

Earth Day/Earth Care Course

The Earth Care committee invites you to a series of three lessons/discussions on the scriptural call, which Christians have to steward the world we live in. The series will begin on Earth Day, Thursday, April 22. The sessions will be via Zoom from 6 to 7 pm on April 22, 29 and May 6.

Zoom link: <https://us02web.zoom.us/j/82013633831>

Part One - “Life Abundant” by Sallie McFague

In a three part, educational offering the Earth Care team intends to shed light and discussion on the roles and responsibilities of religion, theological education, the Church, and indeed the scriptures themselves with respect to **climate change and global warming**.

In part one, to be held on Earth Day, Thursday, April 22nd at 6pm on Zoom - Chris Nilson will introduce us to **Theologian and Author, the late Sallie McFague** and an in-depth review of her book “*Life Abundant*”. Ms. McFague was the Dean of Divinity at Vanderbilt University. She is most noted for her books and views on feminism, climate change, and the use of metaphor in religion.

In this book, she discusses the need for the Church to guide a shift in the way we **North American Christians** view ourselves and our place in the world in order to stem global warming and create a sustainable ecology. She focuses on anthropology - the way we live. Ms. McFague’s central theme offers a vivid contrast between our current “individualistic anthropology” and that of an “ecological anthropology.”

“*Life Abundant*” is available in the FPC library, however it will be presented by Chris as a series of audio excerpts from a speech given to Yale Divinity, her alma mater, that closely mirror the content of the book. Each set of excerpts will be followed by discussion and group breakout.

The introductory excerpt, which is posted below, provides a history of our current anthropology; our individualistic anthropology. Ms. McFague explains, in her view, how we have arrived at our current predicament.

For each excerpt we listen to, we will return our focus on the same question: What is the role of religion; what can and should we be doing as Christians to make sure a “better world is possible”.

If you are interested in attending - please have a listen:

Excerpt and Discussion 1.

To Listen:

<https://www.firstpresportland.org/wp-content/uploads/2021/04/Introduction.wav>

To download this file, please copy & paste into a browser window:

<https://www.dropbox.com/s/o8citdl9ei3ugh5/Introduction.wav?dl=0>

In this first excerpt, we are presented with the idea of “three forces” at work in America that coalesced in the 18th century to empower the individualistic anthropology; the Protestant Reformation, the U.S. Constitution, and the economics of Adam Smith and free market capitalism. We rely on these forces to balance our generosity with our greed. We expect that our individual innovation, productivity, and achievement will create a better world.

Our church is capable of transcending politics and economics, of taking a different path. We do this already, today, by the way we agree to collect and share our resources, by whom we welcome in our doors, and through the messages we preach concerning our behavior in the world toward all God’s Creatures. Sharing is not just about giving, but also about not taking more than you need.

What do you think? Is an “individualistic anthropology” part of the problem? What is the role of religion and our church with respect to how we live? How do we balance the forces of greed and generosity? In Jimmy Carter’s book “Faith”, he states that throughout his life, when posed with a difficult decision, he would often ask himself “What would Jesus do?”

How does the church get involved?