

**Trinity St. Paul's Commitment to
Climate Justice and Environmental Sustainability
Approved by TSP Church Board October 26, 2010**

God is creative and self-giving,
generously moving
in all the near and distant corners of the universe.
Nothing exists that does not find its source in God.
Our first response to God's providence is gratitude.
We sing thanksgiving.

Finding ourselves in a world of beauty and mystery,
of living things, diverse and interdependent,
of complex patterns of growth and evolution,
of subatomic particles and cosmic swirls,
we sing of God the Creator,
the Maker and Source of all that is.

Each part of creation reveals unique aspects of God the Creator,
who is both in creation and beyond it.
All parts of creation, animate and inanimate, are related.
All creation is good.
We sing of the Creator,
who made humans to live and move
and have their being in God.
In and with God,
we can direct our lives toward right relationship
with each other and with God.
We can discover our place as one strand in the web of life.
We can grow in wisdom and compassion.
We can recognize all people as kin.
We can accept our mortality and finitude, not as a curse,
but as a challenge to make our lives and choices matter.

The United Church's **Song of Faith** roots our commitment to climate justice and environmental sustainability at Trinity-St. Paul's. We have been working for many years as individuals, members of this congregation and through our stewardship of the building to reflect this commitment in our words and actions. We have much to celebrate and a good foundation on which to continue our work.

Introduction

Trinity-St. Paul's Five-Year Plan, approved at the February 28, 2010 Congregational Meeting names Climate Justice as one of our concerns, under Focus B – *Growing Vibrant Diverse Congregation*, having a commitment and an impact on local and global social justice issues and the particular reference to Climate Justice under 1. *Social Justice*.

This Policy Statement is an effort to collect and confirm our commitments to climate justice and environmental sustainability and give us all a platform to continue and extend the work we have been doing. We expect this document will grow and evolve with the work and witness of the congregation in this area.

We know we are not alone in this work. The wider community and church context includes many initiatives in which congregational members have given and continue to give leadership and others where we have joined in campaigns. The focus of the current Moderator on climate and ecological justice ensures we will be in good company as we strengthen our action and policy in this area. Faith and the Common Good and their campaign *Greening Sacred Spaces* are clearly partners in this work.

They remind us, that as well as our own commitments internally, the choices we make and the ways we steward the building of Trinity-St. Paul's, A Centre for Faith Justice and the Arts, sends a message to our neighbours. *Our sacred spaces are important to our broader communities and convey a strong message about who we are and how we relate to our neighbours. If viewed through a "green" lens what message does your religious building send to the community? Is the building well maintained and kept running efficiently? What kind of lawns and gardens do you have? Is there the opportunity for a public display of your commitment to caring for creation such as solar panels or other renewable energy sources? How can your building convey to the community that your faith community cares about humanity's place in creation? How can you be a leader and set a good example for all your neighbours and other buildings.*

There are at least four aspects to our commitment to Climate Justice and Environmental Sustainability

1. Education and Advocacy
2. Routine Actions
3. Renovations and Repairs
4. Exploration of additional actions we can take as part of a "demonstration" of what is possible in old, heritage buildings.

We have been active on a number of these fronts. Below are some examples:

1. Education and Advocacy
 - a. Eco-Festival
 - b. Greening Sacred Spaces meeting
 - c. Community Supported Agriculture

- d. Provide space for community groups to meet on these issues and hold public meetings
 - e. Recycling ink cartridge depot
 - f. Banner on the front of the building
 - g. Global Gossip
 - h. Bottled Water campaign
- 2. Routine Actions
 - a. Recycling
 - b. Garden waste composting
 - c. Energy efficient light bulbs
- 3. Renovations and Repairs
 - a. Water Fountain
 - b. See Appendix 1
- 4. “Demonstration” actions

Next Steps

There are many suggestions floating around for how we can continue to move forward in this area, using environmentally friendly cleaning materials, office supplies, exploring the use of Solar Energy, rain barrels, Bullfrog Power etc., having a section on the Website that provides links and information about these issues for individual congregation members, becoming a Depot for Food Share, making a commitment to promote and use local foods, becoming a depot for recycling of batteries etc

Clearly there are many implications to all of these aspects and coordination is needed as well as good information re cost, impact on staff etc. However there is also lots of energy and a general shared commitment.

To help us move forward with a strong policy base, we are proposing the following Commitments:

1) Education and Advocacy

- a) We will stay informed and endeavour to support campaigns in this area developed by the United Church, Kairos and its partners as well as local Church or inter-faith commitments and encourage our members to do so as well;
- b) We will work to educate ourselves - including educate ourselves as a community so that we have a reasonable knowledge of climate change and the risks, a knowledge we can reason with;
- c) We will develop a section of the website with easily accessible information for members about how to enhance their actions in this area and information about what we are doing at TSP;

- d) We will ensure coverage of these issues in our Global Gossips, worship services, Newsletters, other forms of congregational communication
- e) We will measure our carbon footprint and develop a reasonable plan for reducing it over the next three years.
- f) We will encourage members to assess their carbon footprint and make plans to reduce it.
- g) We will encourage shared travel to church and congregational events
- h) We will continue the EcoFair and events like the Bike Blessing
- i) We will invite church members and staff into sharing/learning sessions so we can learn and take action together with everyone's creative ideas
- j) We will ask the Trustees Subcommittee on Investment to ensure our investments, and the UCC Pension Fund Investments reflect these commitments and priorities

2) Routine Actions

- a) We will use environment friendly cleaning products whenever possible
- b) We will use recycled paper and source office supplies and other daily use supplies from environmentally sustainable sources
- c) We will ensure that all food and garden waste is composted
- d) We will create depots for recyclable items that aren't part of the regular program, where possible e.g. ink cartridges, batteries, etc using volunteers to supervise these initiatives
- e) We will continue and extend the use of the building for local food distribution and information or educational events
- f) We will support the initiatives of others in the local food movement and advertise them to our members
- g) We will seek to use local and organic foods where possible in our congregational meals and events
- h) We will turn off appliances and lights when not in use
- i) We will regulate water temperature and insulate tanks
- j) We will use light sensors when possible
- k) We will minimize energy consumption with thermostats
- l) We will replace old electrical equipment with energy saving equipment
- m) We will consider Bullfrog or similar energy supplier
- n) We will monitor and manage energy consumed for effective reduction in cost and use
- o) We will record water consumption rates for review
- p) Collect rainwater as possible
- q) When installing new toilets, ensure that they are water efficient
- r) We will continue to discourage bottled water use and not provide bottled water at church
- s) We will continue to avoid using disposable dishes, cups etc and wash dishes after congregational and other events and encourage renters to do the same
- t) Reuse or recycle waste textiles
- u) We will monitor annual paper use and set reasonable targets for reductions.

- v) We will continue to set printers and/or photocopiers to print double-sided, black and white by default when possible and continue use of a scrap paper box
- w) We will recycle unwanted furniture and other goods
- x) We will promote the use of organic Fairtrade food and drink and other products
- y) We will actively support those who are caring for our grounds, gardens and buildings, in all of their efforts to care for creation and for one another.

3) Renovations and Repairs

- a) We will source and use environmentally sustainable materials whenever possible
- b) For large projects, such as the heating system, we will explore all options and choose those which allow the best balance between conservation and sustainability and practical issues presented from the reality of an old building
- c) We will investigate whether solar panels or solar hot water makes sense in our situation and if yes bring a proposal to the Congregational Board
- d) We will ensure that new buildings, renovations, repairs, extensions, etc., are completed using sustainable principles. Natural paints and low impact carpet suppliers to be used.

4) Demonstration Projects.

While there are no specifics in this area at the moment, we express our commitment to respond to initiatives from within or beyond the congregation which would demonstrate the possibilities for environmental sustainability in a building such as Trinity-St. Paul's.

Implementation

The ad hoc group which met to follow-up on the document taken to the April Board meeting, with its two recommendations felt that establishing a Climate Justice Working Group was not desirable. This would tie up energies in meetings rather than engaging in the work. However, there needs to be coordination and accountability.

We propose that the Stewardship of Resources Circle and the Public Witness Circle jointly carry responsibility for ensuring we make progress on these goals and in evolving our goals and commitments to Climate Justice and Environmental Sustainability. Specifically the Chairs of the Circles would be responsible to ensure this work continues to move forward by convening an annual gathering of all working in this area in the congregation to assess our progress and make any policy or action recommendations to the Board.

Operationally, we propose that each Circle take primary responsibility for several sections of this Policy Document and develop a work plan for the next two years identifying where the commitments in the document fit and how they will be accomplished, with the clear understanding that we will follow-through on these

commitments in the order in which energy and capacity are available from within the congregation and staff, to do so.

We would suggest that the *Public Witness Circle* will take the lead in developing a Work Plan with regard to the items listed in the document under *Education and Advocacy*. This Work Plan with priorities and goals would be brought to the Board for approval.

The *Stewardship of Resources Circle*, through the Property Committee and Jackie would develop a similar plan for the *Routine Actions* Section and bring it to the Board for approval.

The commitments made in the Renovations and Repairs section reflect the existing guiding principles used by Jackie, the Property Committee and the Trustees. They will alert the Board to additional suggestions in this area as needed.

Motion for the Board:

Betsy Anderson moves and Rhea Whitehead seconds that :

The Board of Trinity-St. Paul's United Church adopt this policy document as a basis for its witness and actions regarding Climate Justice and Environmental Sustainability. That this document is understood to be a living document which will evolve along with the congregation's work in this area and that the Chairs of the Stewardship of Resources and Public Witness Circles jointly carry responsibility for ensuring we follow through on these commitments in our life as a congregation.

Appendix 1

Renovations and Repairs

Major Items:

- + On-going Review of Steam Heating System: Both sets of heating engineers brought in to advise on our steam system observed that \$30,000 per year for gas to heat a building our size is extremely reasonable and saw little way to reduce energy consumption either with a re-built Steam system (which we have now done temporarily) or with a new hot water system.
- + Air-conditioning Installation has been indefinitely postponed for, among other factors, the increased energy expense
- + Switching to BullFrog Power was investigated by Moira H. four-five years ago and the increased costs were not deemed justifiable but this can be considered again.
- + New florescent lighting: Our Green Saver audit mainly recommended replacing lights with fluorescents. This has been carried out in most of the main areas and will be completed over the coming year.
- + Repair to Stained Glass Windows: After competitive bidding, we have begun a 5-10 year process of repairing/upgrading all of our stained glass (at \$10,000 expense per year) beginning with the most urgent ones.
Where there are secondary external (plexiglass) "covers", these will be vented better.
- + Our major heat loss is through the cupola and glass skylight. These areas are insulated, but very hard to contain heat loss.
- + We are testing out 50 -year metal shingles on the cupola (so as to reduce waste by 10-15 yr replacements) and improve (*hopefully) on heat loss.

Lesser Items:

- + Sanctuary ceiling fans have been repaired/replaced with new control system
 - + Two hot water heaters used for OOTC have been turned off, leaving only one in use
 - + Recyclables are used for most electronic equipment. Setting up an ink cartridge collection depot was tried but failed to collect many items; better we should perhaps inform members of nearby City collection spots.
 - + Water Fountain; Installed by Public Witness, but most users still bring bottled water and coffee cups onto the site;
- There are doubtless others (paint choices, paper selections, etc.)