

Blue Community Newsletter

WIDENING THE CIRCLE

June, 2019

WHY A BLUE COMMUNITY?

- We have neighbours without access to clean drinking water.
- The growth of bottled water use in society commodifies creation.
- The risks of water privatization grow without greater public investment.

WHAT CAN WE DO?

- Reconnect with our watersheds as sources of life, not just resources.
- Reconcile our relations with the lands and waters and the Indigenous nations who continue to protect them.
- Support existing efforts to protect water as a shared commons and sacred gift.
- Examine and change our personal choices that pollute and privatize water.

This Winter and Spring was filled with several presentations to curious groups wanting to hear about our Blue Community and deepen their connection with water. Project Coordinator Paul Baines, visited Sudbury, Sault Ste. Marie, Guelph, and Toronto to share the good news.

To see photos and a summaries of these presentations, please visit our Blue Community website:

<https://www.bluecommunitycsj.org/blog>

CATHOLIC WOMEN'S LEAGUE

In April, Paul spoke to over 300 women at two different CWL events because they want *Laudato Si'* to guide more of their work, especially the crises and call to action around water. Paul's presentation highlighted several quotes from *Laudato Si'* to organize his presentation including this one:

"... we have to realize that a true ecological approach always becomes a social approach; it must integrate questions of justice in debates on the environment, so as to hear both the cry of the earth and the cry of the poor" (Laudato Si' paragraph 49)

H2AWESOME IN SCHOOLS

In May, the Catholic and Public school boards in Guelph hosted water workshops for all Grade 8 students. Our workshop focused not on water quality, but on the quality of our relationship to water. We asked the following questions and then tried to apply our answers to water as examples of a good relationship. See the blog post for their responses.

What do friends:

do with each other? do for each other? receive from each other? say to each other? feel about each other? wonder about each other? learn from each other?



TYPES OF ACTIONS WE CAN MAKE

- Support existing efforts to protect water as a shared commons, human right, and sacred gift.
- Reflect on your water impacts through daily choices and intentions.

ACTION EXAMPLES

- Wellington Water Watchers in Guelph Ontario, needs help teaching Canadians about the negative impacts of bottled water and putting limits on this industry.
- The Council of Canadians are researching and holding the Federal government accountable on the promise to end Drinking Water Advisories. Learn and support their work.
- A network of Blue Communities across Canada is affirming public control of water systems. Can your City be added to this network?

WIDENING THE CIRCLE

JOINT ECOLOGICAL MINISTRY (Toronto)

On May 22 and 23, JEM hosted keynotes, discussion, and reflection on the topic of Climate Justice and Decolonization. Featuring Sylvia McAdam, Deborah McGregor and Jennifer Henry, the event highlighted critical lessons to settlers and Christians.

To name a few lessons: Treaties are unfinished business, those with privilege need to dismantle the systems that mostly benefit them, and we all need to support self-determined solutions by Indigenous leadership.

Our Blue Community project was part of panel describing what some of these lessons could look like. See the blog post or more details.

ST. PETER'S CHURCH (830 Bathurst St, Toronto)

Early in June, Paul Baines presents to this parish since they want to learn about water as a human right, shared commons, and sacred gift. They are very curious about the potential of becoming a Blue Community and joining this global movement.

LOOKING FOR YOUR FEEDBACK

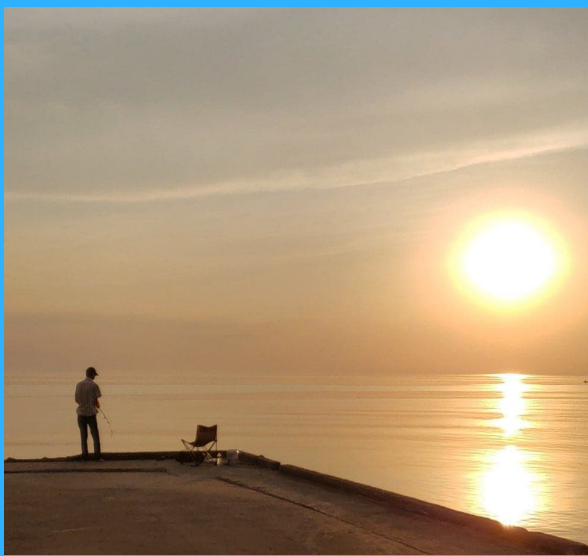
For just over a year, the Federation has supported this project and now is a good time for your feedback and vision.

There are both electronic and paper versions of a survey we have designed for you. If you have not gotten the link or handout yet, it should be arriving in the coming days. Keep an eye out for it. Please complete the survey by June 21. Some of the questions are:

- Have you gained a greater connection with your local watershed because of this project and if so, how?
- How useful is the website for you to learn, reflect and act?
- What additional information, reflection, and/or action would you like more of?

We will share the survey findings in our next newsletter.

WWW.BLUECOMMUNITYCSJ.ORG



PLACE MATTERS

We can turn to many sources when reflecting on place.

Action #45 of the TRC (Truth and Reconciliation Commission) report calling for several acts of healing including a repudiation of the Doctrine of Discovery and adopting and implementing UNDRIP (United Nations Declaration of the Rights of Indigenous Peoples).

All the living beings sharing place with us in creation. Those who breath the same air, drink the same water, rooted to the same soil, warmed by the same sun, and joined by the same spirit.

The Treaties that promised nation to nation sharing and caring for the lands and waters. Treaties were written down and also passed on through story, ceremony, and Wampum Belts (such as the Two Row and the Dish with One Spoon)

Past generations who celebrated and sacrificed in this place and generations yet to come.

HONOURING LAND & WATER

When our project Coordinator toured each Sister House introducing the Blue Community project, he included a land and water acknowledgment at the start of the event and used various maps to highlight the neighbouring First Nations reserves, Treaty numbers and names, and the traditional Indigenous territories that cover the Great Lakes.

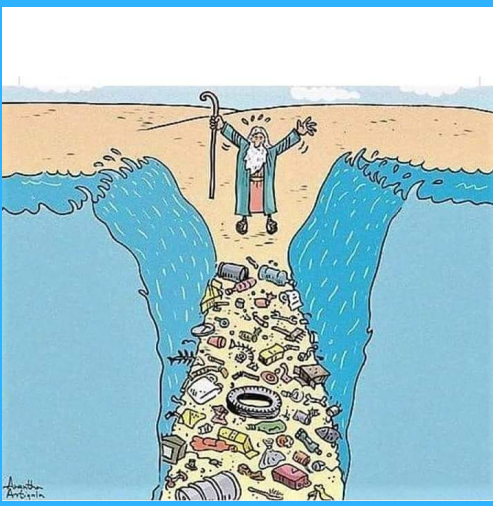
This project is equally about place as is about water. We love and protect what we are connected too. These lands and waters need to be honoured as our sources of life and as the homelands of various Indigenous nations. Water gives us an opportunity to acknowledge how we have been nurtured by place and how we aim to heal our broken relations with these native nations.

It is now conventional for institutions on Turtle Island (what most Indigenous nations call 'North America') to develop a land acknowledgment that situates their livelihood within a particular Indigenous territory. As these acknowledgements continue to evolve into a practice of meaningful reconciliation, we can reflect on the following questions:

- How did Canada and its settler population truthfully acquire all their lands?
- How has the Catholic Church benefited from this acquisition and been an active agent in colonization?
- How do these sacred places that we call 'home' guide us to reconcile past wrongs?
- How are we caring for our common home when we acknowledge the lands and waters as a source of life and as Indigenous homelands?

One of our 2019 Blue Community goals is to create a land and water acknowledgment for each location in the Federation. Paul is hosting a workshop at the Peterborough house on June 24 to support this goal.

Honouring place and its Indigenous peoples will deepen our connection to this shared water commons and sacred gift. Contact Paul by phone or email to schedule a summer or fall workshop for your house.



PLASTIC EVERYWHERE

Plastic has been in news a lot lately. Maybe you have heard about cities and countries banning single use bottles, fast food containers, and straws -- or how Canada has been shipping its recycling to China, Malaysia, Indonesia, and the Philippines and now these countries are saying "no more".

Only 9% of Canada's plastic is eventually recycled, while cities pay millions of dollars collecting, sorting and finding material buyers -- our taxes at work.

The problem is that too much stuff is made with and shipped with plastic. There are now 1 million plastic bottles produced per minute. Advocates are calling for a more 'circular' economy where companies who produce the waste are responsible for its use, disposal, or recycling.

This plastic is ultimately ending up in landfills, the water, all animals, and us. See the website for more.

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See the website:
www.BlueCommunitiesCSJ.org

WHAT'S COMING UP

Please complete the Blue Community survey by June 21. Your feedback and vision are key for this project.

On June 7 from 2:30 to 4:30, there is a Rally starting at the Puslinch Community Centre (23 Brock Rd S, Morriston) and ending at the Aberfoyle Nestle bottling plant to highlight the water injustice of commodifying our shared commons and sacred gift.

This June 7 event marks 1 year since the Conservative government won the election. It is time to endorse the WATER FOR LIFE, NOT PROFIT program. Tell the Ontario government that it must establish policy and regulations that:

1. Say "No to Nestlé" in Wellington County.
2. Phase out the bottled water industry in Ontario within ten years.
3. Respect the duty to consult Indigenous communities.
4. Ensure public ownership and control of water in Ontario.

From June 15-21, join the **All Nations Grand River Water Walk** that invites both Indigenous and non Indigenous Allies from one end of the Grand River to the other.

June 5 is World Environment Day and June 8 is World Oceans Day. Check your inboxes for prayer, reflection, and action notices on these important global dates.

October 21 is Canada's federal election. In 2015, the Liberal government promised to end the Drinking Water Advisories (DWA) on First Nations reserves. In the 2019 Spring budget they committed to spend \$184 million every year for 5 years to fulfill this goal since there are still 59 long term DWAs on reserves as of now (81 lifted and 36 added since the election). However, there are still over 100 short term DWAs that are less reported on. Currently, there are a total of 1,038 DWAs (short and long term) on and off reserves that deny the human right to safe water.

Look for Blue Community postcards coming soon with key facts and actions for phasing out bottled water, ensuring safe drinking water for everyone in Canada, and promoting long-term investment in publicly controlled water infrastructure. Check our website for more information on what is coming up.