Faith & the Common Good

2014 ANNUAL REPORT

Water Walk, Nibi Emosaawdamajig: Those Who Walk for the Water; Photo credit, Georgie Horton Baptiste.
OUR VISION

Supporting diverse faith communities to create greener, healthier, more resilient neighbourhoods.

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3000-10000+ Unique visits per month to our GSS website

Website Subscribers
300+

Newsletter Subscribers
3000+ (with a 25-30% open rate)

15 Media articles

Facebook Likes
620
(150% more than 2013)

Twitter Followers
340

120 Faith Communities in Our Network with Solar

FossilFreeFaith

2,465 views from 598 unique visitors to our FFF website

65 Google Group Members
89 Facebook likes

5 Faith Building Audits & Retrofits

120 Faith Communities in our Network with solar power

447 Volunteers, Interfaith Steering Committee Members & Trustees

14 Faith Traditions Represented

86+ Green Activities
8422 Event Participants
12000+ Volunteer Hours

Rohan Gupta, John Caserta, Steve Stomp, Darbo Scalante, from The Noun Project
All around the world, people are raising their voices and calling for a liveable future. As faith communities, we have an advantage: every faith tradition teaches that we humans are stewards of the earth. It’s on this basis that we support people of faith to act on behalf of our home planet, its inhabitants and future generations. At Faith & the Common Good, our goal is to assist faith and spiritual groups across Canada to be strong leaders in helping to create green, healthy, and resilient neighborhoods.

Over the last year, staff and board have been working to develop relevant resources, innovative programs, and to reach new audiences to get our message out; faith communities can serve as role models for a cleaner, more sustainable, more just society. How? There are many ways to achieve these ends including setting an example by greening our places of worship and preparing it to receive those who will be most impacted by the effects of climate change, supporting local sustainable food systems, divesting from destructive fossil fuels, protecting local water resources and turning to and promoting more sustainable energy.

Our network is growing: We are here to assist you by offering opportunities to partner with one another, to share resources, to share stories of success and challenge and to add voices to the cause.

My hope is that our 2014 Annual report will inspire your faith community to bigger and bolder action. The movement for a resilient climate future is happening. Will you join us in playing a significant role in helping to move it forward?

Lucy Cummings
Executive Director, Faith & the Common Good
An overarching challenge confronting faith groups is meeting rising operating and maintenance costs in the face of shrinking congregations. In 2014, a vital part of our work continued to support faith communities in addressing this challenge, through education and raising awareness about available opportunities, both at FCG as well as through local programs.

Our subsidized Green Audit program with the Anglican Church of Canada (ACC), is an example of what we offered to participating ACC parishes. These parishes committed to energy saving actions following the audit (once the parish has implemented Green Audit recommendations). Parishes also hosted public information seminars with FCG, on energy efficiency. They will be collecting energy consumption data for at least two consecutive years following the audit. This data will help establish a baseline against which parishes can measure environmental performance improvements year over year.

A report was written concerning these energy conservation actions completed in response to the audit for each of these parishes. LINK: http://bit.ly/1IdeO15

GREEN AUDIT

Left: St. Barnabas, Apostle and Martyr (Ottawa Diocese, ACC).

Center: Energy efficiency lighting for faith buildings webinar

Right: Church of the Ascension (Algoma Diocese, ACC).
Our local FCG chapters continued to assist congregations in taking advantage of Ontario’s renewable energy and energy conservation incentives. For example, “Taking the LEED on LEDS: Workshops” in the Toronto area were offered in partnership with Toronto Hydro. Participants learned about LED technology and energy savings incentives to provide faith groups and low-income residents with attractive cost savings.

RENEWABLE ENERGY
Supporting faith groups to model a clean energy future is an important part of our programming. In Hamilton, we conducted a tour of the Meadowlands Fellowship Christian Reformed Church in Ancaster, the only exclusively geothermally heated and cooled church in North America.

In November 2014, we launched a brand new initiative called Renewable Energy Revival for Faith Communities, to encourage faith communities to take advantage of Ontario’s Feed-in-Tariff and become leaders in solar generation. This project is funded by IESO. Visit the link http://bit.ly/1MUgctK.
WASTE MANAGEMENT

The way we dispose of our waste has a tremendous impact on the environment. At FCG we have been developing guides and resources to help faith groups handle the waste that they produce. Our Ottawa chapter has been working with the Catholic parishes on recycling, disposal of food scraps and other organic materials, and becoming familiar with the municipality’s programs and using reusable and washable dinnerware. In Peel, with our partners Community Environment Alliance, we piloted a Zero waste ‘soil-less’ growing system at a Temple. This initiative piloted an innovative growing system to grow food in an efficient and eco-friendly way. The aim is to help increase accessibility of healthy, fresh food to individuals and families facing socio-economic barriers in the community while bringing awareness about the environmental impacts from conventional food production. 130 vegetables were planted as a test run in 2014.
The Green Rule focuses on the importance of our relationship with the environment and how we should treat our earth. A multi-faith, eco-spiritual event, the March 2014 Green Rule Retreat encouraged interfaith dialogue on common good issues among youth, at the Riverwood Conservancy in Mississauga. The retreat brought together diverse young people who explored and discussed important environmental issues as they relate to various faiths. Green rule activities and an eco-spiritual walk were also a part of the day. The Green Rule Retreat was brought together by Greening Sacred Spaces, Halton Presbytery, Scarboro Missions, The Riverwood Conservancy, U of T Mississauga, and Dufferin Peel Catholic District.

With the Community Environmental Alliance, we were able to conduct a survey with youth through our partnership with the Religious Diversity Youth Leadership project of the Multi Faith Centre, University of Toronto. This survey sought to identify the key drivers for enabling sustainable healthy communities and to understand how youth representing diverse faith communities can be the “Change Leaders” in enabling this positive change.
In 2014, our focus on water protection was lead by our Peterborough chapter. Our partnership with the Sacred Water Circle (SWC) has been transformative for our entire network. It is an initiative that is lead by Indigenous spirituality. Volunteers from all cultures raise awareness about the importance of water and aim to motivate communities and governments to set policies to protect water by leading with prayer and walking together.

SWC hosted Indigenous Spiritual Leaders and Community Leaders from North and South America visitors, for a three day, annual Gathering in May. Participants learned about local and global water issues shared information to inspire change in our relationship with water, which is a living, spiritual element.

The event honored the sacredness of water with ceremony, traditional Indigenous teachings, and interactive dialogue between industry, scientists, professors, water professionals and the general public.
2014 was a pivotal year for faith-based climate action, with faith communities around the world stepping up to the call for action on climate. FCG sought to connect with and leverage this international momentum to support similar actions here at home.

In particular, many in our network wanted a balanced exploration of some of the economic tools that Canadian faith communities and individuals can leverage to support a clean energy future. Are we morally obligated to use the power of our purses to end our dependency on fossil fuels? Can fossil fuel divestment make a difference? If so, how do we proceed? What types of reinvestment options are available? What resources are available to help us inform our congregations?

In Toronto, Hamilton, Ottawa, Waterloo, along with partners such as the Green Awakening Network, Divest Waterloo, 350.org, Creation Matters Committee from the Anglican Diocese of Ottawa, we hosted discussions, forums and presentations on fossil fuel divestment for faith communities. Some of the keynotes speakers included Rev. Fletcher Harper, Executive Director of GreenFaith, Jane Ambachtsheer, Partner and Global Head of Responsible Investment at Mercer, and Tim Nash, The Sustainable Economist.
In late spring, we teamed up with Vancouver-based Spirited Social Change to start an initiative called “Fossil Free Faith” (FFF). Over the summer, the FFF working group of ten volunteers finalized a work plan. A website, facebook page, twitter feed, and google group were brought on-line. In the fall, we did a soft launch of the website and Fossil Free Faith received funding through the Inspirit Foundation for an interfaith youth climate fellows initiative in Vancouver.

FCG network members joined people of faith from around the world in New York City for the 400k strong People’s Climate March. We also participated in Union Theological Seminary’s Religions for the Earth conference and multifaith climate service featuring over 200 religious and spiritual leaders from around the world to discuss religious activism in support of climate justice.

We ended the year by co-hosting “LightForLima” events in Toronto & Ottawa, co-organized with Citizens for Public Justice (Ottawa) and Sufi Order International (Toronto). The events were part of a global initiative lead by OurVoices to raise awareness and prayer in support of a stronger global commitment for climate action.
Our networks are very interested in using their outdoor spaces creatively, including community vegetable gardening for sustainable food systems, planting habitat for pollinators with native flower gardens and beautifying their grounds in a sustainable way. To this end, we participated in many local events such as “Seedy Saturday” and our yearly Nourishing Hamilton Fair. We developed an “Edible Gardening Guide” [http://bit.ly/1fi9kLt] and video “An Edible Garden” [Morningside-High Park Presbyterian Church] [https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=shaG8N0lxF4].

Left: Islington United’s Garden in Toronto. 100% of their produce goes to local Mabelle Food Bank. They transport the produce using a push cart so their transportation is green too!

Right: Community garden plan for Morningside-High Park Presbyterian Church, Toronto

Below: Networking around food sovereignty and food security brought over 14 groups at the 4th Nourishing Hamilton Fair, Beth Jacob Synagogue, Hamilton.
2014 was a year of forging new partnerships and building and deepening connections with our network members, diverse faith groups, and community stakeholders.

FCG’s Greening Sacred Spaces staff team members were invited to participate in the City of Vaughan, Peterborough and Hamilton’s community climate action planning councils. In Toronto, our chapter partnered with the Clean Air Partnership’s monthly meeting of municipal sustainability leaders to discuss utilizing faith communities to advance local extreme weather resilience. In Ottawa, FCG’s Diana Bushey was nominated as a public hero at the Intercultural Dialogue Institute’s Annual award ceremony. In Hamilton, our member Laidlaw United Church partnered with local groups to facilitate the dialogue around bringing a Local Improvement Charge program to the city, that would help homeowners do energy conservation on their properties, without having to put out the money upfront.

**GOOD TO GREAT**

To become greater at what we do, we participated in the year long “Good to Great” program ([Sustainability Network](#)) along with six other environmental not-for-profits. Good to Great is an organizational capacity building program that provides an opportunity for ENGOs to consider, develop and implement strategies to significantly increase their impact through Direct Management Assistance (DMA) and Learning Networks.
STAKEHOLDER SURVEY

With Good to Great funding support, FCG conducted an “Online Stakeholder Survey” of our country-wide network. After ten years of outreach, we wanted to reassess our programs, our communications and our strategic direction. What works? What doesn’t? Where can we improve?

One of the questions we asked our members was “Why is it important for you to care for the planet?” The majority of the 270 respondents checked off “I want to leave the world a better place for the next generation.” “What are the areas where we can make the biggest difference?” was another question. Most felt that our continued interfaith network building and youth programming were among our most important tasks as an organization. In what areas? It was almost a tie between “awareness raising around climate change [e.g., hosting educational or advocacy events]” and “promoting renewable and clean energy.”

We plan to continue using the feedback to help ensure that FCG’s sustainability programming meets the needs of the diverse people of faith across Canada who are creating greener, healthier communities.

Q1 Why is it important for you to care for and protect the Earth? Please list your top 3 reasons

Answered: 264 Skipped: 6

- I want to leave the world a better place for the next generation
- My faith tells me it’s important
- I enjoy the physical and spiritual benefits of working with nature
- Caring for and protecting the Earth is my way of giving back to the community
- I enjoy the sense of belonging I feel when I participate in community environmental actions
Each year, FCG presents Green Sacred Space awards to recognize and celebrate those faith communities that have achieved excellence in greening their sacred spaces, as well as engaging community to do the same.

Other 2014 recipient was Meadowlands Fellowship CRC, Hamilton. See link to watch videos for 2014 GSS Awards recipients.

http://bit.ly/1KwZqR2

GREEN CERTIFICATION

We launched an easy to use, online “Green Certification” tool. Why Certification? You can’t change what you don’t measure! The Greening Sacred Spaces Certification program recognizes, celebrates and motivates faith communities who demonstrate commitment in the care of the environment through action. Whether you are just getting started or are ready for the next level of greening, the Greening Sacred Spaces Certification program is an excellent way to engage your faith community in stewardship and showcase what you have accomplished together. Read more here:

http://bit.ly/1Mt9ywl
IN THE NEWS

- Resilient City: Preparing for Climate Change *City of Toronto* [http://bit.ly/1n8WP2X](http://bit.ly/1n8WP2X)
- Case Study #2 *National Trust Canada.ca* [http://bit.ly/1KwZ64x](http://bit.ly/1KwZ64x)
FINANCES

REVENUE

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<td>Corporate and NGO contributions</td>
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EXPENSES

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<td><strong>Rent</strong></td>
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<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
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2014 Net Assets: **$58,628**
FCG’s accomplishments are made possible due to the passion, hard work, and talent of its terrific team of staff, board members and volunteers in many cities and regions. We couldn’t list everyone here, but our deep thanks to all!

Board of Directors
Bill Phipps (Chair), Randal Goodfellow, Azba Hathiyani, Ayal Lesh, Mishka Lysack, David MacDonald, Garth Schmalenburg, Peter Wilkins and Janet Speth.

Staff Team
Diana Brushey, Chaya Chengappa, Stephen Collette, Lucy Cummings, John Dorner, Beatrice Ekwa Ekoko, Kristina Inrig, Donna Lang, Kim Maxwell, Cathy Mitchell, David Patterson, Christina Read, Ted Reeve, Ted Whitmell.

Bio’s for the team can be found on our website at http://greeningsacredspaces.net/about-us/our-team/