

CLASS FIVE
WHO IS GOING TO SAVE US?
THE ROLE OF THE UNITED NATIONS, GOVERNMENTS, TECHNOLOGY,
CORPORATIONS, FAITH GROUPS AND NON-GOVERNMENTAL
ORGANIZATIONS

“You cannot get through a single day without having an impact on the world around you.
What you do makes a difference, and you have to decide what kind of difference you
want to make.” Jane Goodall

Review and Reflections:

- **Highlights from class one, two, three and four:**

- ◇ Class one explored how our faith calls us to care for creation and looked at the history that has enabled us to understand the climate crisis today.
- ◇ The second class explored the basic science of climate change, the impact of the industrial revolution, and where the added CO₂, methane and other greenhouse gases are coming from. It also discussed climate science denial.
- ◇ The third class looked more carefully at where emissions of greenhouse gases come from by sector, and how various parts of our daily living have an impact. Online calculators were introduced to determine your carbon footprint.
- ◇ Class four explored the concepts of climate and creation justice. People are already being impacted by the climate crisis, as well as the Earth’s air, water and soil, and many plants and animals.

Preview of Class Five:

Learning objectives:

- ⇒ Become familiar with more climate crisis vocabulary.
- ⇒ Explore how The United Nations can help.
- ⇒ Explore the part governments must play.
- ⇒ Explore the hope in technology.
- ⇒ Explore the responsibility of corporations.
- ⇒ Explore the role of non-governmental organizations and faith groups.

Class Five Sections:

- [Section One: Developing a Common Language](#)
- [Section Two: The United Nations](#)
- [Section Three: Governments](#)
- [Section Four: Technology](#)

- [Section Five: Corporations](#)
- [Section Six: Non-governmental organizations](#)
- [Section Seven: Faith Communities](#)
- [Additional Resources For Further Study](#)

Section One: Developing A Common Language:

- Technology is defined as the application of scientific knowledge for practical purposes, especially in industry and includes the machinery and equipment developed. (Oxford Languages)
- Carbon Capture Technology refers to machinery that can trap emissions and bury them underground. Trees naturally perform this function.
- The United Nations was founded in 1945 as an international organization committed to maintaining international peace and security, developing friendly relations among nations and promoting social progress, better living standards, and human rights.
- The IPCC is the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change established by the United Nations in 1988.
- Greenwashing is a form of marketing spin in which green PR and green marketing are deceptively used to persuade the public that an organization's products, aims and policies are environmentally friendly.

Section Two: The United Nations

The United Nations formed the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC) in 1988 to provide policymakers with regular scientific assessments (usually about every 7 years) on climate change, its implications and potential future risks, as well as to put forward adaptation and mitigation options. Through its assessments, the IPCC shares the state of knowledge on climate change. It has produced six Assessment Reports as of 2022. Thousands of scientists from all over the world contribute to the work of the IPCC. The panel divides each assessment into three special reports. Regarding the 6th and most recent assessment, [the first report](#) on what's driving global warming, came out August of 2021. [The second report](#), on climate change's effects on our world and our ability to adapt to them, was released in February, 2022. [The third report](#), on how we can cut emissions and limit further warming was released on April 4, 2022. The 6th Assessment Report was compiled by 278 experts from 65 countries. In addition to the above three reports, a [Synthesis Report](#) was released in March 2023.

[VIEW VIDEO](#) of the Secretary General of the United Nations, Antonio Guterres, expresses the urgency of the report released April 4, 2022.

This is from a New York Times article on the 6th IPCC assessment, entitled 'Stopping Climate Change Is Doable, but Time Is Short, U.N. Panel Warns':

“The report by the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change, a body of experts convened by the United Nations, warns that unless countries dramatically accelerate efforts over the next few years to slash their emissions from coal, oil and natural gas, the goal of limiting global warming to 1.5 degrees Celsius, or 2.7 degrees Fahrenheit, will likely be out of reach by the end of this decade.

That’s the threshold beyond which scientists say the [dangers of global warming](#) — including worsening floods, droughts, wildfires and ecosystem collapse — grow considerably. Humans have already heated the planet by an average of 1.1 degrees Celsius since the 19th century, largely by burning fossil fuels for energy.

But the task is daunting: Holding warming [to just 1.5 degrees Celsius](#) would require nations to collectively reduce their planet-warming emissions roughly 43 percent by 2030 and to stop adding carbon dioxide to the atmosphere altogether by the early 2050s, the report found. By contrast, current policies by governments are only expected to reduce global emissions by a few percentage points this decade. Last year, fossil fuel emissions worldwide [rebounded to near-record highs](#) after a brief dip as a result of the coronavirus pandemic.”

[Brad Plumer](#) and [Raymond Zhong](#) published on April 4, 2022:

Section Three: Governments

The April 4th 2022 IPCC special report calls governments from all countries to create and implement policy to support the healing of the Earth. Read the following excerpts from New York Times article Stopping Climate Change Is Doable, but Time Is Short, U.N. Panel Warns by [Brad Plumer](#) and [Raymond Zhong](#)

“The new report examines dozens of strategies proposed by scientists and energy experts to help nations make the transition.

First, countries would need to clean up virtually all power plants worldwide that generate electricity for homes and factories. That means relying more on wind, solar, nuclear, geothermal or hydropower. Most of the world’s coal and natural gas plants would either need to shut down or install [carbon capture technology](#) that can trap emissions and bury them underground. Such technology has been slow to take off because of its high costs.

The next step would be to reconfigure transportation, industry and other segments of the global economy to run on clean electricity rather than fossil fuels. Cars powered by gasoline could be replaced with electric vehicles charged by low-carbon grids. Gas-burning furnaces in homes could be swapped out for electric heat pumps. Instead of burning coal, steel mills could shift to electric furnaces that melt scrap.

At the same time, nations could take steps to reduce their total energy demand. That could entail expanding public transit, upgrading insulation so homes consume less energy, recycling more raw materials and making factories more energy efficient. At the high end, such demand-side policies could help cut emissions in key sectors as much as 40 to 70 percent by 2050, the report notes.

But many economic activities can't be easily electrified. Batteries are still too heavy for most airplanes. Many industries, like cement and glass, require extreme heat and currently burn coal or gas. For those emissions, governments and businesses will have to develop new fuels and industrial processes, the report said.

Countries will also need to address emissions from deforestation and agriculture, which account for around a fifth of global greenhouse gases. That means dealing with issues like global meat production, which emits methane and carbon dioxide, and is causing [rampant deforestation](#) in vital places like the Amazon rainforest.

Forests and wetlands naturally store carbon dioxide, which makes sparing them from destruction a highly effective and economical way to mitigate warming, said Stephanie Roe, a World Wildlife Fund scientist who helped write the report. "I can't reiterate enough the importance of conserving those ecosystems," she said.

Even in the best case, humanity is unlikely to eliminate all of its planet warming emissions, the report warned. So, countries will likely also have to devise ways to remove billions of tons of carbon dioxide from the atmosphere each year by around mid-century. One strategy could be to plant more trees, although that may not be enough, the report cautioned. Other options include [devices that suck carbon out of the air](#), though these technologies are still immature.

The report acknowledges the enormous challenges ahead. Winding down coal, oil and gas projects would mean job losses and financial dislocation. Some climate solutions come with major trade-offs: Protecting forests, for instance, leaves less land for growing crops or raising livestock to feed a world population that keeps growing."

This [LINK](#) to The Citizens' Climate Lobby reviews ways political will can be influenced. Clearly, governments have their work cut out for them. Policy making takes time and lots of negotiating. Time is of essence.

Following are the seven goals for the U.S. government as reported in The Fact Sheet on President Biden's Executive Action to Tackle the Climate Crisis at Home and Abroad, released on January 27, 2021.

- Conserve 30% of lands and oceans by 2030
- Create a Civilian Climate Corps Initiative

- Increase reforestation
- Increase carbon sequestration in agriculture
- Protect biodiversity
- Increase access to recreation
- Address climate change

The Inflation Reduction Act, which contains \$369 billion in investments to boost clean energy and curb greenhouse gas emissions, was signed into law by President Biden on August 16, 2022. It is by far the most sweeping climate legislation in U.S. history. The act dedicates \$369 billion over 10 years to promote clean energy, pollution reduction and environmental justice. It contains a vast and dizzying array of tax incentives for wind and solar energy, batteries, nuclear power, clean hydrogen production, electric vehicles, heat pumps and much more.

An article by Mary Virginia Olano published on August 19, 2022 in Canary Media says the [Inflation Reduction Act](#) is expected to reduce greenhouse gas emissions by 40 percent below 2005 levels by 2030, [three independent modeling teams have found](#). But where exactly are those cuts going to come from? A chart goes on to suggest 37% from power generation, 29% from transportation, 13% from industry, 9% from land carbon sinks, 6% from methane reduction, and 6% from buildings. You can see the chart at [THIS LINK](#).

Further research by the Rapid Energy Policy Evaluation and Analysis Toolkit of Princeton University (REPEAT) can be seen at [THIS LINK](#).

In August, 2022, Electrify America published the following list of rebates for Americans as listed in the Inflation Reduction Act. There are income and other restrictions, but it is worth checking out for many:

- \$840 for heat pump clothes dryer
- \$2500 for rewiring
- \$4000 for update of electrical panels
- \$1600 for weatherization
- \$8000 for heat pumps for heating/cooling
- \$1750 for heat pump hot water heaters
- \$840 for electric or induction cook stoves

And this [LINK](#) will help you calculate the benefits you might be eligible for.

Section Four: Technology

So far, technology has played a major role in mitigating the climate crisis, including providing alternate forms of renewable energy. Much research and exploration are happening today to solve the many problems we are facing. [Take a look at the trailer](#) of a 10- part series entitled

Solving for Zero, based on Bill Gates book, How to Avoid a Climate Disaster. Bill Gates is a major supporter of innovation and believes that technology can lead the way. To watch the series you must sign up for Wondrium, but you will get the sense of the content from the trailer and can decide if you want to watch more on your own.

Many people believe technology alone will not mitigate the climate crisis sufficiently. Humanity will also need to change the way we view creation, interact with the world, and care for each other. Charles Eisenstein's book, Climate: A New Story, suggests that we each need to find what we love and then work to restore it to health.

Section Five: Corporations

Many corporations are making changes in the way they source, manufacture and distribute goods to respond to the climate crisis. Some of these changes can make a difference and some are just marketing, often called greenwashing. Sorting out the truth and holding corporations accountable are challenging tasks.

The fossil fuel industry has responded in many cases by distributing information that denies the effects of emissions from the burning of fossil fuels. We must hold these corporations accountable for knowingly continuing to harm Earth and humanity. The banking industry plays a major role by financing fossil fuel corporations in the development of new methane and petroleum wells. Many people are changing their bank affiliations and changing their investment strategies to avoid supporting corporations that are making the climate crisis worse.

An article on more thoughtful investing can be found [HERE](#). Corporations must take responsibility for putting the well-being of Earth and humanity equal to or greater than maximizing profits, and we as consumers must hold them accountable.

Section Six: Non-Governmental Organizations (NGOs)

According to The Commonwealth Foundation, some common characteristics of NGOs are:

- They are formed voluntarily.
- They are independent of the government.
- They are not for private profit or gain.
- Their principle is to improve the circumstances and prospects of disadvantaged people.

NGOs are now playing an important role in framing environmental policy, mobilizing public support for environmental conservation, and protecting the endangered species of plants and animals. As an example, organizations such as Earth Watch and Sea Shepherd Conservation Society have been successful in creating awareness about the environmental dangers in using drift nets in the commercial fishing industry. (From an article entitled 'Role of Non-Governmental Organizations (NGO) in Environment Protection' by Puja Mondal.)

Section Seven: What Are Faith Groups Doing?

This quote from an article by James Gustave Speth, August 16, 2022, addresses the importance of faith and interfaith groups. The full article can be read at this link: [Can Transformative Change Come To America?](#)

“Building on this, we need a truly massive civic mobilization, of many types and in many places, following the lead of groups like Sunrise Movement, Extinction Rebellion, and 350.org. We need the demand for action raised to the highest decibel our civil society can generate. The new activism must focus on state and local action as well as federal. (We are seeing the early results of such activism in the breakthrough in the Senate with the Inflation Reduction Act.) The faith communities can communicate effectively to large audiences quickly, and, like no one else, can address the very real moral and spiritual dimensions of the climate crisis. Some faith groups are doing this now, and doing it well, but it would be hard to imagine an area with more potential.”

Here is a sampling of what faith and interfaith groups are doing:

[Laudato Si'](#): In 2015 Pope Francis of the Catholic Faith “published an encyclical for the world laying out a vision of integral ecology that includes listening and responding to the Cry of the Earth and the Cry of the Poor, which can never be separated from each other for true and authentic ecological action.” In 2022 the message began to be rolled out to communities for implementation over the next seven years as the Laudato Si' Action Platform (LSAP). “The science is clear; time is running short, and we must move to concrete environmental and climate action immediately. If our political leaders are not up to this task, we must start from below, so our goal with the LSAP is to reach a critical mass of people necessary for systemic ecological transformation.” (Dr. Joshtrom Isaac Kureethadam, coordinator of Ecology and Creation at the Vatican Dicastery for Promoting Integral Human Development)

The Buddhist community in 2015 published: The Time to Act is Now, A Buddhist Declaration on Climate Change. This can be viewed in its entirety at [THIS LINK](#). Here are the closing comments: “We have a brief window of opportunity to take action, to preserve humanity from imminent disaster and to assist the survival of the many diverse and beautiful forms of life on Earth. Future generations, and the other species that share the biosphere with us, have no voice to ask for our compassion, wisdom, and leadership. We must listen to their silence. We must be their voice, too, and act on their behalf.”

United Methodists are also acting on the climate crisis. The following is taken from the [United Methodist Creation Justice Movement website](#):

“An Increasing number of United Methodists are responding to the climate crisis by taking action for ecological healing and environmental justice within local churches and communities, through our connectional system, and in partnership with ecumenical, interfaith, and public environmental movements. The interconnected crises of rising CO2 emissions, climate chaos, biodiversity collapse, land, water, and air pollution, and

multiple forms of social inequity, including especially systemic racism, economic injustice, and intergenerational violence, require widespread change at every level of personal, social, cultural, economic, and political life today. This website hub has been created to build connections within and partnerships outside the United Methodist Church, to facilitate communication for the sharing of best practices and resources, to increase power through collaborative action, and ultimately to grow the number and impact of Christians engaged in ministries of creation care, renewal, and justice.”

[Faith Plans](#)

“The world's faiths are responding to the 'cry of the Earth and the cry of the poor' by developing Faith Plans for People and Planet – long-term faith commitments to use their buildings, lands, investments and influence to drive practical action to create a better world – for the benefit of people and planet, and for today's and future generations.”

The Unitarian Universalist Church is also acting on the climate crisis. More information can be found [HERE](#):

These are only a few examples. Many other faith communities are taking actions. You can easily research online to see what your faith community is advocating.

[VIEW](#) this 5-minute video created by Faith Plans. Remember that a 2009 Harvard study showed that 3.5% is the critical mass needed for radical societal transformation. It is estimated that there are over a million faith-based groups working on saving Earth from the climate crisis.

Watch [this short video](#) produced by the United Nations.

CREATION JUSTICE TIPS

- Are you investing in your values? Scrutinize your portfolio, especially investments that are lumped together. If you find your money is going to support fossil fuels, change to supporting sustainable alternatives—solar and wind, for example. Money talks, and corporations listen.
- Invest and divest. Invest in the future, not the past. Your bank account, insurance, or stock portfolio may be supporting the fossil fuel industry. Find out what businesses benefit from your money. If they do not align with your values, divest. Change banks, insurance companies, or stockbrokers and tell them why. Make your money support clean energy and sustainable practices.
- Urge local, state, and federal lawmakers to act on behalf of Earth. You may not know the details of a particular bill, but you can speak as a person of faith. Describe your vision of what is needed and ask those in power to support what you value.
- Vote your values, choosing candidates who will work for people and planet.

- Buy green. In this market-driven economy, what you buy and what you don't have an impact. Look for socially responsible businesses and products. Avoid excess packaging and single-use plastics. Choose local to cut down on emissions. Purchase products with recycled content. Boycott ones that come at the expense of the planet. Your dollars speak loudly.
- Invest in a better future for all. Donate to organizations doing work you believe in but cannot do yourself. Even a small financial gift is put to good use. And the collective return on investment is huge. Explore 350.org, Sierra Club, and Sunrise Movement, for example.
- Step up to protest actions and inactions that harm our planet, taking our solidarity to city council, state capitols, and Capitol Hill to counter injustice with our very being.
- Stand up for truth in the face of those who do not know or who choose their own interests over the much greater good.
- Numerous climate justice organizations are doing excellent work. Explore them to continue to educate yourself. You may also choose to sign advocacy petitions, which will be sent to appropriate policy makers, or to support their work financially, knowing that you—through these groups—will continue to make a positive difference.
- From COVID-19 we've learned that individual efforts are important but not enough. To end a crisis, governments and businesses must change their policies and practices. Individuals and communities need to exert organized pressure on them to act with urgency to curb emissions and move us into a clean future. Speak up!

Critical Beliefs Underlying This Curriculum

1. Individuals can make a difference, especially as part of a large grassroots movement which you are helping to create by participating in this study.
2. In addition to individual actions, we can make a difference by influencing governments, corporations, organizations through our votes, our voices and our pocketbooks.
3. Talking about the climate crisis is critical. Share your thoughts and stories with friends, family, acquaintances and on social media.

Additional Resources for Further Learning:

Documentary: Kiss the Ground available on Netflix

Here is [a short video](#) with information on the development of the IPCC reports.

Another good information piece on [actions to take at your workplace](#).

Watch [this short video](#) on plastic and imagine what governments might do to impact this problem?

Greta Thunberg is a young activist who for years has been calling on governments to respond to the climate crisis. View [this video](#) with Greta and Trevor Noah.

Providence Health Care is an example of one corporation that is looking for ways to change their business model to help reduce the climate crisis by moving to carbon negativity. You can read more about this initiative and [view their progress reports](#).

Film: "[The Revolution Generation: How Millennials Can Save America And The World](#)" is an excellent documentary (80min) that highlights the importance of getting young people politically active to address climate change. It's available on Amazon Prime, YouTube, Apple TV.

Report: [Climate Solutions That Promote Human Well-Being in Developing Countries](#) from Drawdown Lift of Project Drawdown

Video: [The Cost of Preventing Climate Breakdown](#). (10 min.) This is an excellent Ted Talk by Yuval Noah Harari that shows how doable saving Creation is.

Read this [investigation](#) by The Guardian regarding planned expansion of fossil fuels.

Read about fossil fuel divestment commitments, a growing movement of more than 1,500 organizations controlling roughly [\\$40.5 trillion worth of assets globally](#).

Read about a coalition of faith groups representing a myriad of faiths, including Catholic, Quaker, Buddhist, Baptist, and Anglican, [committed to divesting from fossil fuels](#). In total, this group had more than £1.1 billion in assets under management.