



THE ECUMENICAL CHAPLAINCY AT THE UNIVERSITY OF TORONTO

CALLING OUR FRIENDS

Winter 2018/19 Volume 12

From the Chaplains



Chaplain – Tim Kennedy

During the holidays, we often encounter the phrase “Peace on Earth.” It shows up in popular songs, banners and cards. We hear it in Christian churches as part of the nativity story. On the night Jesus was born in Bethlehem, an angel appeared to shepherds who were watching their sheep, announcing the birth of the Savior, the Messiah. Suddenly, the air was filled with angels from heaven praising God: “Glory to God in the highest heaven, and on earth peace, goodwill toward all” (Lk 2:14).

Our faith in the loving, radically inclusive God revealed in Jesus Christ brings a peace “which exceeds anything we can understand” (Phil. 4:7). Our ministry at U of T includes proclaiming peace to those who are just as surprised as the shepherds were to hear this good news. Many of God’s LGBTQ+ children wrestle with finding that inner peace. We are honoured to be a part of helping them (and all students) hear that ancient proclamation ringing from the highest heaven that God’s peace and goodwill is for everyone.

Ecology and Spirituality



Scenes from the climate strike, Sept 27, 2019

There is a real sense of urgency and passion and fear and courage as we face the realities of climate change. ECUT supports and works alongside students on campus who are engaged in the work of bridging faith and ecological awareness/responsibility.

Through the Multi-Faith Centre, ECUT is able to work with a student intern to plan events related to ecology and spirituality. This year’s intern, Sam Luchetta, organized students to attend the global climate strike on September 27, planned a contemplative labyrinth walk in High Park, and a celebration of light/candle-making event. Next term, she is hosting an art show exploring the themes of religion, faith, ecology and environment.

Sam reflects on her role: “I was actually eyeing this position for quite a long time before I applied. I’ve always been interested in ecology and spirituality separately, but it seemed like such a unique opportunity to merge the two together through facilitating communal activities. People wonder about how spirituality relates to environmentalism. While a lot of environmentalism is about concrete policy change and political activism, environmentalism also involves things like belief and moral value. I believe that by ensuring people have a stronger emotional and spiritual connection to the land, we feel more compelled to conserve and protect it. Nature has always been a part of humanity’s most transcendental experiences.”

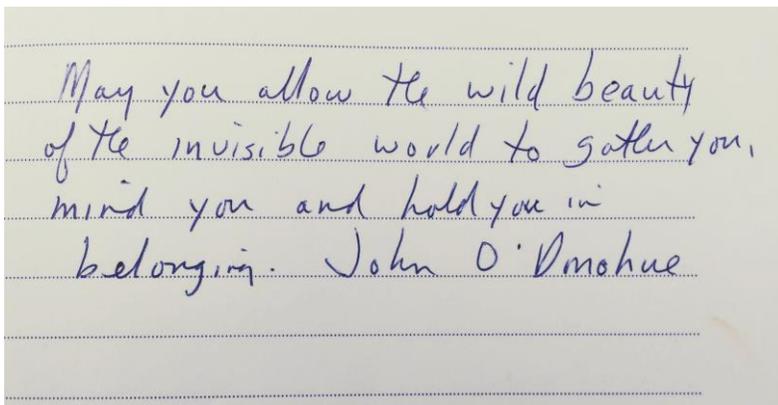
Ecology and Spirituality.....

The Student Christian Movement (SCM) at U of T also participated in the global climate strike in September. The SCM's statement on the global climate strike ends with the following: "May hearts and minds be transformed. May the society that imposes borders and categories on lands and peoples come to repentance. May economics that obscure truth and justice be abandoned. This is our living prayer as followers of Jesus in this time and place, and we offer it as to the chorus of voices calling for change." The full statement is found on their website: <https://scmcanada.org/2019/09/global-climate-strike/>

In November, the SCM co-organized a retreat at Loyola House in Guelph called "Grounding: Discovering our Sacred Gifts in a Climate Emergency." In their invitation to participants, they wrote: "Facing deep grief and dying ecosystems, we come together to ask God: 'What is emerging?' Many of us are weighed down by despair, anxiety, and deep fear about our future in the face of the climate crisis.... [let us] seek God's presence and call in the midst of an emergency. What are the sacred gifts that are being given during this time? What is mine to do? What is ours to do?"



Labyrinth facilitators sharing their wisdom, October 23, 2019



A quote to guide the labyrinth walk

U of T Scarborough Campus



Associate Chaplain at UTSC, Leonard Clarke Jr. (Jae)

The year thus far has been somber yet rewarding. There was a student who regularly joined his friends when they came to "hangout" with me during my office hours. He was quiet and reserved and was content with just being present while I offered words of encouragement and advice to his friends.

This year that student's mother passed away. He reached out to me for support. In the midst of my attempt to offer words of encouragement he interrupted to thank me for preparing him for this moment. He said his quietness was intentional and that he was allowing himself to be uplifted and encouraged. What's more is that he repeated my words to his mother which he said seemed to provide some comfort. Needless to say, I was extremely moved.

It is in moments like these, though somber, that continue to highlight the necessity of ECUT at UTSC.

The new year brings many exciting possibilities. We are gearing up for our annual events: the Interfaith dinner in January, the Interfaith sports tournament in February, and the Multifaith roundtables.

Thank you for your support.

Grateful to Our Friends

Many thanks to the following donors and sponsors who contributed to ECUT in 2019 (as of December 10). Your financial support is essential. You are making a difference in student lives across the U of T.

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ECUT Fund for Gender, Sexuality and Faith in Campus Ministry

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anti-Archive video #20

ECUT is hoping to raise \$2000 to fund a 20th animation featuring Alisha Stranges, project founder. This would provide an opportunity to explain the motivation for the "anti-Archive." Alisha invested deeply in these animations and we think it is important to hear and to see her perspective on the process.

We have raised \$700 already!

The best way is to make a designated contribution to the ECUT Fund for Gender, Sexuality and Faith (QR Fund) on Canadahelps.org and make a note that your gift is for the "anti-archive #20"

We do our best to acknowledge all donations received. Please let us know if your name is missing.

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Find out how to donate by going to our website: www.ecut.ca You can also donate by using the enclosed reply form and envelop. Thank-you!

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“A celebration of light”

On December 5, 2019, a group of students met in the Multi-Faith Centre to make beeswax candles and to celebrate light in various faith traditions. Swami Kripamayananda, a Hindu campus chaplain, shared how light is understood and celebrated in his tradition. After sharing with each other about our own traditions of light, we had a great time making candles together!

In her introduction to the evening, Ecology and Spirituality intern Sam Luchetta, highlighted the ecological significance of light and darkness. “December is dark month, but it's also filled with a lot of light, and warmth. This season marks a lot of celebrations for people from different traditions and faith communities. Although we tend to think about light in this very spiritual way, we should also think about light and warmth in terms of ecology. Light is the sun, it's the stars, and even certain insects and plants generate their own sources of light. We need the light to grow food and keep ourselves healthy.

At the same time, we need darkness, the cold, and rest. Winter is a period of rest for the earth and for different plants and animals. Similarly, in the dark of the night, we also rest so that we can feel refreshed and renewed when the day breaks. It would be unhealthy to live in light all of the time. In fact, in many places, light can even be described as "light pollution" or "over-illumination", which affects our health and our local ecosystems. We also forget that there's actually a lot of life in the dark. There are tons of animals that come out at night that are just as important as the animals that come out during the day and share daylight with us. So while this is a celebration of light and all the fiery and active things that come with it, we should also recognize that this time of year is also for rest, renewal, and rejuvenation. This can mean slowing down a bit after a hectic semester, or even just thinking about the change in daylight and how it affects us across the seasons.”



Participants making beeswax candles, December 5, 2019



Poster promoting the Eco-Spirit art show next term

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