



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

Green Mountains, Blue Water



Photo by Chelsea Steinauer-Scudder

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We Advocate for our Sacred Earth.

Faith Votes

We stand with National Interfaith Power & Light in their “**Faith Votes Campaign**,” a non-partisan, public education campaign that encourages people to vote their values regarding eco-justice.

Find out more [here](#).

Third Act Faith: “Preaching an Election Sermon: An Interfaith Workshop”

When: August 27th, 2024, 7:00 PM ET

Where: Join from anywhere @ZOOM

Register [Here](#).

From Third Act: “As we approach what many regard as the most consequential election in history, clergy must face the question of whether or not to preach an election sermon, and if so, how to faithfully address the choices and challenges before us. This workshop is for clergy and congregational leaders seeking to discern how God may be calling them to speak to this time of decision. Third Act Faith invites you to register for this two-hour workshop led by the Rev. Dr. Jim Antal, Rabbi Stephanie Kolin, and Imam Jamal Rahman.”

Legislative Updates

We are excited to announce that this June, the Vermont Legislature overrode the Governor's Vetoes on three critical environmental bills.

H.687: Protecting Vermont's natural resources

H.706: Phasing out pesticides that harm our pollinators

H.289: Helping Vermont reach 100% renewable energy by 2035

Thank you to everyone who supported the passage of these bills!



Photo by Chelsea Steinauer-Scudder

We create and support eco-spiritual practices and programs.

Join VTIPL's Lunch Break Book Club!

Join VTIPL Coordinator and author, Chelsea Steinauer-Scudder, for our new virtual book club! Every quarter, we'll read and discuss a book about faith and ecology, exploring together the sacred work of caring for creation from different perspectives. We'll meet over Zoom from 12:00-1:00 pm ET on the 2nd, 3rd, and 4th Wednesdays of October, January, April, and July.



Please email chelsea@vtipl.org to sign up or for more information!

October 2024

Claiming Earth as Common Ground: The Ecological Crises through the Lens of Faith, by Rabbi Andrea Cohen-Kiener

January 2025

Zen and the Art of Saving the Planet, Thich Nhat Hahn

April 2025

The Book Of Nature: The Astonishing Beauty of God's First Sacred Text, Barbara Mahany

July 2025

Braiding Sweetgrass: Indigenous Wisdom, Scientific Knowledge, and the Teachings of Plants, Robin Wall Kimmerer

Environment and Spirituality Summit

We're proud to be a sponsor of the annual **Environment and Spirituality Summit**, hosted and organized by **Faith in Place**, an organization dedicated to empowering people of diverse faiths and spiritualities to be leaders in advancing environmental

and racial justice, providing resources to educate, connect, and advocate for healthier communities.

Register [here](#).

From the organizers:

"Join us on September 22-24 for this year's Annual Environment & Spirituality Summit! This year's Summit will explore the theme of 'Grounded & Engaged,' welcoming speakers who will delve into how our spiritual practices can anchor us as we strive to care for Mother Earth and create a healthier and more just world. All the sessions will be hosted on Zoom. We will also have in-person watch parties hosted across Indiana, Illinois, and Wisconsin for Sunday's Keynote Session with Lama Rod Owens."

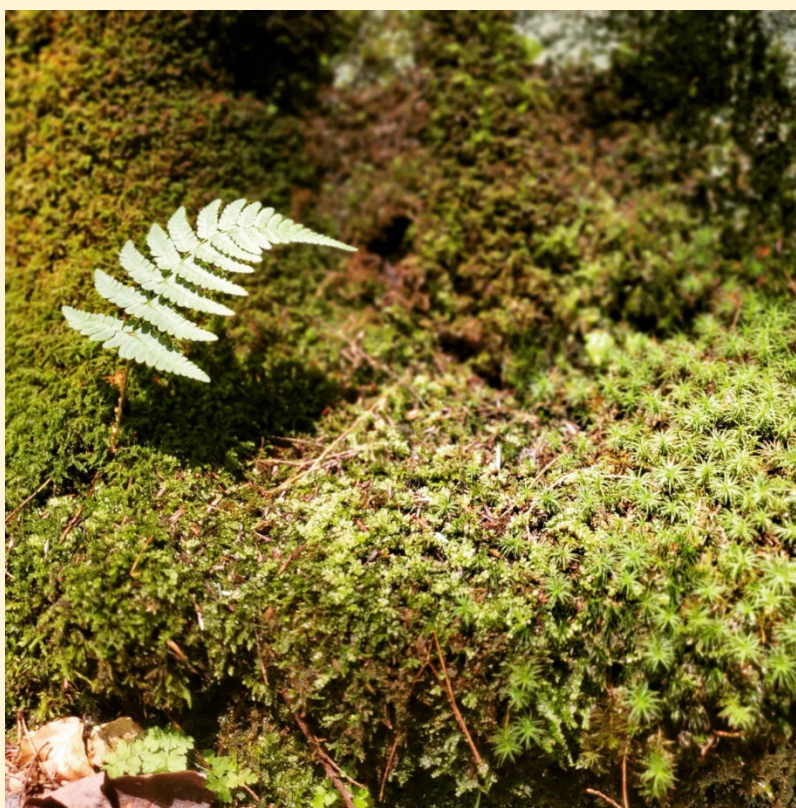


Photo by Chelsea Steinauer-Scudder

We Educate and Engage Faith Communities about Eco-Justice and Creation Care.

Join VT IPL's Board of Directors!

Join a dedicated team of creative thinkers, spiritual leaders, and climate advocates in caring for the Earth.

Vermont Interfaith Power & Light (VT IPL) offers a faith-based response to global climate change. With the support of more than 75 faith communities across the state, we seek to build a more sustainable future for Vermont and for the Earth as a whole.

We're excited to announce several openings on our Board of Directors! If you have a passion for affecting climate change, and a religious or spiritual connection to Earth stewardship, we'd love to speak with you.

Our board consists of active and dedicated community members who work to empower environmental advocacy, educate faith communities about caring for creation, and take action to ensure the health and well-being of our human and natural communities.

If you would like to learn more, please email us at info@vtipl.org.



Upcoming Green Energy Webinar

Join Presbyterians for Earth Care in a webinar about green energy projects for congregations! Tuesday, July 23, 2024, 7:30 pm EDT.

Register [here](#).

"Ronald Newman, Senior Advisor at the U.S. Department of Treasury for Inflation Reduction Act Implementation, has spent the past several months engaging faith-based organizations and intermediaries such as Interfaith Power & Light regarding the Inflation Reduction Act framework, explaining concepts ranging from Direct Pay to the Investment Tax Credit. Mr. Newman will explain how faith-based communities can lead in the clean energy transition. Join us to learn more about how individuals & congregations can access this critical funding to make the installation of green energy projects possible."

Addison County Regional Energy Fair

Come say hello! We'll have a table set up at the Addison County Regional Energy Fair on September 21st, from 10:00-3:00, at Vergennes City Park.

We'd love to chat with you about our commitment to green energy and opportunities for your faith community to apply for a Climate Action Grant!

On Faith: Book Review by Harris Brewster

The Spirit of Green by William D. Nordhaus

I am continuing my interest in careful reading and commenting on some of the best books dealing with major challenges facing our planet Earth today. My grandson Ben, a recent college graduate in Economics, knowing my interest in doing so, sent me Nobel Prize winner and Sterling Professor of Economics and Professor in the School of the Environment at Yale University, William D. Nordhaus's, latest book, which we will be selectively examining in this commentary.

Let's start our analysis by looking at what Professor Nordhaus and most experts and even non-experts agree is the toughest of the problems our Earth is facing today and must resolve: the climate or global warming crisis, caused by the increased presence of greenhouse gases in the atmosphere.

The first truths about this crisis Nordhaus notes are that it will require a global response, that technically the global community has failed and continues to fail miserably to approach and finally be on the path to attain the most modest of goals to limit greenhouse emissions so that, down the road, global warming is limited to a 2 degree Celsius increase.

In reality, Nordhaus argues it is not the international organizations who have failed but almost all nations, including the U.S., who put their self interests ahead of global interests so that the Kyoto Protocols and Paris Accords and other later international agreements have failed in terms of meeting their modest global goals. Professor Nordhaus figures that unless changes in most national behaviors occur, the world's youth, like Ben, will have to pay the high costs of the eventual and inevitable increased temperatures they will face.

Professor Nordhaus does suggest a new strategy, "Climate Compacts," in which a significant number of nations interested and willing to join a Climate Compact will sacrifice, cooperate, and pay the costs to truly reduce emissions and thus limit future temperature increases, as well as agree to financially punish nations who don't agree to join the Compact.

Having just recently celebrated the anniversary of D-Day, we are reminded of those who sacrificed, cooperated, and paid for destroying threats to humanity. They realized there was a crisis.

This Compact plan would face tremendous challenges. But if not this plan, we would need to develop some other plan that rejects nations essentially going it alone or putting the onus on future generations to pay for the inevitable environmental Pearl Harbor or probably something even worse. But I trust people's capabilities to deal with real existential threats, rather than waiting around for such miracles.

Most of the remaining broad themes in the Nordhaus book are more hopeful, thank heavens. For example, he points out how some of those who tend to value the private market for providing solutions to any societal challenges and those who tend to value and favor government regulations for such challenges can find sufficient commonalities, especially when the challenges are scientifically documented, severe, and require cooperation. For example, the late Milton Friedman and some other private market activists were rational and recognized the seriousness of the climate challenges. They can work with those who tend to favor significant government regulations who are also rational and sometimes agree that the private market does a better job in some cases. It is also true there are others, such as those so-called experts hired by the Koch Brothers, who are concerned only about their self-interests, and perhaps ideologues on the left whose views would reject any private sector contributions and see only problems with the private market being involved.

I did find some additional surprising and interesting truths in the book. Nordhaus points out the climate crisis in stories about the Industrial Revolution and its role in affecting carbon emissions. Before reporting them, it is necessary to note that overall studies do demonstrate that climate change is a child of the Industrial Revolution when 80% of the economic growth occurring during that Age depended on using newly available fossil fuels (20% from new technology). However, Nordhaus points out society's use of fossil fuels also diminished for a while much pollution e.g. by ending horse-drawn transportation and its accompanying manure and other carbon-

producing emissions. Nordhaus emphasizes the useful truth that the actual reduction of atmospheric carbon emissions is not a simple task.

Mainstream economists often seem to be academics who focus on the material world and the growth of production of any economic goods, often without any judgment as to their worth to nature, all forms of life on Earth, or their effects on human society. However, Nordhaus, a mainstream economist, spends almost all his analysis using the concept of GREEN, a values-based concept involving more than the quantity of goods but their quality of being Earth-friendly and socially friendly. He contrasts GREEN goods with BROWN goods which pollute and mostly damage life on Earth.

I confess I found a few parts of the *Spirit of Green* difficult to understand and I didn't spend the time or have the ability to fully understand their meaning so I rushed my reading of them.

However, I loved the many historical, ethical, and specifically the broader social science conclusions or truths that Nordhaus points out, including macro-economic descriptions of economies. Reading his book is a joy for the most part.

The Spirit of Green (note the word "spirit") underlies all 25 chapter titles. For example, I loved historical examples of Americans in the 19th and 20th century who were critical of the unbridled Industrialism in America such as Gifford Pinchot, John Muir, and Rachel Carson. Having visited Vermont's only national park featuring the similar roles and voices of Marsh, Billings, and Rockefeller, I am proud of some aspects of their green beliefs and practices.

In some ways, I wish I had the space and energy to point out the many more Green ideas and truths contained in *The Spirit of Green*, but other than truths mentioned at the beginning of this commentary and a couple of others I'm holding in reserve for the possibility of later commentaries, I simply want to thank professor Nordhaus as well as Ben, Greta, and any other youth for their past and future good works to convince the rest of us to get our priorities straight.

Harris Webster; Chestnut Place Berlin Vermont where folks love their grandchildren; retired high school social studies teacher; member of the Board of Directors of Vermont Interfaith Power and Light (or Planetary Lovers); and former Chair of the Unitarian Church of Montpelier's Climate Action Team.

Waterbury LEAP Electric Vehicle Fest

Choosing an electric car is a great way to significantly shrink your fuel and maintenance costs, reduce environmental impact, and find a vehicle that's fun to drive.

Aug 14, 2024, 5:30 to 7:00 PM at the Crossett Brook Middle School in Duxbury (5672 VT-100, Duxbury, VT).

This free community event includes:

- 1) Up to 20 electric vehicles and EV hybrids on display
- 2) The opportunity to talk with experts and owners about EVs
- 3) Information about incentives, tax credits, charging, operating costs, vehicle ranges, etc
- 4) Information and displays of electric yard tools, ebikes, and more!

Dave Roberts from Drive Electric Vermont will speak at the event and give attendees an update on the latest EVs, developments in charging infrastructure in Vermont, incentives, and more.

Brought to you by the volunteers of Waterbury LEAP. For more information contact Alayna at alaynahoward@gmail.com or visit waterburyleap.org. No RSVP required. This event will be held outside, rain or shine.



information can be found [on our website](#).

Apply to our Climate Action Grant Program!

Faith communities seeking to improve the energy efficiency of their buildings and reducing their carbon emissions are invited to explore VTIPL's Climate Action Grant program. More

If you would like to receive a **print copy of our newsletter** in the mail, please contact chelsea@vtipl.org.

If you would like to be on the mailing list for our **Volunteer Task Force**, please email chelsea@vtipl.org

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

[Donate Now](#)

