

Project SnowFall: The Third Letter to Our Congregation

Environmental Privilege

It's a beautiful day today. Blue sky, puffy clouds and a gentle breeze. A day like many others. There is no evidence here of climate change, just occasional thoughts of something distant, far away in time and space. The effects of climate change are most noticeable at the polar extremes, the equator and the coast lines. All, a very long way from here.

Stories of few degrees of energy accumulating in the vast stores of the atmosphere and the massive oceans over the decades seems like something that might just not be much of a problem. The temperature here can change by 30 degrees in a single day.

We live with climate privilege. Something all of us share, anyone who lives here, the upper middle west. The land of the Great Lakes, with vast stores of fresh water, like few places on earth.

There are other, more abstract benefits like the luxury to contemplate whether it does more harm than good to prepare for climate change. All of the immediate short term cost can be amplified. The long term cost diminished. And much of the pollution problems we can see, are in poor neighborhoods. It seems a rational approach to not make any changes to business as usual.

I have been struck with one particular message from the 2017 UIC conference, Untroubled the Waters, about the Great Lakes. That was question of who was making preparations for the 10-20 million refugees expected here in the next decade or two. It seem the whole world can read a map. The whole world will come to appreciate the climate privilege we take for granted.

When enough change has happened to make it obvious, the fix will be very expensive, if possible at all. Considering this, waiting to see what happens is not the responsible conservative thing to do. It is a very radical thing to do.

With the need for so much to do and so little happening, how does the story of climate change stay in the background, easily drowned out by all the other chaos of daily life?

We recognize that we live both with climate privilege and the knowledge that something must be done. We are studying this situation in our monthly letters to let us there are things that can be done. And to share this with our elected representatives.

From The Institute for Governance and Sustainable Development (igsd.org) a reference to their work by the Vatican:

Vatican City, Vatican, 9 November 2017 – Scalable and practical solutions exist to help preserve the quality of life of future generations in the face of

accelerating climate impacts, and with perhaps a decade left to put these into place, the time for climate change action is now. These are the conclusions of the *Declaration* issued last week by the Vatican's Pontifical Academy of Sciences, entitled "[Our Planet, Our Health, Our Responsibility](#)".

And the igsd 60 page report: "Well Under 2 Degrees Celsius", on what to do. From page 10, Ten Scalable Solutions -