

## **Climate Vigil Organizers Speak Out On UN Climate Talks**

### **Waterloo, Ontario - November 24, 2023**

Twelve weeks into a 16-week commitment, local Climate Emergency Vigil organizers anticipate the final four weeks of gatherings in the lead up to the United Nations Climate Conference (COP28) in Dubai this December. As world leaders gather to discuss the urgent need to reduce climate-harming pollution, people from across our region continue to gather to hold space for both grief and hope during this momentous time. The vigils are being hosted in recognition that we are, collectively, living in a climate emergency that demands our attention and action.

“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. It’s far beyond what’s considered ‘safe’ for human societies and life on this planet,” said Kai Reimer-Watts, one of the vigil organizers.

“Canadians expect our governments to take science-based action commensurate with the scale of this crisis, but Canada has a history of broken climate promises,” said Laura Hamilton, another organizer. “We urge our federal government to legislate a strong emissions cap on the oil & gas industry – our most polluting sector – that’s been making record profits while causing the climate crisis that impacts us all.”

When asked about whether he despairs over Canada’s record of climate inaction, organizer Isaiah Ritzmann responded, “Even when it can feel that way, it’s not true that change is impossible. Improbable? Yes. Impossible? No. It’s an injustice to each other, to the earth, and to future generations to not act just because the odds are stacked against us.”

Organizer Henriette Thompson speaks to an important call to action for Canada at COP28. “While Canada played a productive role at COP27 in establishing the framework for a Loss & Damage Fund for vulnerable countries most impacted by climate change, we need to ensure Canada will implement its commitments at COP28.”

“All are welcome to join community vigils for sacred spaces of grief and hope. Together we grieve – for all past and present inaction, and for what has been lost. And together we hope – time is running out but we can still act, and we can act with justice,” said Becky Voll, another organizer.

**Details:** Vigils are held every Friday at 8pm, September 1 to December 15 at Waterloo Public Square. For 45 minutes, dozens of participants gather to listen to a brief reflection by a local member of a faith community or wisdom tradition linked to climate care and justice, followed by a time of silence and calls to action. The vigils are hosted by a coalition of climate groups – including Faith Climate Justice WR, 50x30 Waterloo Region, and Divest Waterloo. All are welcome. For details, visit: [bit.ly/climate-vigils-wr](https://bit.ly/climate-vigils-wr)

-- 30 --

Contact:

[climatevigilswr@gmail.com](mailto:climatevigilswr@gmail.com)

[faithclimatejusticewr@gmail.com](mailto:faithclimatejusticewr@gmail.com)