

Making Your Case: Environmental Action as Christian Action was a day long workshop held at Resurrection Lutheran Church on Dec.6, 2014. It was organized by Churches For Environmental Action and sponsored by the Roman Catholic Diocese of Saskatoon in partnership with the Prairie Centre for Ecumenism, and Riverbend Conference of United church of Canada.

Bishop Don Bolen gave the opening address where he shared 8 themes used as guidelines in addressing with urgency the environmental concerns. He drew on resources from the past Popes: John Paul and Benedict plus the Canadian Bishops letters.

1. Humans while made in the image of God share an intimate bond with Nature and that a certain reciprocity exists “as we care for creation, we realize God through creation cares for us” Benedict
2. Creation has intrinsic and intelligent order, and that we are to respect each other and Nature.
3. Human ecology and its relationship is linked to natural ecology, e.g. mining operations in the developing world exploits both the natural world and the people who bear the cost of environmental practises.
4. Responsible Stewardship does not see us as absolute masters of creation, rather it is a gift intrusted to us which demands our responsibility in action to protect Nature.
5. Care for the environment is a moral issue. “every economic decision has moral consequences” John Paul. Pope Francis named poor environmental practises as sinful.
6. Solidarity needed between nations and people, especially the poor. Intergenerational solidarity is the preservation of the environment for future generations.
7. Creation and Spirituality awakens our senses and relationship to creation around us.
8. Current environmental issues calls for urgent action, good policy development, International cooperation, financial responsibility, decreasing our individual and collective consumption, using wisely earth’s limited resources.

Contemplative, ascetic and prophetic responses can be awakened in the St. Francis pledge at [climatecovenant .org](http://climatecovenant.org).

Bishop Bolen concluded with a quote- Pope Francis advises to hold hand in hand the urgent call to action and immediate call to dialogue.

Keynote speaker:

Dr. Jim Harding is a former professor of psychology at Lakehead University, environmental studies in Waterloo University, and human justice at the University of Regina, and is known for his leadership in KAIROS to mobilize social change. Kairos is a Canadian wide group consisting of eleven different Churches engaged in faithful action of ecological justice and human rights

Dr. Jim Harding called us to focus on awakening to creation. We have colonized the planet for 3500 years and we have not been doing a good job. We need to open our lens to ecological awakening and enter into greater solidarity with nature. He mentioned the loss of half our species in his lifetime due to our unchecked selfish actions that are changing the chemistry of the planet. This awakening helps us to see the limits and consequences of what we are doing. Bearing witness to this is very hard, so we must care for one's spirit, heart and relationships.

We are encouraged to awaken to this greater ecological awakening and be fearless in an awakened way, not a delusional manner. We are to tell the truth with the outcomes and consequences for it creates a new kind of knowledge that is more accessible.

A starting point is to stay involved at the local level, reaching out beyond your comfort zone. Networking creates and builds communities of compassion not delusion; recognizes each person as a resource, together find a way to bring about small steps of change. And then celebrate your creativity with ritual and good art that connects us to the land. We need to reconnect with the cosmos, the great work and the great turning.

Jim shared his story of dealing with the watershed issue in Qu'appelle area giving us examples of how we need to network with other green agencies and churches. He believes we must move beyond the conquest of nature to an ecological compassionate cultural adaptation with nature. This involves religious reframing of issues, stating our values, responding to issues, assessing conditions, having a need for analysis and strategy, community support and then the campaign required.

People in attendance were given a questionnaire. We invite you to look at it and respond to it and let us know what you are doing in your church community; or how you might wish us to help.