

NACJT Recommendations for Climate Study and Action Groups



1. Katharine Hayhoe, *Saving Us: A Climate Scientist's Case for Hope and Healing in a Divided World* (New York: Atria/One Signal Publishers, 2021)

Katharine Hayhoe is both a climate scientist and an Evangelical Christian ... and is not afraid of speaking her truth from both places. "Climate change," she has said, "is nothing less than a failure to love." *Saving Us* presents accessible climate science and addresses common anti-climate tropes, while also cautioning that facts, fear and guilt will not motivate positive change. Believing that talking about climate is the single most important thing we can be doing right now to fight climate change, Hayhoe models a three-fold process for climate conversations (not conversion!) that communicate. 1) BOND over shared values, 2) CONNECT-the-dots between what people care about and climate realities, and 3.) INSPIRE with potential solutions, actions and hope. Study can be supplemented with Hayhoe's many interviews, videos, and podcasts.

Videos & Podcasts: "Loving All God's Creation." (Nov 2022, Brigham Young University)
<https://speeches.byu.edu/talks/katharine-hayhoe/loving-all-gods-creation/> Highly recommended!

"The most important thing you can do to fight climate change: Talk about it." (Nov 2018 TED Talk)
https://www.ted.com/talks/katharine_hayhoe_the_most_important_thing_you_can_do_to_fight_climate_change_talk_about_it?language=en

"Katharine Hayhoe on Hope and Healing." (October 2021, Climate One podcast).
<https://www.climateone.org/people/katharine-hayhoe>

Companion website: Explore katharinehayhoe.com and subscribe to her weekly update; her post always includes "good news" first, followed by "not-so-good news" and "what you can do".
<http://www.katharinehayhoe.com/posts/>.

Recommended for: Our #1 recommendation for beginning group study, *Saving Us* is particularly suitable for 1) engaging climate change with theologically conservative-leaning study groups, or 2) groups who want to develop skills for effective communication about climate change. Consider introducing your study with the BYU video "Loving All God's Creation."

2. Greta Thunberg, et al., *The Climate Book* (New York: Penguin Press, 2023)

"The Climate Book is the most ambitious, wide-ranging, and hard-hitting collection I have ever encountered," says Yale Climate Connections. Bearing prophetic witness to truth is never easy, and Greta's style is steadfastly forthright, calling those of us most responsible for carbon emissions to account. Comprised of 84 short essays written by a "whos-who" of invited climate scientists, journalists and activists, each section is prefaced with Greta's biting commentaries.

The Climate Book conveys a steady sense of urgency detailing the science of climate; climate-fueled changes that we are already experiencing; our collective shortfalls and lack of progress in addressing the climate emergency (including the profound social and economic injustices at the heart of our willful inaction); what we've done so far; and the challenges that lie ahead of us. Expect to come away informed and equipped, but don't expect to come away feeling complacent! Greta's final comments sum up her call to action: "Hope is something we have to earn."

Recommended for: Congregations & study groups willing to take a deeper dive into understanding the current state of the climate emergency and its impacts. Alternatively, it serves well as a resource for leaders who want to bring added depth to climate science study groups.

Reader beware, you need to be willing to hear some hard-hitting truths. We recommend pairing *The Climate Book*'s hard-hitting essays with solutions-based inspiration from either of the two following books by Paul Hawken.

3. Paul Hawken, ed. *Drawdown: The Most Comprehensive Plan Ever Proposed to Reverse Global Warming* (New York: Penguin Books, 2017)

Want to find out more about what you – and we together – can do to address climate change? *Drawdown* outlines 100 feasible strategies to draw down carbon emissions. An illustrated compendium of climate “solutions” presented sector-by-sector (e.g., Energy, Food, Land Use, Women and Girls, Transportation, Materials, etc.) each short chapter details a proposed solution and gauges its impact: gigatons of carbon reduced by 2050, net costs to implement up front, and net savings over the longer term. The book's summary ranks the impact of potential solutions under different drawdown scenarios. You can find even more information at the Project Drawdown website.

No one person can do it all! Or do it alone!! So find out more about the drawdown strategies that appeal most strongly to your values and passions!!!

Companion website: <https://www.drawdown.org>

Recommendation: See below.

4. Paul Hawken, *Regeneration: Ending the Climate Crisis in One Generation* (New York: Penguin Books, 2021)

Want to be inspired with nature-including-people based solutions to the climate crisis? By a vision of a “just transition” towards true systemic change? Presented in short, accessible, illustrated chapters as a companion/sequel to *Drawdown*, Hawken's vision of regeneration “weaves justice, climate, biodiversity, equity, and human dignity into a seamless tapestry of action, policy, and transformation” (Amazon review). With a preface by Jane Goodall.

“Regeneration means putting life at the center of every action and decision. It applies to creation – grasslands, farms, people, forests, fish, wetlands, coastlands, and oceans—and it applies equally to family communities, cities, schools, religion, cultures, commerce and governments. Nature and humanity are composed of exquisitely complex networks of relationships, without which forests, lands, oceans, peoples, countries and cultures perish.” (p. 9)

Companion website: <https://regeneration.org>

Recommendation: Use one of Hawken's books as a “solutions-based” (*Drawdown*) companion and/or as “visionary” inspiration for systemic transformation (*Regeneration*) to information-dense (and sometimes discouraging) state-of-the-climate-emergency books like Greta's *The Climate Book*.

5. **Joanna Macy & Chris Johnstone, *Active Hope: How to Face the Mess We're in with Unexpected Resilience & Creative Power* Revised Edition (Novato, CA: New World Library, 2012 and 2022)**

"In this view, a visionary impulse is not something we invent; it is something we serve." (p. 172)

I picked up this book well aware of "the mess we're in" and desperate to find a way forward. Joanna Macy and colleagues articulate a compelling visionary framework for imagining the work of our times – transforming our social, political, economic and cultural systems. Macy begins with three "great stories" from which we are urged to choose: "Business as Usual" (busy and distracted, we ignore the perils we face); "The Great Unraveling" (a tale of mass extinction, climate collapse and social deterioration that paralyzes us with helplessness and hopelessness); and "The Great Turning" (a vision of immediate action and emerging possibilities.)

Invoking systems and emergence theories, *Active Hope* details "The Work That Reconnects," a four-fold path towards systemic transformation. The path begins with gratitude; honors the pain of the world so we don't get stuck in it; widens our understandings of self, power, community and time as we see the world with new eyes; and empowers us to go forth. The book (and its companion *Coming Back to Life*) includes a plethora of practical exercises and group activities to integrate practical head-learning with heart-felt, fully-lived experience. A Buddhist practitioner, systems theorist and life-long environmentalist, Joanna's work is grounded in a visionary world-view; reframes what it means to be engaged in activism through a contemplative, compassionate lens; and welcomes the voice of all faith traditions.

Companion websites: <https://www.joannamacy.net> and <https://workthatreconnects.org>

Recommendation: I can't recommend this book enough. Joanna Macy's vision of "The Great Turning" – and "The Work That Reconnects" that *might* bring it about – leads us into the heart and towards a shift in spiritual consciousness that heralds the emergence of completely new ways of being in relationship with the Earth and each other. Dare I call it a vision of how we might actively and hopefully participate in bringing about God's New Creation?

6. **Ayana Elizabeth Johnson and Katharine K. Wilkinson, eds., *All We Can Save: Truth, Courage, and Solutions for the Climate Crisis* (New York: One World, 2021)**

All We Can Save is a collection of essays, interspersed with poetry, written by "women from the forefront of the climate movement who are harnessing truth, courage, and solutions to lead humanity forward." (Description from the back cover). This book is, for the most part, not highly technical and covers a variety of topics; the essays vary in length and include voices from across a broad spectrum of women climate activists -- including and especially women representing marginalized voices. Some of the essays are edgier and may be harder to "hear" than others, depending on your group. Overall the book trends more secular, but integrates poetry and heart-felt reflections that "root" this work in a broad-based feminist spirituality.

Companion TED talk: "How to Find Joy in Climate Action" (June 2022 TED Talk). One of the editors of *All We Can Save*, Ayana Elizabeth Johnson, shows us how to identify the climate actions we can take based on what we're good at, what needs doing, and what brings us joy. https://www.ted.com/talks/ayana_elizabeth_johnson_how_to_find_joy_in_climate_action?language=en

Recommendation: For those seeking a solutions-oriented approach that honors the voices of women and marginalized communities.