

FALL 2023 LECTURE

CREATION CARE AND THE CLIMATE CRISIS: WHAT CAN WE DO? A JEWISH PERSPECTIVE



A lecture by Madeline Hirschland, Executive Director of Creation Care Partners

Wednesday, October 25 @ 7:30 PM

Gannett Auditorium, Palamountain Hall at Skidmore College

Reception to follow

Admission is free and open to the public

About the lecture: The climate crisis can feel unfathomably huge and impossibly politicized. Many people of faith understand that quick and effective action is imperative but do not know what they can do to make a difference. They also may not see the direct connection between the climate crisis and social justice. Feeling overwhelmed and even paralyzed by the magnitude of the climate crisis, they focus their limited energy on day-to-day demands and other social justice issues. After acknowledging the sources of this inaction and drawing the direct connection between the climate crisis and social justice, the Perlow speaker will present a series of cases of effective action drawn from her experience at the congregational, local and statewide levels. After giving a visceral feel for each case, Ms. Hirschland will highlight the principles underlying its success. Together, the introduction and cases will aim to answer the following questions:

How can our faith traditions help us summon the will to face this crisis?

How can communities of faith serve as a joyful base for effective action?

How can faith communities make a difference?

The presenter will show how certain commonalities of different faiths and faith communities combined with a focus on results can enable individuals and communities to take important, effective and joyful action to curb the climate crisis.

The presenter's frame and references are Jewish, from an introductory story from the Talmud to translated Hebrew expressions, Jewish holy days and a concluding Jewish folk tale. She will discuss her efforts as a Jew to engage Jews and people of other faiths to take effective climate action. Her conclusions, however, will intentionally be inclusive of other faith traditions.

About the speaker: Until 2008, Madeline Hirschland worked in microfinance, a strategy to alleviate poverty, in Africa, Asia and the Middle East (Gates Foundation, Save the Children, USAID, World Bank). But alarmed by the impact of the changing climate on the most vulnerable, she shifted to motivating individuals and congregations to act.

She co-founded Hoosier Interfaith Power & Light; founded Solarize Indiana, which increased residential solar in Indiana by 20% in six months; and founded The Seventh Day Initiative, which assisted congregations and their members to become models of deep energy conservation by reducing their energy use by 33%. Madi now directs Creation Care Partners, which mobilizes synagogues and Evangelical churches across Indiana to install solar and deeply reduce their energy use.

Co-sponsored by the Office of Special Programs, Environmental Studies and Sciences program, Religious Studies department, Office of Religious and Spiritual Life, Skidmore Hillel, Skidmore Environmental Action Club, Temple Sinai, Unitarian Universalist Congregation of Saratoga Springs, and Presbyterian United Church. Funding is provided by endowments established by Jacob Perlow and by Beatrice Troupin.

About the Jacob Perlow Series: A generous grant from the estate of Jacob Perlow - an immigrant to the United States in the 1920s, a successful business man deeply interested in religion and philosophy, and a man who was committed to furthering Jewish education - supports annual lectures and presentations to the College and Capital District community on issues broadly related to Jews and Judaism. Additional funding was provided by a bequest from Mrs. Beatrice Perlman Troupin.