

FRIENDS OF LIVING SKIES REGIONAL COUNCIL

FARMLAND LEGACIES



- Mosaic makes 3-year pledge for the Harvest for Hunger project
- 9 quarters of land placed in trust with Farmland Legacies (1440 acres)
- \$45,000 grant received to renovate the office based on adding a new project – “Lentils for Lunch” as an additional source of protein for food banks and soup kitchens in Saskatchewan
- An informative one-page summary of Farmland Legacies was produced to be used in mail outs and as introductory material for potential donors and sponsors (attached)
- A fresh and updated design was completed for our website presence www.farmlandlegacies.org
- The leaf cutter bee project continued on about 160 acres
- The annual general meeting was held April 7th, 2021
- Livestock herd calved out 82 - pasturing was cut short due to drought so began winter feeding earlier than usual Oct. 1
- Costs of winter feed greatly increased due to drought. Thankfully there was a provincial/federal program of drought assistance which kept us from selling off any of the bred herd
- 20 bred cows were placed at one of the Farmland Legacies’ holdings as Farmland begins to look for alternative ways to run Harvest for Hunger and save on winter feed
- One quarter of land at the Wynyard farm was taken out of grass in preparation for growing livestock feed in 2022 to further mitigate a repeat of drought conditions
- Sold a few pieces of equipment not in use to help offset feed costs
- Over 41,000 servings of beef delivered to Saskatchewan food banks and soup kitchens

KAIROS – PRAIRIES NORTH

Greetings and Update from the KAIROS Prairies North Coordinating Committee,

It's been almost a whole year since KAIROS's "Virtual Potluck" when a few of us volunteered to re-establish a coordinating committee in the Prairies North region. Our hope was to support existing networks and encourage new connections in this vast region, but first we needed to get to know each other. We began meeting online, with Shawn and Amanda in Saskatoon, and Javed and Kevin in Edmonton.

We've been reaching out and learning what's happening in the region. In November we held a regional gathering online; about 50 people registered for the meeting. We heard inspiring updates from a number of local groups across the region: there are local groups working on access to housing, ecological justice, decolonization, prophetic witness, and more. We also heard about the challenges of geographic isolation and yet a strong desire for the work of KAIROS to continue and grow in our region.

As a way to help build connection and relationship, we've also launched a virtual newsletter. In each issue, we'll be sharing encouraging stories from different local groups. We've also partnered with a local decolonization group (which includes a number of KAIROS members), and with the Treaty Land Sharing Network, to support workshops on Treaties and land acknowledgments. A special treat has also been working with St. Andrew's Doctor of Divinity and longtime artist/activist Bob Haverluck, who has gifted KAIROS with his new book "The Courtcase of the Creatures", as a learning tool to engage our treaty and covenant relationship with the whole Creation.

We look forward to continuing the work of KAIROS here in the Prairies North region, on your behalf. Inquiries and new members always welcome!

Yours in faith and goodwill,

The Prairies North Coordinating Committee:

Kevin Guenther Trautwein (Convener)

Shawn Sanford Beck, for St. Andrew's College (Regional Representative)

Javed Sommers (Treasurer)

Amanda Dodge (Secretary)

KAIROS REGINA

The mission statement of many United Church of Canada (UCC) communities of faith may include this sentence or something similar: "We advocate for justice and social action." How is this done? One way certainly is to work within the framework of the UCC, in your own congregation, or in cooperation with other UCC congregations, or through our national church, overseas partners and Mission and Service.

Another way to engage in justice and social action is to work through KAIROS with other Christian churches and faith groups on issues which they too are concerned about. One of the main ways the United Church nationally engages in justice issues is through its membership and support of KAIROS. KAIROS, Canadian Ecumenical Justice Initiatives, is a coalition of 10 national Canadian churches and religious organizations working together to do education, action and advocacy [<https://www.kairoscanada.org/>]. KAIROS works through

overseas partners (including those in Guatemala, Philippines, Palestine, Congo and elsewhere) and a network of local KAIROS groups across Canada, including KAIROS Regina. Current areas of work include: ecological justice, gender justice, Indigenous rights and migrant justice. KAIROS was formed in 2001 by bringing together about ten inter-church coalitions including Ten Days for Global Justice and PLURA, an anti-poverty network.

The KAIROS Regina local group meets monthly via Zoom. It currently includes persons from Roman Catholic, United, Anglican, Orthodox and other faiths. In the past two years we have worked on three areas. First, our major focus, climate change, included several small group education/discussion sessions following the “For the Love of Creation” program [<https://fortheloveofcreation.ca/>]; an advocacy campaign aimed at the targets and policies of the federal government; and a successful campaign to have Regina City Council adopt a new Energy and Sustainability Framework with a 1.5 degree target for emissions reduction. Secondly, in the area of Indigenous rights, we supported the Saskatoon-based KAIROS Prairies North Region group in conducting several very popular webinars featuring perspectives of prominent Indigenous women on federal legislation regarding the UNDRIP (United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples) and in holding an in-person summer event at Fort Carlton. And thirdly, we initiated a working group on Guaranteed Livable Income.

Currently we are seeking to assist Regina churches explore how they can eliminate emissions from burning natural gas, thus supporting the City's Framework target and reducing Canada's emissions. KAIROS views climate change as a justice issue, where the Global South and others who did the least to create climate change now suffer the most.

KAIROS Regina would welcome your participation in our Regina group or in the KAIROS network. What we do depends entirely on the energy and interests of those who choose to join in.

Dan Beveridge, Convenor,
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Email: danmbeveridge@gmail.com

PRAIRIE CENTRE FOR ECUMENISM

This Regional Council is one of the denominational partners on the board of the Prairie Centre For Ecumenism, headquartered in Saskatoon. Other partners include the Roman Catholic, Presbyterian, Lutheran, and Anglican Churches.

The Prairie Centre For Ecumenism exists to promote and facilitate ecumenical action and offer education, advocacy and experiences between and among participants from many denominations. Among other activities, and with partners from across the region, it coordinates the Week of Prayer for Christian Unity, most recently managing a well-received week-long online Bible study, and is planning to add to that a return to a series of in-person worship services for winter 2023.

The Prairie Centre For Ecumenism hosts an online database for Ecumenical Shared Ministries as part of its newly refurbished website. Work is needed to bring this database up to date.

Bridging between denominations, the Prairie Centre For Ecumenism offers a way forward toward more sharing of worship, education and the practice of our Christianity. As an

associate member of the Canadian Council of Churches, it brings a wide range of experience to bear on ecumenical issues.

An additional lay delegate from Living Skies Regional Council is needed on the board of the Centre. Feel free to contact me if this might be of interest to you. It's fun!

Brian Maitland
brian.maitland0@gmail.com

GUARANTEED LIVABLE INCOME

In a country where minimum wages and social program benefits no longer are meeting the basic needs of its citizens there is the need to look at other alternatives. The Guaranteed Livable Income (GLI) has been a topic of conversation for many years, but we are at a place now in our history when jobs are not as plentiful, and regressive social policies are making it impossible for people to cover the cost of their most basic needs, such as housing, utilities, clothing, and food.

There were two people as the Living Skies Regional representative on the national Guaranteed Livable Income (GLI) Committee. Vickie Obedkoff was one of the representatives in Saskatoon, but she has since retired and is no longer doing this job. We would appreciate another person, in Saskatoon or a northern community, to take over the position Vickie so capably filled. If you are interested, please contact me at bonnie.morton@gmail.com. I was unable to contact Vickie to figure out all of the actions that happened, and the dates, in Saskatoon, but I am aware that there were a number of gatherings in front of politician's offices.

We were unable to get gatherings happening to coordinate with Saskatoon events. In the Regina area we did send out letters to our Saskatchewan Senators and elected federal politicians, but we did not get any responses from the Senators, and Michael Kram was the only politician that responded to our requests, but a meeting never did happen. I am working with members from the United Church and other faith groups to develop a plan of action in the Regina area, and hopefully we will be able to coordinate provincial actions.

I sit on the national United Church's committee on the GLI, as the Saskatchewan Representative. We have developed worship service material on the GLI, and we support Senator Kim Pates call for the GLI. There is a move to get the Federal government and the Province of Prince Edward Island (PEI) to develop a pilot project around the GLI, to study the outcome for PEI and the feasibility for the rest of Canada. At this point all of the provincial political parties, in PEI, that have been elected unanimously support this idea of a pilot project. Below is a link that will take you to a petition for you to sign your support for the pilot project.

Please consider voicing your support for this, pilot project, through the petition. Many Canadian citizens need your help.

<https://united-church.ca/social-action/act-now/create-guaranteed-livable-income-program>

Submitted by Bonnie Morton

CLIMATE JUSTICE

For the Love of Creation: Working for Climate Justice in the Living Skies Region

Climate change is a justice issue: generally, those who suffer its worst effects are least responsible for the emissions that cause it. Answering the call to work for justice, General Council Office had staff specializing on climate change in the past. However, with reorganization, the work fell to generalists who sought advice from the wider church, and so in 2019, the Climate Justice Advisory Circle was formed.

By 2021, feeling the urgency of the climate crisis, members of the circle moved beyond their advisory role, and looked for ways to foster action across the church. Starting in January, 2021, we hosted a series of national Zoom meetings promoting a new ecumenical initiative called [For the Love of Creation](#) (FLC). We encouraged and supported participants to use the FLC resources to host “faithful climate conversations” in small groups, to reflect on God’s call to care for Creation, to take small actions personally and to advocate for big actions politically. We called this campaign the “UCC Effort For the Love of Creation.”

Several Living Skies congregations have hosted FLC conversations. An environmental group at Broadway United Church in Regina also took up the task of advocacy by collecting donations to give every Saskatchewan MLA a copy of Seth Klein’s book, *A Good War: Mobilizing Canada for the Climate Emergency*.

For Creation Time (in Pentecost, from the Sunday after Labour Day to Thanksgiving Sunday), a small team, including Anne Mathewson, Rev. Jim Balfour and myself, shared [worship resources tailored to our region](#), with scripture reflections, hymn suggestions, prayers, and “Minutes 4 Climate” focused on different Saskatchewan landscapes. We hope to add to these resources for 2022.

While celebrating these achievements, I also note the urgent need for a stronger, more coordinated effort at the regional level. I look forward to seeing General Council’s work on a climate proposal this year, and what new supports may become available nationally.

Respectfully submitted,
 Laura Stewart
 Lay Climate Justice Organizer

TASTE OF PALESTINE REGIONAL COUNCIL REPORT

After the May 2021 assault on Gaza by Israeli occupying forces, one of our members gave a slide presentation informing two congregations about the effects on civilian lives and infrastructure from a health perspective.

Two local ministers, members of The United Church of Canada (UCC) and friends were then moved to create and record a justice worship service with a Palestine focus. The purpose was to draw attention to the continuous suffering of Palestinians – Muslim and Christian- under Israeli occupation, in response to the Kairos Palestine document.

What started as a Saskatchewan initiative became a cross - Canada collaboration due to our lack of capacity. UCC ministers and UCC members from Ontario and BC contributed their considerable talents and tech support. Omar Haramy from Sabeel provided the sermon.

The service has been used in at least 5 UCC congregations that we are aware of. On YouTube it has had 437 views. It is on the UNJPPI website.

<https://youtu.be/jHKdLiyEq6E>

The justice worship service was meant to be a jumping off point for a Taste of Palestine series of events. Our first one featured a talented young woman from Gaza with strong feminist principles instilled by her parents. A university-educated writer, translator and podcaster, she told the audience about the effects of the blockade on the physical, mental and economic health of Gazans.

The second one was presented by a Palestinian woman in Bethlehem whose house is surrounded on three sides by the separation wall. She had a business selling olive wood carvings made in a workshop for carvers with mental health problems until the Israeli army's repeated interference shut the business down.

As mainstream media tend to show Palestinians in a negative light, we wanted to portray not only their common humanity but also the difficulties under which they try to survive.

We paid stipends to Omar Haramy and the presenters in the Taste of Palestine events, totalling \$1200. These funds came from a grant through the Living Skies Regional Council. Julie Graham of the Regional Council staff also gave invaluable assistance with facilitating the virtual events and advertising. We are grateful to the Living Skies Regional Council for their financial and staff support for these initiatives.

For future events, we are working on connecting Canadian youth with Palestinian youth to increase Canadian awareness of the human rights violations Israel is committing daily in the Holy Land. We especially want to connect Indigenous Canadian youth as they too are still experiencing the effects of settler colonialism.

A workshop on antisemitism by Independent Jewish Voices will be offered to the region in the near future.

We plan to continue educating UCC congregations and the general public, for instance by showing documentaries about the ongoing Nakba.

Submitted by:

Brenda Curtis: Humboldt

Renée Nunan-Rappard: Lanigan