

## Lent 2022 Study Questions (5 weeks)

### Saving Us: A Climate Scientists' Case for Hope and Healing in a Divided World

#### Week 1/Section 1 THE PROBLEM AND THE SOLUTION

In what ways has climate change been significant in your life? And are there ways in which you are acting to reduce your carbon footprint? How is your congregation reducing its carbon footprint?

How did you apply the *Global Warming's Six Americas* to Canadians? How was the classification system helpful to you?

Hayhoe's premise is that we can invite others into impactful climate change conversations if we start with what we have in common, and she suggests we start with where we live, what we love doing, where we're from, those we love, and what we believe. Spend some time in your group talking about who you are in all these ways and how who you are intersects with various aspects of climate change. After each person shares, invite group members to share where they noticed other intersections that the storyteller didn't mention...things that might help them find common ground with others.

#### Week 2/Section 2 WHY FACTS MATTER – AND WHY THEY ARE NOT ENOUGH

What was your reaction to the two chapters; *The Facts are the Facts* and *The Problem with Facts*? What stuck with you, impacted you? Where did you see yourself and your conversations reflected?

Did you resonate with Hayhoe's descriptions of how fear can motivate and paralyze us? Would you be willing to share an example of this at work in your life, being motivated by fear or paralyzed by fear?

Hayhoe quotes Christiana Figueres, a Costa Rican diplomat and shepherd of the Paris Agreement who says, "Anger that sinks into despair is powerless to make a change. Anger that evolves into conviction is unstoppable." (page 71) How do you react to this quote?

Spend some time with your group discussing how effective you find guilt and shame as motivators for your behaviour or the behaviour of others you know. How does your experience support or undermine Hayhoe's claim that shaming others and even ourselves might temporarily make us feel better but that it just makes things worse in the long run?

Hayhoe ends Section 2 with Paul's letter to Timothy saying that God has not given us a spirit of fear but instead has given us a spirit of power; which enables us to act, and a spirit of love, of compassion for others that compels us to put their needs before our own desires as we act. She concludes with a quote from Hannah Malcolm, a theologian who says about the prophets that in teaching us about our apocalyptic fears, "...they teach us how to be absurdly hopeful, painting visions of peaceful futures when that seems impossible." (page 83) How does this speak to your heart?

### **Week 3/Section 3 THE THREAT MULTIPLIER**

How do you see the idea of psychological distancing at work in your own life; the very human tendency to ignore ideas that seem far away or not impactful on our own lives?

How does your heart feel about trying to reduce our psychological distance about climate change at this point? Ready, anxious, worried, not ready...?

What do your family, friends and neighbours say about *global weirding*? What are the weird weather pattern stories you share in common?

Share with your group how you respond to this statement from the *No Time to Waste* chapter; we are not the victim tied to the train track waiting for climate change to destroy us... "we humans are actually on the locomotive's footplate, with our hand on the throttle. The train is heading for a bridge that's down. We can assume protective positions to ride out the crash, but we can also stop accelerating (stop increasing our emissions) and hit the brakes (decrease our emissions) to minimize the damage." (page 113)

Hayhoe concludes *The Sickness and the Cure* chapter with this statement, "Climate change is not only a science issue...it is a health issue, a food issue, a water issue and an economic issue. It's an issue of hunger, and of poverty, and of justice. It's a human issue." (page 128) What speaks to your heart in this statement, and what is your heart saying?

### **Week 4/Section 4 WE CAN FIX IT**

Hayhoe talks about the many ways that we're more afraid of the solutions than we are of the problem; does your fear or *solution aversion* land more on the side of "the solutions are too big and difficult" or closer to "nothing little old me can do will make any difference, and how was Hayhoe's perspective helpful to you?

What is your reaction to Hayhoe's perspective that as Christians, "Love is key to acting on climate: caring for the poor and the needy, those most affected by the impacts of a changing climate, as we as creation itself. It's not only our responsibility, *it's who Christians believe God made us to be.*"? (page 142) And how does this connect for you with the idea of a *global commons*? (page 144)

How did Hayhoe's explanation of the corporate responsibility of fossil fuel companies for the preponderance of climate change sit with you? (Chapter 13, Carbon and the Common Good) What are your reflections about your individual responsibility and corporate responsibility?

What excites you about all the current ways of reducing our dependence on fossil fuels and other avenues of reducing the rate at which the earth's temperature is rising? How does the material in the chapters in Section 4 give you hope?

Hayhoe says “Our actions reinforce, deepen, and even irrevocably alter our sense of who we are. Not only that, but what we do changes others, too...if you *think* you can do something...you’re more likely to do it.” (page 199-200) Where do you see that in our Christian lives, and how does that impact your sense of empowerment around climate change?

Hayhoe talks about her own personal choices around low-carbon habits and shares that while she knows her contribution doesn’t get the world closer to the Paris Agreement, she practices low-carbon choices because it makes her feel like she’s doing her part, gives her integrity when she’s talking about carbon reduction, and because it feels good and inspires others (builds efficacy). In the *What I Do* chapter, she doesn’t mention a faith connection to her low-carbon practices. If you have low-carbon practices, how do you link those to your identity as a Christian?

*Bond, Connect, and Inspire* (chapter 21) gives us lots of tips about how to have effective conversations about climate change with others...grounded in Hayhoe’s sense that the most important thing we, as individuals, can do about climate change is to have conversations. She urges us to use our voices to talk about why climate change matters to each of us, to share what we are doing about it, to advocate for change in neighbourhoods, businesses, towns and cities, regions, etc., and to inform yours and others’ voting decisions.

Share with your group what conversations you might feel ready to try or share what barriers are holding you back from engaging in these conversations to see how the group can support you.

How can you see these conversations happening in our churches and impacting our local and diocesan low-carbon habits and advocacy?

Hayhoe quotes Peter Kalmus “We’re not fighting for a merely ‘liveable’ planet. We’re fighting for a riotous, wild, gorgeous, generous, miraculous, life-cradling climate that’s home to a society that works for everyone.” (page 243) And then she ends *Saving Us* with this statement, “We cannot afford to be paralyzed by fear or shame. We must act, with power, love, and a sound mind. Together, we can save ourselves.” (page 245) As we conclude our study, what gives you hope?

Looking for other Katharine Hayhoe resources?

<http://www.katharinehayhoe.com/faqs/>

Hayhoe’s TED Talk; The Most Important Thing You Can Do

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=-BvcToPZCLI>

Diocesan resources?

<https://niagaraanglican.ca/climatejustice>