



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



Photo courtesy Donna C. Roberts

Green Mountains, Blue Water

Save the date: VT IPL Spring Conference - April 24, Norwich Congregational Church

This winter, VT IPL is busy organizing a series of activities during Earth Month and Faith Climate Action Week. We are thrilled to be planning an in-person VT IPL Spring Conference to take place on the afternoon and early evening of Sunday, April 24, at Norwich Congregational Church, in Norwich, VT. The conference, *Limits to Growth: Pathways to a Sustainable Future*, features keynote speaker UVM Professor Dr. Jon Erickson. We'll soon share details about the four conference workshop themes and associated speakers. Registration will be available via our website next month. COVID-19 safety protocols will be followed during the conference. VT IPL is prepared to make

alternative conference arrangements should our leadership determine that it would be better to convene remotely. We hope and pray that's not the case!

As in the past, VT IPL invites congregations to sponsor our Spring Conference. For a minimum sponsorship donation of \$50, a congregation's name will be listed in conference materials and on VT IPL's website. Thank you for considering sponsoring our signature event. Of course, we encourage pastors/leaders and members of congregations to attend the conference. To inquire about congregational, or other organizational or individual sponsorship opportunities, please send us an [email](#). Thanks!



YOUTH GOV

***Youth v. Gov* Virtual Film Screening & Youth-Led Panel, Thurs., April 14**

First on VT IPL's spring calendar will be a virtual presentation of another compelling film, *Youth v. Gov*, followed by a panel led by Vermont youth on Thursday, April 14. Please plan to join us. The film tells the story of 21 young plaintiffs who - since 2015 – “have been suing the U.S. government for violating their constitutional rights to life, liberty, personal safety, and property through their willful actions in creating the climate crisis they will inherit.” The film is about “empowered youth finding their voice and fighting to protect their rights and our collective future”. The film is offered thanks to an agreement between the filmmakers and national IPL. We’re grateful that VT IPL Board

member Sylvia Burkman, a high school senior, is playing a lead role in this event! Stay tuned for a registration link in future newsletters.

IPL Webinar with *Youth v. Gov* Filmmaker & Plaintiffs, Wed., April 27

Following our screening with a Vermont youth panel on April 14, and VT IPL's Spring Conference on April 24, there will be a national IPL webinar on Wednesday, April 27, with the film's director and two youth plaintiffs from the groundbreaking case featured in the film. Earth Month will be busy!

Vermont Climate Legislation Update & Call to Action

by VT IPL Board member Richard Butz (Full version on our [website](#).)

As we head toward the midpoint of Vermont's legislative season, I think it is useful to assess where we are in relationship to climate policy in the state.

In the last several years a lot has happened. The Global Warming Solutions Act was passed that MANDATES reductions of greenhouse gases in Vermont; the Climate Council has presented its report to the legislature recommending how the mandates can be accomplished; major bills are being drafted; the administration has proposed its goals and budget; unprecedented amounts of federal money have flowed in; and the climate crisis, yes crisis, becomes more dire with every scientific report.

As we try to "Build Back Better," it is also imperative that we take this opportunity to address the wrongs that have accumulated regarding those who have been left out or cast out. We need to bake climate justice into everything we do from this point forth. You'll see this in legislation and policy going forward. I believe our legislators are committed to it, and as people of faith, we are, too.

We need to understand, however, that our legislators and Governor have a herculean task confronting them, and we need to thank them. Secondly, we need to educate ourselves about priorities. Everyone should read Vermont Conservation Voters' Vermont's 2022 Environmental [Common Agenda](#).

Finally, after getting up to date on the issues, we need to act by contacting our legislators to tell them that we're paying attention and to inform them of our priorities. I suggest we call, email, or write to our legislators and tell them: "We are people of faith who care about our kids' and grandkids' future on this

Earth. We know climate change is affecting us right now. We know it will get worse if we don't act now. We want our representatives and Governor to act decisively right now. We must pass legislation and allocate significant funding to immediately begin reducing our greenhouse gas emissions, starting with bottom-up programs that relieve pressure on those who are often most affected, the poor, and those who have historically been left out. We don't have time to waste; our house really is burning."

Contact information for your legislators is on [VTIPL's website](#). Thanks for caring and for taking action!



Build Back Better Update & *Climate Can't Wait* IPL Petition

As you may know, negotiations among the White House, Senate Leadership, and Senator Manchin have slowed along with other issues that have been taken up in the Senate. It's expected that there will soon be a stand-alone bill that includes the climate provisions of the Build Back Better Act along with a new name. President Biden has indicated that he hopes to have it taken up by his March 1 State of the Union speech. Now is a critical time to keep up the drumbeat of support for climate action. We need to pass the most comprehensive version of Build Back Better policies as possible, including \$550 billion investments that will deliver on climate, justice, jobs, and clean energy.

***Climate Can't Wait* Petition**

"We have a moral responsibility as a nation, and a sacred task as people of faith, to care for our climate and to leave a safe and thriving world for future generations." Please help circulate this *Climate Can't Wait* petition calling on President Biden, his cabinet, and every member of Congress to do all they can to pass the \$550 billion in climate investments. The petition will be delivered to the White House and Capitol Hill on February 25 along with thousands of other signatures collected by our partner groups. Please share the petition with your communities. "Our climate, our communities, our people,

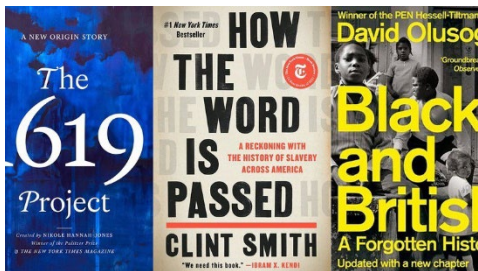
and our faith compel us to call for bold and just action. The time to act for our climate and our neighbors is now!" **The signing deadline is February 23rd.** Access [petition](#).



Uprooting Racism in the Food System, Soul Fire Farm Training, Feb.16

February is Black History Month, and we'd like to highlight a very special offering of Soul Fire Farm. This 1-4 pm ET virtual activity is a theory and action

training for farming and food justice leaders to uproot systemic racism in our organizations and society. Delve deep into the history and structural realities of racial injustice, and develop an understanding of the movement strategies of front-line communities struggling for food sovereignty. Soul Fire Farm is a New York-based Afro-indigenous centered community farm committed to uprooting racism and seeding sovereignty in the Food System. The same workshop will be held March 3. [Register for 2/16 workshop](#). [Soul Fire Farm](#).



Setting the Record Straight - Global Citizen Book List

Global Citizen suggests a list of books for Black History Month, *Setting the Historical Record Straight for Racial Justice*. As American writer and activist James Baldwin once said, 'history

shapes "our frames of reference, our identities, and our aspirations". [Book list](#).

Honoring Spiritual Leaders/Activists Archbishop Tutu & Thich Nhat Hanh

We want to acknowledge the recent passing of two of the world's most beloved spiritual leaders whose lives also exemplified brave activism.

Archbishop Desmond Tutu passed away on December 26, 2021, at the age of 90, shortly after VT IPL presented the film, *Mission: JOY*, about the extraordinary relationship between Tutu and His Holiness The Dalai

Lama...and their fabulous laughter! Tutu, who played a key role in ending apartheid in South Africa and led South Africa's Truth and Reconciliation Commission, was also a climate activist.

Just a few weeks later, we learned of the passing of Zen Buddhist monk Thich Nhat Hanh, at 95, the Vietnamese monk and peace activist largely responsible for bringing the practice of mindfulness to the West and socially-engaged Buddhism to his country and the East. Martin Luther King Jr. nominated Hanh for the Nobel Peace Prize for his non-violent resistance to the Vietnam War which apparently prompted MLK Jr. to speak out against the conflict. Thich Nhat Hanh lived primarily in France, in the Plum Village Community he founded, which also has affiliated centers around the world including in Vermont.

On Being with Krista Tippett recently shared a wonderful 2010 interview with Nobel Laureate and Archbishop Emeritus of Cape Town Tutu. [Listen.](#)

Oprah Winfrey had the honor of interviewing Thich Nhat Hanh as in this video posted by Plum Village. [Watch.](#) [Read the interview.](#)



**Faith Climate Action
Week Printed
Organizer's Kit
Available**

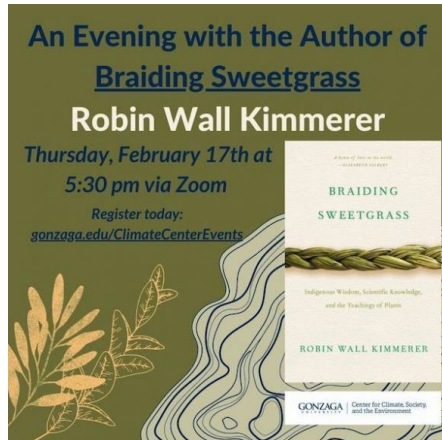
April 22 - May 1 is
Interfaith Power &
Light's 2022 Faith
Climate Action Week.

The theme is *Sacred Trust: Our children's right to a livable future*. Resources and materials invite us to examine our responsibility to safeguard our Earth for future generations, and how our faiths call us to respond with bold and just solutions to climate change. A printed Organizer's Kit with themed activities, blessings, sermon resources and more is available to buy for \$24. Digital kits will soon be available at no charge. [Order Printed Kit.](#)

Other Upcoming Activities:

-Vermont Lobby Day, Wednesday, Feb. 16

We are all invited to Rights & Democracy's *Vermont Lobby Day 2022* next Wednesday to "come together and raise our voices on the issues at the heart of our work. It is critical that our elected leaders hear directly from the people impacted by the decisions made in the State House. This is a chance to share your story and your personal stake on issues from environmental justice to tenants' rights." [Register.](#)



-Evening with *Braiding Sweetgrass*

Author Robin Wall Kimmerer, Feb. 17

Join Gonzaga University's Center for Climate, Society, and the Environment for an evening with award-winning author of *Braiding Sweetgrass*, Robin Wall Kimmerer, on Thursday, February 17, at 8:30 p.m. ET. ^[LIVE]_[SEP]^[SEP] "Braiding Sweetgrass: Indigenous Wisdom, Scientific Knowledge, and the Teachings of Plants" is about

alternative forms of Indigenous knowledge outside of traditional scientific methodologies. The book reframes the relationship between land and humans by exploring themes of reciprocity. *Braiding Sweetgrass* focuses on plants and botany as seen through Native American traditions and Western scientific traditions." Prof. Kimmerer is an enrolled member of the Citizen Potawatomi Nation. She is SUNY Distinguished Teaching Professor of Environmental Biology and founding director of the Center for Native Peoples and the Environment. Register for this [free event](#).

-Finding Common Ground-Science, Spirituality, Environmentalism-Feb. 22

"How can spiritual and faith-based knowledge systems inform the weather, water, and climate enterprise?" Join this program at 12 Noon on February 22 to hear from panelists across various spiritual/faith-based backgrounds on environmentalism, and how the American Meteorological Society and spiritual/faith communities can work together in this important space. Presented by the AMS Interfaith Committee. [Register.](#)



-One Earth Film Fest March 4-13

Reserve your tickets for the *One Earth Film Fest*. “Some films have a limited capacity, and all screenings are free (with suggested donation), so grab your spot before it’s snatched up by someone who’s equally

passionate about the planet.” [Tickets.](#) [Trailer.](#)

[Donate Now](#)

Thank you for your ongoing support of our work providing a faith-based response to the climate crisis. We are so grateful!



Photo courtesy Donna C. Roberts

