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Kokanee Concerns

We are reminded in the Gospels and in the Baptismal Covenant that we are called to seek and serve Christ in all persons, loving our neighbour as ourselves. We are reminded also to strive for justice and peace, respecting the dignity of every human being, and strive to safeguard the integrity of God's creation, respecting, sustaining, and renewing the life of the earth. *Kokanee Concerns* is a weekly publication from the Anglican Parish of Kokanee that identifies items of concern in both the local community and the wider world, for which we can advocate, act upon, pray, and learn on a weekly basis. Consider the local community, the wider world, and your place in both as you reflect upon the topics each week. This week, please consider these thoughts in relation to our responsibilities as peacemakers and as carers of creation and of the community around us. How do we act as agents of Peace? How do we care for Neighbour?

Peace,

David

Concern in our Neighbourhood . . .

While so many in Christian congregations are anticipating Christmas through the season of Advent, most in our neighbourhood are focussing wholeheartedly on celebrations of winter solstice and Christmas. Already the hurry and busyness of this time of year is evident. People are moving more purposefully, lights and decorations are displayed beautifully, and the rush of gift choosing, purchasing, and giving is starting in full swing. In almost every place I go I see beautiful imagery, smell wonderful smells, and long to touch beautiful crafts, materials and displays. This doesn't even count all the goodies I'd

love to taste! There is such pressure for everything to be perfection: our decorations, our presents, our food, our experiences. Into all this we step as persons who don't always have things together. We enter as people who may be hurting, grieving, chaotic and challenged with emotions and experiences, juxtaposed within a society that pressures people to have everything perfect. There are community expectations of generosity, family expectations of presence and love, and I'm sure, personal expectations around how one will *be* during these days and weeks.

This is the time for us to remember that love of self is the first step in caring for neighbour and others. In all the hustle and bustle of this time of year, *personal* wellbeing is vital so that all the other pieces can fit into place. This is a time for us to be gentle with ourselves, and make sure we are practising good self-care.

There are so many resources that are at our fingertips regarding self-care during this season (<https://www.healthcoachinstitute.com/articles/20-tips-for-holiday-self-care/>). In the marketplace of capitalism in the western world, it seems if we have need, resources, and are willing, we should be able to do anything.

Before making plans, checking websites, and committing to anything, I would encourage you to breathe . . . look inward to the things that give you life and strength. Step cautiously forward into your life, remembering that this time is to be experienced. What are the pieces of your life that bring you strength and life? In what ways can you be good to yourself physically, emotionally, intellectually and spiritually, so to be present as your best self? In what ways might you need to be gentle with yourself, give yourself a pass, or forgive yourself during this time of year?

For us to live our lives, offer ourselves to others, to our neighbours, and the world, we must first be at peace with ourselves. Do what you need to do, unapologetically. Take time for the things that make you, you. Give yourself this gift this season, realizing that this may indeed enhance all other experiences for you. *Submitted by David Burrows*

Concern in the World . . .

December already, and with it comes the colder weather we all anticipate, some with excitement and some not so much! At least this time of year holds just the possibility of blizzards and snow shoveling as opposed to the angst of wildfire threat that our summers now hold for us.

The headline in a recent David Suzuki Foundation letter grabbed my attention, it read, "As the world gathers to talk climate, will we get anywhere?". This was regarding COP28 – 28th United Nations global climate conference that began this past week in Dubai. But I wonder if that headline could also read, "... have we gotten anywhere?".

Perhaps the answer is different depending on who is being asked the question. To me, it honestly seems to be getting worse. But then my optimistic side says, yes, but listen to how much the awareness and talk about climate change, now crisis, has grown over the past several years... But, says my pessimistic self, the situations everywhere have gotten so much worse! Yes, but.... Perhaps that is the seesaw you find yourself on as well?

At this moment in time, we are in a pivotal moment in our journey toward a safe and healthy planet for all. Again, from Suzuki, the extreme weather events we see will escalate unless governments reshape our societies within planetary limits that are quickly becoming depleted. The ability of the Earth to mend itself in the wake of human abuse is becoming less and less. Governments everywhere owe it to their citizens to take bold action on the ever-worsening fossil fuel-driven climate emergency. As citizens of Canada, we have the responsibility of holding our governments, the peoples holding office, accountable for the future of us all, all our relations, our descendants, and the planet they will inherit from us.

I find it extremely difficult to personally do more than sign petitions, reduce/recycle/re-use, walk as much as possible, donate money, occasionally show up for a rally. I still drive a car (albeit a hybrid – which also has questionable resource uses/abuses), I (occasionally) order online, I still buy new stuff. But I want to stop. I want to yell to the world STOP! I want to be a larger part of the solution like a few people I know and admire.

So, will COP28 end up getting any traction at all globally to reduce our massive Western Corporate Footprint that is quickly stamping out massive ecological regions around the world? Will you and I get more traction to speak out and help disrupt the influence and power of the fossil fuel industry giants, mining companies, marketing giants that urge us to buy and do more to be happy, on the backs of those with little resources as community are plundered by large extraction companies? They have tremendous power, resources, and influence on governments at COP28 and the global economy. Something is very wrong with the system when (as reported by DSF) several hundred fossil fuel executives are invited to join climate conference negotiations! -while front-line climate emergency voices are relegated to the sidelines of climate conferences!

Voices need to be loud and persistent to overcome this massive sway held over governments. We need to add all our voices to those calling for justice for communities here and around the globe that are being stripped of any ability to have their voices heard. We need to join and be prophets in our own time, speaking truth to power; calling out those who would see our planet ruined for the sake of individual profit, rather than look at, and plan for, the common good. Are we in or are we out? Perhaps paying attention as COP28 unfolds is a good beginning step.

Submitted by Sue Basek