

MARCH 2022 | NEWSLETTER

CLIMATE SOLUTIONS



CENTER FOR
Sustainable
Climate Solutions



Anabaptist leaders
collaborate on climate
change concerns



DOUG GRABER NEUFELD
DIRECTOR'S
NOTE

Climate Action is More Urgent Than Ever

“Solutions to climate change are simple but not easy.”

That was the challenge given by Brent Alderfer at the Anabaptist Collaboration on Climate Change. As founder and CEO of a solar company, Brent knows that we have the solutions in our hands for climate change, but the difficult part is implementing them.

One key to overcoming barriers to having impacts is being aware of the context, and being willing to adjust when that context changes. Climate change is one of the many fast-moving shifts happening in the world, and the context for CSCS has changed since our founding nearly six years ago. At the Anabaptist Collaboration on Climate Change we initiated the process of making some key changes that position CSCS to more effectively have an impact on the most critical problem of our age. Eighteen Anabaptist organizations supported CSCS as we crafted an updated strategy that builds on the strengths of our current programs.

With the help of our partners and supporters, CSCS is exploring what it would mean...



To center climate justice through an Anabaptist lens.

The vision from our updated strategic plan states it well: “We envision CSCS as a leader in addressing climate change by promoting engagement and understanding through the perspectives of justice, peacebuilding, and reconciliation.” These are distinctively Anabaptist perspectives, and we join with others who believe they are needed in a world newly wracked by violence of various kinds.

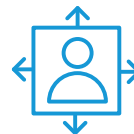
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WATCH for ways CSCS is expanding how we can embody work which truly centers those communities who are most affected by climate change, but whose voices often go unheard.



To embrace a new role as convener of Anabaptist organizations.

Humans are most effective when we act together – the church knows that well. What we learned from the organizations in Akron was that these organizations care and act on climate change, but need a convening body to most effectively partner with each other. CSCS is positioned to play that role.

.....
WATCH for new initiatives as CSCS helps organizations work together to increase their effectiveness.



To become an independent organization.

CSCS’s core partners have provided a home for us during these first six years, and we would not be where we are without them. As we engage a broader range of partners, it’s time for fully embrace our own identity and operations by incorporating as an independent nonprofit (501c3).

.....
WATCH for news of CSCS relaunching as an independent organization under a new name.

CSCS spent our early years building a core of strategies, activities and relationships. Those will continue. Our new plans build on the strengths of our engagement with youth, congregations, global voices and innovative solutions. In Akron, we found energy in how we can transform these ongoing activities in a way that integrates them more with other Anabaptist organizations, and with communities that are impacted by climate change.

VOICES



SARAH AUGUSTINE

Coalition for Dismantling the Doctrine of Discovery

“Indigenous people and vulnerable people... are usually the first people that are impacted; they’re the first that are going to be refugees, the first that are displaced, the first people injured by climate change. It’s good to see Mennonite institutions willing to take a stand.”

BRENT ALDERFER

Community Energy

“Solutions to climate change are simple but not easy. Economics now support solutions, but solutions take more than a tweak to operations—they require revamping our core missions to assure sustainability for generations to come. With the scale of irreversible damage from climate change, if it ever was moral to take our lifestyle and wealth from future generations, it no longer is.”



ANN GRABER HERSHBERGER, Mennonite Central Committee USA

“It is without hesitation that MCC affirms the work and the potential that a group like CSCS has, and their work for collaborative work by Mennonite and other Anabaptist institutions.”



CHAD HORNING

Everence Financial

“This is an important thing for us to work on together. Can we imagine a nimble organization that is focused on facilitating collaboration among the willing?”

DOUG KLASSEN

Mennonite Church Canada

“I think we really need to figure out how we can anchor our efforts in the grassroots, in congregations. MC Canada and MC USA gather thousands of people every Sunday for worship. Worship is profoundly formative and I feel that we need to incorporate what we do into worshipping communities.”



Anabaptist Collaboration on Climate Change



Participants at the gathering in Akron were moved to articulate their collective concern on climate change through a consensus statement, signed by the following organizations

“As organizations founded on Christian faith in the Anabaptist tradition, we recognize the significant threat to global communities, economic justice, and the next generations from climate change. We are committed to explore our work and mission in support of sustainable and just climate solutions.”

Signatories:

Anabaptist Mennonite Biblical Seminary
Center for Sustainable Climate Solutions
Coalition for Dismantling the Doctrine of Discovery
Eastern Mennonite University
Everence Financial ¹
Goshen College
Mennonite Central Committee U.S.
Mennonite Central Committee Canada
MennoMedia ¹
Mennonite Church Canada
Mennonite Church USA
Mennonite Creation Care Network
Mennonite Economic Development Associates
Mennonite Education Agency
Mennonite Healthcare Fellowship
Mennonite Men ²
Mennonite Mission Network ¹
Mennonite World Conference
Merry Lea Environmental Learning Center of Goshen College.

¹ An agency of Mennonite Church USA

² A constituency group of Mennonite Church USA

LESSONS LEARNED

from the Anabaptist Collaboration on Climate Change

Human potential thought leader, Bryant McGill, shared these words in one of his recent presentations,

“One of the most sincere forms of respect is actually listening to what another has to say.”

As we continue to reflect on our “Anabaptist Collaboration on Climate Change”, held at the MCC Welcoming Place in Akron, PA, January 26–27, 2022, many common themes and learnings have begun to emerge. We realized in planning our time together, that we needed to listen to the collective wisdom of those who would gather with us. We wanted both to show respect for the work others have done but also glean the wisdom they have gathered over many years, as organizations and as individuals.

Here is just a sampling of those themes and learnings:

CLIMATE CHANGE IS OVERWHELMING

in its scope and we all struggle to know what we can actually do to make a difference.

AS PEOPLE OF FAITH AND HOPE, we

believe that when we work together—collaboratively—we can have an impact greater than we can working alone.

THE VERY PEOPLE WHO HAVE DONE LITTLE TO CAUSE CLIMATE CHANGE are the very ones unjustly impacted by its results.

AS ANABAPTISTS AND PEOPLE OF GOOD WILL, we believe this climate injustice must not stand.

THE STRUGGLE TO REDUCE CLIMATE CHANGE and end

climate injustice must include partnering with those most impacted. Thus, we must widen and broaden the tent to include many not yet at the table.

YOUTH ARE CRITICAL TO THE CLIMATE MOVEMENT;

effective action climate change must include engaging and empowering with younger generations.

A CLEAR VISION AND COMMON CALL TO ACTION, combined with mutual accountability, is needed to crystallize an effective community response.

EVERY ANABAPTIST ORGANIZATION AND ALL PEOPLE ARE BEING IMPACTED in one way or another by climate change and thus all of us together must find ways to act in concert to slow climate change and support the first and worst impacted by it.

COLLABORATION ON THESE ISSUES

will require careful planning and a willingness to programmatically and financially support joint efforts.

THERE ARE OPPORTUNITIES TO MOTIVATE ANABAPTISTS

to buy in to a collaborative effort on climate change by providing “hands on” and “grassroots” opportunities for people to get involved.

THE CENTER FOR SUSTAINABLE CLIMATE SOLUTIONS (CSCS) as an independent (501c3) organization could serve as a convener for these efforts among Anabaptist organizations, for shared work efforts and for creating databases of resources to deal with climate change issues.

WE ARE CONFIDENT THAT ANABAPTIST VALUES OF CARING

for one another and for the earth can bring a sense of hope for a more sustainable future for all of God’s creation.

WHAT ELSE IS HAPPENING AT CSCS?



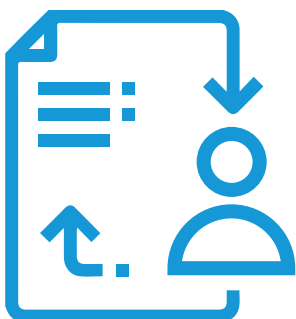
STUDENT ADVOCACY

EMU student Andrea Troyer recently joined our team as our Campus Climate Advocacy Program Coordinator. In this position, Andrea has been working across various college campuses to develop plans and programs that focus on campus-based climate advocacy work. So far, Andrea has co-hosted a webinar with MCC U.S. National Peace & Justice Ministries, which focused on training college students how to engage in advocacy work. Andrea is also currently working with us as our 2021-2022 Climate Ambassador to Eastern Mennonite University.

CLIMATE RIDE DOCUMENTARY

Following last summer's Climate Ride, videographer and climate rider Loren Friesen compiled the video footage he collected over the course of the ride into a twenty-six minute documentary. The documentary follows the ride, the riders, and the experience and conversations they had throughout the course of their coast-to-coast bike trek across the United States. The documentary premiered on January 30th, and was followed by a talkback session in which people had the opportunity to ask questions to a panel of climate riders. They discussed the details of their trip, the things they thought about and discussed as they rode, and some broader take-aways relating to energy use, car-centrism, and climate justice. The documentary can be found on YouTube.

[View Here](#)



CARING FOR CLIMATE: MOVING FROM ANXIETY TO ACTION

We are planning for a written curriculum for congregational and small group study. Called "Caring for Climate: Moving from Anxiety to Action," our director of pastoral ecology, Douglas Kaufman, is leading this effort. He brings experience in leading nine pastoral retreats on climate change, giving over 50 presentations the past several years.

A critical feature of this curriculum is that it explores the emotions that keep us from engaging climate change. When Doug started this work he encountered more denial, not just hard denial of doubting the facts, but a soft denial of not considering the implications of climate.

Increasingly he encounters anxiety and anger about climate change.

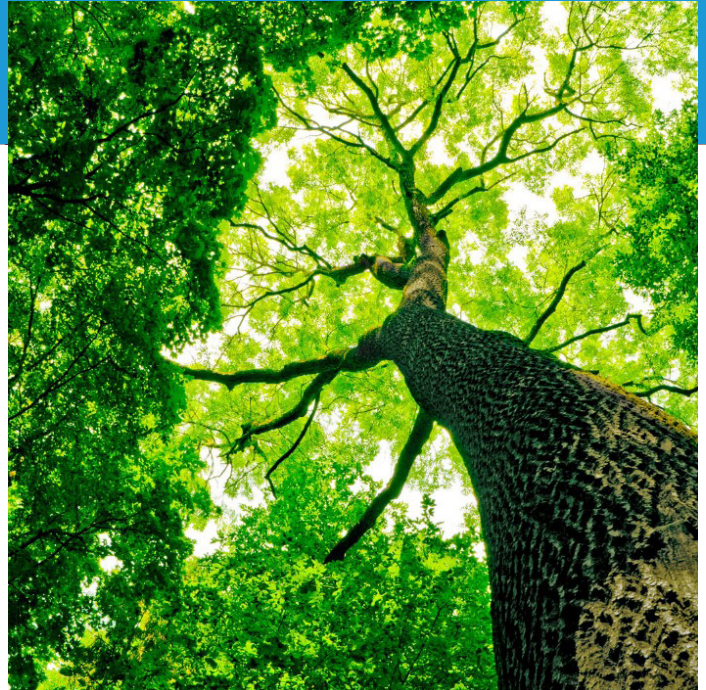
The goal of the curriculum is to help Christians engage climate by processing their emotions and moving into action. While this includes personal and congregational action, it also must include social and political action.

Doug has assembled an amazing team of writers, people who have taught at retreats he has led. This is a kind of the all-star lineup of teachers. Sessions include engaging the science of climate change, the social psychology of climate, advocacy, congregational work, ritual and worship, and climate justice. While wealthy people contribute the most to global warming, mostly poor and marginalized people are in the front lines of experiencing the disastrous effects.

We are aiming for distribution in the summer or fall, and hope to include video components along with ideas for discussing and engaging the issues each session brings.

We are grateful to the Showalter Foundation for financial support of this project.

ANNOUNCING



SUSTAINABILITY SUMMIT FOR HIGHER EDUCATION

This summer, CSCS will hold the first “Mennonite Sustainability Summit for Higher Education”. Faculty, students and staff from 10 Mennonite higher education institutions from the US and Canada will gather together at Eastern Mennonite University for 3 days to compare sustainability strategies, and to brainstorm ways that they can work together.

As part of CSCS’s new role in convening Anabaptist organizations around climate change, this summit focuses on the critical role that higher education has in empowering youth. The summit will use participatory dialogue to spark further actions on individual campuses, and further collaborations between our institutions by:

- 1. Sharing stories** of success and failure in sustainability on campus
- 2. Comparing approaches** to sustainability in institutional documents and plans, curriculum, and student initiatives
- 3. Identifying specific ways** that institutions can collaborate and plan next steps for collective actions
- 4. Creating a collective sense of support** for sustainability in Mennonite Higher Education, with a focus on actions which address the climate crisis.

CSCS is grateful for financial support from the Marpeck Foundation to hold this event.

PARTNERSHIP WITH JOINTREES

Probably the most common comment that we get at CSCS is “What can I do?”

Plant trees — that’s the answer that Steve Thomas of Mennonite Men gives when he’s asked that question. Tree planting has become one of the most talked about solutions for drawing down carbon. The right tree species in the right place provide a wealth of benefits that extend beyond carbon sequestration.

CSCS is setting up a partnership project with the JoinTrees project of Mennonite Men [www.mennonitemen.org/jointrees], a constituent group of Mennonite Church USA, that will expand the scope of tree planting activities. JoinTrees works with organizations and individuals around the country, and in countries such as Benin and Honduras to support trees as a natural solution that provide benefits to local communities in addition to sequestration of carbon.

With this partnership, you’ll be able to work together with JoinTrees and CSCS to support tree planting as a concrete way to engage in climate action. This partnership with JoinTrees is a direct result of the Anabaptist Collaboration on Climate Change held in January. Watch for more ways that we are expanding our partnerships with other Anabaptist organizations.

Partner With us as Donors

Understanding the impact of climate change and climate injustice on our lives, our families, our nations and our world is not an easy task. More difficult still is understanding what we can actually do about these troubling developments. This is a reality not just for individuals but for organizations and congregations as well.

One thing we seem to know intuitively, we cannot fix climate change all on our own. We must find ways to connect with others both to expand our knowledge base but also to forge reasonable ways to actually make a difference.

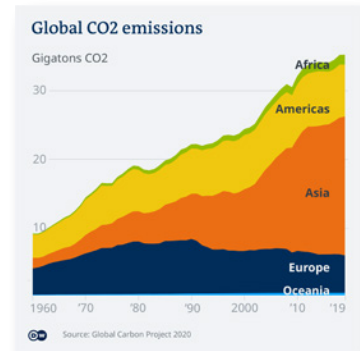
In late January 2022, the Center for Sustainable Climate Solutions brought together Anabaptist people and organizations to see what might be possible if we could actually collaborate on projects and programs aimed at reducing CO2 emissions and climate change. More than 15 Anabaptist organizations were represented, both in person and online and we shared 24 hours of conversation on ways to collaborate to build a uniquely Anabaptist approach to ending climate change and find direction together in our work around climate injustice—where those who contribute least to climate change are most affected by climate change.

Collaboration is when two or more people or entities work together to achieve some common aim. Once again, we intuitively seem to know that the success of any collaboration rests on how well the collaborators negotiate their needs to create the shared objective, and then how well they cooperate and coordinate their resources to execute a plan to reach their goals.

We need your help to make the next steps on this journey toward a uniquely Anabaptist approach to changing the course of global warming and bringing our values to partner with those most affected by climate change.

Your financial contribution today will help us to:

- Hold future meetings like the one we just convened
- Move CSCS toward creating a separate 501c3 organization with a major new focus on being the convener of Anabaptist organizations desiring to collaborate on reducing climate change.
- Provide CSCS with the resources to widen our circle of participants and ensure that we have a more inclusive group of participants
- Assure that a renewed focus be to raise the voices of those most impacted by climate change such as people of color, indigenous communities, women and those from the global south.



If you would like to become a monthly donor or are interested in committing

to be part of the matching gift from a \$25,000 donor, or would like to talk about making an estate gift to CSCS, please be in touch with me at 510 809 6721 or marklancaster116@gmail.com

Mark Lancaster
Development Director, CSCS



[Please go to this link to give online](#)

Although we have three core partners (EMU, MCC, and Goshen), Eastern Mennonite University serves as our fiscal entity. Therefore, you will be directed to the donations system of EMU for processing your contribution. However, be assured that all online donations come to CSCS.



Donate by mailing a check.

Please make the check out to "**CSCS – Eastern Mennonite University**", and send to:

Center for Sustainable Climate Solutions

Eastern Mennonite University
1200 Park Rd
Harrisonburg, VA 22802