



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



Winooski River near Lake Champlain. Photo courtesy Gerald Lee Hoffman.

Green Mountains, Blue Water

* Message from VTIPL & Resources for those Impacted by Flooding

* *Finding Balance in Times of Darkness: An Equinox Lament & Celebration of Earth.* VTIPL September 23 Event at Rock Point

* TONIGHT! Sierra Club Virtual Activist Training: *Effective Public Comments*, Tues., July 18, 6 p.m.

* TONIGHT! 350VT *Let's Change the Headlines!* Tues., July 18, 7p.m.

* **Share Input on VT Agency of Transportation Carbon Reduction Strategy**

* ***Vermont's flooding was historic. What role did climate change play?***
VTDigger

* **From IPL: *Renew America's Nonprofits Grants for Congregations***

* ***Seeing is (or is not) Believing*, by Prof. Rebecca Kneale Gould**

* **Donor Offers Matching Challenge to New & Existing VTIPL Supporters**

* **ONGOING: Green Team & EcoSpirituality Gatherings**



We at VTIPL hope and pray for the safety and well-being of all Vermont communities, especially those who have been directly affected by the terrifying floods. As the waters recede and the clean-up continues - as do the summer rains - please stay safe and help your neighbors as you are able.

At South Burlington donation site.

We in the climate movement know that solutions are found in working together and supporting each other. Look locally to see how you can find and offer support.

Houses of worship are providing shelter, cooling, nourishment of body and spirit. These expanding and essential roles for congregations will surely increase as the climate crisis worsens. Our notion of the functions of churches, temples, spiritual communities is broadening.

Many of us are acutely aware that the floods and the air pollution from Canadian wildfires are directly related to human-caused climate change. We can no longer act as if this is a problem for the future. Climate change is here now. The air we breathe, the rains that fall, the rivers that flood, the water we drink, the land.... It is all connected. Just as all humans are connected and

reliant on each other, we are interdependent with all of nature, all creatures, and all of Creation.

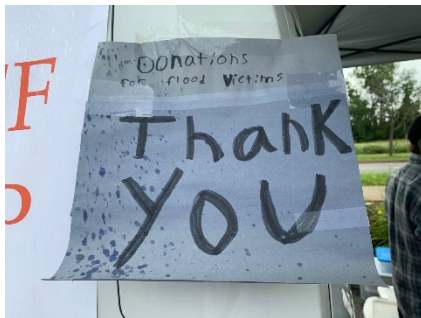
We invite you to work with us as we educate and advocate, lament and celebrate Earth and all Creation with our communities across Vermont, the nation, and the world. National boundaries mean little in times like these. We truly are all in this together.

Don't forget about our matching Climate Action Grants to congregations striving to lessen impacts of the climate crisis. [VTIPL's Matching Grants](#). Please read more below and register for VTIPL's September 23, *Finding Balance in Times of Darkness: an Equinox Lament & Celebration of Earth* at Rock Point, on the shore of Lake Champlain in Burlington.

Thank you for supporting Vermont Interfaith Power & Light's efforts to make a difference.

Stay safe! BE well,

Donna C. Roberts
VTIPL



Recovery Resources

Here are some resources we hope can be helpful to you and your communities.

Thanks to our friends at **350VT** for creating this Mutual Aid [Spreadsheet](#).

We are grateful to the **Peace & Justice**

Center for sharing these resources:

Volunteer Opportunities

- Department of Public Safety Vermont [Emergency Management](#).
- Volunteer with [Montpelier Alive](#).
- Vermonters Affected by [Flooding Initiative](#).

Funding and Donations

- NOFA-VT's [Farmer Emergency Fund](#).
- Intervale Recovery Fund [Intervale Recovery Fund](#).



View from Rock Point.

Finding Balance in Times of Darkness: An Equinox Lament & Celebration of Earth, Saturday, September 23, 1-4 pm, Rock Point

Please join VTIPL for our fall Equinox gathering to embrace the light and darkness of these times...as Joanna Macy has called, “The Great Turning.” We invite you to *Finding Balance in Times of Darkness: An Equinox Lament & Celebration of Earth*, on September 23, 1-4 p.m. (event may conclude earlier) at Rock Point Center on the shore of Lake Champlain, in Burlington. As light and darkness stand in a fleeting moment of balance, we welcome all.

Who should attend?

In this time of climate crises, we often find ourselves experiencing grief for what has already been lost or what we may soon lose: clean air, cool waters, beloved birds, treasured forests, vulnerable communities, not to mention our own optimism and innocence. Many of us long for time, space, and community to express both our grief and love for Earth. This Equinox gathering creates a moment to acknowledge Earth’s gifts, along with the griefs and losses we may be holding...a ritual occasion to step outside our routines and attend to the hopes, fears, and longings of living on a beautiful Earth in a profoundly vulnerable moment.

Facilitated by nature-loving Jewish, Christian and spiritual-but-not-necessarily-religious leaders from VTIPL’s communities, our gathering welcomes all.

What Will We Do?

We will gather and create community, with time for silence and music, quiet contemplation, and for circle sharing. A central component is an opportunity to BE on the land (or to enjoy the view from indoors) for personal connection with the natural world, a time to experience grief, gratitude, whatever arises. Our intention is to depart having connected with nature and one another in ways that leave us energized and renewed for the work and service ahead.

The event fee is \$20 per person.

Partial or full scholarships are available. No one will be turned away for financial reasons. For any special considerations send us an [email](#).

REGISTER

Go to our [website](#) to complete the registration form electronically or by printing and sending it back to us with a check. You can complete the form online, then copy & paste (or scan) the info. and return by [email](#), OR print the form, complete it, then return it with a check payable to VTIPL, to VTIPL, P.O. Box 3095, Burlington, VT 05408. Please include "Sept. 23 event" in memo line.

If submitting your form by email, you may also pay the registration fee online securely via Network for Good using the DONATE link below, or on our website's homepage. When using the online donate option, please be sure to complete the field, "Designation", indicating "Sept. 23 Event".

Please spread the word about the event with your friends and networks. Contact us for more information or to volunteer. [Contact VTIPL](#).

[Donate Now](#)

TONIGHT! Sierra Club Activist Virtual Training, July 18, 6-6:30 p.m.

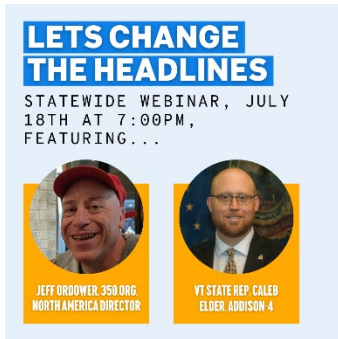
To help prepare for the upcoming VTrans Carbon Reduction Strategy hearings, Sierra Club VT is hosting a short activist training tonight, at 6 p.m. focusing on how to offer effective public comment at hearings. Join Sierra Club communications volunteer Rick Morris in this activist training session to learn how your voice can help Vermont be successful in reducing transportation emissions. Register to attend the [activist training](#).

Share Input on VT Agency of Transportation Carbon Reduction Strategy. August hearing date TBC (July 19 HEARINGS POSTPONED)

Vermont's Agency of Transportation is holding virtual hearings on the Carbon Reduction Strategy. Vermont is to receive \$ 7 million dollars per year upon submitting a plan to the federal government on how to reduce emissions in the transportation sector. It is vital for us to attend the hearings.

- VTrans is tasked with 40% of VT's carbon reduction.
- VTrans needs public feedback to unlock \$7 million/year in federal funds.

- In August, we'll have the opportunity to advise VTrans how to use the money.



TONIGHT! Let's Change the Headlines!

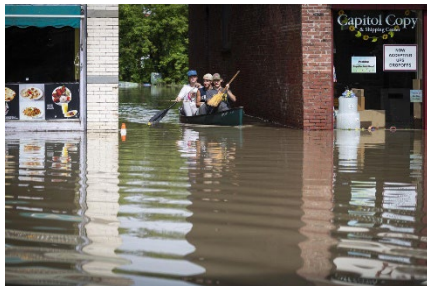
Tuesday, July 18, at 7p.m.

350VT invites everyone to a virtual meeting with Jeff Ordower, 350.org North America Director, and Vermont State Rep. Caleb Elder to discuss what we can do this year to significantly and justly slash Vermont's emissions and stop the utilities and the Public Utility Commission from delaying

action.

As Vermonters, we come together to care for each other in the aftermath of extreme weather events. But that isn't enough. We must move urgently to stop burning things for our energy. We must instead conserve and invest in energy efficiency, weatherization, public transportation, and low-emission renewables like solar, geothermal, and wind.

Please join this statewide webinar tonight, Tues., July 18 at 7pm. to learn about work across Vermont and what you can do. [RSVP & Register.](#)



Canoeists paddle onto a flooded Main Street in Montpelier on Tuesday, July 11, 2023. Photo by Glenn Russell/VTDigger

Vermont's flooding was historic. What role did climate change play?

(This excerpt is from a VTDigger story by Peter D'Auria on 7/12/2023.)

"Over the past three days, rainfall and flooding reached levels not seen in nearly 100 years in much of Vermont.

Rainfall in Montpelier set an all-time daily record on July 10. And several gauges

across the state reported record high river levels. But behind the anomalous weather, scientists and officials see a larger trend: climate change.

Vermont experts interviewed by VTDigger said that, while it's impossible to blame one unusual weather event on climate change, there is a clear link between increasing temperatures and extreme weather." [Full VTDigger story.](#)

From National IPL: *Renew America's Nonprofits* Grant Program includes Congregations

The federal Department of Energy (DOE) has announced the launch of the *Renew America's Nonprofits* grant program; congregations are eligible. Interfaith Power & Light is planning to apply as a Prime recipient. The program aims to provide funding of up to \$200,000. per project to support the reduction of energy use and emissions, as well as lower utility costs in nonprofit facilities. By redirecting the savings, nonprofits can further their mission-critical work, enhance their organizational capacity, and better serve their communities.

It's important to note that – for this program - energy efficiency upgrades do not include solar and other renewable energy sources, and the buildings must be owned by a registered 501(c)3 or tax-exempt congregations. There will also be a 20% required contribution on the requested funds. Contributions can be cash, other financial awards, donated materials, and even volunteer time.

The initial step in the application process involves Prime recipients submitting their applications to the DOE without specific sub-recipients (congregations) listed. To assist with this process, IPL has designed a survey linked below including additional details, to gather essential information. This will help estimate the amount of work and resources congregations will request through the *Renew America's Nonprofits* grant program. Participating in this survey does not influence the chances of receiving a sub-recipient grant from IPL in the event of an award. The survey is intended to assist IPL in submitting the initial application to the DOE. Therefore, IPL urges congregations not to be concerned if they are not fully prepared at this time. If awarded, the DOE will release requirements for the next phase of the program. IPL will then contact eligible congregations which submitted a survey regarding more details with an opportunity to submit a fuller proposal.

If your congregation would like to be considered as a potential applicant for the DOE's energy efficiency funding, please complete the [IPL Survey](#).

Seeing is (and is not) Believing

By Rebecca Kneale Gould, VTIPL Board member, Writer, and Associate Professor of Environmental Studies at Middlebury College. (The essay first

appeared in *Addison County Independent* on June 29, 2023, as part of the “Ways of Seeing” series. It is republished here with permission. The following is an excerpt. Read the full version via the link at the end of this piece.)

"By the mid-afternoon of June 7th, Manhattan was shrouded in a thick, toxic, orange haze of wildfire-induced particulate matter. I was worried about my New York friends and reached out in concern. 'No walk on the Brooklyn Bridge today!' one friend somewhat jauntily replied. 'It feels downright apocalyptic here' said another, apparently less invested in dispelling my distress. 'It's unreal,' exclaimed my third correspondent, one who often struggles with asthma. But oh, how very real it was. The orange factor turned out to be all about optics and wavelengths, but it was nonetheless starkly visible. Meanwhile the daily views my friends were accustomed to were nowhere to be seen.

In an email to a fellow writer, I enacted an effortful reach for a silver-lining: 'The only 'positive' element in an event like this (my fervent hope anyway) is that maybe when apathetic people actually SEE what our climate emergency looks like, it might spur them into action.' Then I added, 'Based on past history I'm not that optimistic, but you never know!' Looking back at this email with a couple of weeks of hindsight, I see a classic, tripartite hope-despair-hope structure that has come to typify my climate change communication patterns. I actively resist a posture of Only Doom. But let's be honest, as far as the hope-despair-hope sandwich is concerned, the outer slices are getting progressively thinner, while the unpalatable filling grows correspondingly thick.

If I thought I would get a response, I might ask the orange haze a few questions. Is seeing believing? If so, will the believing that comes from seeing finally kick the inactive into passionate action? And how much action, at what levels of power-brokerage, will be necessary to turn the massive ship of fossil-fuel dependence ever so slightly in a more sustainable direction?"
(Read Rebecca Kneale Gould's complete essay at *Addison County Independent* online. [Read complete essay.](#))

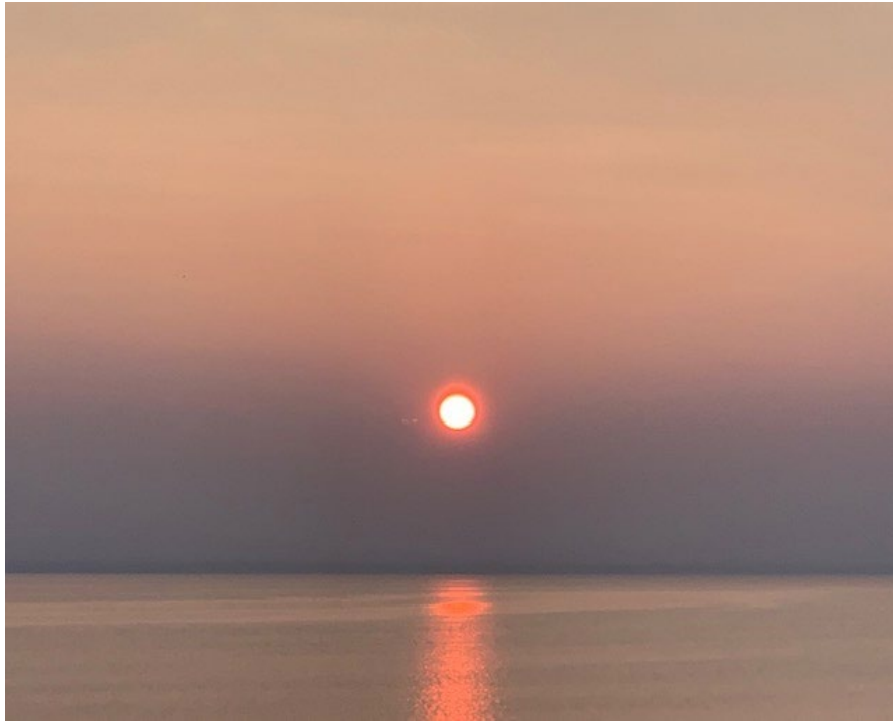


Photo courtesy Donna C. Roberts

Donor's Matching Challenge to New & Existing VTIPL Supporters

A longtime VTIPL supporter has challenged our community to give more to our organization, to become new donors, or to renew giving. Up to \$1500 in gifts received by VTIPL this year will be matched. Please help us with an increased donation to VTIPL, or if you haven't given in the last year, that will count as a new donation. Consider sharing this newsletter and invitation with friends. Our website has much information about our work. [VTIPL Website](#). Donations can be via credit card or check payable to VTIPL, sent to P.O. Box 3095, Burlington, VT 05408. Give securely online via the Network for Good link on our [website](#) or using the Donate Now button in this newsletter. Thanks for considering a gift when our work is more important than ever.



Ongoing Gatherings for Creation Care & EcoSpirituality

Join those who have Green Teams or want to create one, and who foster Creation Care. The Rev. Dr. Nancy Wright, VTIPL's Vice- President, leads these meetings on the last Tuesday of the month at 7 p.m. Come each time or drop in. To receive the link, write Pr. Nancy with "Creation Care Zoom Meeting". [Email](#).

Connecting with Spirit in Nature

EcoSpirituality gatherings meet on the 2nd Sunday of the month at 7 p.m. These regular virtual gatherings focus on EcoSpirituality as a way to stay connected with those who value a spirituality grounded in appreciation of the natural world. For a link to join, please send Pr. Nancy an [email](#). Offerings are co-sponsored by VT IPL and the Green Team of the New England Synod of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America.

Thank you for your interest in and support of Vermont Interfaith Power & Light. We are grateful to collaborate with you on behalf of the human community and all of Creation.



We wish everyone brighter days ahead.

