

3/8/2023

# **BRAVE CHURCH – HARD TOPICS**



## **Climate Change and Social Justice**

# BC/HT Covenant



We will...

accept conflict and commit to the way of kindness.

take responsibility for how our words are received.

ask permission before we challenge someone's views on a subject.

show respect for one another and graciously receive feedback if someone feels disrespected.

use 'I' instead of 'you' statements. We will not accuse or attack.

give everyone who wants to speak an opportunity to do so.

# Recap: What We Know about Climate Change

97-99% of climate scientists agree:

Climate change is real

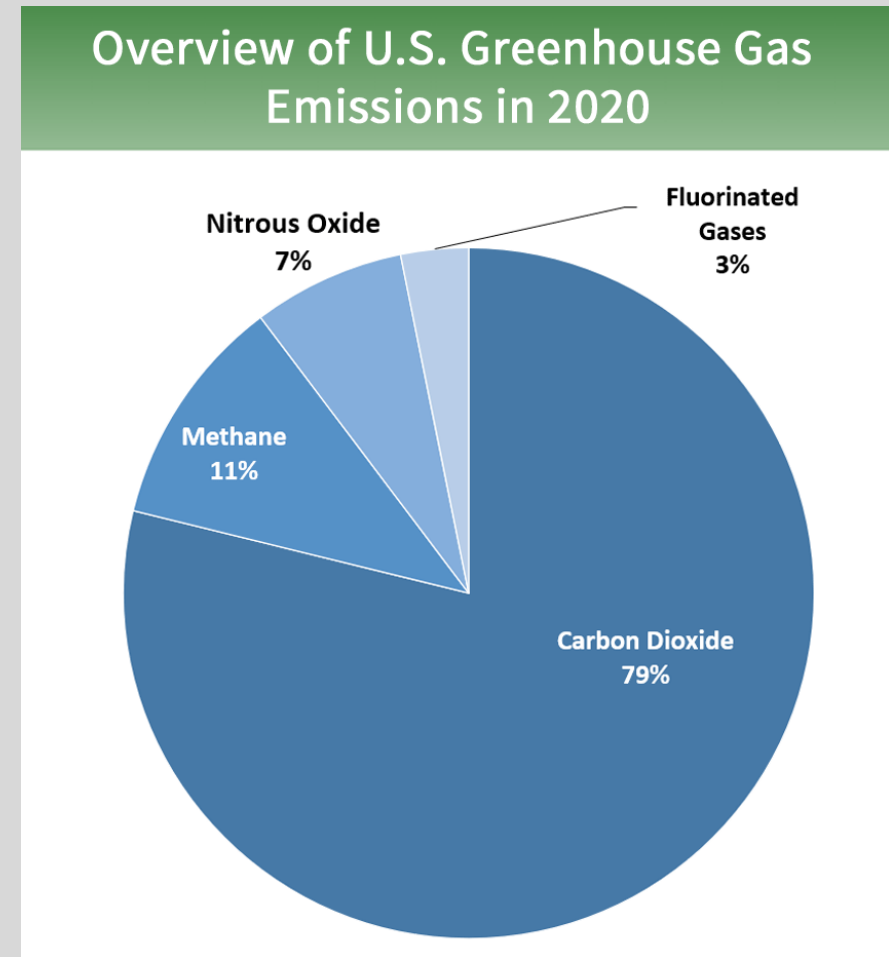
It is caused by humans

We're running out of time to fix it



# Recap+: Greenhouse Gases

US EPA's [Overview of Greenhouse Gases](#) (link on the BC/HT page) provides an overview of greenhouse gases, including how much is released, how long they stay, their sources, relative impacts, and ways to reduce emissions.



Source: [US EPA – Overview of Greenhouse Gases](#)



# Recap: How Does Climate Change Affect Us?

Our water

Our food supply

Our health

Our infrastructure

Our environment



Source: [NOAA – climate change impacts](#)

# Recap: Our Calling

## Start Here



**Love God with all your  
heart, mind, body,  
and soul.**

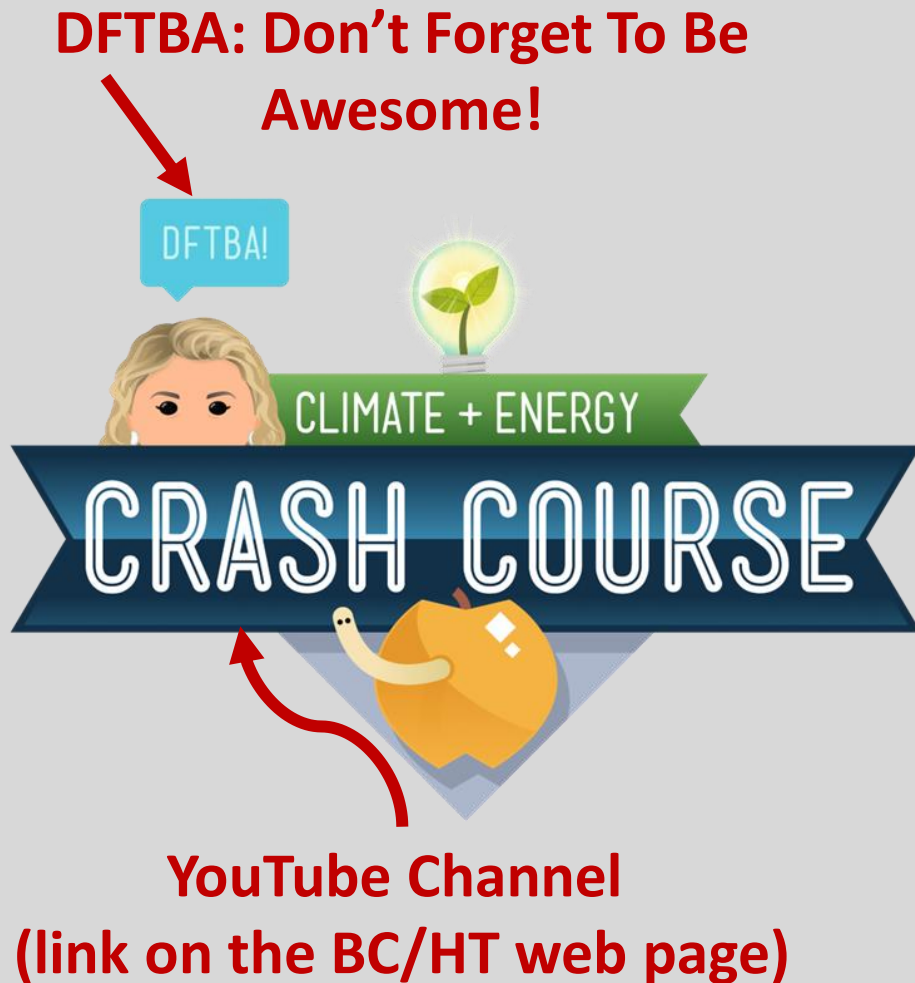
**Love your neighbor as  
yourself.**

“I believe that God created this planet and gave us responsibility over every living thing on it. And we are to care for and love the least fortunate among us.”

- Katharine Hayhoe

Climate Scientist and Chief Scientist for  
Nature Conservancy

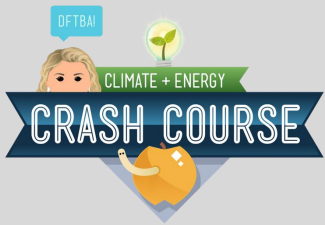
# The Scope of the Challenge



Climate change is a complex and a systemic problem.

It doesn't respect political boundaries.

The impacts of climate change aren't distributed evenly across the globe.



# Who's Responsible?

“Figuring out how much each country should be responsible for reducing emissions... is an ongoing ... challenge.

**...The higher-income countries that are best poised to lead the charge are the same ones that benefit the most from the fossil-fuel-powered global economy.”**

Many of these countries subsidize the fossil fuel industry to keep prices low.

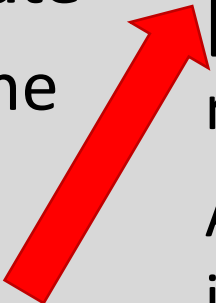
As a result, new technologies based on alternative/renewable resources seem artificially expensive.



# Why Is it a Social Justice Issue?

**Not everyone will experience the same consequences from climate change** or be able to adapt in the same way.

Those who face the most severe consequences are often least responsible for the greenhouse gas emissions driving global climate change.

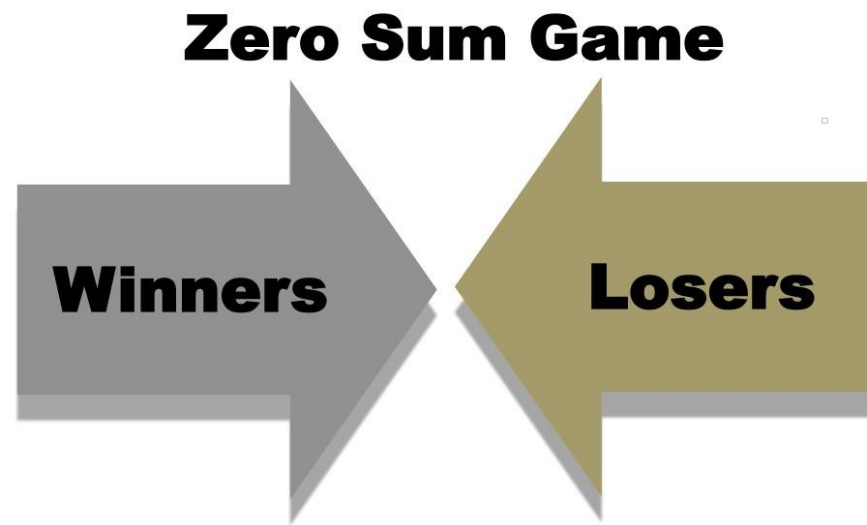


Racial divides exist between and within nations from “structural inequalities [from] a long legacy of unequal power relationships.”

A “lack of deliberate discrimination now is often used as a reason to dismiss structural racism/systemic injustice. But that doesn’t make it any less of an issue.”

- [\*Why Climate Change Is Inherently Racist\*, BBC Future](#)

# Overcoming Zero Sum Bias



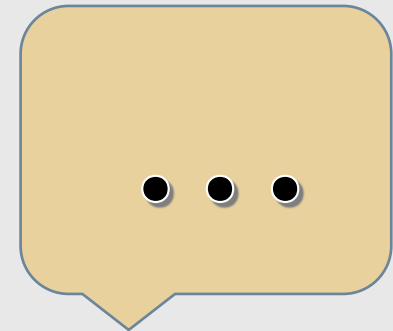
**Zero sum thinking:** success, especially economic success, is possible only at the expense of other people's failures (or losses).

**Zero-sum bias:** a tendency to intuitively judge that a situation is zero-sum, even when this is not the case.

What do we, who have benefitted from fossil fuel use, owe to developed countries that are experiencing the negative impacts but not the benefits of energy development?

What options are you willing to support in response to climate change impacts in other parts of the world?

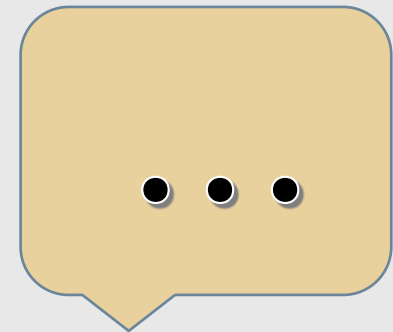
## Discussion



If we're benefitting from fossil fuel subsidies in this country, what is our responsibility to people in other countries who don't get those benefits?

Are you willing to advocate for removing the subsidies that keep fossil fuel energy low? If not, why?

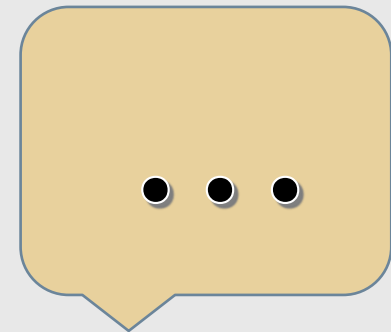
## Discussion



How much do you think addressing climate change is constrained by zero-sum thinking? How do we break that bias?

How much sacrifice are you willing to make to address climate change?

## Discussion





# How Can Any of Us Make a Difference?

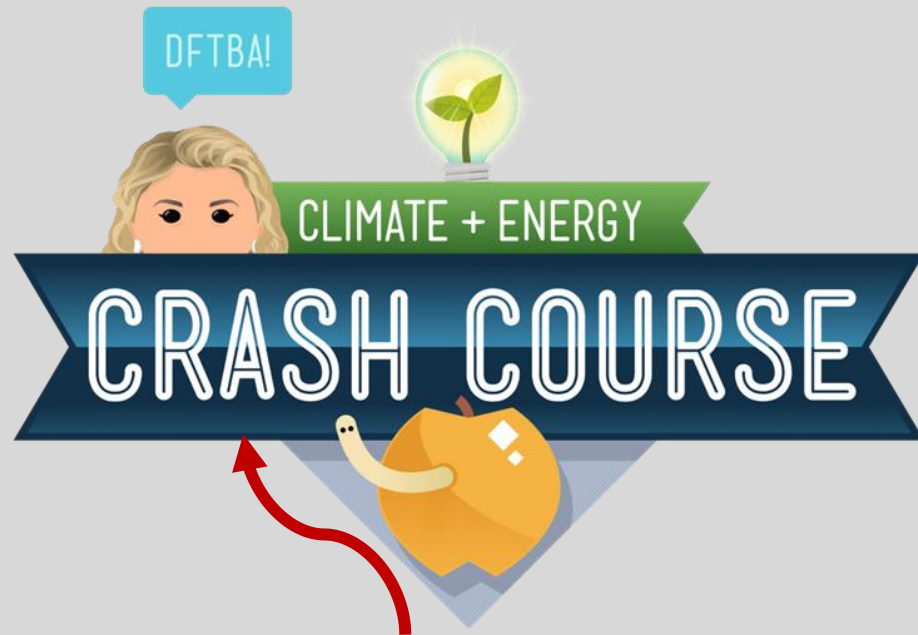
**“All of us have a role to play in shaping what’s next.... Tackling climate change will require a ton of creativity and even more cooperation – it’s humanity’s biggest group project ever.”**

**- Crash Course: Climate & Energy**

**“I can’t change the whole world, but I have tremendous power in how I choose to interact and move through the world.”**

**- Carrie Newcomer**

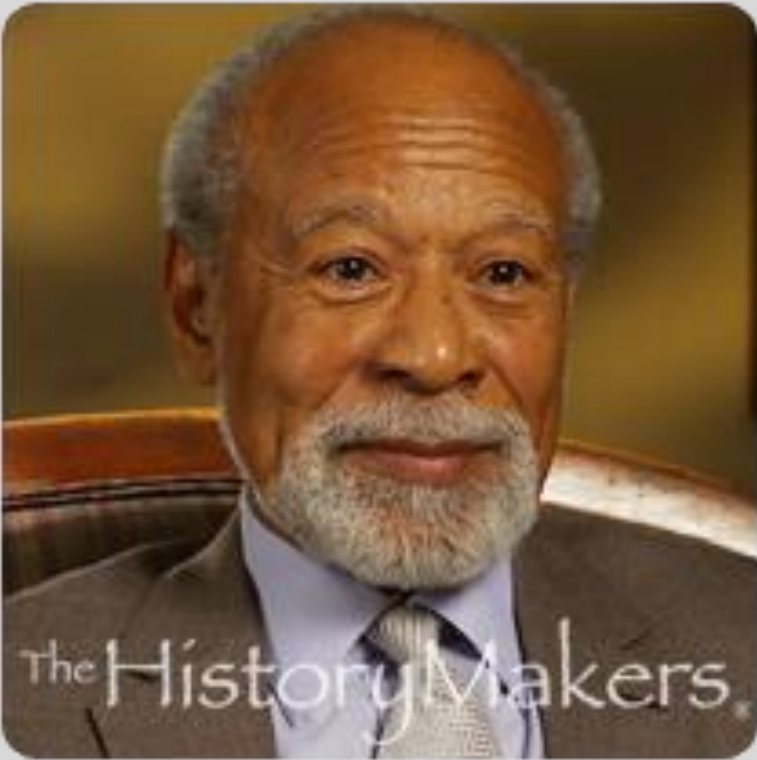
# Advocating for Alternative Fuel Sources



**YouTube Channel**  
**(link on the BC/HT web page)**

“Beyond helping slow the global effects of climate change, it could also be a step towards correcting environmental inequities — things like air, water, and noise pollution that disproportionately affect some more than others.”

# Inspiring the Next Generation



**Luther Williams**  
**Retired Biologist,**  
**Academic Administrator**

“As states increase restrictions of Black history content in schools, ...the stories and faith of Black scientists can help inspire equity and climate activism.”

**“Both the church and schools can help address the climate crisis by showing our youth those that have come before them, and the ways they used science as a way of liberating themselves and our people.”**

# Prioritizing People, Planet, Profit in that order



REBUILDING THE APPALACHIAN ECONOMY FROM THE GROUND UP.

**“The businesses we support all have a triple bottom line: people, planet, profit, in that order. It’s all about impact.”**

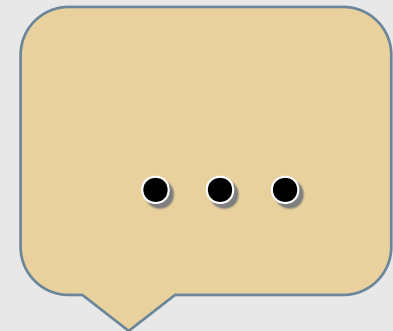
- Brandon Dennison, co-founder of Coalfield Development

**“They ...need to contribute to environmental sustainability, not take away from it. Most importantly, they need to contribute to the well-being of people and not [profit] on the backs of people.”**

In what ways could Grace Church make a difference?

How can we as a church encourage, empower, and equip youth in Springfield and beyond to engage in solutions to an issue that greatly concerns them?

## Discussion





# **A Franciscan Benediction**

May God bless you with discomfort at easy answers, half-truths, and superficial relationships so that you may live deep within the heart.

May God bless you with anger at injustice, oppression, and exploitation of people, so that you may work for justice, freedom, and peace.

## **A Franciscan Benediction (continued)**

May God bless you with tears to shed for those who suffer pain, rejection, hunger and war, so that you may reach out your hand to comfort them and to turn their pain into joy.

And may God bless you with enough foolishness to believe that you can make a difference in the world, so that you can do what others claim cannot be done, to bring justice and kindness to all our children and the poor. Amen.