



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

Green Mountains, Blue Water

Earth Care News September 2020

VTIPL Launches *Climate Justice Series*

Be a Faith Climate Justice Voter



Blueberry Lake, Warren, VT (Photo courtesy Gerald L. Hoffman)

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-Faith Climate Justice Voter Campaign-Make Plans to Vote

The 2020 election is a moment for renewed vision for our nation and our world. Voting is the central sacrament of our democracy. For people of faith and conscience, voting is how we create a country that reflects our values. Do you know how you're going to vote this year? Not who you're going to vote for, but HOW

you're going to vote? With the pandemic and continued reports of voter suppression, elections this year will be different. Here is what you can do right now: MAKE YOUR PLAN TO VOTE. Whether you plan to vote by mail or



early in person, making your plan to vote is one of the best things you can do now. Our national IPL's partner organization, When We All Vote, offers a Voter Resources Hub where you can check your voter registration, request a mail-in ballot, research your ballot, find your polling location, register to vote, and more. [Voter Resource Hub](#). VT IPL encourages everyone to take advantage of the resources in IPL's Faith Climate Justice Voter [Campaign](#). Take the [Pledge](#), check out the sermon resources, and download the free [Voter Reflection Guide](#).

-Climate Change, Our Faith Values, and 2020. Mon., Sept. 14, 3:00 pm
Join IPL president Rev. Susan Hendershot for a virtual conversation with climate scientist Dr. Katharine Hayhoe, Co-director of the Climate Center at Texas Tech University. An evangelical Christian and wife of a pastor, Dr. Hayhoe blends her scientific training and faith to share how faith calls us to take urgent action to address the climate emergency. In the webinar, learn effective ways to discuss the importance of caring for Creation and voting our values. Sponsored by Interfaith Power & Light, the Catholic Climate Covenant and Young Evangelicals for Climate Action. [Register here](#).

-Be a Climate Justice Voter. Thurs., Sept. 17, 7:30 p.m. Join several extraordinary speakers to help you prepare to be a Climate Justice voter. Vermont environmental scholar/author Bill McKibben will present *How Your Vote Can Change the System on Election Day-and the next day too!* IPL Board Chair and civil rights champion Rev. Gerald Durley will discuss *Race, Climate and the Power of Your Vote*, and Tiffany Hartung, Program Manager of IPL's Faith Climate Justice Campaign will share about the importance of the Campaign during this election. [Register here](#).



VT Global Warming Solutions Act passes House - Tell Gov. Scott to sign It!

Great news! The Vermont House this week passed the Vermont Global Warming Solutions Act with a vote of 102-45. The vote margin means there should be sufficient votes to override Governor Scott IF he decides to veto the bill. We strongly believe the Governor should sign it. The Solutions Act is a critical step in creating a framework for Vermont to take essential climate action while creating more resilient, sustainable, and just communities, a framework that will bolster our statewide recovery from COVID-19. Governor Scott has repeatedly said he supports Vermont's climate goals. This is his chance to prove it.

Will you call the Governor at (802) 828-3333 and urge him to sign the Global Warming Solutions Act?

VT Natural Resources Council states, "This is a strong step forward for long-overdue progress to combat the climate crisis, and it would not have been possible without all of you who reached out to your legislators to urge them to support it. The Global Warming Solutions Act puts in place a solid foundation to hold the state accountable to its commitment to reduce climate pollution and build resilience for the disruptive changes that we know are coming. It ensures that the state centers the needs of rural, low-income, and vulnerable Vermonters at the forefront of our planning decisions. And as we begin to rebuild our economy from the ravages of the pandemic, it enables Vermont to take advantage of the significant job creating opportunities that climate action offers." See this video featuring Vermont business leaders sharing support for the Solutions Act and urging Governor Scott to sign it into law. [Video link.](#)



-VTIPL Launches *Climate Justice Series!*

Responding to the extraordinary circumstances of the COVID-19 pandemic which have transformed most in-person events to virtual or physically-distanced activities, VTIPL's heightened concerns about violence targeting people of color and decision to align our work more closely with racial justice as distinctly part of climate justice, VTIPL is creating a *Climate Justice Series*. Often in partnership with other organizations, these activities are VTIPL's creative alternative to our signature annual Fall Conference.

-The first event in the Series is a **Climate Justice discussion featuring VTIPL Vice-President Rev. Dr. Nancy Wright and past VTIPL Board Member Rev. Arnold Thomas** of Good Shepherd Lutheran Church who will present a Zoom event focused on climate and racial justice. The discussion, planned over the **October 10-11** weekend, is also a contribution to Al Gore's Climate Reality Leadership Corps' *24 Hours of Reality: Countdown to the Future* aimed at inspiring people everywhere to take part in building a just, green future. The Climate Reality Corps' goal is to have 3,000 presentations that weekend. This is our contribution! Pastor Nancy and new VTIPL Board Member Sylvia Burkman recently completed the Climate Reality Leadership Training; VTIPL Coordinator Donna Roberts completed the training in 2017.

The Pastors will, of course, be mindful that the discussion occurs just a few weeks prior to the critical 2020 election. The event will be recorded for future use. If you're interested, contact us including in the subject line "Climate Justice Series". Thanks! info@vtipl.org

**-Mission Farm screening event,
Kiss the Ground, on October 18**

The second event in our Series is a virtual and in-person film screening event at Mission Farm, in Killington, hosted by VT IPL Board member The



Rev. Rachel Field of Mission Farm and co-sponsored by VT IPL. The film shows how the health of our soil is directly connected to the health of the planet, humanity, social and racial justice, and is an important part of solutions addressing global climate change. "At Mission Farm, we know the power of regenerative agriculture to provide that hope for our healing and for the healing of the Earth. We invite you to join the regenerative agriculture movement and come to the farm on October 18, at 4 p.m., for a screening of *Kiss the Ground*, a documentary showing how regenerative farming techniques can provide abundant food, sink carbon into the soil, and heal landscapes rendered biological wastelands due to mechanized farming practices. We'll be firing up the Mission Farm bakery to have pizzas with ingredients from VT regenerative farmers available for purchase! The event will take place outside and folks are encouraged to bring a folding chair or plan to remain in vehicles for the showing." Masks and social distancing are required to attend. Up to 40 persons can attend on-site at the Farm physically-distanced (in chairs and in cars). Others can stream the film online (details to come) and join a Facebook Live watch party hosted on [Mission Farm's Facebook page](#) & linked to [VTIPL's Facebook page](#). The suggested donation is \$5/person or \$20 for a family. **Please RSVP** using [this link](#). A trailer and resources are on the [film website](#).



-Illinois IPL/Faith in Place Green Summit A Just Recovery. Sept. 13-17 VTIPL is pleased to support this

important initiative of Illinois IPL and Faith in Place. The multi-day Green Team Summit is free and open to all, and features timely justice-based discussions by faith, social/racial justice, and environmental leaders. The **keynote panel takes place on Sun., Sept. 13, at 5:00 ET p.m.** and explores the Summit's theme, *A Just Recovery*. The impressive list of speakers from around the country (two with Vermont connections) includes the director of the NAACP Climate Justice Program. [Register here.](#)

-Christianity, Science, COVID, and Climate Change

Article, Christian Leaders Call On Fellow Believers To Take Science Seriously During The Pandemic. "Dozens of Christian leaders signed a statement defending science and calling on fellow believers to follow the advice of public health experts during the coronavirus pandemic. The 76 leaders include Christian writers, pastors, theologians, scientists, doctors, and seminary leaders. They say they are deeply concerned about the 'polarization and politicization of science' that is emerging in some Christian communities during the COVID-19 crisis. The word science has become a weapon in the culture wars, the leaders wrote in the statement published Monday. Scientists are vilified and their findings ignored, while conspiracy theories go viral. Thoughtful Christians may disagree on public policy in response to the coronavirus, but none of us should ignore clear scientific evidence,' the leaders wrote." In Vermont, we know that our governor's reliance on science-based decision-making has been a saving grace during the pandemic keeping our numbers low and our population safe. This also applies, of course, to global climate change which is grounded in solid science versus being a "belief" as some erroneously conclude. [Full article.](#)

Other VTIPL News:

-We are pleased to announce that VTIPL Board Member Rev. Dr. Nancy Wright of Ascension Lutheran Church is our new Vice-President after retired Unitarian minister Jane Dwinell stepped down from the position following two years of dedicated service for which we are grateful. We enthusiastically welcome Pr. Nancy into this new role and we wish Jane all the best.

-VTIPL co-sponsored the First African Landing Vermont Commemoration organized by Vermont Racial Justice Alliance. The Aug. 22 event recognized the 401st anniversary of the landing of the first enslaved Africans in English-occupied North America at Point Comfort in 1619, and included a ceremony of storytelling, dance, drumming, music, and a keynote by Dr. Wanda Heading Grant, Vice-President of UVM's Division of Diversity, Equity and Inclusion. Funds raised from the event benefit the Building Fund of New Alpha Baptist Missionary Church. [VT Racial Justice Alliance](#).



Other Events & Information

Sept. 13, 3 p.m. -*Stopping Stones installation & virtual ceremony*
Ohavi Zedek Synagogue, Good Shepherd Lutheran Church & Stopping

Stones invite you to honor Lavinia and Francis Parker, a mother and son enslaved from 1835-1841 in Burlington. We often learn that Vermont was the first state to outlaw slavery. Less well known are instances of people moving to Vermont with slaves and continuing to keep them in bondage. Rev. Arnold Thomas of Good Shepherd invites us to remember two enslaved members of the Burlington community. [Join online here.](#)

Sept. 18, 1-3 p.m. - Webinar - *Ecology and Ecumenicity*. This webinar will focus on ecology and the role of ecumenical partners in taking action to preserve our common home. Organized by the Greek Orthodox Diocese of America. [Registration.](#)

Sept. 24, 11 a.m. - Webinar - *Climate Change is a Hunger Issue*. When farmers struggle, so do our food systems. As farmers from the U.S. to West Africa struggle to adapt to climate change, global hunger is on the rise. We must understand their common challenges if we want to end hunger. Join Bread for the World Institute for a conversation with a panel of experts, including farmers, on how climate change affects food systems and the changes needed to address the impacts of climate change. [Register here.](#)

-Rooting out Structural Racism Vermont Law School Webinar Review

The panel offered historical and contemporary examples of how land-related laws and informal policies have created inequities for people of color, particularly African-Americans. The discussion drew direct links between environmental, agricultural/farm-related, and civil rights issues often considered separate. It was a good primer on these interconnected concerns. Here are some quotes from the webinar: "Black farmers have lost 90% of the land they once owned." "Land means wealth - generational wealth." "Power concedes nothing without a demand." "We need anti-discrimination (farm and agricultural) policies." "To address structural racism, we need a structural remedy or solution."

-Interested in involving your congregation in Anti-Racism work?

One way to act is an Anti-Racism Book Group as Ascension Lutheran Church has done. Participants come prepared to comment on books they've read (or

webinars attended) and listen to others share. Ascension has compiled a list of suggested titles accessible [on VTIPL's website.](#)

[**Donate Now**](#)

We greatly appreciate your contributions to our ongoing work at the intersection of faith, climate, and justice.



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