

DEEPENING Climate Integrity

THE UNITED CHURCH OF CANADA

2021-2022

Sustainability Report

Camp Scugog, Scugog, ON
Credit: Aleyxa Gates - Julien



Faithful
Footprints



Dear Friends,

The United Church of Canada is committed to climate, ecological, and social justice, and to deepening our integrity by working to mend our world. We are a church that seeks to restore the balance of God’s created order. The latest reports from the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change at the United Nations make it clear that the time for bold action is now. In the biblical tradition, the prophets often called us to repent of our wrongdoings with urgency—and we must lift up that prophetic voice and insist that we do what we know is right to preserve life on this planet.

These past two years have been difficult—an ongoing pandemic, heartbreaking news concerning thousands of Indigenous children’s unmarked burial sites, and worsening climate impacts—but it has also been a time of new beginnings. Our collective responses to these deeply challenging crises give me great hope.

Our second Sustainability Report is a testament to our dedication, resilience, and creativity in problem-solving. A small sampling of how we are correcting wrongs, lightening the way we walk in Creation, and healing our planet together, it reflects the hope we share for human prosperity and dignity in a flourishing web of life.

For me, as a member of the **Heiltsuk First Nation** and the first Indigenous woman to have taken on the role of Moderator, I am privileged to influence understandings of our deep spirituality, bold discipleship, and daring justice across the church as we learn to live within the planetary boundaries that hold us in a just and safe centre. Holding in balance our impacts on the world around us is something that Indigenous peoples in Canada and globally have modelled since time immemorial. It is based in the belief that we respect all of Creation, and that we only need to take what is necessary because we believe that Creator will provide what is necessary for our thriving. Like the story of the quails and the manna from heaven, we are provided always with what we need through God’s gracious giving.

I invite you into this abundance mindset and spirit of generosity.

The Right Reverend Dr. Carmen Lansdowne
Moderator
The United Church of Canada



*The Right Reverend
Dr. Carmen Lansdowne
Moderator
The United Church of Canada*



PUTTING OUR HOUSE IN ORDER



RAISING OUR SPIRITED VOICES



CONNECTING WITH THE EARTH



RESPONDING TO CLIMATE IMPACT

Our Four Climate Pillars



PUTTING OUR HOUSE IN ORDER



RAISING OUR SPIRITED VOICES



CONNECTING WITH THE EARTH



RESPONDING TO CLIMATE IMPACT

The Journey

What

- Reduce our carbon, energy, transportation, and operational footprint
- Help change the underlying structures at the heart of these crises
- Strengthen our love for and connection to all of God's Creation
- Support and respond to communities affected by climate change

When

- The time is now
- In 2022, the General Council Executive pledged to amplify and integrate current initiatives in a denominational climate strategy, and as a whole church commitment
- The climate strategy will accelerate carbon reductions towards the goal of an 80% decrease in emissions by 2030 with a focus to measure, report and adjust based on learnings

How

- Intensify our historic commitment through church-wide participation, tools to support congregations, stronger denominational advocacy, and investor action
- Work with allies and collaborators
- Commit to measuring and reporting our progress
- Explore **innovative strategies** and mobilize new and existing resources that reflect our Call and Vision

Why

- Our planet faces intersecting crises – climate, ecological and social
- These multiple crises harm those who are the least responsible the most
- If we hope to have a life-supporting future, there is no time to wait
- Safeguarding and taking responsibility for the injustices wrought on God's creation is central to our mission

PUTTING OUR HOUSE IN ORDER

We are contributing towards more resilient communities by putting our house in order. By greening our buildings, sharing our spaces, and decreasing our carbon footprint, we are lowering operational costs, creating revenue-flowing opportunities, and building capacity for additional programming.

Greening Our Buildings
A Snapshot of Faithful Footprints
Kindred Works
In Service to the Community
Changing How We Operate
Working with Nature
Contributing to a More Just Economy
Powering the Grid
Green Audits





Greening Our Buildings

The majority of United Church emissions come from heating our buildings. **Faithful Footprints** is our primary granting program, delivered by **Faith & the Common Good**, to help our faith communities reduce their carbon footprint and improve energy performance by retrofitting their buildings. Three **Regional Support Centres** and a team based in Ontario actively support the program's successes. **Grants** and **Energy** data progress is shared through two maps developed in collaboration with **Toronto United Church Council (TUCC)**.



Credit: St.Paul's United Church, Saskatoon, SK



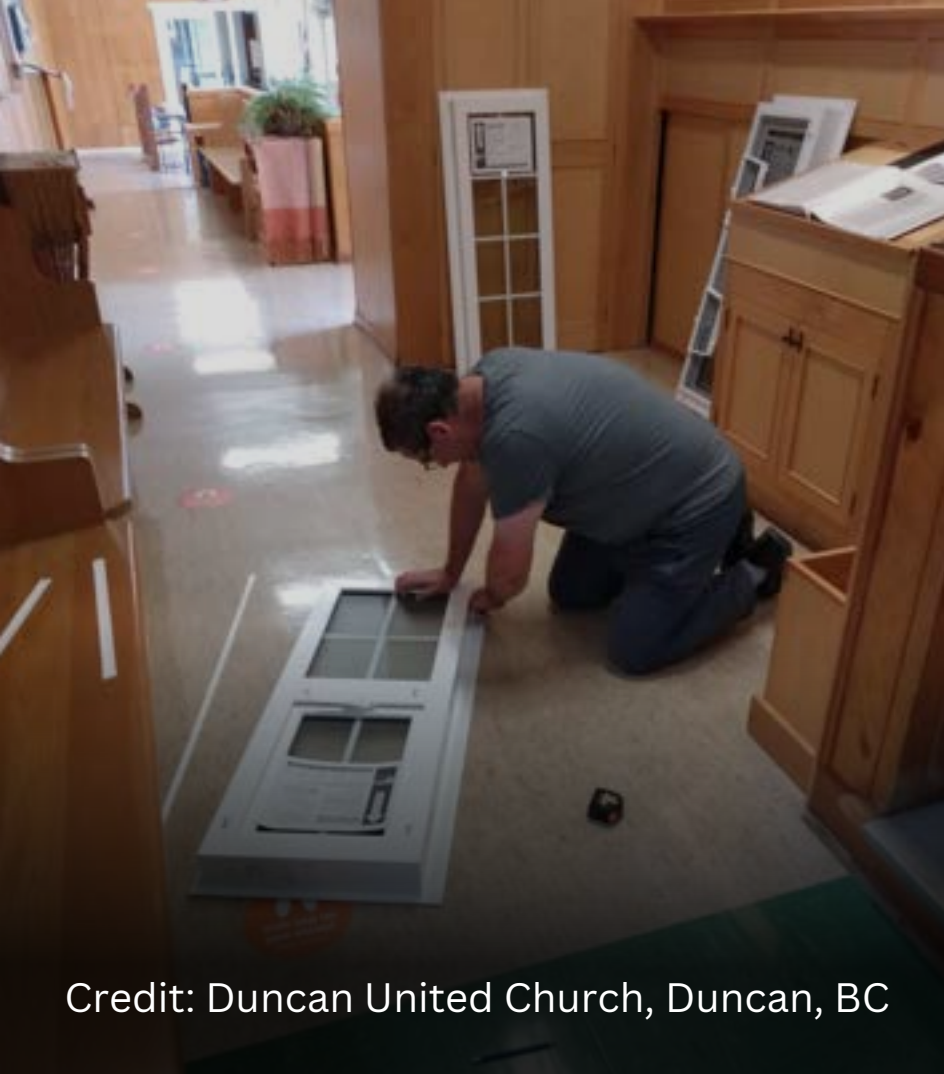
Credit: Oakbank United Church, Oakbank, MB

A Snapshot of Faithful Footprints

Region and Communities of Faith Engaged since 2018

Antler River Watershed Regional Council	19
Eastern Ontario Outaouais Regional Council	15
Pacific Mountain Regional Council	26
First Dawn Eastern Edge Regional Council	11
Shining Waters Regional Council	33
Northern Spirit Regional Council	23
Horseshoe Falls Regional Council	15
Living Skies Regional Council	17
Regional Council 15	42
Fundy St. Lawrence Dawning Waters Regional Council	36
Western Ontario Waterways Regional Council	18
Chinook Winds Regional Council	13
East Central Ontario Regional Council	21
Conseil Regional Nakonha:ka Regional Council	13
Canadian Shield Regional Council	5
Prairie to Pine Regional Council	25
Total to December 2022	332





Credit: Duncan United Church, Duncan, BC

Duncan United Church Duncan, BC

Received a grant in support of the replacement of fluorescent and incandescent lights with LED lighting, an oil furnace with an air-source heat pump and electric motor, and two fridges, four freezers, and windows. A year following its projects, **Duncan United** reduced its GHG emissions by **58.7%**, natural gas usage by **23.9%**, and energy costs by **18.5%**.



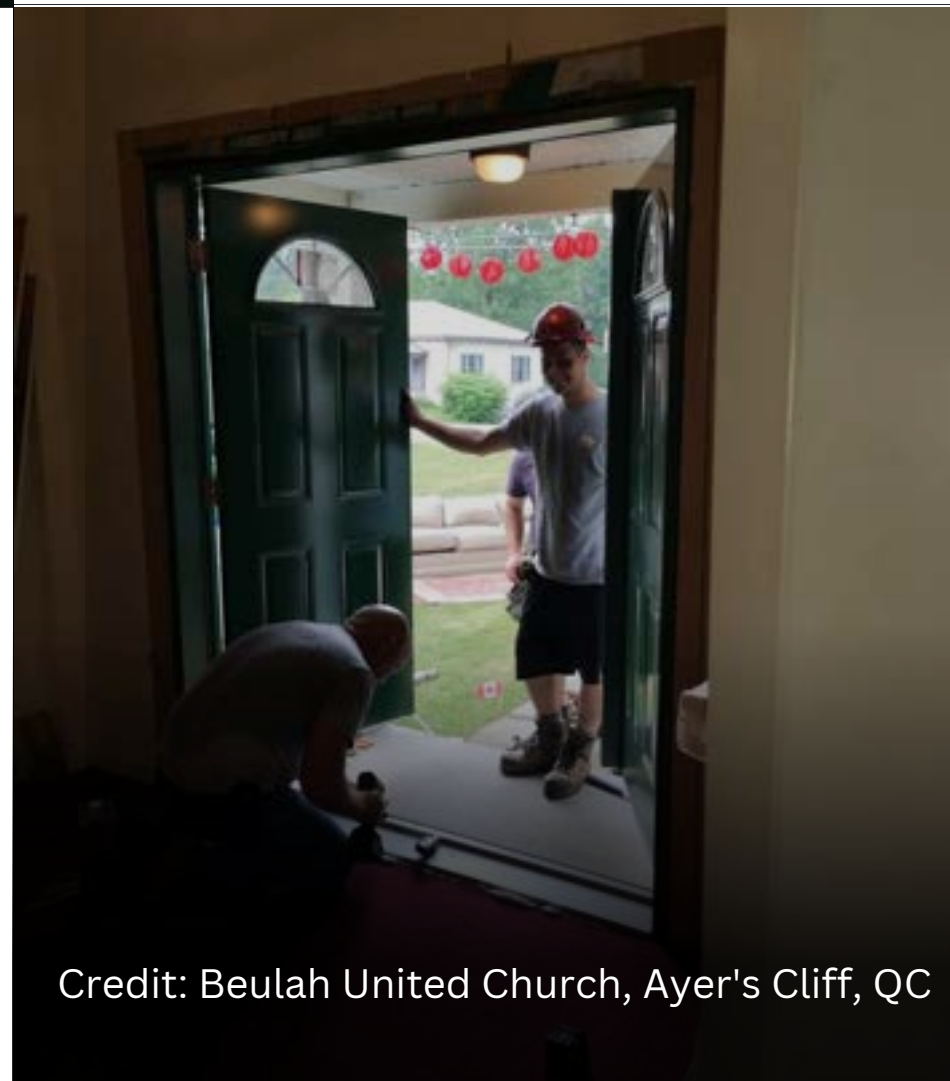
Credit: Hillcrest United, Montague, PEI

Hillcrest United Church Montague, PEI

Received a grant in support of the installation of six ductless heat pumps, four windows in basement, and LED lighting around the entire building; the replacement of an oil boiler and hot water heater, with an 80-gallon electric hot water heater; the sealing of the door to bell tower and bell tower hatch; and the insulation of the electric hot water heater and bell tower hatch. A year following its projects, **Hillcrest United** reduced its GHG emissions by **49.7%**, fuel oil usage from a single source by **69.2%**, and energy costs by **24.6%**.

Beulah United Church Ayer's Cliff, QC

Received a grant in support of the replacement of a hot water tank, oil tank, oil furnaces with electric furnaces, and electrical panel; the replacement of a window, industrial fridge, and rangehood in the kitchen, and four doors with panic bars; the installation of a dishwasher, and electric fans and LED lights in its sanctuary, vestry, kitchen, and office. A year following its projects, **Beulah United** reduced its GHG emissions by **99.4%**, and energy costs by **26.0%**.



Credit: Beulah United Church, Ayer's Cliff, QC

Ralph Connor Memorial United Church Canmore, AB

Received a grant in support of the installation of solar panels and a heat recovery ventilation system; the replacement of fluorescent lights with LEDs, refrigerator and stand up freezer; and the insulation of crawl space ductwork under sanctuary. A year following its projects, **Ralph Connor United** reduced its GHG emissions by **26.7%**, natural gas usage by **8.9%**, electricity usage by **42.4%**, and energy costs by **26.0%**.



Credit: Ralph Connor United Church, Canmore, AB



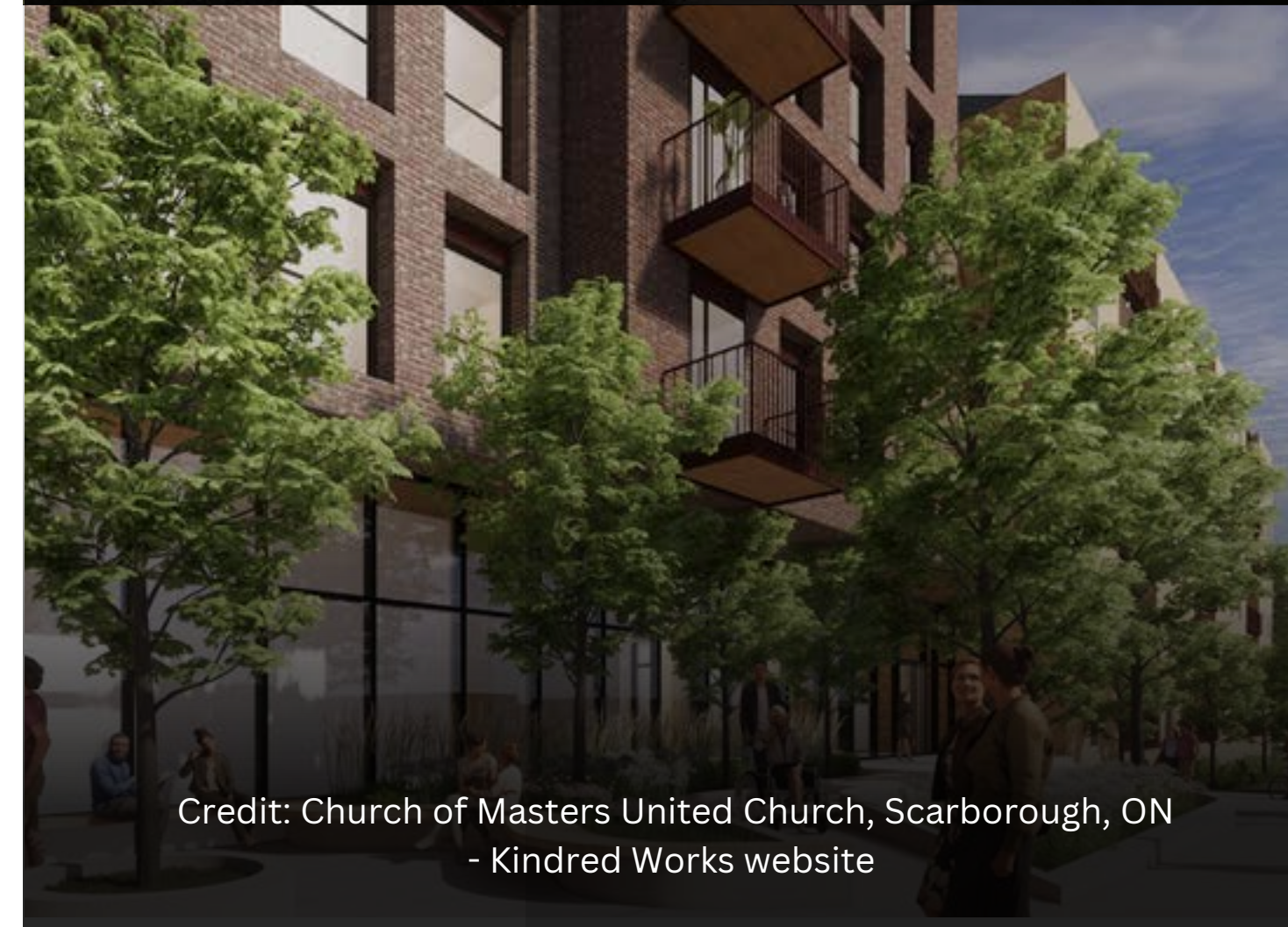
Kindred Works

The United Property Resource Corporation (UPRC) delivers real estate expertise to United Church communities. In 2022, UPRC established **Kindred Works**, a company that acts as its development and asset manager. Keeping with the United Church ministry – service to the community – Kindred Works plans to repurpose underused properties to build a nationwide portfolio of mixed-income rental housing and gathering spaces. The company aims to develop homes for 34,000 people in the next 15 years, with a grounding vision of creating opportunities for people – social, environmental, and financial – while advancing equity, accessibility, right-relations, anti-colonialism, and anti-racism approaches. A champion of sustainable practices, Kindred Works' goal is an 80% carbon reduction in construction from today's industry standard by 2030.

Kindred Works currently has eight projects going through municipal planning processes. Four projects are in **Toronto** and include **St. Luke's United Church**, **Church of the Master United Church**, **Wexford Heights United Church**, and **Wilmar Heights United Church**. Another three in **Ontario** are **Queenswood United Church**, **Ottawa, Regent Park United Church**, **Orillia**, and **Westminster United Church**, **St. Catharines**. **Portland United Church** in **Saint John, NB**, rounds out the eight. A 2022 **Broadview magazine article** shares a map of these sites that includes background information and further project details for each one.



Credit: Portland United Church, Saint John, NB
- Kindred Works website



Credit: Church of Masters United Church, Scarborough, ON
- Kindred Works website



In Service to the Community

Our buildings provide critical and affordable spaces for local community groups. With retrofitted structures, we can offer a broader range of services. **Tatamagouche Centre**, in **Tatamagouche, NS**, has become a more welcoming and comfortable space for learning, healing, and retreat, and is well positioned to become an emergency preparedness hub for communities in **Tatamagouche** and surrounding areas. **Harrow United Church** in **Winnipeg, MB**, is now better insulated to provide Christian education, yoga, and dance and music programs, as well as providing space for **The United Church Halfway Homes**. **Kensington United Church** in **Kensington, PE**, has increased community rentals for concerts, festivals, recreational activities, meetings, and a community warming centre.



Credit: Tatamagouche Centre, Tatamagouche, NS



Credit: Harrow United Church, Winnipeg, MB

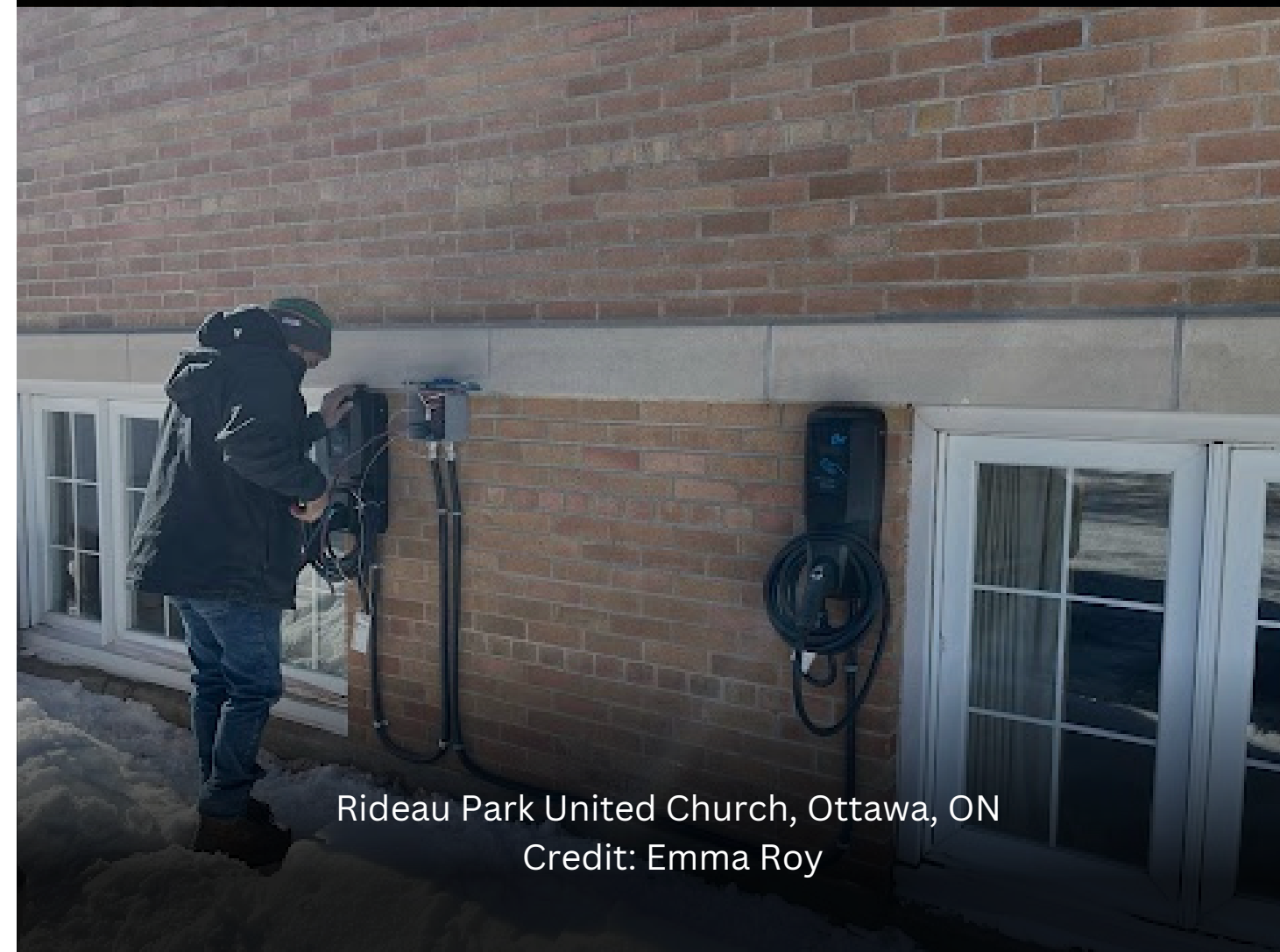


Changing How We Operate

Transportation emissions are our second largest carbon emitter. To help lower their emissions, **Rideau Park United Church** and **Kanata United Church** in **Ottawa, ON**, worked with **Greening Sacred Spaces Ottawa (GSS Ottawa)** to secure funding to install electric vehicle charging stations in their parking lots. Funding was received through **Natural Resources Canada's Zero Emission Vehicle Infrastructure Program (ZEVIP)**, **Hydro Ottawa** and **The United Church of Canada Foundation**. The chargers will become a new source of revenue for the churches and will be valuable to **Ottawa's** transition towards electric vehicles, cementing these locations as pillars of sustainability in the broader community.



Rideau Park United Church, Ottawa, ON
Credit: Emma Roy



Rideau Park United Church, Ottawa, ON
Credit: Emma Roy



Working with Nature

On-site resource usage can reduce overhead transportation costs and carbon emissions. **Camp Fircom** on **Gambier Island, BC**, turned to the natural abundance of the sun as an alternative onsite power source by installing a 16kW solar energy system on the roof of their south-facing archery shelter. **St. James Centennial United Church** in **Parry Sound, ON**, built an outdoor wood burning oven and installed a rain barrel system to harvest water for their community garden. **Camp Scugog** in **Nestleton, ON**, installed an underground geothermal system that uses water circulation to convert the natural underground temperatures of the Earth to viable energy to heat and cool, thereby upgrading their main facility to a four-season building.



Credit: St. James Centennial United Church, Parry Sound, ON



Credit: Camp Scugog, Scugog, ON



Contributing to a More Just Economy

Transforming our buildings is contributing to supporting trade jobs through local social enterprises. To deliver our retrofit program, **Faithful Footprints** contracts with Winnipeg-based **Purpose Construction** and Camrose-based **Newo Global Energy**, which both provide skilled trades training and long term jobs to those who face barriers to employment. As part of Newo Global Energy's Indigenous-led training and employment program, **Pecamu Makoce** (Stoney for "fixing the earth"), specifically targeted to the **Alexis Nakota Sioux Nation**, trainees gained hands-on experience assisting in installing solar panels on the roofs of **First United Church** in **Wetaskiwin, AB** and **Riverbend United Church** in **Edmonton, AB**.



Credit: Newo Global Energy



Credit: Riverbend United Church, Edmonton, AB



Powering the Grid

Generating an excess amount of power through renewable energy sources can help serve nearby communities and create a passive revenue source for churches. With a solar energy system that often produces a surplus of energy, **Parkdale United Church** in **Calgary, AB**, have enough energy to power their own buildings and provide additional energy to neighbouring buildings, thereby contributing to their local energy grid.

Green Audits

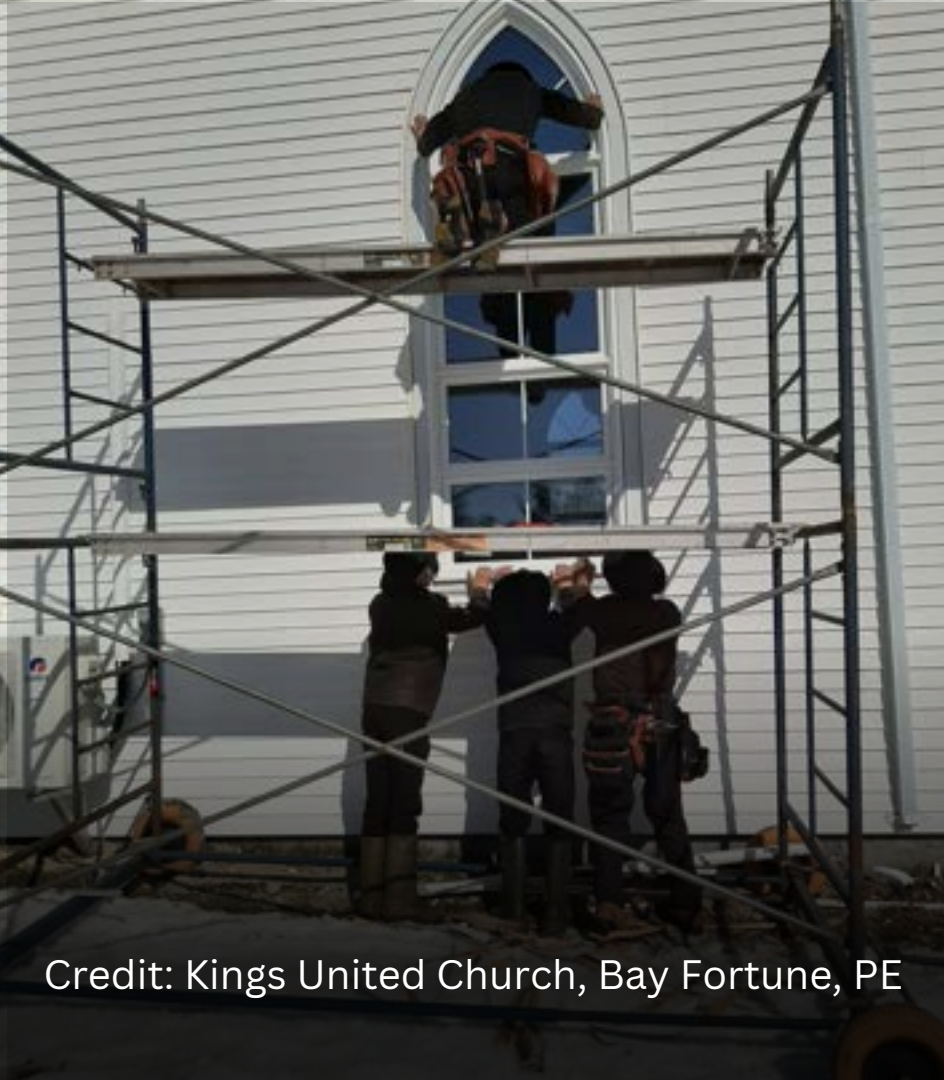
Faith & the Common Good's Green Audit involves a walkthrough of the faith community's building by a trained auditor who identifies areas with greening potential. Despite the pandemic, 11 churches managed to complete audits during 2021 and 2022. To date, more than 90 United Churches have completed audits.



Credit: Parkdale United Church, Calgary, AB

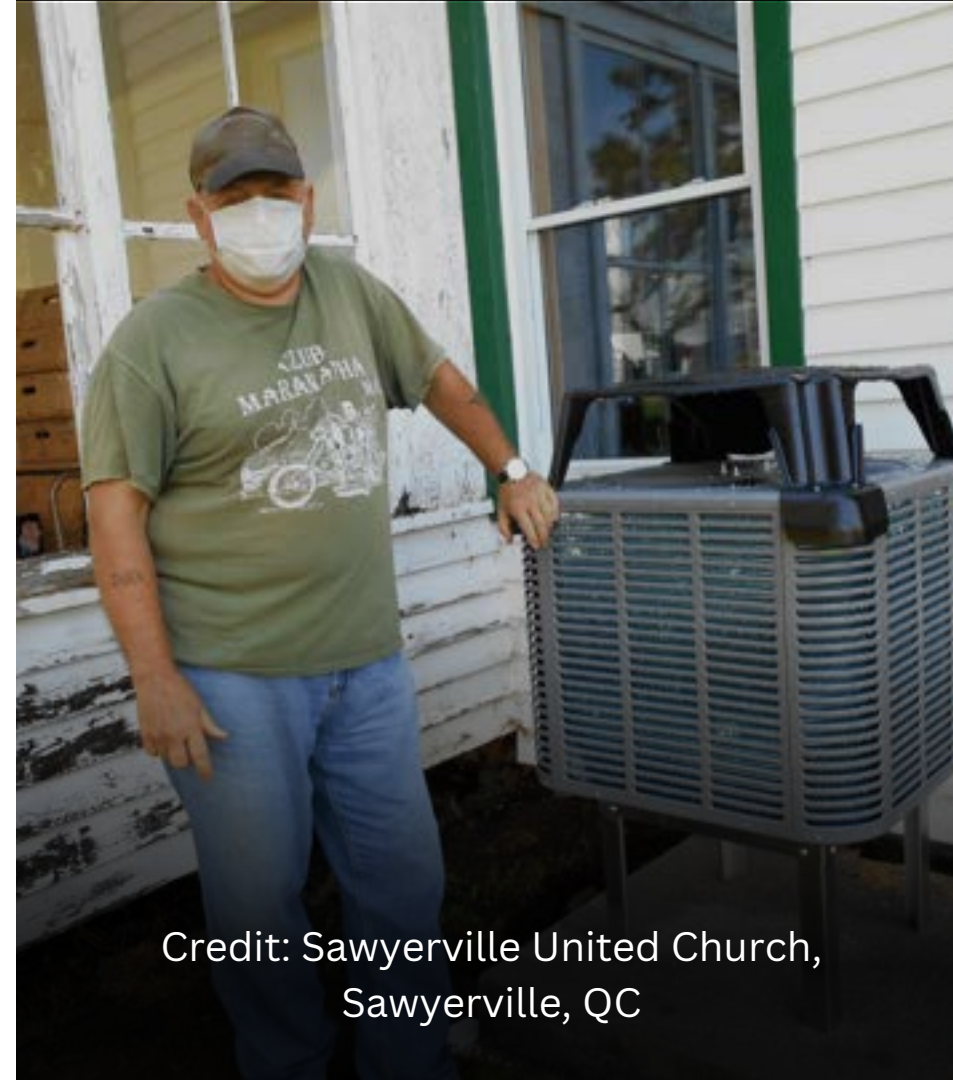


Credit: St. Paul's United Church, Orillia, ON



"Our retrofit has contributed to church enthusiasm, and will be a symbol of the United Church commitment to be good stewards of the Earth. We have plans to continue being good stewards of Mother Earth by making improvements at the manse to reduce energy costs and carbon output."

**Kings United Church,
Bay Fortune, PE**



"We have learned that we need not hesitate to go ahead with upgrades to our church. Such projects will enhance our worship space, makes us more energy efficient and reduces our impact on the environment. The energy savings will aid in the continuing work of our church."

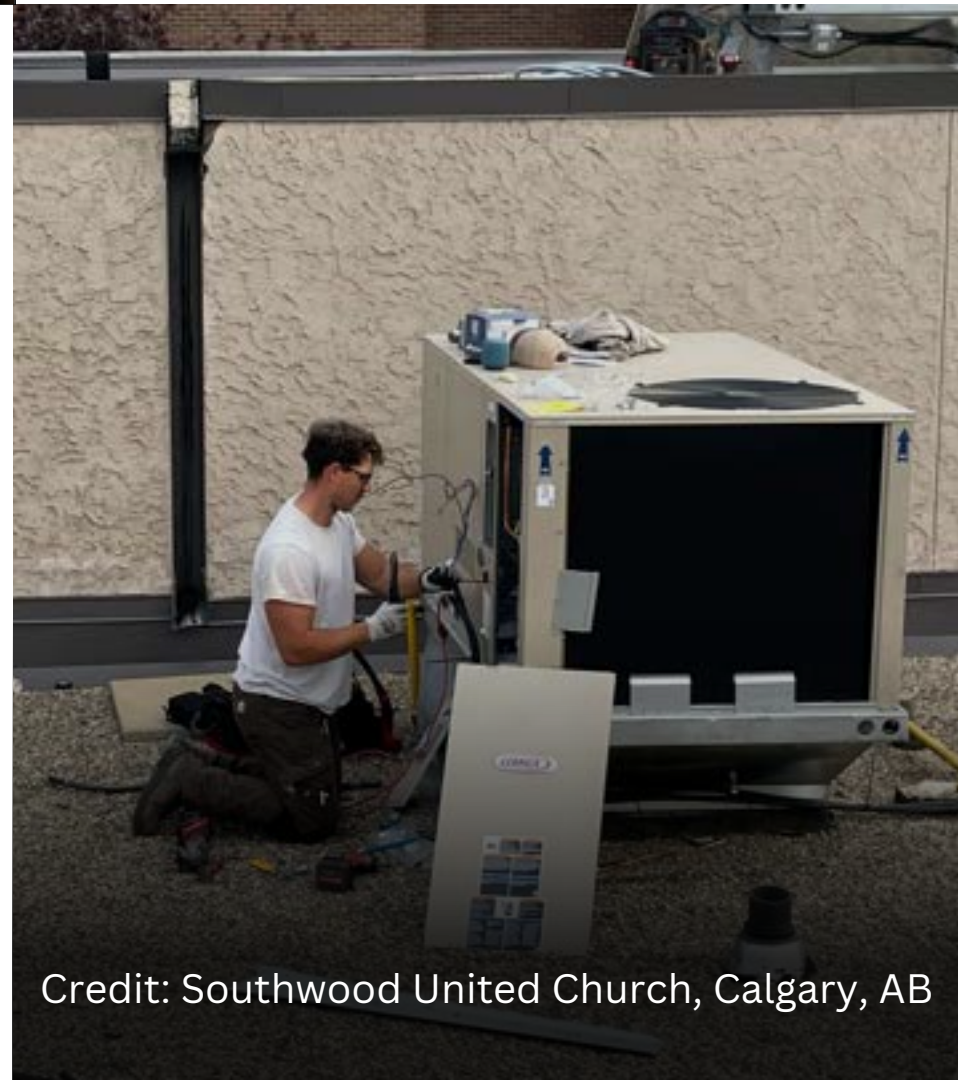
**Sawyerville United Church,
Sawyerville, QC**

Credit: Kings United Church, Bay Fortune, PE

Credit: Sawyerville United Church,
Sawyerville, QC

"Not only will greening efforts reduce our carbon footprint and thus be a public witness for creation care, but it will also reduce our costs in the use of natural gas – which benefits every ministry and program through more available funding for relational work with people."

**Southwood United Church,
Calgary, AB**



"We expect our building retrofit to have a significant positive impact on our energy consumption. These savings will be better used to provide programs and services to our congregation and the community."

**Noel Anthony
Fraser Road United Church,
Gander, NL**

Credit: Southwood United Church, Calgary, AB



Credit: Fraser Road United, Church Gander, NL

RAISING OUR SPIRITED VOICES

We are raising the alarm to do (much, much) more for climate, social and ecological justice. In a world of intersecting crises, made so by colonialism, capitalism and supremacy mindsets, public advocacy, working with allies, and channeling financial resources to repair damage and heal are critical to our response.

**Publicly Witnessing
Working Together
Addressing Canadian Companies Behaviour Overseas
Investing Responsibly
For the Love of Creation
Love and Justice Conference
GC44 Global Partners Conversations
COP (United Nations Climate Change Conference)
Youth Initiatives**





Publicly Witnessing

Healing our planet requires centering justice for all. In **Canada**, **The United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples Act** – an important step in moving **Canada**'s relationship with Indigenous peoples forward – became law on June 21, 2021. For the United Church, our ongoing commitment to **UNDRIP** as a framework for reconciliation is top priority. In 2021–2022, as well as prioritizing reconciliation justice, many of our churches offered a range of participatory pathways for climate and ecological justice.

In summer 2021, **Rev. Ross White** and members of **Highlands United Church, North Vancouver, BC**, met with **MP Jonathan Wilkinson**, Minister of Environment and Climate Change, to urge him to do more for the climate. Their team presented him with a book full of letters and kids' art with a key ask: **requesting a more aggressive emissions target.**

In a dramatic effort to put climate and a Just Transition front and foremost on government agendas, **Laura Stewart** of **Broadway United Church** and of the **national church's Climate Advisory Circle**, biked to the nearest train station in **Melville, SK** (150 km) to catch a train to **Winnipeg, MB** from **Regina, SK**, and **meet with a supportive MP.**



Credit: Highlands United Church, North Vancouver , BC



Credit: Laura Stewart



Working Together

Getting to flourishing, thriving, resilient communities requires of us, bold, collective discipleship and a more equitable, coordinated effort. Collaboration is critical and working with allies – local, national, and international – amplifies the impact of our work. In 2021, **Rev. Wendy Evans** and **Megan McQuirter** with **Montreal City Mission** (a United Church community ministry) formed a **GreenFaith Circle** in **Montreal, QC**. **GreenFaith** is an international movement of faith groups for climate. The group joined others around the globe to celebrate the international #Faiths4ClimateJustice at St. James Square in downtown **Montreal** in 2021, and again in October 2022. In 2022, **GreenFaith Montreal** held a multi-faith candlelight vigil on the eve of the UN Conference on Biodiversity, COP15.

Addressing Canadian Companies Behaviour Overseas

The United Church is a member of the **Canadian Network on Corporate Accountability (CNCA)**. Our communities **wrote to Prime Minister Trudeau in April 2022** to voice support for two new Bills that call for effective Canadian legislation in addressing human and environmental rights violations by Canadian companies overseas.



Credit: GreenFaith Montreal



Credit: Canadian Network for Corporate Accountability

a people and planet first approach to business



Investing Responsibly

The church is committed to ensuring deeper alignment of our investments with our values. Strong votes at key shareholder proposals are helping advance better environmental, social, and sustainability governance and improvements to corporate practices.

As part of our commitment to responsible investing, the Pension Fund of the United Church annually engages external investment managers with a series of questions that reflect the priorities of the **Pension Board** and The United Church of Canada. Managers' responses lead to further engagement concerning best practices. Faith communities working on sustainable investing are encouraged to explore our **Investing in Anti-Racism, Equity, Diversity, and Anti-Oppression** statement for policies and practices.

Our church continues to sign on to various high-profile investor statements. For example, in 2021, The United Church of Canada joined 36 institutional investors, managing \$5.5 trillion in assets, signing on to a new **Canadian Investor Statement on Climate Change** as a member of the **Responsible Investment Association**, pledging to manage our assets in promoting transition to a low carbon economy. We signed the **Canadian Investor Statement on Diversity & Inclusion** and the **Global Investor Statement in Support of an Effective, Fair and Global Response to COVID-19**, and joined the **Powering Past Coal Alliance (PPCA)**, a coalition of national and subnational governments, businesses, and organizations working to advance the transition from unabated coal power generation to clean energy.

As well, The United Church of Canada invested \$1 million in **Oikocredit International**. One of its more than 500 church-related members, The United Church of Canada communities have a 40-year history of working with Oikocredit to promote sustainable development by providing loans, investments, and capacity building to the financial inclusion, agriculture, and renewable energy sectors in the global south.



Credit: Powering PastCoal Alliance



Credit: www.riacanada.ca

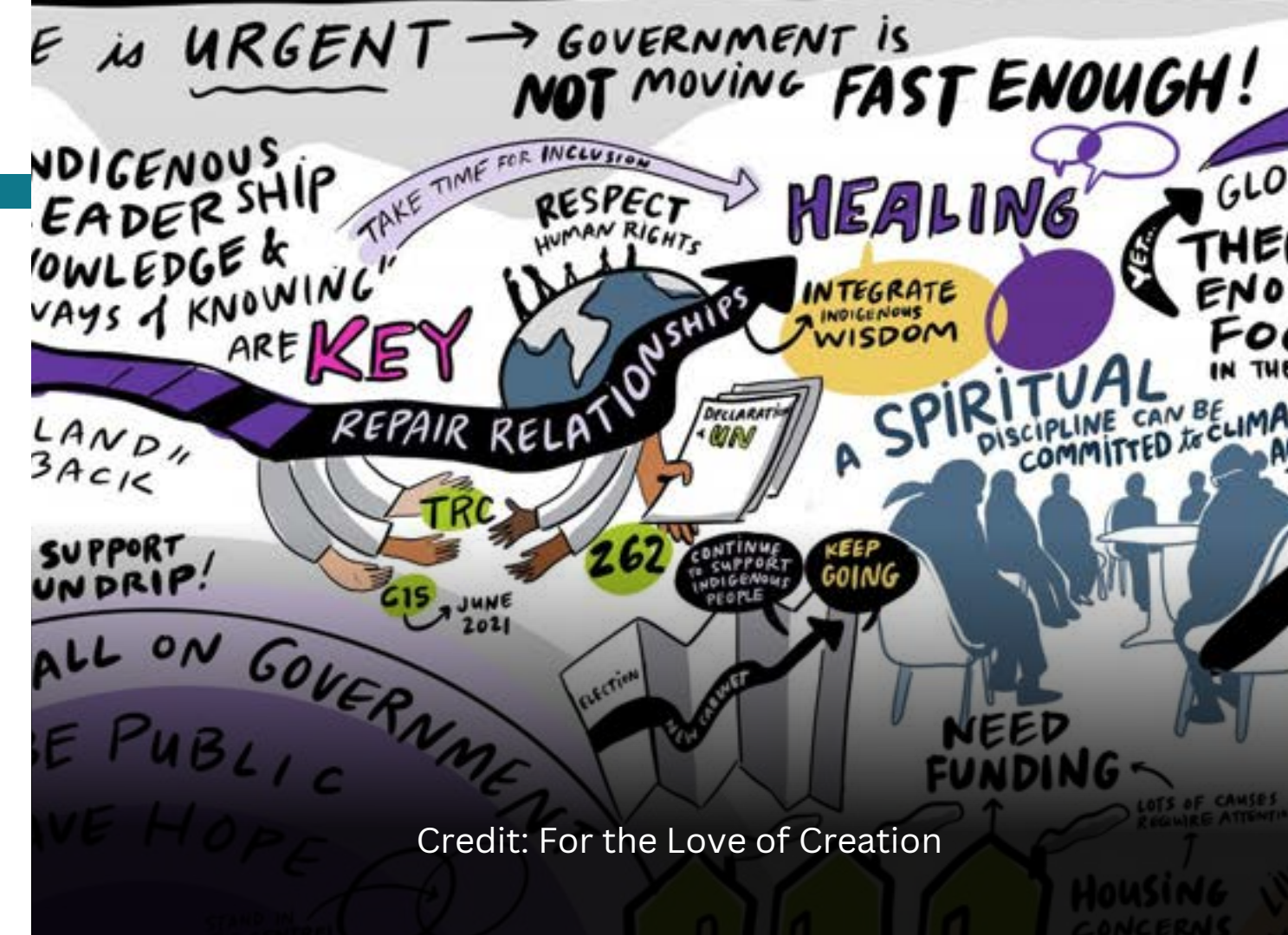


For the Love of Creation

For the Love of Creation (FLC) is a coalition of 37 Canadian churches and faith-based organizations, including The United Church of Canada, working together under a unified banner to educate, reflect, act, and advocate for climate and ecological justice. Throughout 2021–2022, The United Church of Canada continued its leadership role, forming, shaping, and supporting this ecumenical effort, mobilizing our constituency in this primary vehicle for advocacy, theological reflection, and community engagement.

In 2021, the **United Effort for the Love of Creation** initiative held three well-attended, nationwide Zoom sessions, co-hosted the national FLC Earth Day session, and promoted the yearly **Give it up for the Earth!** campaigns with **Citizens for Public Justice (CPJ)**. The **Faith-in-action campaign** mobilized people across Canada to reduce household GHG emissions and demonstrate support for increased federal climate action.

Pacific Mountain Justice Network facilitated the **Faithful Climate Conversations** webinars in the fall of 2022. Topics of discussion were **Creation, Climate, and You; From Concern to Action;** and **Build a Better Future**. United Church groups in **Guelph, Whitehorse, North Vancouver, Regina, Parksville, Victoria, and North Bay** held Faithful Climate Conversations events at their churches.



Credit: For the Love of Creation





Love and Justice Conference

In the fall of 2021, the Church in Mission Unit of the General Council office held the **Love and Justice Conference** with keynote speaker **Claudio Carvalhaes**, Associate Professor of Worship, at Union Theological Seminary, **New York City**. Claudio spoke about hope and how what **we really need is courage**.

GC44 Global Partners Conversations

In May 2022, General Council 44 collaborated with our global partners for an online event called **Bold Discipleship: Climate Crisis: Leading the Way through the Storm**, an ecumenical discussion on the climate crisis. This event was an opportunity for United Church members and global and interfaith partners to learn how they are providing leadership and resources in the context for climate justice.



GC44 Global, Ecumenical,
and Interfaith Partner Engage

Bold Discipleship: Climate C
Leading the Way through the Storm

May 12, 12 p.m. EDT

Credit: GC44 Global Partners Conversations



COP

(United Nations Climate Change Conference)

For **COP26** in **Scotland**, The United Church formed an eight person ecumenical virtual delegation with **For the Love of Creation**. United Church leaders, **Rev. Tony Snow (Stoney Nakoda First Nation** and The United Church of Canada Climate Advisory Circle) and **Vancouver-based Janet Gray** (grassroots leader and climate activist) were part of the delegation. Delegates participated in numerous COP sessions, posted many **blogs** and offered public events including a film screening of ***End of the Line: The Women of Standing Rock***. See the **delegation announcement**.

For **COP27** in **Sharm El-Sheikh, Egypt**, the United Church lent its accreditation to a joint delegation organized by **For the Love of Creation** and **KAIROS**. The delegation included Indigenous partners and youth from **Turtle Island**, and KAIROS Women, Peace and Security, and global solidarity partners. COP27 came after the Season of Creation in the Christian calendar (September 1–October 4), and delegates picked up on its theme "Listen to the Voice of Creation," specifically to those voices that have been muted or ignored. A major highlight was the entire delegation's involvement in delivering the KAIROS Blanket Exercise under the leadership of **Clifford Mushquash**. With partners and collaborators For the Love of Creation and KAIROS, The United Church of Canada was particularly active in the animator's circle and Canada online events to help amplify the delegate messages and increase climate engagement. A **COP27 delegation report** is now available.

Nov 3 2021

5 PM PT / 6 PM MT / 7 PM CT / 8 PM ET / 9 PM AT

Join Our COP26 Special  Screening

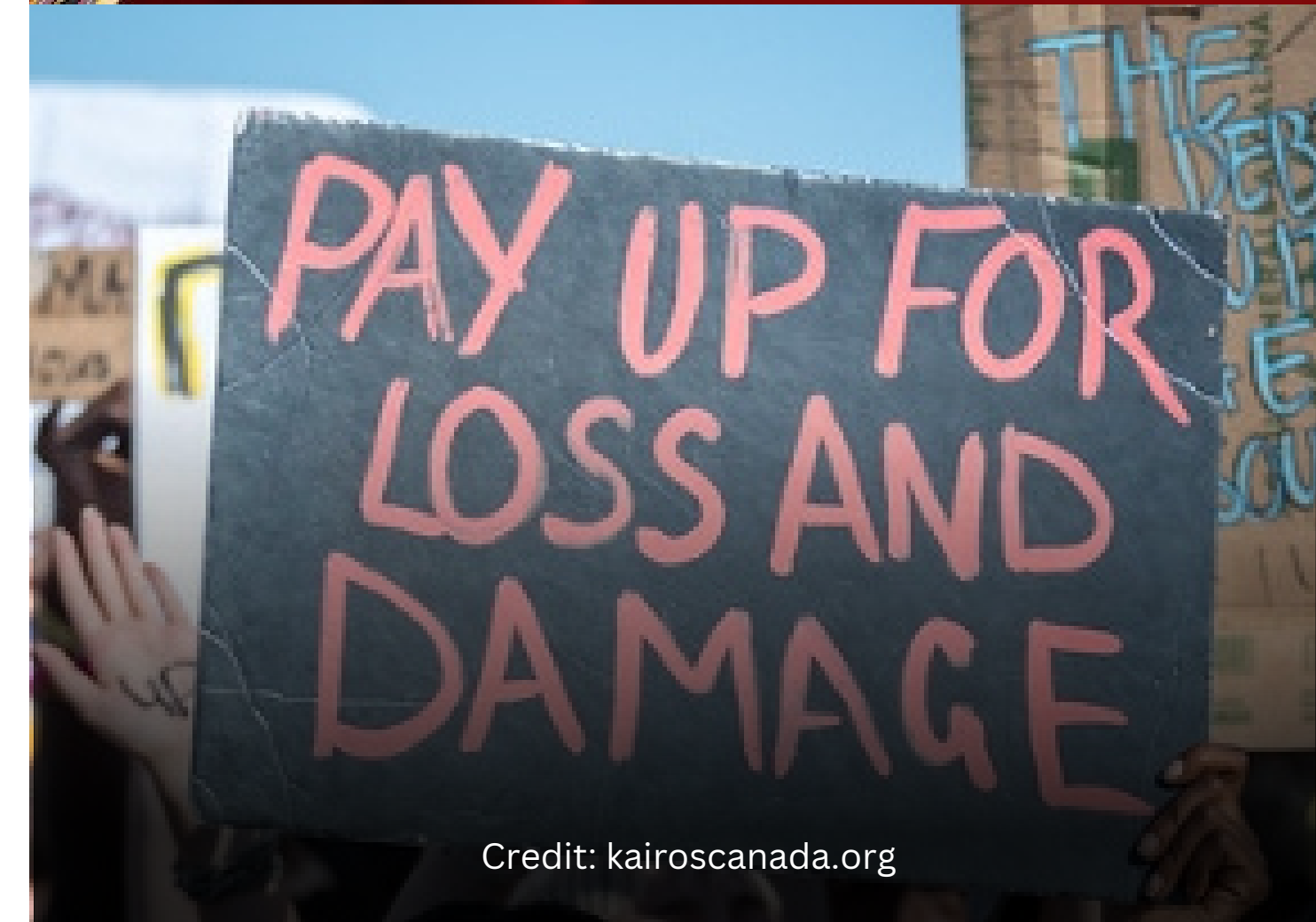
END OF THE LINE

THE WOMEN OF STANDING ROCK



Register at: chinookwindsregion.ca/indigenous_ministry

Credit: Chinook Winds Region



Credit: kairoscanada.org



Youth Initiatives

In the summer of 2022, the General Council and Regional Councils employed Youth Forum Delegates and Commissioners through the Canada Summer Jobs program. Delegates/commissioners attended the business sessions of the GC44 and worked on self-selected social justice projects (including Climate, Indigenous Justice, Anti-Racism, and Inclusion, and 2SLGBTQIA+ and Gender Justice — themes emerging from the **Strategic Plan**).

Sackville United Church, Sackville, NB, offered the **Climate - Engage - Change Program**, involving youth at three Anglophone schools, one Francophone school, and **Fort Folly First Nation** students. The projects included bike maintenance, connecting with seniors through gardening, making reusable lunch wraps, vermicomposting and composting, and making and building a ribbon skirt library at Nukumi House. This initiative was one of three youth and young adult climate initiatives funded through the **Vision Fund**.



Credit: The United Church Canada



Credit: Sackville United, Sackville, NB

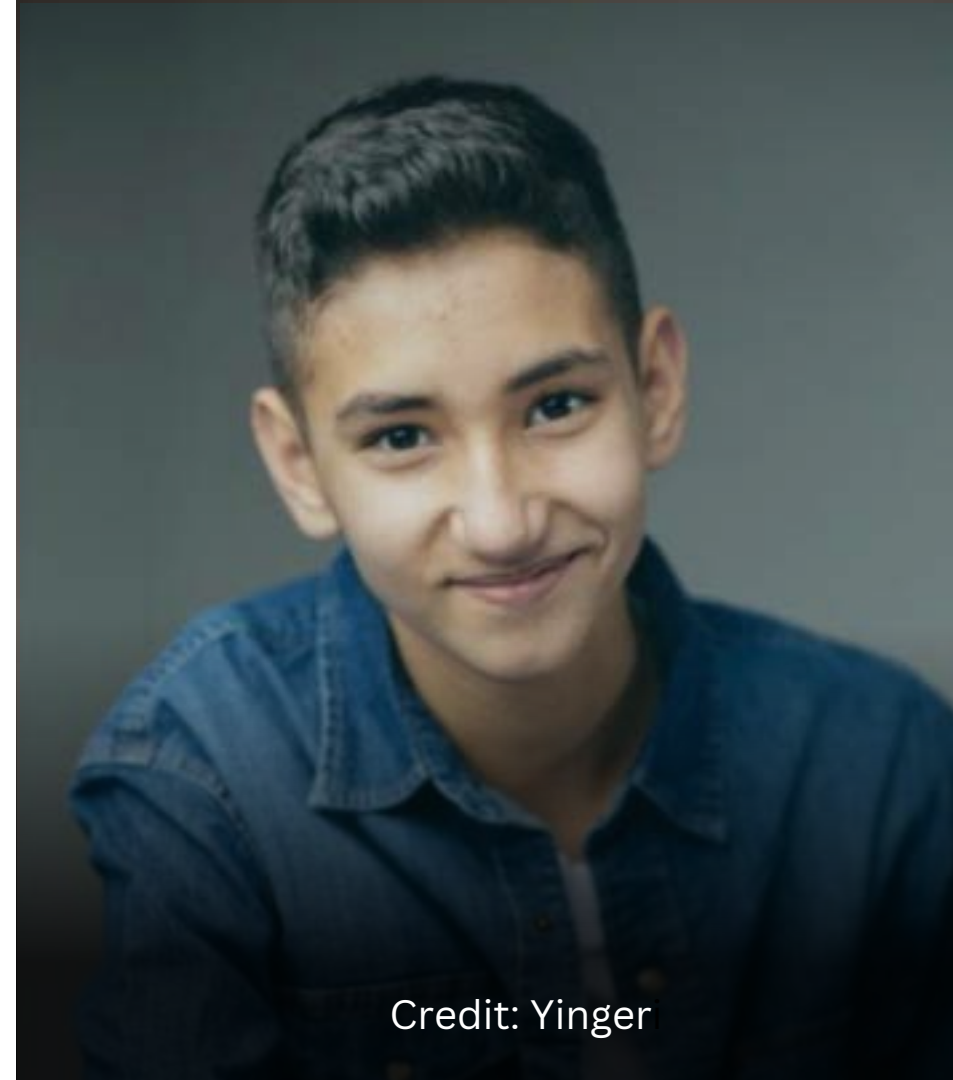


Source: United-church.ca

"The time for delay, voluntary and half measures is long past. Partners of The United Church of Canada: women, Indigenous peoples, land defenders, church leaders, have lost their lives, suffered grave violence and their environment has been irreparably harmed by the actions of Canadian companies overseas."

Rev. Michael Blair, General Secretary General Council

Letter to Prime Minister re bills C-262 and C-263 (April 2022)



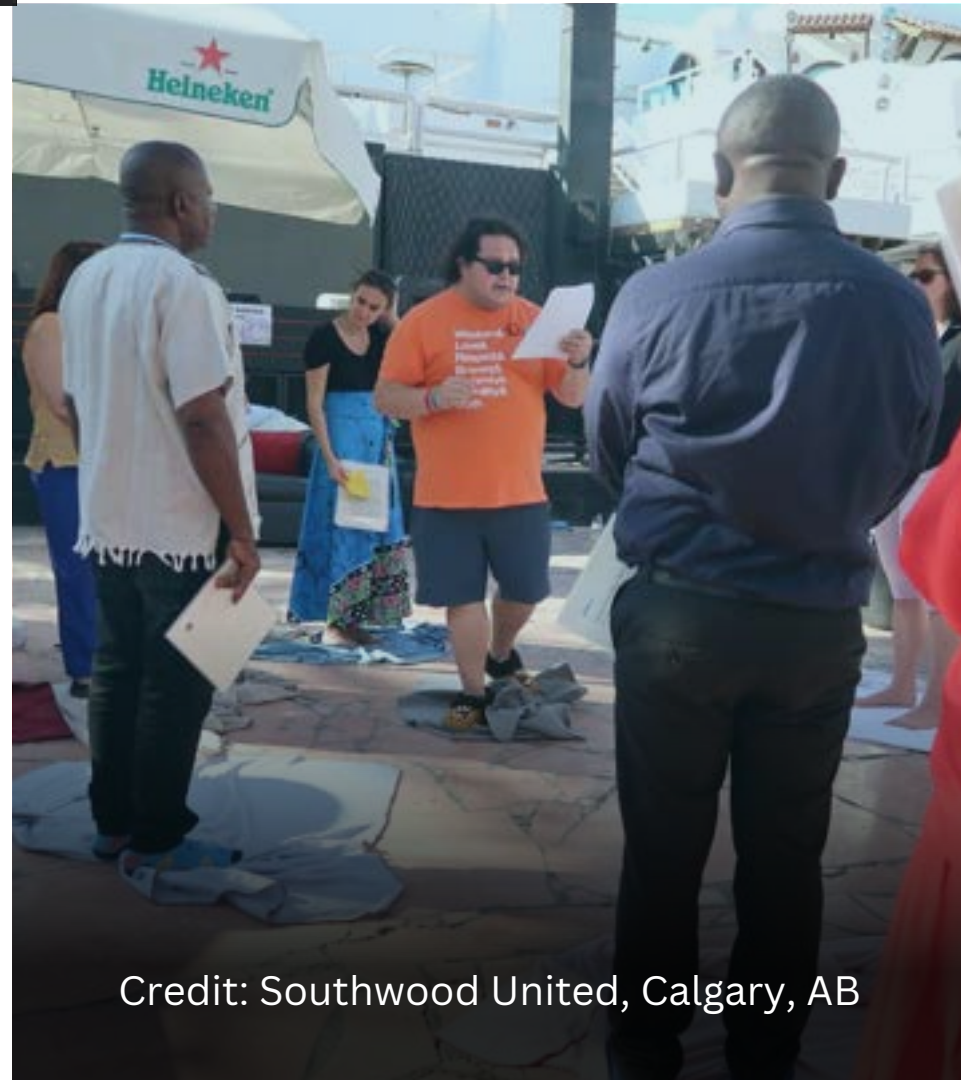
Credit: Yinger

"As a result of being part of the Youth Forum of General Council 44, I completed a passion project for sustainability. My passion project explored how churches across Canada can have more energy-efficient buildings. I planned an energy audit of my local church and then subsequently make any necessary changes that the congregation thought worthy."

Ben Isac
GC44 Youth Forum, Vancouver, BC

"For myself, facilitating the Blanket Exercise has allowed me to understand my people and our land better. It challenges me to better understand the history of the country known today as Canada. It has allowed me to understand myself better, and to reconnect to my culture and people in ways I wouldn't have been able to previously."

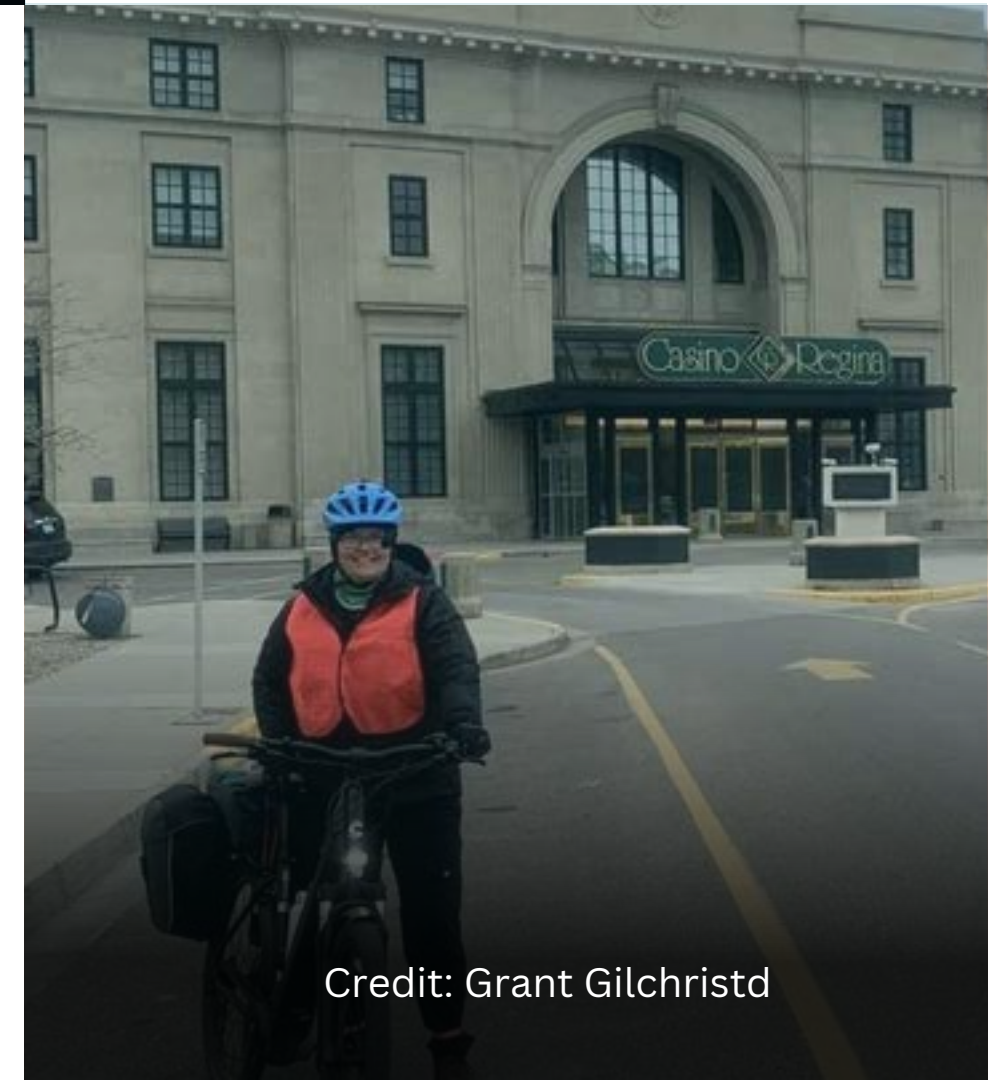
Clifford Mushquash
Anishinaabe from Pawgwasheeng (Pays Plat First Nation)



Credit: Southwood United, Calgary, AB

"The best thing about this trip has been the people and the response of people that are so supportive and excited to see this happening. It gives them a point of hope, I guess, to see someone taking this strong an action on this crucial issue."

Laura Stewart
Broadway United Church
Regina, SK



Credit: Grant Gilchristd

CONNECTING WITH THE EARTH

By cultivating our relationship with the land, we enrich our experience of Creation. We can kindle in ourselves a deep love and appreciation for its abundance and the desire to uplift and protect it by immersing ourselves in nature, nurturing our ecosystems, sharing liturgical resources, and exploring new environmental ministries.

Caring for Our Sacred Green Spaces
Climate Smart Victory Garden
Encountering the Divine in Nature
Wild Church
Green Exodus
Providing Resources
Reconciliation: National Healing Forest Initiative
Spiritual Retreat
Earth Healing





Caring for Our Sacred Green Spaces

Many United Churches connect with nature through planting and tending gardens. Establishing a community garden on their property is one way for a faith community to reach out to their neighborhood, demonstrate good land stewardship, and contribute to local food security. With their partner, Temple Shalom, **Westminster United Church, Waterloo, ON**, planted two fedges (food hedges) at their shared facility, the Cedars Worship Centre, as part of a **Faith Food Forest** network.

Siloam United Church, London, ON, partnered with **Urban Roots London** and established an urban farm on the vacant portion of their property, growing fresh produce and donating it to local food banks. Watch a **video** about this project.



Credit: Westminster United Church, Waterloo, ON



Credit: Siloam United Church, London, ON



Climate Smart Victory Garden

The Climate Smart Victory Garden at **Sharon Hope United Church, East Gwillimbury, ON**, is active in teaching people of all ages from surrounding communities how to grow food using various techniques, including those for overcoming drought and pests. In 2022 they purchased and built a shed to store tools. They made plans to improve their watering procedures and irrigation, expanded seating and learning areas, added a small greenhouse and a pollinator garden, and raised bed areas for those with mobility issues.

Beacon United Church Community Garden, Yarmouth, NS, started their garden 12 years ago with a single test plot, which has now grown to 185 plots. The plots are available to applicants at no cost. The garden is organic, with compost produced in on-site compost bins. A rainwater mitigation/distribution system was engineered in 2022 and will be installed in 2023. This system will take runoff from the roof and send it to cisterns for storage and distribution into the 20 rain barrels situated around the garden.



Credit: Sharon Hope United Church, East Gwillimbury, ON



Credit: Beacon United Church, Yarmouth, NS



Encountering the Divine in Nature

Over 18 communities of faith have received United Church Innovation Grants from Embracing the Spirit for diverse environmental ministries. **Camp Kidston, Halifax, NS**, and **Camp Kee-Mo-Kee, Kokoma, ON**, implemented wilderness camping programs for area teens to connect with God's gift of nature and have time for solitude, introspection, and gratitude. Participants develop deeper environmental awareness and explore environmental issues and climate justice in a meaningful way.

Wild Church

Wild Church, BC, is a land-based ministry that seeks to help participants grow in a relationship of reciprocity with the natural world. Wild Churches withdraw to the WILD-erness to pray, to wander, and to seek connection with the first incarnation of the Divine.



Credit: Camp Kidston, Halifax, NS



Credit: Debbie Hubbard



Green Exodus

Incubated by **Ralph Connor Memorial United Church** in **Canmore, AB**, **Green Exodus** gatherings enable individuals and communities to refresh, reboot, and recalibrate their relationship with nature. In 2021, Green Exodus hosted Earth Jam – Communities and Practices for Stepping Up in a Time of EmergencE/Y. Former United Church Moderator, The Very **Reverend Dr. William Phipps**, spoke at this virtual event emphasizing that we need to learn to live within the limits and health of Mother Earth. His messages were particularly poignant, given his passing shortly after.

Providing Resources

With over 40 years of creation-care engagement, the United Church has close to 70 different worship **resources** that United Church members routinely draw upon in their work. There are an abundance of sample services, prayers, vigils, songs, and stories on the United Church websites. United Church camps and retreats across the country provide hands-on, experiential opportunities to connect with the land. Partners such as **KAIROS**, **Faith & the Common Good**, **Citizens for Public Justice**, **Green Church** and **For the Love of Creation** have free resources for advocacy and action, as well.

Credit: Sarah Arthurs



Credit: Photo by NASA on Unsplash

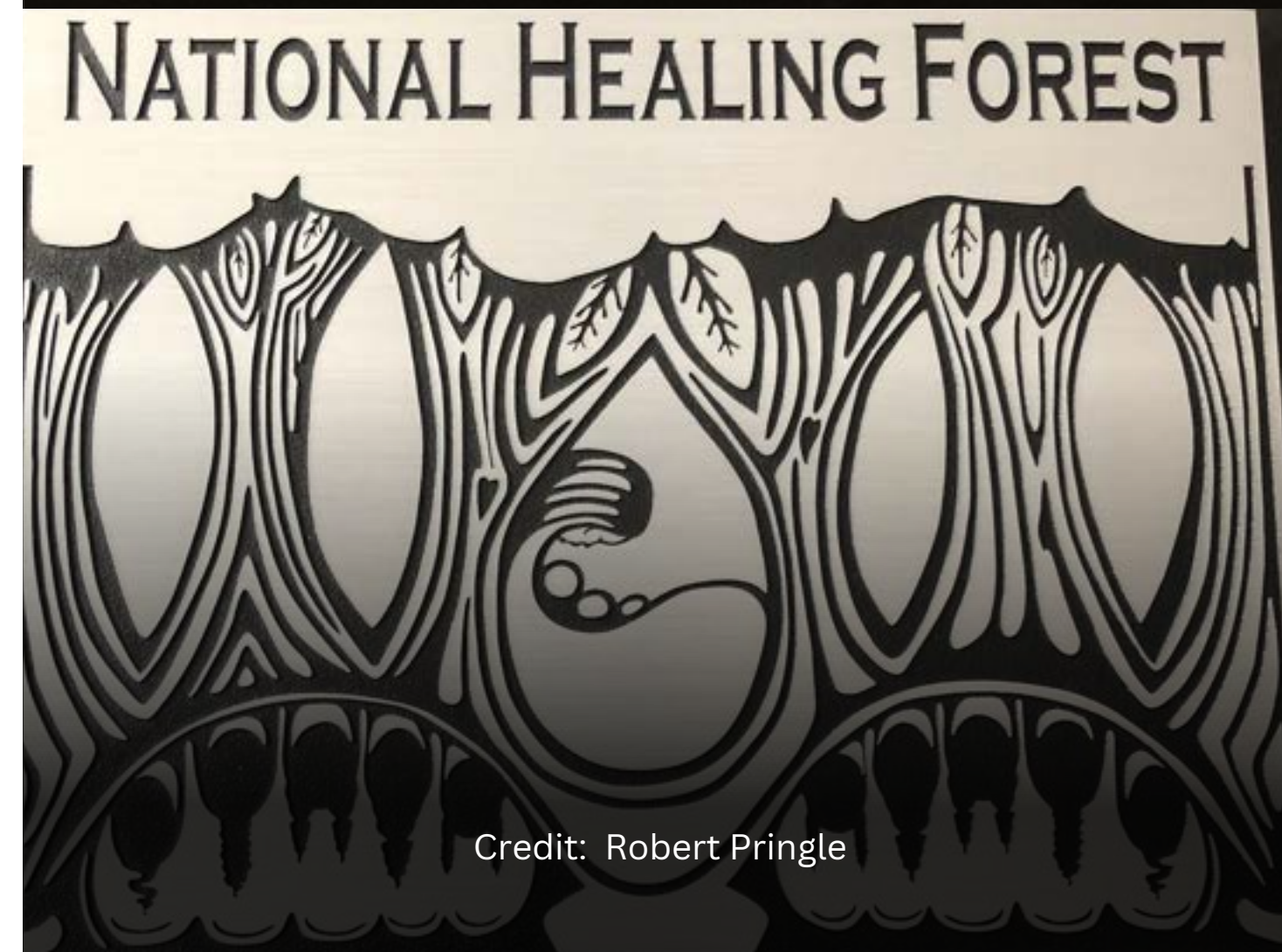


Reconciliation: National Healing Forest Initiative

Northlea United Church, North York, ON, participates in the **National Healing Forest** initiative – dedicated forests, gardens, or green spaces that communities develop as a place for healing, learning, sharing, and reflection about Canada’s history and the legacy of residential schools. For the past few years, Northlea has been honouring the victims of residential schools and continues to educate the community regarding our shared responsibility for healing and understanding. While progress was slow throughout the pandemic, it was deliberate, and members created a welcoming community space and a natural outdoor educational area to promote **Truth and Reconciliation**. During the Spring of 2022 and under the guidance of **Dr. Bob Phillips (Great Bear)**, they offered tobacco to the trees and are planning All My Relations webinars with **Carolynne Crawley**.



Credit: Northlea United Church, North York, ON



Credit: Robert Pringle

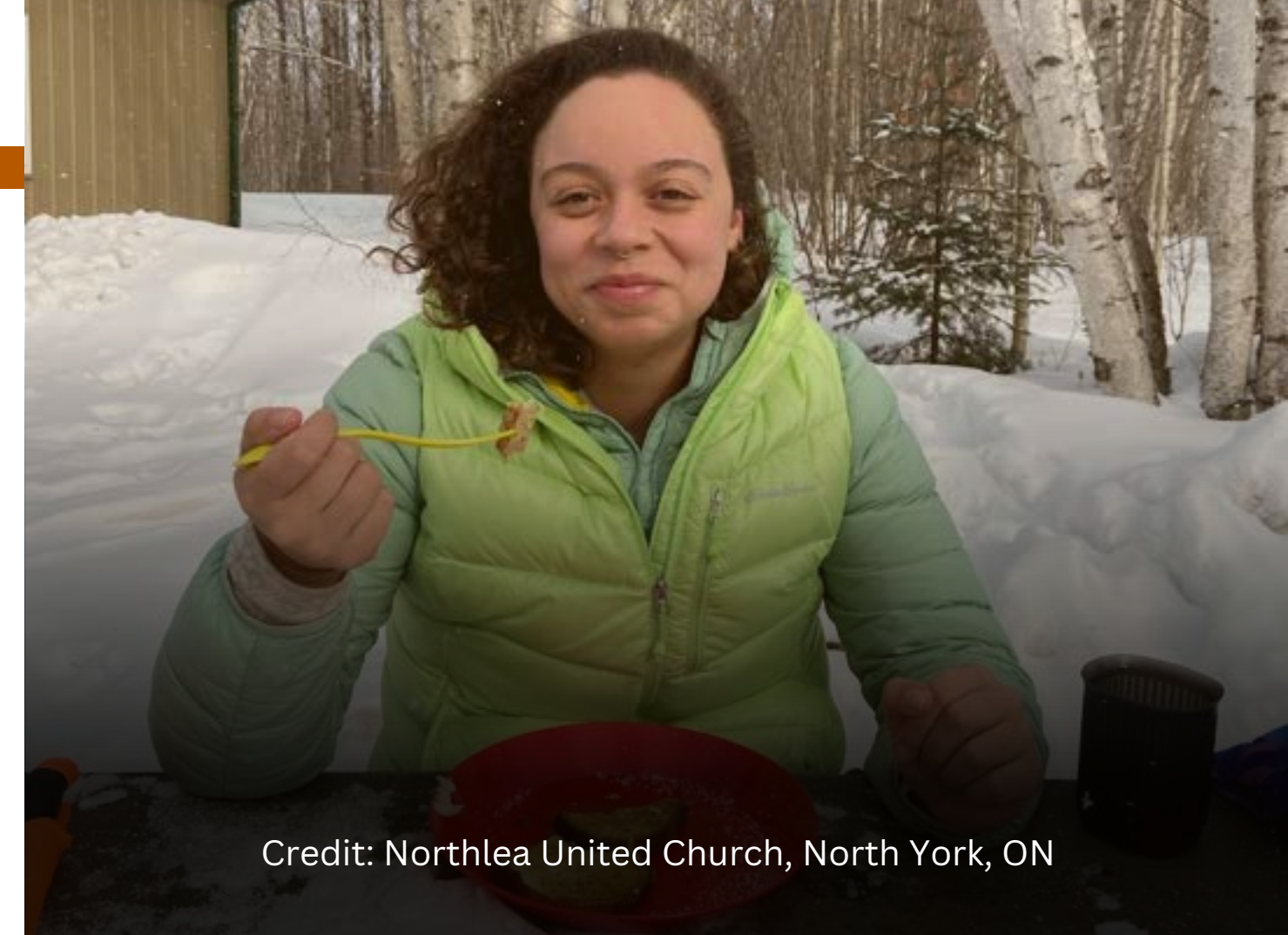


Spiritual Retreat

Emberwood, through **Southminster-Steinhauer United Church, Edmonton, AB**, hosts spiritual retreats. These retreats support participants in developing the skills needed to engage in individual spirituality and meaning-making in nature. "Nest" is a 40-hour program that teaches participants the camping and psychological skills needed to spend 24 hours in solitude in the wilderness. "Lodge" is a 48-hour silent retreat in cabins along Narrow Lake. After completion of the programs and solo experiences, participants celebrate and reflect on their experiences and growth.

Earth Healing

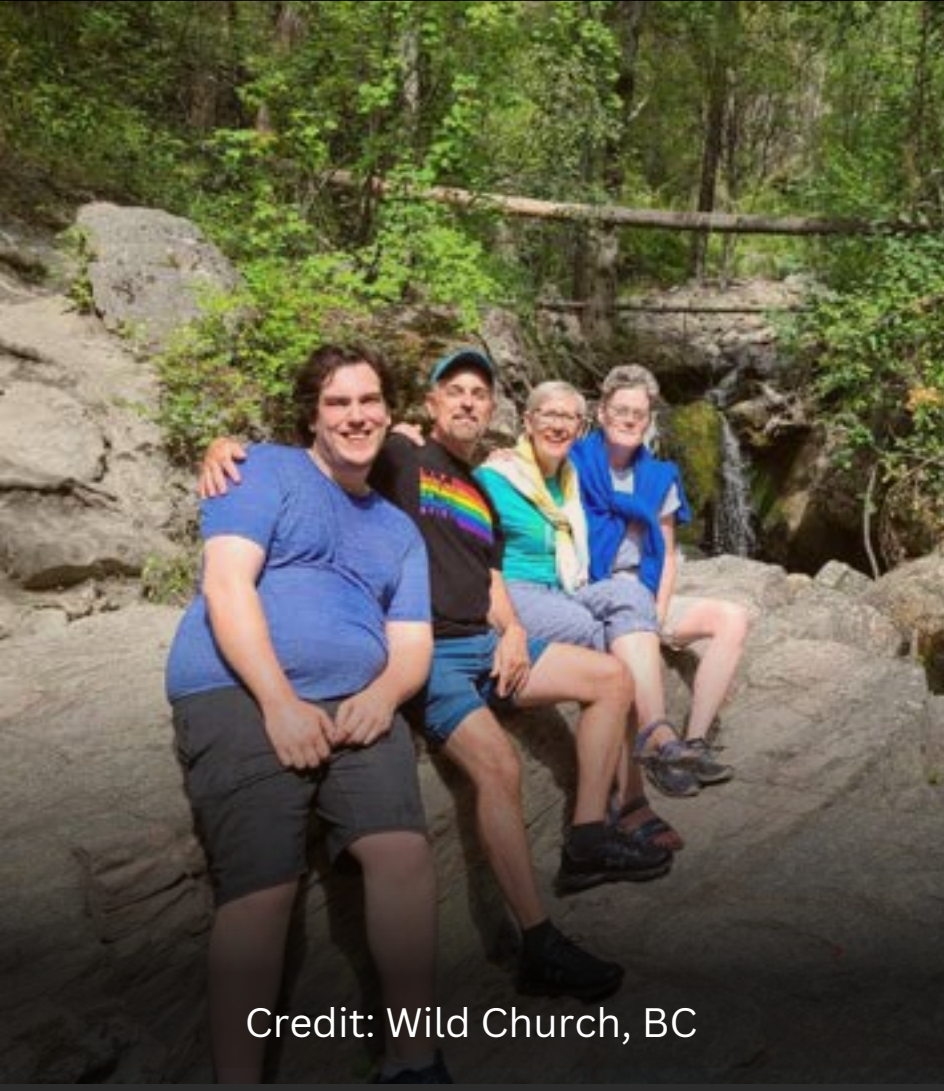
In the fall of 2022, **Oxford United Ministries** sponsored **Discipleship for Earth Healing** with eco-theologian **Rev. Dr. Jessica Hetherington**. Held at **Trinity United Church, Ingersoll, ON**, this was a weekend of learning and spiritual engagement about our place in creation, the need for lament, and how we can deepen our discipleship response to the ecological crisis and climate change.



Credit: Northlea United Church, North York, ON



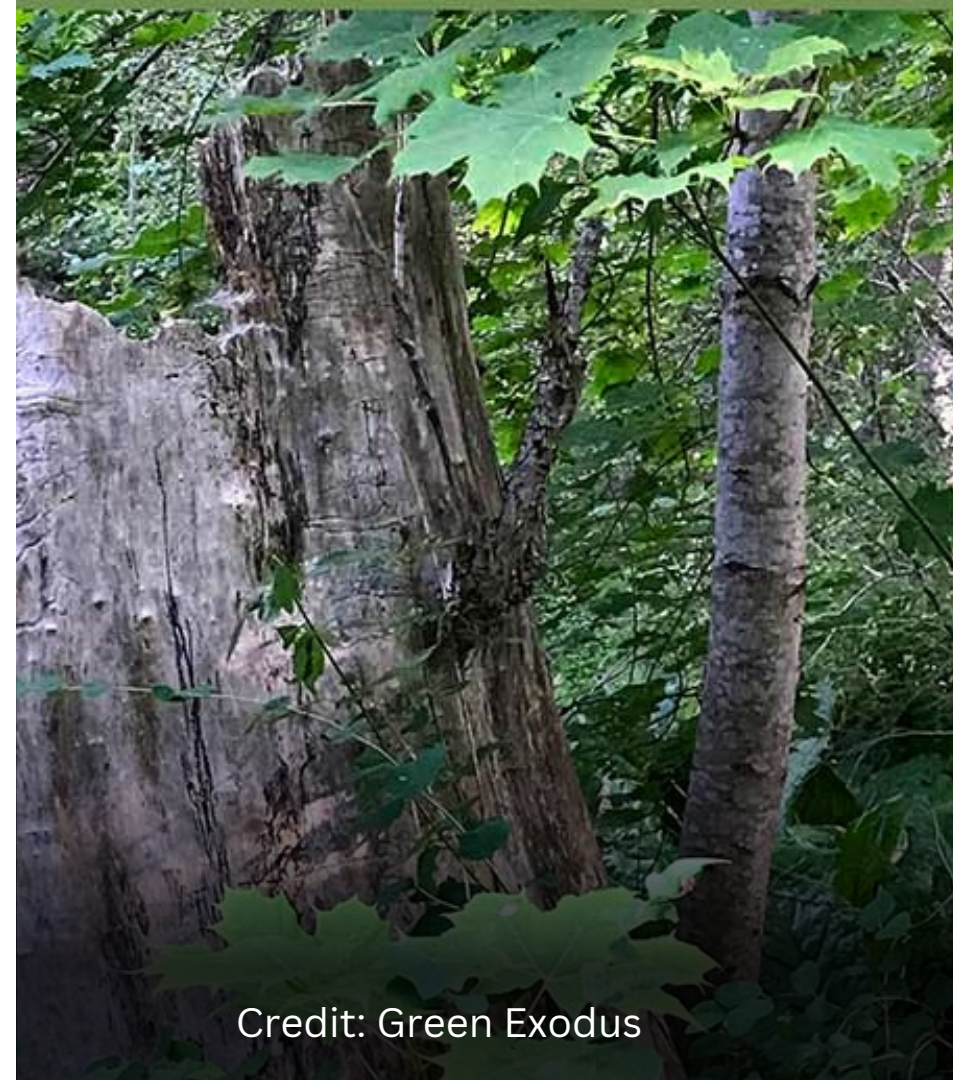
Credit: Trinity United Church, Ingersoll, ON



Credit: Wild Church, BC

"We meet outside year-round, unless the weather creates a safety hazard for participants. The pandemic invited us to shift our gatherings to an online connection, allowing our four plants to get to know one another in a way they may not have otherwise. We continue to offer a monthly online gathering, and now offer joint events during the year, allowing those connections to continue."

Rev. LeAnn Blackert
Wild Church, BC



Credit: Green Exodus

"The goal of Green Exodus is to provide a space where we can become eco mystics (Karl Rahner); the kind of humans who are able to be present to the Earth in a mutually beneficial way."

Sarah Arthurs
Green Exodus Leader

"The Garden Ministry at Siloam United Church, London, ON, is playing an important role in reducing food insecurity in the north east of the city. In 2022, this urban farm grew over 3,000 pounds of fresh produce and distributed it to over 1,000 people. It also provided employment to seven Canada Summer Jobs Students whom we paid a living wage."

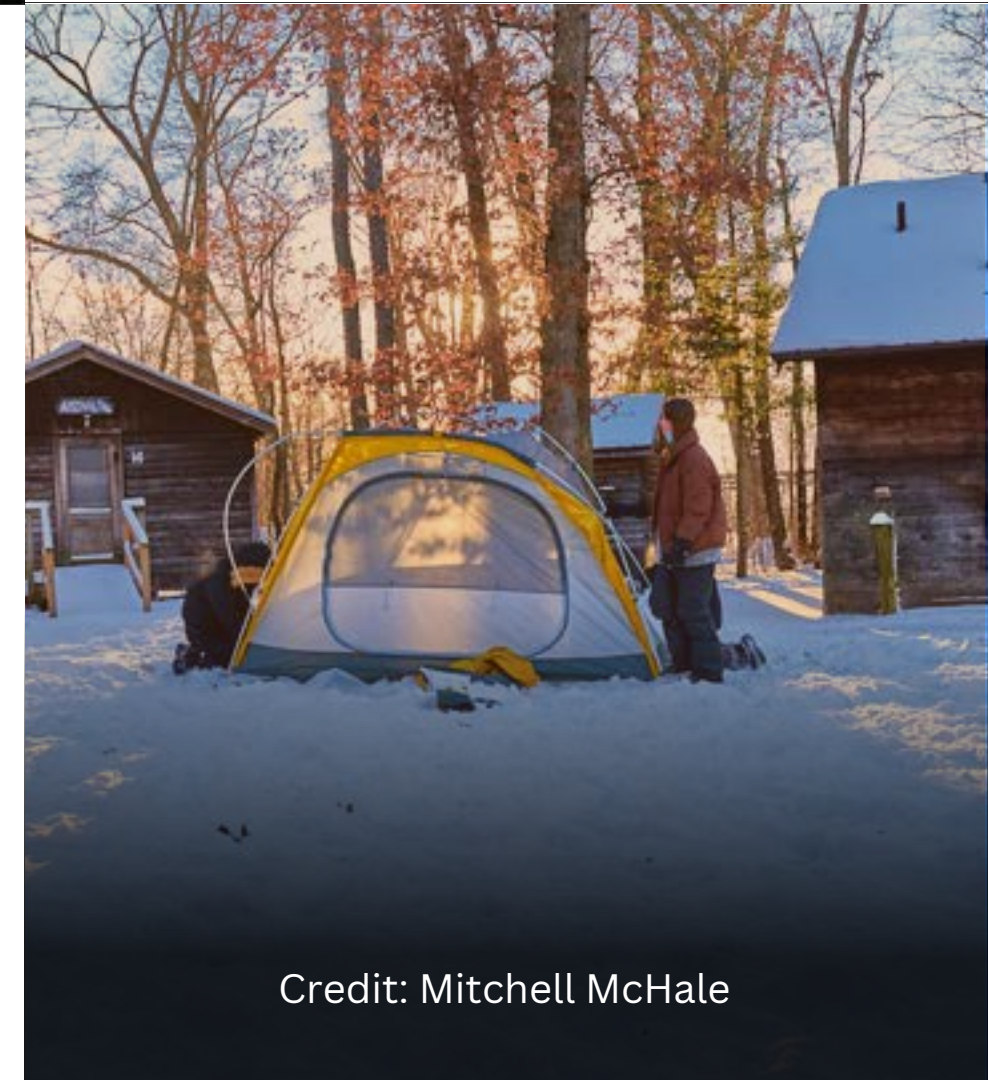
Catherine Glover, Chair
Siloam United Church, London, ON



Source: urbanrootslondon.ca

"Camp Kee-Mo-Kee's inaugural winter camping program was a huge success with twelve teens learning new skills and building confidence while connecting with nature, others and themselves."

Jill Hodgins, Executive Director
Camp Kee-Mo-Kee, Kokoma, ON



Credit: Mitchell McHale

RESPONDING TO CLIMATE IMPACT

Climate change is a risk multiplier, exacerbating present threats, creating unforeseen challenges, contributing to humanitarian disasters, and impacting vulnerable communities the hardest. Flooding, droughts, landslides, hunger in the global south, make the news daily. Our church is being called on to take action and assist with mitigation and adaptation to climate change for healthier, more resilient communities, locally and internationally. Our work towards sustainable development and emergency response takes various forms, including advancing food sovereignty, welcoming displaced people and accompanying partners, attending to needs, and promoting justice.

Food Insecurity
International Development Week
International
National
Local
Sustainable Communities Include Healthy People



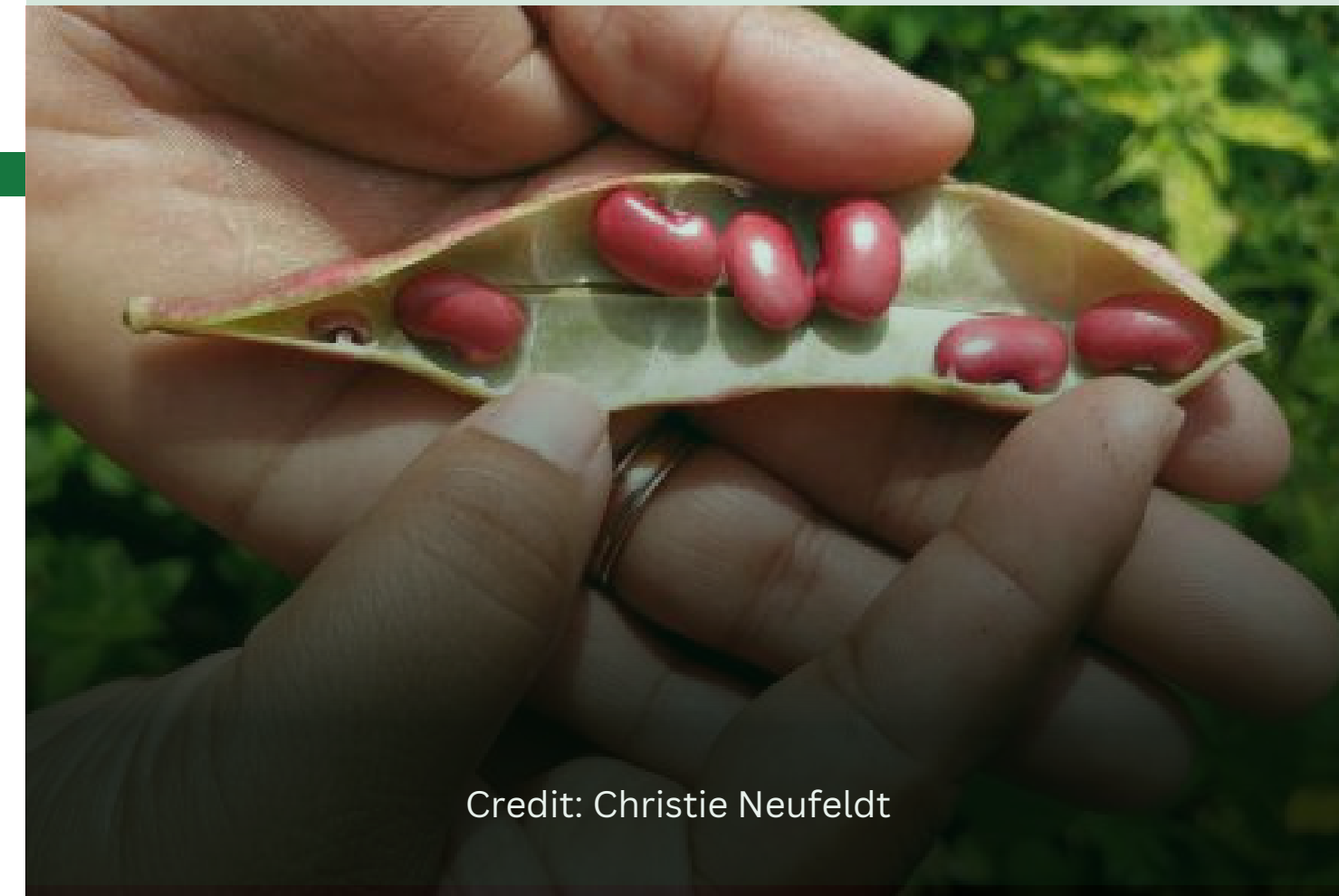


Food Insecurity

The United Nations called 2022 a "year of unprecedented hunger." The global pandemic has only increased food insecurity. Resilient food systems – from production, processing, delivery, access, to consumption – are urgently needed in response to increased worldwide hunger brought on by climate change, biodiversity loss, conflict, and other factors.

International Development Week

In February 2022, the **Government of Canada**, civil society organizations, and communities celebrate **International Development Week** (IDW). This week of activities focuses on sustainable development and the **UN's Sustainable Development Goals** (SDGs), a shared plan for building a healthier global future for people and the planet by 2030. United churches, such as **Grace United in Dunnville, ON**, participated in IDW, sharing stories from across the church about their collaboration with Mission & Service partners in work that addresses poverty, hunger, climate change, justice and peace, health, and education on a global and local scale.



Credit: Christie Neufeldt

13 CLIMATE
ACTION





International

Through Mission and Service, the church supports the ongoing work of partners in **Latin America, Africa, and Asia** who work in areas of sustainability. Two examples are below.

In **Zambia**, **Women for Change** is an organization that strives to improve conditions in rural communities by empowering women and girls. Women and girls bear the brunt of climate change, and focusing on building climate resilience and food security in the face of drastically changing weather patterns is a priority. Saving and sharing seeds, as well as education around adapting planting for longer or shorter rains or drought, etc., is made possible through our long-standing partnership.

In **Japan**, Mission & Service gifts worked to address hunger by supporting agricultural training centres including the **Asian Rural Institute based in Japan** where community leaders are learning to solve problems such as raising livestock, coping with climate change, and finding markets for organic produce.

Furthermore, climate change contributes to humanitarian disasters and increases people's risk and vulnerabilities. In 2021 and 2022, the church financially supported partners across 12 countries who are responding to these climate impacts with over \$170,000 in **emergency funding**.



Credit: Women for Change, Zambia



Marita and Ester, participants studying at the Asian Rural Institute

Credit: ARI



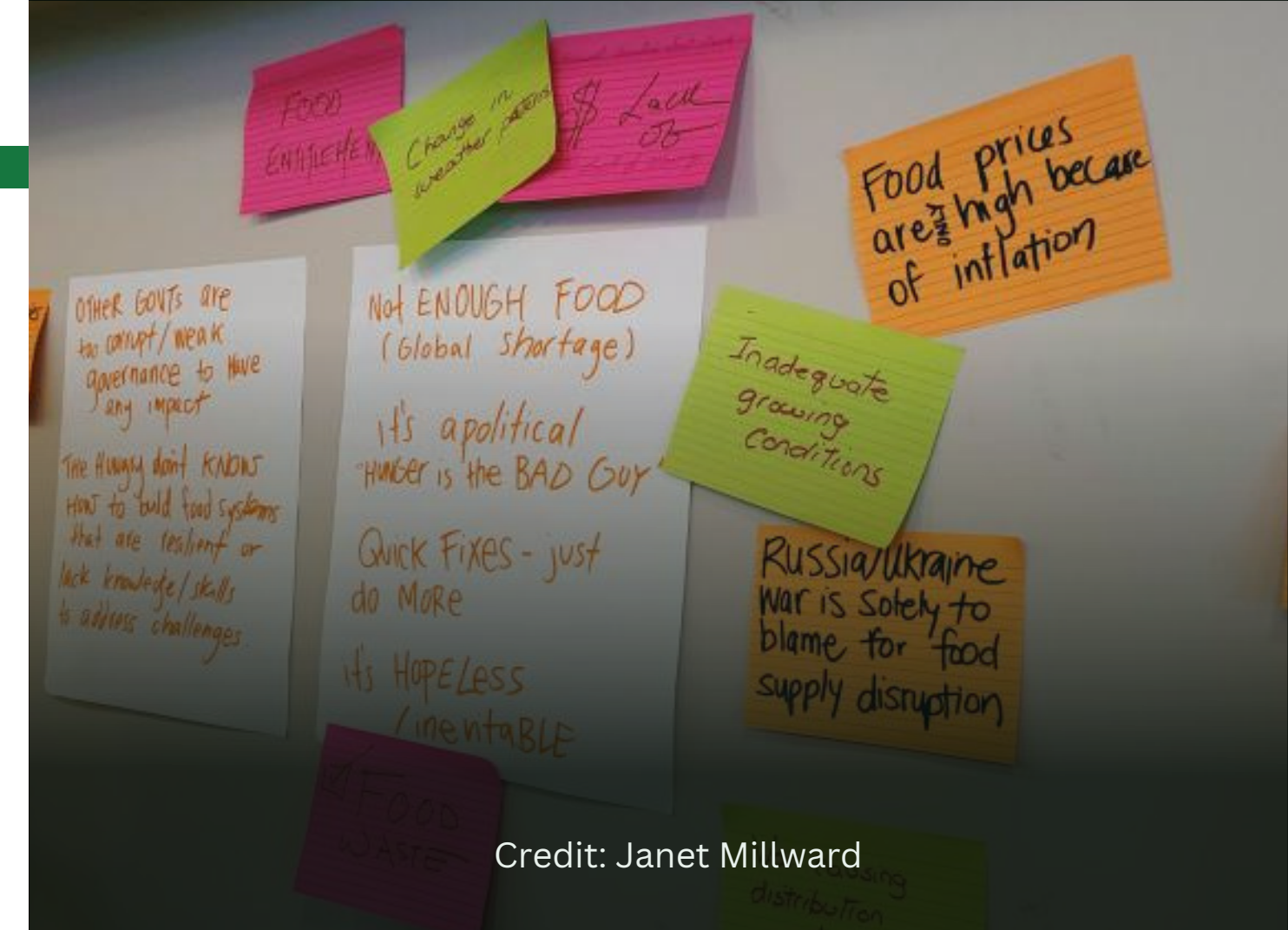
National

In the fall of 2022, **Canadian Food Grains Bank (CFGB)'s Hunger on the Hill initiative** included two United Church delegations to **Ottawa** to advocate for climate finance in the face of climate change to Members of Parliament.

Janet Millward of **Knox United Church, Ayr, ON**, was one of the delegates, and has written **an article about her experience**. CFGB continues to invite members to send letters to their MPs through their **advocacy page**.

Local

Maple Grove United Church, Oakville, ON, is a part of **OakvilleReady**, a network of neighbourhood **extreme weather resilience hubs** collaborating with municipalities. They have also made building improvements via Faithful Footprints funding. Over the last few years, members have planted vegetable and pollinator gardens — a great way to engage children and youth.



Credit: Janet Millward



Credit: Jessica McCrae



Sustainable Communities Include Healthy People

Sustainability issues are justice issues. Transforming our society into one that flourishes requires a broader understanding of resilience beyond ecological and climatic concerns. The United Church community recognizes this and continues to take action by uplifting underrepresented communities. In 2021–2022, church members organized **Indigenous Lenten** and **40 Days of Engagement on Anti-Racism** series, advocated for transportation to alleviate poverty, and pushed for a **guaranteed livable income**. Additionally, United Church members fought for **justice for migrant workers** and advocated for gender equity and 2S-LGBTQIA+ rights and inclusion.



Credit: Jonisha Lewinson



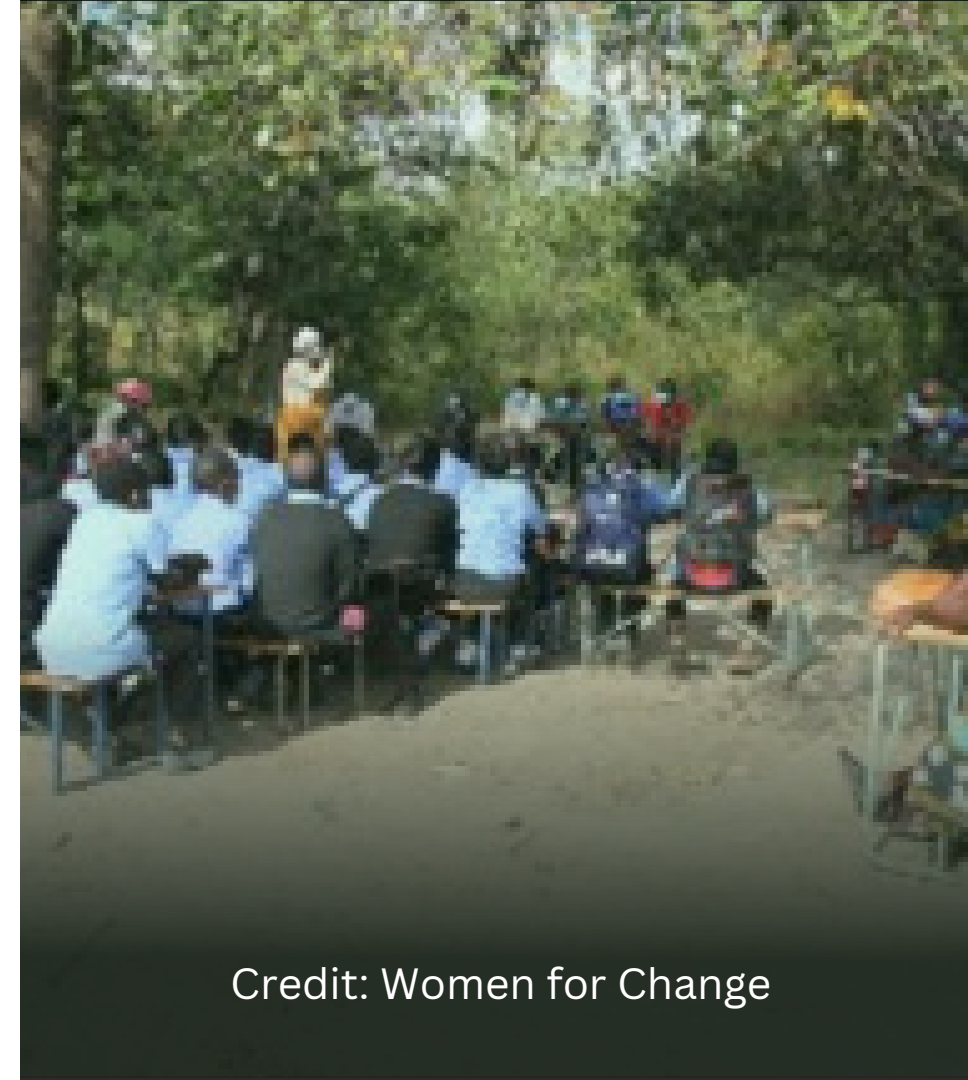
Mexican and Guatemalan workers pick strawberries on a Quebec farm
Credit: © THE CANADIAN PRESS/Jacques Boissinot



Credit: Hugh Wanless

"At Maple Grove, we are living what we call 'Climate Courage'. We strive to face the climate catastrophe with courage, making changes where we can to better protect our environment, mitigating against climate problems as we are able to and most of all, facing the future with hope as we learn, educate, and provide opportunities for all of us to come together to make positive change for creation."

Rev. Jessica McCrae
Maple Grove United Church
Oakville, ON



Credit: Women for Change

"Women discuss how they can save and share seeds, what they can plant with longer or shorter rains, and if there are traditional methods that can increase food production. We are building climate resiliency. We are grateful for the United Church's support."

Shadrick Chembe
Women for Change, Zambia

"...the issue of environment, the issue of the climate emergency, the issue of climate change, is a treaty issue. It is an issue of reconciliation."

Rev. Tony Snow
Presenting on the
Calgary Climate Strategy,
June 2022



Source: sprawlcalgary.com

"I now know how I can use the political process to make a difference. Life with Christ is always about growth and this experience was no different. Let's raise our voices to end hunger."

Janet Millward
Knox United Church, Ayr, ON



Credit: Janet Millward

We acknowledge that we live, worship and work on Indigenous lands.

We are committed to reconciliation with Indigenous peoples, and recognize that includes aligning ourselves with the values of living with care in creation.

Report prepared by Faithful Footprints (a United Church program delivered by Faith & the Common Good) with input from United Church staff and members across Canada.

For more information, contact info@faithfulfootprints.org

The Climate Smart Victory Garden. Credit: Mariah Tsioros

