

Published November 1st, 2017

Climate change discussion focuses on moral issues of our lifetime

By Pippa Fisher



Image provided

Residents will have a chance to consider the moral questions around climate change and discover ways to help at a free event hosted by Temple Isaiah's Environmental Committee in Lafayette.

The forum will focus on the science of climate change, the moral imperative for action and how individuals can get involved alone or with others from 4 to 6 p.m. Sunday, Nov. 12.

Billed as a "community and interfaith event" the committee emphasizes the community's shared responsibility to protect the environment so that the planet and its diverse species continue to thrive, and says that the work of the committee includes fighting climate change, supporting greenhouse gas reduction, clean air, water, and protecting public health and safety.

The forum will feature three speakers: Andrew Gunther, Ph.D. - the executive coordinator of the Bay Area Ecosystems Climate Change Consortium and board of directors of the Union of Concerned Scientists; Wei-Tai Kwok - a solar technology expert and the president of Sustainable Lafayette, who is a trained speaker with Al Gore's Climate Reality Project; and Rev. Canon Sally Bingham - Canon for the environment in the Episcopal Diocese of California and lead author of "Love God, Heal Earth" (2009), who was awarded the Audubon Society's Rachel Carson Award in 2012 for environmental leadership. She is also the founder and president of the Regeneration Project, which is focused on an Interfaith Power and Light campaign.

Kwok will be focusing on local solutions. "Most Lafayette residents and businesses now have MCE as our electricity provider. What residents aren't aware of is that this change now allows each household to go from MCE's default level of 50 percent renewable energy content and 'opt-up' to 100 percent renewable energy," says Kwok. He points out that the cost to get household electricity "carbon free" is, on average, \$5 more per month for a typical family to run their home on 100 percent California-generated solar and wind power.

So, is the climate crisis one of the greatest moral issues of our lifetime?

Kwok says, "If we accept the scientific fact that the earth is warming (2016 was the hottest year ever measured by weather instruments, eclipsing the previous record of 2015, which eclipsed the previous record of 2014), as well as the scientific consensus that human activity is the principal cause, we must stop to ask ourselves the moral and ethical questions. Is it morally acceptable to continue 'business-as-usual' habits, which pollute our air and oceans to the point where 50 percent of species could be lost by 2100, and to the point where extreme weather events increasingly devastate segments of our society, particularly the most vulnerable in our communities?"

Kwok is encouraged that faith communities, including Temple Isaiah, have taken up the dialog and notes that Pope Francis in 2015 called on people of all faiths to come together and take urgent action. "I thank him for his clarion call to other faiths and I'm proud that Temple Isaiah is taking a lead in our community. I look forward to sharing the stage with the Rev. Canon Sally Bingham, a climate leader in the faith community."

"Awareness levels are low," says Kwok, "so only 2 percent of Lafayette residents have opted up to MCE's 100 percent 'Deep Green' level, but I have a vision of a Lamorinda which is powered by carbon-free electricity. And that's not in the Jetsons' timeframe, it's something we can actually do right now."

The free event will take place at Temple Isaiah, 945 Risa Road in Lafayette.

Reach the reporter at: pippa@lamorindaweekly.com

[back](#)

Copyright © Lamorinda Weekly, Moraga CA