



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

Green Mountains, Blue Water

Earth Care News February

VTIPL Black History Month Screening Event, Resources & More



Photo courtesy Donna Roberts.

- VT IPL Black History Month Film/Discussion, Tues. Feb. 23, 6:30 p.m.
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**VTIPL Black
History Month
Film &
Discussion,
*Yemanjá: Wisdom
from the African
Heart of Brazil*
Tuesday, Feb. 23,
6:30 p.m.**

VTIPL is pleased to present the award-winning documentary, *Yemanjá: Wisdom from the African Heart of Brazil*, narrated by Alice Walker. The film explores the Afro-Brazilian spiritual culture known as Candomblé which evolved from the

ways of enslaved Africans and remains a vital force in Brazil today, if also largely misunderstood. Religious intolerance is widespread, with some devotees and houses of worship targets of violence. The story is told through the voices of distinguished elder women faith leaders. At the request of filmmaker Donna Roberts (VTIPL's Coordinator), we will contribute funds equivalent to a license fee to Vermont organizations working on environmental and racial justice, among the themes of the film. VTIPL will contribute to SUSU Healing Collective's BIPOC Land and Food Sovereignty Fund, and Vermont Racial Justice Alliance. Learn about [SUSU](#) & [VT Racial Justice Alliance](#).

Following the screening, there will be a discussion featuring The Rt. Rev. Dr. Shannon MacVean-Brown, Bishop of the Episcopal Diocese of Vermont, VT IPL Board Vice-President The Rev. Dr. Nancy Wright, and The Rev. Rachel Field of Mission Farm. During the panel, the film's multiple themes will be discussed including Candomblé practitioners' reverence for the natural world, religious intolerance, and implications of women-led faith communities. [Pre-register here and invite others.](#) [Film website and trailer.](#)



March 22, World Water Day

VTIPL is also planning an activity to coincide with World Water Day which is commemorated on March 22. Details to come!

Recap of *A Just Transition for All*

VTIPL's first virtual event of the year, with three dynamic speakers, included a discussion of how environmental, social justice and organized labor organizations can work together to create a better world for all. David Van Deusen, Pres. of VT AFL-CIO, reminded us that we must "work to save both the planet and the people", and "we need to make green jobs union jobs". He described how the direction of his organization has changed since Fall 2019 while emphasizing the promise of jobs in the green energy sector. Kate Logan of Rights and Democracy VT (RAD) discussed the need to build popular support when moving from an extractive to a regenerative (vs. sustainable) economy, and how extractive systems are rooted in systems of oppression. Responding to this, RAD created a training program called *Collective Liberation for White Folks*. The Rev. Jim Antal, a powerful voice for climate in the United Church of Christ (author of *Climate Church, Climate World*), spoke of how climate is a justice issue, and that climate change will make every justice issue worse. He said houses of



"Working Hands". Photo: Gerald Lee Hoffman.

worship need to increase their activity becoming “spokesplaces” for these vital issues, especially considering that “80% of the world considers itself to be religious.” Rev. Antal wants to motivate and equip faith leaders with "the understanding that science and faith are completely compatible". A final comment of the discussion: we need to replace the false notion of infinite growth with spiritual growth. Amen! [Access event recording here](#). Passcode: ^V31YE?2

VTIPL Board Membership Open

Vermont Interfaith Power & Light is seeking Board members. If you have a passion for effecting climate change and understand religious or spiritual faith's connection to Earth stewardship, you may be a candidate for Vermont Interfaith Power & Light's Board. We are also looking for Board members with website design skills. More information about our organization and Board is on our [website](#). Please share with friends or colleagues.

**Interfaith Power & Light
Applauds Biden
Administrations Climate
and Environmental
Justice Executive
Actions**



Interfaith Power & Light
A Religious Response to Global Warming

President Biden took ambitious executive action to address the climate emergency and made strides towards environmental justice. These executive actions will restore science based policy-making; recommit the U.S. to international climate leadership; preserve public lands and oceans; set ambitious domestic pollution reduction goals; and establish a process to root out policies that disadvantage low-income communities and communities of color who bear the brunt of pollution impacts. The actions advance elements of the administration's Build Back Better Plan which is centered on creating economic opportunity and ending racial injustice while rebuilding the economy in a safe and equitable manner.

People of faith and conscience view the climate crisis as one of the defining moral issues of our time....President Biden, a devout Catholic, stated in his inaugural address that, “a cry for survival comes from the planet itself.” Interfaith Power & Light, our congregations, and our supporters hear that cry, and also the cry of the poor, the vulnerable, and communities of color on the front lines of climate impacts. [Read the full news release here.](#)



Update from Montpelier

by VT IPL Board member Richard Butz

The 2021 legislative season is off to the races! While COVID is the gorilla in the room and many thought it would suck out all of the oxygen, there is a great deal of serious work being done on the environmental agenda among other

things. Highlights include:

- Under the Global Warming Solutions Act, the Climate Council has begun to meet and set up operating procedures and sub-committees including:
 - Rural Resilience and Adaptation
 - Cross-Sector Mitigation
 - Just Transitions
 - Agriculture and Ecosystems

Due to Federal Stimulus funding, Vermont is projecting a budget surplus, so there is funding available to accomplish some of these initiatives. One caveat: these are one-time funds.

- \$5 million to encourage electric vehicle purchases including a plan to buy back and replace inefficient vehicles for low and middle income Vermonters
- \$20 million for home weatherization
- \$10 million for solar, low income housing, and broadband

The legislature is jumping into action with several climate-related bills:

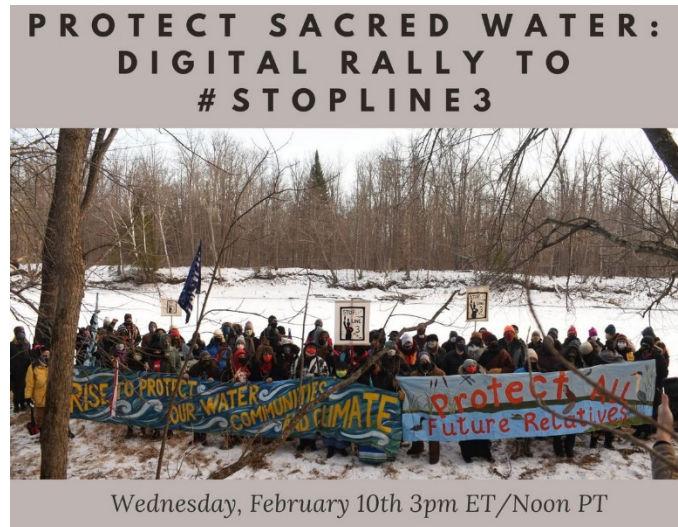
- The Transportation Modernization Act (TMA) seeks to influence the State Transportation Budget to include measures that reduce carbon and transportation costs for Vermonters;
- Creating an All Fuels Energy Efficiency Program. We currently have one for electricity, RGGI, but we need it for all three major sectors of energy use: electricity, thermal, and transportation;
- Weatherization for All: an enhanced weatherization program scaling over time to weatherize 120,000 homes in the next decade.

The bottom line: Montpelier is a really active place, even though most meetings are virtual. And it's all informed by racial justice and equity to achieve a sustainable future.

**IPL Digital Rally to
Protect Sacred Water
Feb. 10, 3 p.m.**

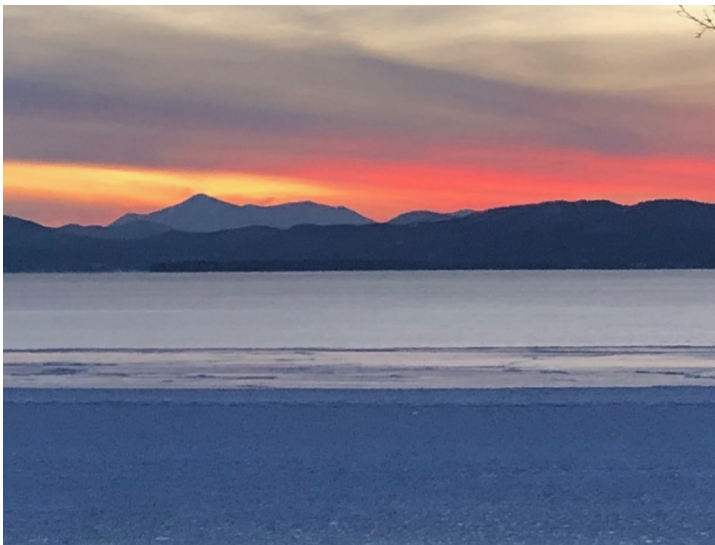
While we celebrate President Biden's use of his executive authority to cancel the Keystone XL Pipeline on his first day in office, we remember it's not the only tar sands oil pipeline that needs to be stopped.

The Line 3 pipeline in Minnesota will cross through Anishinaabe land, violating treaty rights, and putting drinking water, fish, wild rice, and the health of all beings at risk. Construction of the pipeline has been met by prayer and courageous resistance by the community. Join a Digital Rally to #StopLine3 with Tara Houska and Winona Laduke. At the rally, we will learn from Indigenous leaders about resistance to the Line 3 tar sands oil pipeline, their call on Pres. Biden to stop it, and how to stand in solidarity with water protectors on the frontlines. [Register.](#)



Sierra Club Conversation - Reversing the Rollbacks, Feb. 10, 7pm

We are thankful that President Biden has already begun taking action to reverse the rollbacks of the Trump Administration. But what can the new administration do to revamp our federal energy policy, such as some of the most controversial oil pipelines, like Keystone XL and Dakota Access? What about the significant oil and gas production infrastructure proposed in the Gulf? Join the discussion with several Senior Attorneys from Sierra Club's prestigious Environmental Law Program. [Register here.](#)



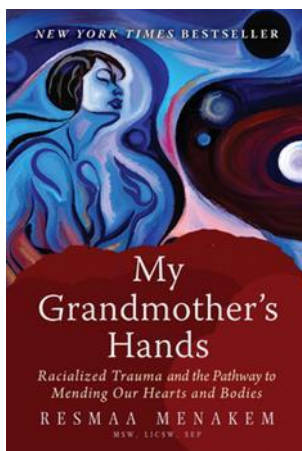
"Winter Sunset" photo: Gerald Lee Hoffman

Vermont Clean Water Network Policy Forum, Feb. 11, 12:00 p.m

This is the annual Clean Water Policy Forum focusing on legislative and regulatory issues.
-Clean Water Policy Update - Hear the latest about clean water issues under consideration in the current legislative

session, and an update on Clean Water Service Providers, and Vermont Agency of Natural Resources budgeting.

-Resilient Recovery Vision - Learn about this new initiative that focuses on how COVID recovery investments and policies can create a future in which both people and nature thrive. [Register here.](#)



Black History Month Resources

During Black History Month in the U.S., many organizations including VTIPL are highlighting programming reflecting racial justice, which so often also means environmental justice. Here are a few noteworthy activities to deepen our understanding.

-PBS Presents: *The Black Church*, Feb. 16.

In this intimate four-hour series from executive producer, host, and writer Henry Louis Gates, Jr., we trace how this came to be in the 400 year-old story of the black church in America, all the way down to its bedrock role as the site of African American survival and endurance, grace and resilience, thriving and testifying, freedom and independence, solidarity and speaking truth to power. [More info and Black Church trailer.](#)

-*Steps to Racial Healing*: Feb. 18, 7 p.m.

Illinois IPL / Faith in Place has a series of programs this month including a Racial Healing Book Discussion. “As the country moves forward with the work of dismantling a culture of systemic racism, this book discussion will explore the work of Isabel Wilkerson, Pulitzer Prize and National Humanities Medal-winning author of *The Warmth of Other Suns* and *Caste*. You do not need to have read her work to attend this event!” [Register for book discussion.](#)

-*Walking Together: Growing in Awareness and Accountability, Putting Our Love into Action.*

Sounds True offers thought-provoking programming with extraordinary writers and teachers of color as part of its commitment to stand with and for Black communities and social change activists working to end racism. Here are two:

Somatic Abolitionism features Resmaa Menakem, a body-centered psychotherapist, healer, and author of, *My Grandmother's Hands: Racialized Trauma and the Pathway to Mending Our Hearts and Bodies*. Menakem begins by speaking of a construct he calls "white-body supremacy—how the white body in our culture is the supreme standard by which all bodies are

measured, both structurally and philosophically." He also discusses the importance of becoming aware of this cultural construct, its 400-year-old history, and how it impacts us today on a cellular and emotional level.

Healing Racism is a powerful three-part webinar featuring Dr. Tiffany Jana. This series looks at how to embrace diversity in our personal lives, in our communities, workplaces, and the wider world. [Sounds True programming.](#)

IPL JEDI Statement: Justice, Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion

Interfaith Power & Light is actively working to become an anti-racist organization. We believe that relationships must be centered in justice and equity within the human family, as well as with all of the natural world. We must strive together toward this sacred goal.

We bear this responsibility with integrity, insisting across our network that we do what is right, even when the path is not obvious or easy. As advocates for climate justice, we commit to working against systemic racism and anti-Blackness; ending both the historic disenfranchisement of Black, Indigenous, and People of Color, and racially-rooted economic and health disparities; and dismantling structures of racial and economic marginalization and colonialism.

Our diverse religious and spiritual traditions call us to work for systemic change and a more just society that embraces differences based on religion, national origin, gender, sexual orientation, gender identity, age, and physical ability. The IPL network will address this with specific, often-updated commitments regarding internal processes, policy positions, diversity efforts, training, funding mechanisms, and more.

Together we will work to reverse paradigms of oppression of humans and the natural world as we build a thriving, inclusive, and equitable future on behalf of all who inhabit this good Earth.

-Adopted by IPL Board of Directors (Oct. 2020)



***What is Jewish About Jewish Environmentalism?* March 1, 4:30 p.m.**

For this year's annual Rabbi Max B. Wall Lecture Series at Saint Michael's College, Professor of Public Policy at Tel Aviv University, Alon Tal, will present, *What is Jewish about Jewish Environmentalism?* In this Zoom event, he argues that Environmentalism and Judaism are essentially synonymous, and that the Jewish perspective has unique insights and approaches to the global challenges of sustainability. The talk offers an interactive exploration of how this ancient tradition perceives human relations with Earth and why it might be relevant for people today. Prof. Tal's career has been a balance between academia and public interest advocacy. He has held appointments at Ben Gurion and Hebrew Universities in Israel, the University of Otago, New Zealand, Stanford University, and Harvard University. Between 2010 and 2013, Tal served as chair of Israel's green party, "the Green Movement." Prof. Tal has written and edited 11 books about the environment and numerous academic articles. His law degree is from Hebrew University; he has a master's and doctorate from the Harvard School of Public Health in Environmental Health Policy. [Click here to join the Zoom discussion.](#)

SunCommon's Climate Action Film Festival March 2-12

The virtual Film Festival brings together activists, filmmakers, and communities to witness and celebrate stories of climate action. CAFF's mission is to amplify voices and inspire further action in addressing the climate crisis, locally and beyond. Raise your voice in the name of climate action! [Learn more & get tickets.](#)





Youth Poet Laureate Amanda Gorman's *Earthrise* Poem

Many of us were profoundly inspired by Youth Poet Laureate of the U.S. Amanda Gorman's recitation of her poem and reading at the recent Inauguration. But did you know she also has a gorgeous piece called *Earthrise*? In this video, Gorman reads her poem about reverence and care for Earth, our home.

[Earthrise video.](#)

Thank you so much for your interest in and support of our work!
We couldn't do it without you!

[Donate Now](#)



"Snow Angel" (aka Donna Roberts at play) photo by Gerald Lee Hoffman



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