

Who we are and how we are called

Bishop Jane Alexander

Second Week of Lent

Friday March 18

Scripture

Isaiah 42: 5-6a

Thus says God, the Lord,
who created the heavens and stretched them out,
who spread out the earth and what comes from it,
who gives breath to the people upon it
and spirit to those who walk in it:
I am the Lord I have called you in righteousness,
I have taken you by the hand and kept you

Reflection

Be an advocate for the climate. Advocacy is about influencing people and public policies to bring about change. It involves influencing those in power to act more fairly, in order to bring justice. Advocacy is firmly rooted in the Bible and is based on God's commitment to justice:

'Speak up for those who cannot speak for themselves, for the rights of all who are destitute. Speak up and judge fairly; defend the rights of the poor and needy.' –Proverbs 31:8-9.

Advocacy involves building relationships with people in authority and raising their awareness in order to influence them about a particular issue. It includes suggesting potential solutions.

I am aware that I am encouraged to be an advocate by the advocacy of young people. Of course we can all bring the Swedish environmental activist Greta Thunberg to mind, but I have been so inspired by the stories of young Anglicans in Green Anglicans and through the ACEN (Anglican Communion Environmental Network). Check out their stories and be inspired.

Being an advocate could also mean fasting from things that pollute single use plastics and styrofoam should already be on our lists, but what could we add to it? Like many ventures this is one that is best done in community. Is there a friend you could covenant with? Someone who would hold you accountable? Do you have a prayer partner, could you begin there? Would you consider giving up eating foods that are not in season or trying a month of supporting local farmers and food producers?

The 2021 COP26, is scheduled to be held in Glasgow, United Kingdom, from 1 to 12 November 2021. How will you prepare — what do you want to know?

Prayer

*That we can glimpse you
within creation is a beautiful thought,
but also tells us
that you desire to be seen,
to be found and known.
Open our eyes, Lord,
as we walk through this world,
feel the wind and sunshine,
see the majesty of creation unfolding before our eyes.
Help us to see you.
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Youth council rep fights against climate change

PWRDF Youth Council member Jessica Steele is one of two women climate activists representing KAIROS Canada, as observers at the 24th Conference of the Parties to the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (COP24), in Katowice, Poland this week. They are accredited by The United Church of Canada, the only Canadian church with official observer status at COP.

Along with Cameroon-based Georgine Kengne, Jessica's mission is twofold:

- to urge the Canadian government to increase its greenhouse gas emissions reductions targets, backed by an ambitious action plan;
- to join other women climate activists in adding their voice to the COP24 process on the gendered impacts of climate change.

Steele is an environmental educator and climate change activist from Coast Salish Territory in Vancouver and the Youth Council Representative for the Diocese of British Columbia. She works with the Ocean Wise Conservation Association's Ocean Bridge program, where she empowers youth and young adults across the country to participate in ocean conservation service projects.

Kengne is a francophone and the Senior Projects Coordinator on Consent and Just Alternative Development with WoMin: African Women Unite Against Destructive Resource Extraction, which seeks to build a women-centred and ecologically responsive African alternative to mining's current destructive model. Read Jessica's blog posts after week one and after week two.

As women on the frontlines of climate action, Steele and Kengne's participation is significant. Recognizing that women disproportionately bear the brunt of climate impacts but also tend to crops, manage water and develop adaptation strategies, the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC) adopted its Gender Action Plan at COP23 in Bonn. The plan becomes operational at this year's COP and aims to bolster women's influence in climate change dialogue and action.

Both women are deeply connected to the ecumenical community in Canada and globally. Besides being a long-time member of the PWRDF Youth Council, Steele represents PWRDF on the KAIROS Ecological Justice Circle. Kengne is the former General Secretary of the Nairobi-based World Student Christian Federation – Africa, which has worked closely with KAIROS on climate change, debt cancellation and HIV/AIDS advocacy issues in Africa.

Canada's current greenhouse gas emissions reduction target is to be 30 percent below 2005 levels by 2030. Climate Action Network Canada, of which KAIROS is a member, recommends increasing the target to 50 percent below 2005 levels by 2030.

“It is time that Canada steps up to this challenge by agreeing to more ambitious climate targets,” says Steele. “We need to commit in word and in action to facilitate a transition away from fossil fuels and support communities both in Canada and abroad who are most affected by the climate crisis.”

Read the whole story on our website at

<https://pwrdf.org/steeley-determination-youth-councilrep-fights-against-climate-change-at-cop24>