

Fall Climate Vigil Organizers Speak Out on UN Climate Talks and the Need for Urgent Action

[Climate Emergency Vigils](#) to be held again in Waterloo Public Square

Friday evenings, 8-9pm, October 4th – Nov 29th, 2024

Waterloo, Ontario - September 18, 2024

This year marks the 29th year of UN climate conferences ([COP29](#)) when world leaders gather to discuss the urgent need to reduce climate-harming pollution, and to support a just response to the climate crisis. People from across Waterloo Region will again gather in vigils to hold space for grief, hope, and action during this momentous time.

Details: Vigils will be held every Friday, 8-9 pm, from Oct. 4 to Nov. 29, 2024 at Waterloo Public Square. For 45 minutes, participants of all ages will gather to listen to local speakers, reflect during a time of silence and respond to closing calls to action.

Vigils are hosted by a continuing committee from last year's Climate Vigils, including representatives from various groups such as Faith Climate Justice WR, Waterloo Region Climate Collaborative, and the Working Centre.

Further details on the vigils can be found at: bit.ly/climate-vigils-wr. All are welcome to attend.

Vigils are a way to recognize that we are living in a climate emergency that demands our attention and demands action.

That climate emergency hit home most recently here in Canada when Jasper, Alberta burned and residents were evacuated. In 2024, to date, 5.3 million hectares (13.1 million acres) have burned and more than 600 fires are still raging across the country, mainly in British Columbia.

That makes [2024 the worst wildfire season since 1995](#), with the exception of last year, when a record-breaking 17 million hectares burned and released more carbon than some of the world's largest- emitting countries.

Globally, despite decades of talks, the world is still on track for average planetary warming of nearly 3°C above pre-industrial levels.

That’s more than two times more warming than what we’re already experiencing, leading to even more extreme climate impacts. While 2023 was the [second warmest year in Canada](#), the World Meteorological Organization established that, globally, it was the warmest year on record. In the Canadian Arctic, warming [has been about four times higher](#) than the global average.

Canadians expect our governments to take science-based action commensurate with the scale of this crisis. We urge our federal and provincial governments to legislate [strong emissions caps on polluting industries, such as oil and gas](#), that have been making record profits while contributing significantly to the climate crisis.

Vigil organizer Natalie Wennyk outlines the call to action for Canada at COP29: “We must ensure that Canada meets its emissions targets, accelerates the clean energy transition, delivers on its climate finance commitments, strengthens climate adaptation, and protects biodiversity through nature-based solutions.”

When asked whether Canada's much too slow progress on emissions reductions leads him to despair, organizer Isaiah Ritzmann responded: “No! Even when it can feel that way, it is not true that the change we need is impossible. Improbable? Yes. Impossible? No. Furthermore it is an injustice to each other, to the Earth, and to future generations to not act just because the odds are stacked against us.”

Vigil speakers will include local Indigenous leaders, professors, members of faith communities, and activists of all ages – addressing the personal and collective actions needed to promote climate justice.

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Media contacts:

Kai Reimer-Watts

647 570 4536

Henriëtte Thompson

climatevigilswr@gmail.com

647 701 7812