerings.

[GreenFaith Facebook page.](#)

VT Faith Communities Deal with COVID-19

The VT Digger recently featured an article about how faith communities in Vermont are dealing with COVID-19. [Read article here.](#)

Roll Back of Clean Car Standards

You've likely heard that while our nation is in the grip of the COVID-19 public health emergency, the Trump Administration announced a dangerous roll back of the nation's clean car standards while dismissing decades of law under the Clean Air Act which allowed states to adopt stronger tailpipe pollution limits to protect public and environmental health. As people of faith, we have been speaking out for years supporting stronger clean car standards. This rollback is, according to national IPL President Rev. Susan Hendershot, insensitive to the current crisis, and an unethical decision to put big oil and corporate polluters over the health and safety of our communities.

Interfaith Power and Light will continue to fight for the Clean Car Standards and other important environmental safeguards under attack. As religious communities, we hold to the shared values of justice, equity, and stewardship of Creation. We must encourage people of faith and conscience across the U.S. to call on elected leaders at local, state, and national levels to reduce greenhouse gas emissions and care for Creation. COVID-19 has reminded us of just how interconnected we are - when one of us suffers, we all suffer.

Recent webinars

Energy Action Network's 2019 Annual Report

From our resident energy expert, VT IPL President Ron McGarvey: The Vermont Natural Resource Council (verify) held a recent webinar focused on the Energy Action Network's 2019 Annual Report. It included a lot of good data on the sources of VT's greenhouse emissions, the policies to reduce them, etc...Though quite detailed and "wonkish", it was interesting!

[Report available here](#) or you can order a hard copy by writing to Caroline Wesley's [email](#).

Basin Basics: Watersheds and the State of Lake Champlain

A recent UVM Extension/Sea Grant webinar, including the State of the Lake report, reminded participants that phosphate is a growth regulator, not a poison, though phosphates can act as such promoting blooms of harmful blue green algae or cyanobacteria in waterways. As only 10% of water falls directly into the lake as rain or snow, most water gets to the lake as runoff from the land. Some really good news: most Lake Champlain beaches were swimmable most days during the last report! As for mercury content in lake fish, yellow perch and white perch top the list as best for human consumption, followed by smallmouth bass, lake trout, and walleye. We were reminded to "raise the blade" on lawnmowers to 3" as taller grass acts like a sponge allowing less potentially phosphate laden water to run off land into the lake; use rain barrels and create rain gardens to capture runoff from gutters and pavement, to pick up pet waste, and "No wipes in the pipes" as flushable wipes pipes actually clog pipes. For more info, visit LCBP's [Resource Room](#).

Resources to Help Lighten the Load During This Troubled Time

Free Film Screening! Virtual Premier of "Sitting at God's Table", April 12.

This film explores what happens when a Rabbi, a Priest, a Baptist Reverend, an Episcopal Bishop, and a Muslim leader sit down to a 7-hour dinner. They try to make sense of why we do what we do in the name of God. The film by Ellen L. Shepard is available on Easter

Sunday, April 12, at 7:30 p.m. EST Film run time is 1 hr.15 mins. View a 3-minute [Trailer](#) or on April 12 click for [Film access](#).

Insights at the Edge Audio - Finding Beauty in a Broken World

Sounds True's Tami Simon shares in-depth audio podcast interviews with leading spiritual teachers and luminaries. Here, she speaks with Terry Tempest Williams, a writer, naturalist, environmental activist, and author of several books including *Finding Beauty in a Broken World* and an original audio adaptation of the book. In this interview, Terry discusses her creative process as a writer and how she has been able to find beauty in a broken world. (Terry is a favorite writer of VTIPL Coordinator Donna Roberts.) [Podcast here](#).

Faith Community Energy Q & A

If you have questions about energy use in your building, options for energy efficiency and/or renewable energy projects, send them to Info@VTIPL.org and we'll try to answer them. Please use "Energy Q & A" in the subject line.

Q: We'd like to improve the lighting in our parish hall/social room.

Current lighting includes a combination of ceiling lights with incandescent bulbs and some fluorescent lights that flicker when turned on, and make a humming sound.

A: It should be possible to replace incandescent bulbs with LED bulbs from your local hardware store or electrical products distributor. Check the "lumen" (light output) of the LED bulbs to ensure they're comparable to the incandescents you're replacing. You may also want to consider replacement fixtures designed for LED bulbs. Fluorescent lights that flicker are near the end of their useful life; humming sounds mean that they have older-style, inefficient magnetic ballasts. It would be best to replace the lights with new fixtures designed for LED lights. Check Efficiency Vermont's [website](#) for info on rebates and discounts.

Poem *Pandemic* by Lynn Ungar

What if you thought of it
as the Jews consider the Sabbath—
the most sacred of times?
Cease from travel.
Cease from buying and selling.
Give up, just for now,
on trying to make the world
different than it is.
Sing. Pray. Touch only those
to whom you commit your life.
Center down.
And when your body has become still,
reach out with your heart.
Know that we are connected
in ways that are terrifying and beautiful.
(You could hardly deny it now.)
Know that our lives
are in one another's hands.
(Surely, that has come clear.)
Do not reach out your hands.
Reach out your heart.
Reach out your words.
Reach out all the tendrils
of compassion that move, invisibly,
where we cannot touch.
Promise this world your love—
for better or for worse,
in sickness and in health,
so long as we all shall live.

Here's a link to a choral rendition of the poem. [Choral.](#)



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VTIPL helps people of faith and conscience better understand the climate crisis and take action to care for Earth.

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