



EDUCATING LEADERS FOR JUSTICE, COMPASSION, AND TRANSFORMATION

## Thanks to you, Gwen's ministry is rooted in a theology of the land

*As a student, Gwen McAllister learned about theology of the land. You prepared her for her role as priest at St. Matthew's Anglican Church, where, "greening the church" begins with all of creation in relationship with God.*

For many churches, trying to become more green often means energy audits, new approaches to heating, and LED lighting. When St. Matthew's Anglican Church in Winnipeg looked into what they could do, the options were either too expensive or not possible in their building.

These energy saving steps may be good things, but Gwen suggests that there's often no supporting theology behind them. "It's all about progress and purchasing power—a secular impulse to do good that's only available to congregations with financial resources. 'Going Green' doesn't transform what got us into

climate disaster in the first place. It is separated from faith."

Gwen has learned from Indigenous faith leaders to read Scripture with new eyes, to see that God creates the land and calls forth life for all that dwell in it. The story in Luke 12:13-21 of the man who wanted to build bigger barns for his good harvest illustrates that God's concern is not wealth, status, security, or property but loyalty to, and love for, the members of God's family. It's about paying attention to different things.

St. Matthew's is going green, in the small ways that they can, by paying attention to relationship and creativity. They make do and share what they have. Instead of a polished worship space, they have a meaningful one, which accommodates the needs of parishioners. For example, a credence table, normally used for Eucharistic elements, has been repurposed as a coffee station – a different sort of Communion!

They've let go of what's "proper" or simply looks good because, as Gwen says, "These are not the things that will save." Instead, they make small decisions based on what's at the heart—that all belong to the God of the land. Greening comes when we know we are all part of creation, in this together.



*Thank you for Gwen's formation at CCS. It prepared her for a ministry where relationships are valued more than keeping up appearances.*

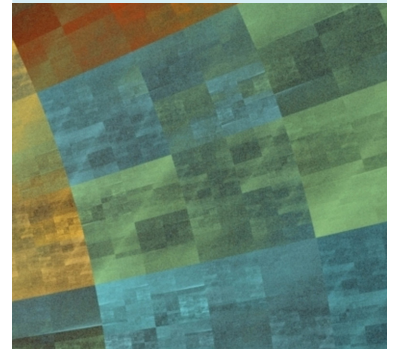
### INSIDE: READ MORE STORIES ABOUT YOUR GENEROSITY

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*St. Matthew's Anglican Church uses this land acknowledgement to recognize the relationship of land, people, and God.*

**One:** *This is Treaty 1 Territory, home of the Anishinaabe and Cree people and homeland of the Metis nation. Let us here learn to live not as children of colonialism but as children of Creator, for in Creator and creation will we be home.*

**All:** *We give thanks for this land and its people; let us be reconciled together in justice and wisdom.*

# Water: Your Connection with the Sacred



*The Athabasca River is the heart of many communities. Thanks to you, Bruce is working with Indigenous partners to seek rights for the watershed.*

**W**hen you donate to CCS, you educate students who have an impact in their communities. Bruce Jackson is a great example of the effects of your generosity. Living in Athabasca, Alberta, the neighbouring river and his passion for social justice prompted him to get involved in advocating for the “personhood of rivers” so that sacred water is available for all living things.

In 2002, after graduating from the Centre for Christian Studies, Bruce was settled at Athabasca United Church.

As a response to the war-mongering going on in the US at that time, he asked, “Why don’t we make the community a place where...people could learn and understand peace within themselves, between themselves, and relationships in the community.”

That initiative reignited academics and activists who’d previously been successful in challenging a nearby pulp mill to abandon plans for a polluting chlorine process mill, in favour of adopting a cleaner, less smelly, peroxide process. It helped raise standards in the industry. These kindred spirits contributed to Bruce’s interest in protecting the water.

Bruce is convinced that being Christian doesn’t just mean partaking in communion; it means being interconnected with the sacred things in life and protecting those things. “What’s sacred is life itself. It’s what we take in. The water. What we need for life.”

That’s why he’s working with the Keepers of the Water Society to get legal personhood for the DeCho Watershed, of which the Athabasca River is a tributary. It is something groups in other places have done. Bruce says, “This is part of nature having rights, the same as a person. If you allow the river to have rights, then protectors of the water can go to the courts and say, ‘This person needs protection’.” In his understanding, water not only gives life, but water is alive and sacred.



*Bruce’s passion for peace and justice is making a difference, and you’ve made it possible with your donations.*



## Taking ministry formation outside —You give students that opportunity

**Y**our support gave Alison Brooks-Starks tools for spiritual care. She uses what she learned at CCS every day, and often, outside. As a leader in the Eco-justice learning circle, she invited students to prepare for ministry by connecting to nature, the divine, and their deeper selves.

Alison describes her vocation as, “Putting people outside alone.” She knows how healing going outside in solitude can be. “For me, major shifts have been discovered through time alone outside. It’s a place to hear your core self and find that which is God. I want to give that to other people.”

And that’s what she did as a co-facilitator at the Centre for Christian Studies’ first Eco-justice learning circle. It seemed right that any course on that theme would include time outdoors, and it’s especially true for students preparing for diaconal ministry. Jesus



*Alison came to CCS with a background in outdoor ed. Your gifts to CCS gave her skills in spiritual formation, which she’s now added to her practice.*



*Your support made the circle Dyanne attended a reality. Even while learning online, she was able to get outside and create as an act of worship.*

was always taking off to be alone, to prepare himself for ministry.

As a participant, Dyanne went outside each day with reflection prompts. She found these invited her into prayer and later, became part of her spiritual practice. One invited her to “make a shrine, altar, sacred place. Gather natural forms and arrange them in a way that feels pleasing”. It was a way for Dyanne to reflect on creating in God’s creation.

When Susan, another student, walked with the question “What is my place in the world?” she says, “I noticed a fallen tree and received the response ‘to be a witness’. This idea got me thinking about my role as a diaconal minister. Is it enough to be with someone or something? Does the fallen tree just need me to honour its presence? When I find out some hurt has happened in the world (or in the woods), do I need to act? It became the subject of my next spiral reflection.”

Alison explains that being alone is not the same as being lonely. As you learn to love the natural world, you also see that you are interconnected with all that is alive and enfolds us. It’s a wonderful teacher.



# Will you help Dyanne be in the Right Relations Learning Circle?

When Dyanne comes to the Right Relations Learning Circle, it won't be to just get another credit towards her diploma at CCS.

She'll get a chance to sit with students and staff from CCS and the Sandy Sauteaux Spiritual Centre. It will be a chance to listen deeply to story, and learn from land and Creator.

If they don't learn about right relations, students like Dyanne will not confront their own biases. She won't be prepared to work on reconciliation or to lead her parishioners in lament when hard truths are revealed.

She can get so much more than another credit. But she can't do it without you.

**Your support is so necessary to make sure the Right Relations Learning Circle is fully funded.**

Right now, there's a gap between the tuition Dyanne will pay and what it will cost to offer the Right Relations Learning Circle. **Your gift of \$27.00 will pay the additional cost for one student for a day. Get your donation in by October 21 before the circle starts!**

Will you give \$27.00 for Dyanne for a day? Your gift will help her get the learning she needs to be the minister God is calling her to be.

**Please make sure Dyanne doesn't miss out by making a gift today!**

**I will make sure no student misses out on the Right Relations Circle**

***YES! I want to help with a gift for the additional costs for one student like Dyanne.***

***Thank you!***

Please return this form with your tax deductible gift or use the enclosed reply form.

**Here is my gift for one day**

☐ \$27 for 1 student ☐ \$54 for 2 students ☐ \$108 for 4 students ☐ Other \_\_\_\_\_

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