



Faith Climate Justice WR March 2022

## ***Statement in support of a Just Transition to a far more sustainable Waterloo region, addressing the climate crisis and securing brighter futures for all***

Faith Climate Justice Waterloo Region is a grassroots collective of faith communities and citizens across Waterloo region who are deeply concerned about the global climate emergency and its impacts on people, the natural world, and our communities (see [www.faithclimatejustice.ca](http://www.faithclimatejustice.ca)).

Last Spring 2021, members of Faith Climate Justice WR endorsed both the *TransformWR Climate Action Strategy* and a commitment to the science-based target of 50% emissions reduction in our region by 2030 (50by30). We sought to add further urgency to increasing climate action region-wide, including building momentum to implement the many crucial actions outlined in this Strategy.

Raising our voices alongside many other inspiring and dedicated members of our communities, we urged local councils across Waterloo region last Spring to pass both the TransformWR Strategy and 50by30 target at this time. We are deeply grateful that councils of all seven area municipalities and the Region of Waterloo voted to pass both the TransformWR Strategy, along with the aspirational 50by30 target.

Now, in late winter 2022, **we as people of faith concerned for climate action and justice are raising our voices once again.** We reaffirm our support for *bold leadership by all* for continuing this urgent work, including support for a Just Transition that will accelerate the transition to the far more sustainable and equitable societies we know are possible – societies that care for all people, and for the sacred miracle of Creation that sustains all of us.

This call is aligned with peaceful actions set to take place in communities across Canada on March 12<sup>th</sup> this year calling for a bold Just Transition to fairer, cleaner economies (see <https://350.org/just-transition-day-of-action/>).

Such a transition is well-aligned locally with increasing support for implementing the many actions identified in the recently-passed TransformWR Strategy. The Strategy provides many opportunities to empower residents to join and help lead this important work; reduce our emissions towards meeting the 50by30 target; and as importantly, help position Waterloo region at the forefront of developing equitable climate solutions.

As shared in our statement to councils last Spring, as people of faith across Waterloo region, we support the TransformWR strategy and 50by30 target for several key reasons:

1. The actions proposed in the strategy are founded on a vision of the natural world as a sacred trust. This vision requires action based on a respectful caretaking of - and partnership with - the natural world, as well as a recognition of the interconnectedness between the health of our community and the health of our local environment.



2. The actions proposed emphasize the principles of inclusion and equity. Meeting the needs of equity-deserving groups will increase the equity, prosperity, and the resiliency of our beloved communities. Our faith-based perspective embraces the key intersections between climate action and social justice and calls us to care for those most vulnerable in our societies who have often done the least to contribute to climate change.
3. While the strategy itself includes many important and commendable actions that should be taken immediately, the recently-approved near-term target of 50by30 better aligns the strategy with the demands of climate science, increasing momentum for bold action locally, in line with increasing momentum that is now taking place around the world. We must aspire to what science requires to secure a safe climate future, and to lead in building the sustainable societies of the future right here in Waterloo region.

Lastly, as people of faith, we recognize we are all people of the living world and creation. With our global climate system in crisis, the living world is also, tragically and terribly, under great threat. The crisis threatens the well-being of us all, particularly children and young people and those most vulnerable who have often done the least to cause it. These communities on the front lines of impact deserve our utmost care and support.

For our part, we commit to supporting all who are doing this work to ensure a safe and just climate future in Waterloo region. We ask you, as our elected leaders, to lead this effort boldly. We also call on others to join us! Visit [www.faithclimatejustice.ca](http://www.faithclimatejustice.ca) or reach us at [faithclimatejusticewr@gmail.com](mailto:faithclimatejusticewr@gmail.com)

Sincerely,

Members of Faith Climate Justice Waterloo Region





**Group signatories**

Brahmarishi Mission of Canada, Kitchener  
Christ Lutheran Church, Waterloo  
Community of Christ, Kitchener  
Emmanuel United Church, Waterloo  
Erb Street Mennonite Church Peace and Justice Committee, Waterloo  
First Mennonite Church, Kitchener  
First United Church, Waterloo  
Global Partners Committee, Knox Presbyterian Church, Waterloo  
Grand River Unitarian Climate Action Team, Kitchener  
Kitchener Area Religious Society of Friends (Quakers), Kitchener  
Nexus Church, Kitchener  
PiE (Pastors in Exile) Waterloo Region  
Rockway Mennonite Church, Kitchener  
Rockway Mennonite Collegiate (High School), Kitchener  
St. Andrew's Memorial Anglican Church, Kitchener  
St. Andrew's Presbyterian Church, Kitchener  
St. Francis of Assisi RCC Laudato Si' Environmental Team, Kitchener  
Stirling Avenue Mennonite Church, Kitchener  
Trillium Lutheran Church, Waterloo  
Unitarian Congregation of Guelph, Guelph  
Waterloo North Mennonite Church, Waterloo

**Individual signatories**

Becky Voll, The Meeting House, Kitchener  
Carol Burrows, Grand River Unitarian Congregation  
Chris Springer, Kitchener Area Religious Society of Friends (Quakers)  
Fr. Murray McDermott, CR, St. Francis of Assisi Church, Kitchener  
Henriëtte Thompson, Christ Lutheran - Waterloo  
Kai Reimer-Watts, Rockway Mennonite Church