

Spring 2024 | NEWSLETTER

CLIMATE SOLUTIONS



ANABAPTIST
Climate
Collaborative

Anabaptist Climate Collaborative (ACC) is now an independent 501(c)3 nonprofit organization. In these pages learn about our new Executive Director and new vision and strategic framework. We are grateful for our past as the Center for Sustainable Climate Solutions and the partners who made that possible: Eastern Mennonite University, Mennonite Central Committee, and Goshen College.

Building on the past,

embracing the new

Amy Huser, Sustainability and Outdoor Education Director at Camp Friedenswald, Cassopolis, MI, leads a hike at the final gathering of the Pastoral Care for Climate Cohort, a joint program with Eastern Mennonite Seminary, in December 2023.

DOUGLAS DAY KAUFMAN DIRECTOR'S NOTE



This past January Doug met his representative Rudy Yakym, (R- IN District 2), outside the US House of Representatives, advocating for preserving funding for climate programs in the budget negotiations.



Doug and Benton Mennonite Church co-pastor Brenda Meyer baptize a young person in the Elkhart River.



Doug speaking at the final retreat of the Pastoral Care for Climate Cohort at Camp Friedenswald.

Anabaptist Climate Collaborative (ACC) appointed new Executive Director Douglas Day Kaufman, starting July 1, 2023. Kaufman's unwavering passion for climate justice, coupled with his extensive experience and training, positions him exceptionally well for leading the organization into its next phase of growth.

Kaufman assumes a vital role in advancing ACC's mission by leading the development of programmatic strategies and activities that promote engagement and understanding of climate change, fostering communities that collaborate towards a more just, peaceful and carbon-balanced world.

When I was pastor of Benton Mennonite Church, we decided to baptize people in the nearby Elkhart River. Then one of our members warned me that the health department does not recommend full body contact with the water. I eventually learned that there often was too much manure in the river.

We went ahead with the baptisms but provided showers afterwards. And I led a Hoosier Riverwatch group at the church where we performed chemical and biological tests of the water quality. As part of that I learned about the many creatures who make their home in the river bottom.

I also learned to read the Bible differently, as I wondered whether God cared that the Elkhart River was too polluted for safe baptism. I discovered that rivers, like the creation

herself, is a gift from God to be cherished and cared for, not abused.

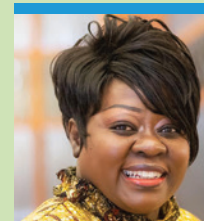
As I earned a Master's of Theology in ecology from the University of Toronto, I saw how climate change is impacting so many environmental issues, from water quality and availability, habitat loss, air quality, and an increasing number of "natural" disasters, from hurricanes and other violent storms, to droughts, to floods.

So I was pleased to join ACC as Director of Pastoral Ecology in 2018, developing pastoral and leadership retreats on climate change. This work among Mennonites became interdenominational as well, reaching about 400 pastors. Through these retreats pastors became more able to speak hopefully about climate justice, and to lead congregations in engaging more broadly in climate action.

I have experienced the good news of Christ in the creation, seeing how one humble creature in the river bottom, the Caddisfly larva, praises God as she builds a home of sticks and stones around herself. In the midst of the challenges of environmental degradation in our world, I also experience the resurrected joy of new life.

What a privilege to become the executive director and dedicate my time to something that I am so passionate about. Addressing climate justice is the critical issue of our time and I am proud of the work we have done and will do. I am pleased to be able to help sustain and grow the organization as we both become independent, and more collaborative, engaging Mennonites and others in climate justice with Anabaptist faith and values.

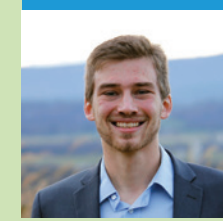
NEW BOARD MEMBERS



Sibonokuhle Ncube

Dr. Sibonokuhle Ncube is Regional Co-director for Africa and Europe with Mennonite Mission Network. She is a mother, social justice advocate and development expert. Licensed for ministry in Mennonite Church USA, she was a deaconess in Bulawayo, Zimbabwe. A

recent graduate of Anabaptist Mennonite Biblical Seminary, she is a student at Bakke Graduate University. She previously earned a doctorate in development. Known for her passionate speaking, intergenerational, and cross-cultural insights, she has two decades of experience working with climate change responses, climate finance governance, and disaster preparedness in southern Africa. She has long experience with Anabaptist Climate Collaborative and our predecessor Center for Sustainable Climate Solutions, being part of our first Global South Voices tour in 2018. She continues to teach and write on climate and discipleship in a global context. She serves as the Africa representative on the Mennonite World Conference Creation Care Task Force. A member of the Brethren in Christ Church of Zimbabwe, she was for many years the National Coordinator of their Compassionate Development Services. She currently attends Eighth Street Mennonite Church in Goshen, Indiana, with her family.



Andrew Yoder

Andrew is the CFO of a start-up renewable energy technology company based in Harrisonburg Virginia. Andrew

has worked in the renewable energy space since 2015 with experience in solar development, facility operations, and renewable energy finance. He has undergraduate degrees in Economics and Environmental Sustainability and an MBA, both from Eastern Mennonite University. Andrew is passionate about climate related dialogue and expanding access to renewable energy. In his free time Andrew enjoys running, board games, musicals, gardening, and spending time outdoors. Andrew lives in Harrisonburg Virginia with his wife Alena and their six chickens.

NEW VISION AND STRATEGIC FRAMEWORK

Vision

Communities collaborating to create a more just, peaceful, and carbon-free world

Mission

Equip and activate individuals, congregations, and organizations to seek climate justice through Anabaptist values, community, and faith.

Faith

Following the way of Jesus

- The “gospel of all creatures” reconciles all creation
- Discipleship renews creation
- Climate action is peacemaking
- Climate justice means confronting structural sin

Impact Strategies

- Developing emerging leaders who act as catalysts for larger scale changes
- Empowering diverse voices of those most impacted by climate change
- Building partnerships to more effectively address climate change



The ACC board gathers with Global Voices participants at the MCC Great Lakes Office in Goshen, IN, in February 2024



Harrison Horst, board co-chair

As I struggled into my winter coat before heading outside, the person next to me jokingly asked me if I would be “warm enough”. Earlier that day, ominously balmy temperatures had incentivized a few of us to walk from our AirBnb – in Indiana in February. It was an unfortunately apt backdrop for ACC’s most recent board retreat.

Temperatures aside, it is an exciting time for the Anabaptist Climate Collaborative. Under the helm of Executive Director Douglas Day Kaufman, ACC is moving swiftly into operations as a fully independent nonprofit organization. We’ve refreshed our core guiding principles to better reflect our rapidly changing context while staying true to our founding values. New strategic planning efforts have reinvigorated our traditional program offerings and brought forth new ideas for collaboration. Old friends and new have chipped in to get us closer to achieving a sustainable donor-funded financial model.

Climate change is incredibly daunting, but feeling the energy and spirit of our makeshift boardroom as we discussed these updates filled me with life-giving hope. Spending my weekend with passionate board members and staff who have committed their lives in various ways to achieving climate justice gave me a glimpse of how the divine moves us to act in defiance of structural sin.

A week after returning from the retreat, the National Weather Service announced that Chicago (where I live) had experienced its warmest February on record with an average daily temperature of nearly 40 degrees. These days, the increasingly mercurial weather reminds us constantly of the urgency that is required of us in order to mitigate the effects of climate change – not just in places where rising temperatures are a passing curiosity, but in every place that is “sweltering from the heat of injustice,” to quote Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr..

There is no better time than now to face the realities of climate change, and ACC needs your support to equip and activate leaders pursuing climate justice. Only together can we hope to make climate action the “moral equivalent of peacebuilding” in a broken world. Only together can we take action to create a more just, peaceful, and carbon-free future. I hope you join us in making that audacious dream a reality.

GLOBAL VOICES

Reflection on **Global Voices** Tour



Victor Odinda, MCC Cambodia

I left Phnom Penh, Cambodia on February 11, 2024 to begin my journey across the United States from California to Indiana, Kansas, Pennsylvania, Virginia and Washington DC. I was the speaker for the Climate Action for Peace Global Voices tour, a collaboration between Mennonite Central Committee and Anabaptist Climate Collaborative, to empower diverse voices to speak on climate resilience in their communities. I spoke to various groups—Mennonite congregations, colleges and universities, and retirement communities, and staffers on Capitol Hill—about climate change in Cambodia.

I not only shed light on challenges faced by Cambodians because of the negative effects of climate change, I highlighted how MCC collaborates with our partners to adapt or mitigate these challenges. These include changes in weather patterns, such as how longer rainy seasons with floods and longer droughts with record high temperatures affect farm yield, illegal logging in Prey Lang Forest, and overfishing in the Mekong River.

Along with presentations on environmental protection, food security and livelihoods as sustainable solutions to climate change in Cambodia, I talked about how MCC climate projects incorporate peace building. This is due to the conflicts that arise among different parties. Gender involvement, religious and cultural considerations, and

collaboration with various stakeholders also form part of the bigger picture.

We highlighted clean energy solutions through solar power and biogas production by Score Against Poverty (SCORE), an MCC partner in Zimbabwe through the MCC documentary “Women Will Renew” found at mcc.org/women-will-renew. Unfortunately SCORE’s leader, Caroline Pugen, a trailblazer in climate response in Africa, was unable to join us in person because of last-minute visa issues.

A learning from my interactions with people in America is that climate change is not just a “save the earth” issue. It affects our wealth gap, politics, quest for social justice, education, socio-cultural and religious ideological standpoints. Most communities where I spoke are responding to climate change but feel like their contributions are insignificant because of the magnitude of emissions from the global north. I encouraged them by letting them know that they are part of a larger global response and if everyone puts their efforts together then the magnitude of the response may be just enough to save our planet.

I also learned that the global north is also experiencing climate change and there is need for adaptation efforts as well. The negative effects of climate change are not just a preserve of the global south. Dependence on dwindling ground water, deforestation for commercial timber and

changing weather conditions came out as some of the biggest challenges in the US together with flash floods and forest fires, according to the communities I interacted with. It was also encouraging to see young people involved in climate response through campus environmental sustainability clubs, often supported with the campus climate ambassadors of Anabaptist Climate Collaborative.

A special thanks to Micah Buckwalter from ACC, who coordinated the day-to-day aspects of the tour together with being my travel buddy, and Galen Fitzkee, MCC Legislative Associate in DC for coordinating the administrative aspects of the trip. I would also like to give a big thank you to both the MCC and ACC teams for all that they did to put the tour together and make the tour a success. It was a wholesome eye-opening experience!!!



We would like to thank Mennonite Central Committee our partner in presenting the Global Voices tour. MCC is a significant financial and program partner making possible many events and programs like this.



This work is best done in community, so let’s keep that in mind as we take bold action in addressing the climate crisis from our own corner of this earth.

Global Voices

Reflection by Micah Buckwalter, coordinator

I’ve been involved with the Anabaptist Climate Collaborative for several years now, starting as the Campus Climate Ambassador in my second year at Eastern Mennonite University (EMU), participating in the 2021 Climate Ride across the United States, and working as the Climate Advocacy intern in the Mennonite Central Committee (MCC) office in Washington, DC.

One theme that ran through each of these roles was the importance of working in community – connecting with other passionate students at EMU, finding strength in collective agony on long rides or steep climbs, and meeting others in DC who continue to push for strong federal climate policy. This theme stood out to me again as I helped to coordinate the 2024 Global Voices Tour.

I met Victor Odinda, who works for MCC Cambodia as a Climate Solutions Partner Advisor, in Los Angeles, California in mid-February. For the next three weeks, we traveled across the United States, engaging with more than 650 people in retirement communities, congregations, and on college campuses.

At each event, Victor shared how communities in Cambodia are already feeling the worst effects of climate change. But he also shared how MCC is partnering with farmers to adapt to climate change. They also work with indigenous communities to protect the Prey Lang Forest and the Mekong River.

This tour was not only an opportunity to amplify stories from the Global South, where those who have contributed the least to the climate crisis are feeling the worst effects. It was also a helpful reminder that when we work to address climate change, we are never alone but are working in community with others in the United States and even with folks across the world in Cambodia. This work is best done in community, so let’s keep that in mind as we take bold action in addressing the climate crisis from our own corner of this earth.

I'VE BEEN THINKING ABOUT BIRDS

By Anna Ruth Hershberger, interim advancement director

Our church has a sub-theme of birds right now so I'm often singing, "God's eye is on the sparrow and I know he's watching me." This old hymn reminds me of Matthew 6:26. "Look at the birds of the air; they neither sow nor reap nor gather into barns, and yet your heavenly [Parent] feeds them. Are you not of more value than they?" These words are hopeful.

And yet, I recently received an email from David Moser, a Mennonite pastor and avid birder, saying that "Since 1970 the total bird population in N. America has dropped by 30%. That is roughly 3 billion less birds than when I first started birding. Most people do not even notice this overall decline. I think about it every morning when I wake up and notice the dawn chorus of birdsongs is not as loud and strong as it was when I was young." These words are discouraging.

Our world is crumbling and dying all around us and still there are so few of us discussing this or making significant movement towards change. What do dying birds mean for our faith? How does one individual take on the task of caring for the birds or the whole world - literally? She doesn't. She looks to her whole community and she works with them. This is also hopeful - that we don't need to work alone. We can face the climate crisis and act as a people around the world and more specifically as an Anabaptist community - together.

At Anabaptist Climate Collaborative, that's exactly what we're doing. We want to help you start the conversation so you can make changes in YOUR community, with OUR people. Please consider the birds. And while you're at it, consider giving to us so we can help you consider the climate crisis with others and work with them - together.



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