

## **Minister's Message (Sermon) – Easter 4 – Sunday, May 3/20**

### ***Extraordinary Persons of Faith: Part Two***

#### **Katharine Anne Scott Hayhoe**

##### **Introduction**

Katharine Ann Scott Hayhoe, age 43, is an atmospheric scientist, professor of political science, director of the Climate Science Center at Texas Tech University in Lubbock, Texas, and CEO of the consulting firm ATMOS Research and Consulting. She is better known, however, as America's evangelical prophet of climate change.

Hayhoe was born in Toronto, in 1972, the daughter of evangelical Christian missionaries. Her father, Doug Hayhoe, a science educator as well as an evangelical missionary, held the position of technology and science co-ordinator for the Toronto District School Board, and since has served as an associate professor of education at Toronto's Tyndale University College and Seminary. Her mother, who apparently tends to remain out of the spotlight, is also an evangelical missionary and scientist.

Katharine, who is a committed evangelical Christian, credits her parents as the inspiration behind her commitment that science and religion do not have to conflict with each other.

##### **Education**

Hayhoe received her B.Sc. degree in physics and astronomy from the University of Toronto in 1994. As the result of taking a course on climate change simply to fulfill an undergraduate degree requirement she shifted her focus from astrophysics to atmospheric science, and specialized in the latter academic discipline at graduate school. Hayhoe attended grad school at the University of Illinois (Urbana-Champaign) where she received both her M.Sc. and Ph. D. degrees.

While attending graduate school at the University of Illinois she was introduced to the Union of Concerned Scientists, a non-profit science advocacy group.



Photo: Professor Katharine Anne Scott Hayhoe ([www.ireland.anglican.org](http://www.ireland.anglican.org))

## **Personal Life**

Katharine met her husband Andrew Farley while she was studying at the University of Illinois. Farley is a linguist as well as the pastor of an evangelical church in Lubbock, Texas. He and Katherine have one child. Although most of her work has been done in the United States, and she is perhaps better known in that country than anywhere else in the world, she remains a Canadian citizen (W. Marsden, “National Post”, April 24, 2015, [www.nationalpost.com](http://www.nationalpost.com))

## **Hayhoe’s Work and Scientific Research**

Katharine Hayhoe has worked at Texas Tech since 2005 and written at least 120 peer reviewed publications. She has also authored several important Climate Change reports. Shortly after the release of a major report for the American federal government in 2014 she said, “Climate change is here and now, and not in some distant time or place...the changes we’re making today will have a significant impact on the future” (D. Rice, “U.S.A. Today”, May 6, 2014, [www.usatoday.com](http://www.usatoday.com) ).

Known for the excellence of her advocacy and communication around Climate Change, Hayhoe is also very critical of Climate Deniers. In 2018, she lashed out saying, “The six stages of climate denial are: It’s not real. It’s not us. It’s not that bad. It’s too expensive to fix. Aha, here’s a great

solution (that actually does nothing). And, oh no! Now it's too late. You really should have warned us earlier (M. Crist, "New York Times", March 27, 2020, [www.nytimes.com](http://www.nytimes.com) ).

She has served as a science advisor to the Emmy Award winning TV documentary series Years of Living Dangerously that details the impact of Climate Change on lives around the world. In the first episode of this series she discussed why she believed her Christian faith and her need to act on Climate Change were not in conflict. She also hosted and produced a bi-weekly series with PBS called Global Weirding: Climate, Politics and Religion, which ran from 2016 to 2019 (Wikipedia, [www.wikipedia.org](http://www.wikipedia.org))

**Some of Hayhoe's Honours and Awards** (Wikipedia, [www.wikipedia.org](http://www.wikipedia.org) )

2019 – United Nations Champions of the Earth Award

2019 – "Foreign Policy Magazine", 100 Leading Global Thinkers

2018 – Stephen H. Schneider Award for Outstanding Science Communication

2017 – "Fortune" magazine's 50 World's Great Leaders

2016 – National Center for Science Education, Friend of the Planet Award

2016 – Katherine Hayhoe appeared at the White House with U.S. President Barak Obama and actor Leonardo DiCaprio to discuss Climate Change

2014 – "Time" magazine's 100 Most Influential People

2014 – American Geophysical Union, Climate Communication Prize

### **Evangelical Christianity and Climate Change Advocacy**

In 2009, Katherine Hayhoe and her husband Andrew Farley (a one-time climate denier) co-authored the book "A Climate for Change: Global Warming and Facts for Faith-Based Decisions" which outlines the ways in which climate science reflects evangelical Christian beliefs and values. The successful publication of this volume has had the happy consequence of providing countless speaking opportunities for Hayhoe. She has spoken on the topic of evangelical Christianity and its friendly relationship to climate science at evangelical Christian colleges, churches and other religiously conservative groups all over the U.S.A.

Mostly, she delivers lectures that are rooted in the New Testament and grounded in theology-based ethics emphasizing the benefits of collective action to mitigate climate change.

Seen through the lens of the Christian evangelical tradition, one-time sceptics show a demonstrably greater willingness to accept scientific facts pointing out that that global warming is a reality, and mitigating collective action, a necessity.

Or to quote Hayhoe, “When we tie that (climate science) to our Christian values there’s no conflict. In fact, quite the opposite – our faith demands we act on this issue (K. Kroh “Jump up to”, October, 2019).

### **A Climate Prophet, Not a Climate Evangelist**

Many Americans refer to Katherine Hayhoe as a “climate evangelist” but because of her faith-understanding, she will have none of it. She quite correctly points out that an evangelist is “the bearer of good news” and when it comes to global warming and climate change there is no good news whatsoever.

Instead, she sees herself more as the Old Testament prophet, Jeremiah, whose omens and warnings were divinely inspired challenges to the actions of selfish kings and self-obsessed priestly cults in ancient Israel. She sees herself as warning the American people about the consequences of their choices, which is what the ancient prophets did. And, now as then, prophets are hated and threatened and violated. Hayhoe gets a steady stream of hate on social media, and sometimes even death threats. But she reminds herself that the apostle Paul wrote to his disciple Timothy pointing out that “hate comes from anger, and anger comes from fear, and fear does not come from God” (2 Timothy 1:7). And she takes delight in knowing that she is empowering people to act which, according to the apostle Paul in this same letter to Timothy, is a gift from God (D. Zak, June 25, 2019, Washington Post, [www.washingtonpost.com/lifestyle](http://www.washingtonpost.com/lifestyle))

Hayhoe goes on to explain, “I’m a climate scientist because I’m a Christian”. But that’s not all she has to say about her evangelical Christianity. She points out that climate change adversely affects the most vulnerable whom Christians have a duty to serve. “When you are living on two dollars a day, you are the most vulnerable to the effects of climate change”, she emphasizes. And referring to Genesis 1: 26 she clarifies that human beings are to have dominion over the earth but dominion, she rightly insists, is not domination and exploitation. Instead of domination and exploitation, we humans are “to exercise skilled mastery with respect” (Peter Segal, June 16, 2019, [www.juneauempire.com/news](http://www.juneauempire.com/news)).

**Katherine Hayhoe's Most Memorable Statements** (D. Zak, June 25, 2019, Washington Post, [www.washingtonpost.com/lifestyle](http://www.washingtonpost.com/lifestyle))

1. We humans have been given the responsibility for every living thing on this planet, which includes each other.
2. We are called to tend the garden and be good stewards of the gifts God has given us.
3. You might say that the climate problem, while understood through science, can only be solved through faith. Faith in one another. Faith in our ability to do something bold, together. Faith that the pain of change, that the sacrifices required, will lead to a promised land.

May it be so. Amen.

### **Some of the Sources That Shaped This "Sermon"**

Church of Ireland, Photo of Katharine Hayhoe, [www.ireland.anglican.org](http://www.ireland.anglican.org)

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