



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

VTIPL Conference Wrap, Green Congregation of the Year & More



Photo courtesy Donna C. Roberts

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l. to r.: VTipl Board members Pr. Nancy Wright, Sam Swanson, Betsy Hardy, Sr. Laurian Seeber, Ron McGarvey, Richard Butz & Coordinator Donna Roberts.

VTipl Conference a Success!

(Submitted by VTipl Board member and Conference Chair Betsy Hardy)

It had been more than two years since VTipl's last conference, and it was a joy to have one this year!

Held at Norwich

Congregational Church in

the afternoon on Sunday, April 24, it was so good to meet in person again. Though there were still COVID protocols - wearing masks, social distancing, and some open windows for extra ventilation - it was like previous conferences in many ways. The attendance was lower than in the past, but for a pandemic year, it was a good turnout, and the conference was a success.



Friends from Weybridge Congregational Church with Award.

Norwich Church pastor Rev. Jonathan Hauze and VTipl's President Ron McGarvey welcomed everyone, and several Board members spoke, including Harris Webster who shared a quote from the late Donella Meadows to whom the Conference was dedicated. Board member Richard Butz presented VTipl's first

Green Congregation of the Year award to Weybridge Congregational Church. This came with a plaque and a \$500 check for the church to use for a green activity or project in their church or community. Read about Weybridge Church's impressive accomplishments on [VTipl's website](#).



The keynote address of Dr. Jon Erickson and the three workshops were well-received. Near the end of the gathering, we went outside to share reflections in a circle. Poems and prayers were offered. And we shared hopes for the future while

appreciating our surroundings. We finally joined in a song of thanks.

We are very grateful for the generous hospitality of Norwich Congregational Church (special shout out to Rev. Hauze and to Pam Piper). Many thanks to Jon Erickson and our workshop leaders, our conference sponsors, and to Norwich Bookstore, and Bob "the Green Guy" for videotaping the conference.

Please visit VTIPL's [website](#) for more information about the conference leaders, more photos, and a link to the videos of the conference (including welcomes, the keynote, and three workshops) and much more!

Thanks to Betsy for this summary and for serving as 2022 Conference Chair!



UVM Prof. Jon Erickson

During his keynote, UVM's Dr. Jon Erickson shared anecdotes of animated experiences with students illustrating their notions about ecological growth and limits to growth. He discussed the latest climate statistics while underscoring what's at stake

for us all. Participants also got a preview of his new book, *The Progress Illusion: Reclaiming our Future from the Fairytale of Economics* which will be available this summer. Jon has published widely on energy & climate change

policy, land conservation, watershed planning, environmental public health, and the theory and practice of ecological economics.

The theme of the Conference led us to dedicate the gathering to Donella Meadows, lead author of the book, *The Limits to Growth*; 2022 is the 50th anniversary of its initial publication. We couldn't have been happier that workshop leader Dr. Marta Ceroni is Co-director of the [Academy for Systems Change](#) the organization which continues the work of Donella Meadows.



Marta Ceroni in workshop mode.

The first workshop, *Systems Change Frames for Climate Action Inspired by the Work of Donella Meadows*, was attended by all at the Conference. It was the perfect follow-up to Jon Erickson's keynote, and we all

appreciated his participation in the workshop. Led by Marta Ceroni, Ph.D., who has worked with Jon on numerous occasions, the activity invited participants to dream more deeply about our hopes for Earth, the climate, and other issues which have personal and community meaning for each person. Marta challenged us to imagine steps we can now be taking toward manifesting those visions with tools that we have and people who we know while considering what capacities we may still need to develop. Breakout moments offered opportunities for connection, sharing, and "listening deeply", as Marta urged.

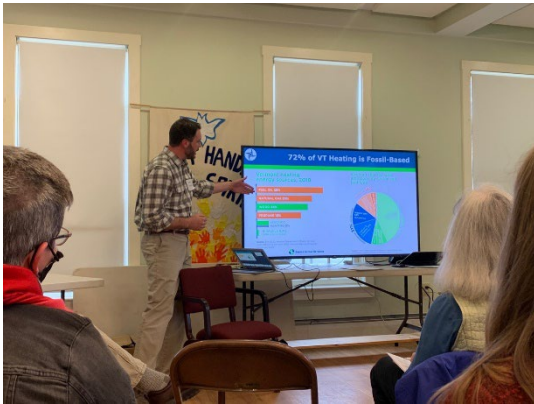
Participants then chose between two late-afternoon sessions.



Fueling Our Homes: The Sacred and Profane

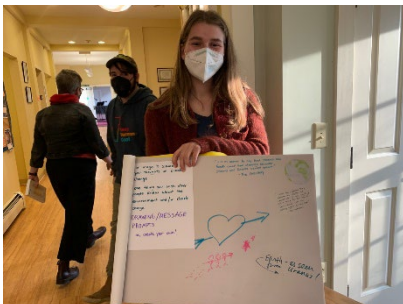
We are thrilled that the Rev, Joan Javier-Duval and Jared Duval took us up on our invitation to collaborate on a presentation for our conference! As their session title suggested, participants were invited to consider the energy choices we make at home are a

key part of reducing carbon emissions. It is within our power - pardon the pun - to make a difference.



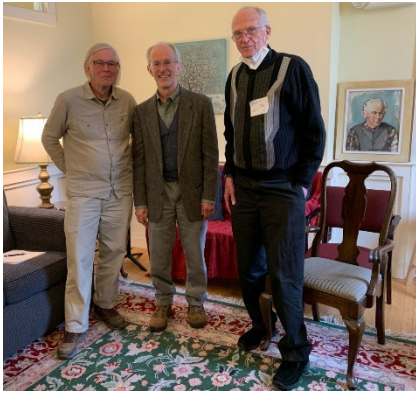
Rev. Joan helped us consider the theological and spiritual underpinnings of these choices, while Jared reviewed the more practical matters such as aspects of the Climate Action Plan, including shifting towards more renewable energy options for our home heating and transportation

choices. His personal examples of changes they've made in their own home and transportation helped bring it all home for us! The Rev. Joan Javier-Duval is Minister of the Unitarian Church of Montpelier [UCM](#). Jared Duval is Executive Director of Energy Action Network (EAN) and serves on the Vermont Climate Council. [EAN](#).



During breaks between sessions VTIPL Board member and South Burlington High School senior Sylvia Burkman stood by with poster and markers ready to assist conference-goers in illustrating their dreams for a more just and sustainable future.

VTIPL Board member Sylvia Burkman



Center & left, Bob Fireovid & friend;
VTIPL Board member Harris Webster on
right.

[Better\(not
Bigger\)Vermont.](#)

Citizen Toolkit for Creating a Sustainable Community Through Town Zoning

Regulations with Bob Fireovid

Bob Fireovid, Executive Director of Better(not Bigger)Vermont, led a workshop focused on how town zoning regulations can lead to more sustainable communities. Better(notbigger)Vermont motivates people to take actions to reduce the impacts of growing consumption, development, and population on the environment, economy, and quality of life. [Better\(not](#)

Thanks again to these organizational sponsors of our Spring Conference!

Efficiency Vermont

Lyme Green Heat

Vermont Public Interest Research Group (VPIRG)

Norwich Solar Technologies

Sierra Club - Vermont Chapter

Greenvest

Preservation Trust of Vermont

Vermont Natural Resources Council (VNRC)/VECAN

Conference Videos Available!

Again, be sure to check out the videos of our Conference keynote and workshops which are now available via our website. If you were unable to attend VTIPL's Spring Conferrece and would like to view recordings of our excellent programming, please consider making a donation to VTIPL as a gesture of reciprocity via the Donate button at the bottom of the newsletter or on our [website.](#)

If you attended the conference and did not yet complete our evaluation, we would be very grateful to receive your feedback. You could scan and return it, or send your comments by [email](#). Thanks!

Vermont's Clean Heat Standard Back to the Drawing Board

Like many other organizations in our state that care about solutions to the climate crisis and cutting carbon emissions, VTIPL has been closely monitoring recent developments with the Clean Heat Standard. This week, the bill died in the State House. Stay tuned for future news about revised versions of this potentially important proposal to impact the climate crisis.

VTDigger reports, "By a single vote, Vermont's House of Representatives has sent the state's largest climate bill back to the drawing board, failing to override Gov. Phil Scott's veto. Scott vetoed the clean heat standard bill, H.715, on May 6, citing concerns about the large role of the state's Public Utility Commission and potential cost implications for Vermonters, sending the bill back to the House. It needed 100 votes to pass — and earned 99, with 51 lawmakers voting 'no.' Born out of the state's Climate Action Plan, the clean heat standard was designed to measurably reduce emissions in the state's thermal sector. Heating Vermont's buildings produces more than a third of the state's greenhouse gas emissions — the thermal sector is second in line behind transportation." [Read full VTDigger story.](#)



**Tell SEC to Make
Public Companies
Disclose Climate
Impacts & Plans**
*Thanks to National
Interfaith Power &*

Light for this call to action.

The Securities and Exchange Commission is proposing a rule to require public companies to disclose to investors and the federal government how their operations affect the climate, and how they are addressing climate risks. This is excellent news and will be a big step forward in helping us all hold companies accountable for their climate impacts and risks. But large

corporations and their congressional allies are gearing up to fight it. We are asking you to send a public comment urging the SEC to adopt this rule.

We know that climate change poses enormous financial and economic risks, and publicly traded companies have a major role in our economy. Are they preparing for climate change? Are they reducing their own emissions? Right now, we don't necessarily have a good way of knowing.

If passed, this rule will require companies to report climate data annually in shareholder reports and stock registration information.

We have a few more weeks to comment.

Large businesses are threatening lawsuits and claiming the SEC doesn't have the right to require this information. That's why we need to have thousands of comments of support submitted by people of faith and conscience. Investors and all of us deserve to have this kind of information to better align our investments with our values. [Voice your support.](#)



Video of VTIPL's Youth-Led Discussion of *Youth v. Gov* Film coincides with Netflix Release

We are happy to share with our community a video recording of the dynamic youth-led discussion that followed VTIPL's special preview

screening of the film, *Youth v. Gov* last month. The film - released on Netflix globally on April 29 - tells the story of 21 youth plaintiffs suing the U.S. government for violating their constitutional rights by perpetuating the climate crisis through its policies. Following our screening, South Burlington High School senior and VTIPL Board member Sylvia Burkman moderated an inspiring discussion about the climate crisis and youth activism featuring: Emily Thompson, an Environmental Justice major at Middlebury College where she is Hub Coordinator of the College's Chapter of the national Sunrise Movement; Nadia Nazar, Co-Founder, former Co-Executive Director, and Art Director of the youth-led Climate Organization Zero Hour; and film producer Olivia Ahnemann. Watch the film on Netflix then view the [video of VTIPL youth-led discussion.](#)



***The Power of Big Oil* PBS FRONTLINE
Series Now Streaming**

If you missed the extraordinary PBS Frontline Series, *The Power of Big Oil*, be sure to watch the the three documentaries now available for streaming online. As the final comment indicates, "We can't solve the climate crisis, until we solve the information crisis". [Access PBS FRONTLINE Series.](#)



Photo courtesy Donna C. Roberts

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

[Donate Now](#)



