



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



Photo courtesy Donna C. Roberts

Green Mountains, Blue Water

Happy Holidays!

- VTIPL Virtual Film & Discussion, *The Letter: A Message for our Earth*, Jan. 5
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- Play Every Town* – 252 Community Concerts for a Cooler Climate
- Paul Winter's Solstice Celebration - Now Available



VTIPL Virtual Film/Discussion, *The Letter: A Message for our Earth*, Jan. 5

We are happy to announce our first event of 2023! On **Thursday, January 5, at 7 p.m.**, VTIPL will host a screening of *The Letter: A Message for Our Earth*. The documentary features Pope Francis interacting with five leaders on the frontlines of the climate crisis - individuals representing the voices of Indigenous people, the youth, the poor, and the wildlife of our planet. The Letter is a reference to *Laudato Si'*, Pope Francis's *Encyclical on Climate Change & Inequality: On Care for Our Common Home*, published in 2015. Created by the Laudato Si' Movement and an award-winning film production team, the film is about dialogue that calls for a change of heart. At a news conference announcing the film, the Chair of the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change, Dr. Hoesung Lee, said: "Today is a special day for the alliance between science and faith. Humanity is at a crossroads. Both the science community and the faith community are clear: the planet is in crisis and its life-support systems are in peril. The stakes have never been higher. May the world receive this 'Letter' with an open heart and open mind."

Our screening will be followed by a community conversation moderated by VTIPL Vice President The Rev. Dr. Nancy Wright. Please register to join our screening/discussion and share with friends. After registering, you'll receive an email with a link to join the event. [Register for film event.](#) Donations are welcome to support this program using the link below, but are not required to participate in the film event. [Watch film trailer.](#)

[Donate Now](#)

Vermont's Energy Future, Legislative Review & Climate Justice Alert

(by VTIPL Board member Richard Butz)

The legislative session that begins on January 4, 2023 and concludes in May/June 2024 is going to be critical for Vermont's drive to significantly lower carbon emissions sustainably and equitably. Alone among the New England States, Vermont has actually been losing ground; our emissions have gone up rather than down. We know that our biggest emitters of carbon dioxide are from the Transportation Sector (40%), and the Thermal Sector (47%). And we know that as we electrify our vehicles and buildings, the demand for electricity from renewable sources will increase dramatically.

So first let's consider the Transportation Sector. Already, Vermont has signed on to the Clean Cars and Trucks II Rule following California's lead to ban the sale of fossil fuel-powered cars and light trucks after 2035, and place increasing restrictions on heavy trucks through to 2050. In Vermont, we have in place state and federal incentives to purchase certain electric and hybrid-electric vehicles. Programs are rolling out to electrify our buses and make public bus routes more accessible and free of charge. There are funds available now for EV chargers in public places and rental properties. As the legislature considers the Transportation Bill and other related bills, we need to advocate that low-income people have access to these programs. And we need to advocate for safe streets and good sidewalks for walkers and cyclists, and bus shelters for riders. [Please read Richard Butz's full article.](#)



Third Act: Older Vermonters Protest Climate Change, Protect Democracy

They - or we! - fought for civil rights, marched against the Vietnam War, saw Richard Nixon resign his presidency, and started the Second Wave of Women's

Liberation. That was the "first act." Tending to their private lives was the "second act." Now, they are organizing again for their "Third Act" - nationally and in Vermont. Nationally, Third Act is a new movement founded by Bill McKibben and led by an advisory council with extensive experience in

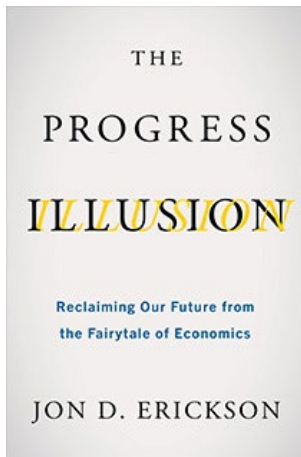
organizing and activism. Third Act is enlisting people over the age of 60 to come back and protest how our country is not addressing the climate crisis and threats to our democracy. The timing is right, as ten thousand people reach 60 every day and elders control a large part of the country's wealth. During its first year, Third Act has had phenomenal growth; there are eleven regional working groups.

Expressing his appreciation to Third Actors, McKibben wrote: “Thanks for the enormous efforts of the last year, from writing postcards to marching to going to jail. Third Actors accomplished enormous things: blocked pipelines, helped pass massive climate legislation, freed up hundreds of millions of dollars for heat pumps, and provided the margin in narrow elections. You've helped redeem our faith in the goodness of people and the possibility that we can work together for the common good....” The next Third Act virtual meeting is **tonight/December 19, at 7:30 p.m.** Get involved and [learn more](#).

Speth-McKibben: *Energy advances have given Vermont a great opportunity*

(This VTDigger commentary published December 15, 2022, is by Gus Speth of Strafford, VT, whose most recent book is *They Knew: The U.S. Government's Fifty-Year Role in Causing the Climate Crisis*, and Bill McKibben of Ripton, VT, founder most recently of the non-profit, Third Act.)

“When it comes to the climate crisis, there’s almost never any virtue in moving slowly — physics is giving us so little time to meet the challenge that each year that passes makes the job harder. And so we’ve watched a little ruefully in the last few years as Montpelier has failed to seal the deal on new climate legislation. But delay, in this case, may have its uses. Because in the larger world, the last few years have seen remarkable developments that undercut some of our old ideas about energy.” [Read full VTDigger Commentary.](#)



UVM Prof. Jon Erickson's New Book, *The Progress Illusion: Reclaiming Our Future from the Fairytale of Economics*

VTIPL encourages you to read the latest work of UVM Professor and Ecological Economist Jon Erickson, *The Progress Illusion: Reclaiming Our Future from the Fairytale of Economics*. Erickson was the keynote speaker at VTIPL's 2022 Spring Conference with the theme, *Limits to Growth: Pathways to a Sustainable Future*. He says, "I wrote *The Progress Illusion* because I'm convinced that

economics as currently taught and practiced will ensure a planetary path to ruin. The mainstream of my field tells a story centered on a very narrow caricature of humanity as greedy and independent. It's a story that assumes the Earth is limitless and at our disposal. It's a fairytale detached from biophysical reality and lacking a moral compass. The fate of people and planet depends on upending this illusion and writing a new story based on care, cooperation, interdependence, and stewardship." Buy a copy from Island Press, using code ILLUSION, for a 20% discount. The book can also be ordered from your local bookseller. [Order with Island Press for discount.](#)

A Review of *The Progress Illusion* (By VTIPL Board member Harris Webster)

"VTIPL's Spring Conference keynote speaker professor Jon Erickson's book has just been released. Whether you attended our gathering or not, it is a book more than well worth reading, even purchasing and re-reading. Jon's speech at the conference contained enticing thoughts we all needed to hear, but in my opinion, the book format brings out many more details that I needed to hear and have access to. I believe all Americans concerned about not just the climate crisis, but the broader crises facing American society will find this a deeply satisfying read.

In his first chapter, Jon explores his personal story of how he came to be an ecological economist. Too few Americans including our leaders are even aware of or pay serious attention to this exciting variation of economics based on the premise that society's economic system is a sub-system of Earth's ecological system, not the other way round." Read Harris's [full review on VTIPL's website.](#)



IPL Post-COP27 Webinar Recording

National IPL and several state affiliates had a strong presence at the recent COP27 international climate conference in Egypt. Referred to as “the implementation summit”, this was the year when nations were expected to demonstrate that they are ready to turn their commitments from the 2015 Paris Agreement and beyond into action. In a recent webinar, IPL President Susan Hendershot and others shared about the significance of the faith presence and its impact at COP27. Watch the webinar for explanations and insights regarding the summit's major outcome, a Loss and Damage Fund to support developing nations most affected by climate change which have also contributed the least in terms of greenhouse gases. [View post-COP27 webinar.](#)



Play Every Town – 252 Community Concerts for a Cooler Climate

Pianist David Feurzeig intends to play a free concert in every town in Vermont.

According to David’s website: “Live music is back after a long Covid pause.

Great! But existing touring models are

not sustainable. Like so much of our everyday fossil-fuel-intensive culture, touring needs to change rapidly and radically if we are to maintain a livable world. Long-distance jet-dependent concertizing is not limited to star performers: for academic musicians as well, like me, there are incentives to fly, fly, fly. The farther the gig, the more prestige and promotion/tenure brownie points earned—even at UVM, my green-branded employer. But I’ve given up flying. I’ll have to travel to the rest of my gigs by public transit or in my solar-powered EV, and that’s going to narrow my radius. And there’s so

much beauty and variety right here in Vermont. I think about what Thoreau said: 'I have traveled a good deal in Concord.' So I decided to play 251 concerts in my little home state." To see the concert schedule, and contact David and his team about playing in your town, visit the [Play Every Town website](#).



Paul Winter's Solstice Celebration Now Available

And finally, the 43rd annual Paul Winter Consort Winter Solstice Celebration, a video retrospective, is now available to watch for free on YouTube.

Entitled *Solstice Saga*, this three-hour journey interweaves performances from the first forty years of these celebrations at New York's Cathedral of St. John the Divine. *Solstice Saga* includes performances by 12 special guests, including Brazil's Ivan Lins and Fabiana Cozza; Russia's Dmitri Pokrovsky Ensemble; Gary Brooker, lead singer of Procol Harum; Ireland's Davy Spillane and Níóirín Ní Riain; Noel Paul Stookey of Peter, Paul and Mary; and Abdoulaye Diabaté of Mali, along with the African drumming and dancing of the Forces of Nature Dance Theatre.

What a great way to welcome back the light! [Watch on Youtube](#).

We wish you a wonderful holiday season and a new year with abundant health, and we wish for a sustainable future for all of Creation.

We look forward to seeing you in 2023.



Photo courtesy Gerald Hoffman; fused-glass ornament made by Paula Willoquet.

