

With our ELFEC co-sponsored Reconciliation (Peace) Garden we are already, as expected, growing individual and collective consciousness that the earth and all that is in it belongs to a loving Creator who blesses all to be in the world together in a spirit of unity and collective kindness.

Settlers to Canada were required to think of dominating the land to take possession of it, and so, the narrative of Settlers has been oriented to ownership, property, hierarchy and self-service. The witness of God, in contrast, is gift, sharing, unity and equality amongst the orders of creation and God's own self-giving generosity. European settlers also chose to bring with them to North America a notion of what "good order" in properties should look like, and imposed notions of order onto the land. Wild spaces needed to be controlled, contained, civilized, colonized.

Creation, however, was originally symbiotic, there were ecosystems indigenous to this place, blessed to be a blessing to animal and plant life and later humans who needed the food and medicines. Landscaping with the *Kayanase Ecological Restoration Centre* Team helps combat the multiple drives towards the European and warped Christian mindset of colonizing and dominating, a mindset that has done great harm to humans and also to the Earth which teaches, comforts, refreshes, nourishes and sustains us all.

Lessons that participants in this project are increasingly becoming aware of include that imposed and invasive species have and continue to disrupt our local ecology. In addition, participants have become aware of how much treated water is wasted in our picturesque Village to maintain imported plants (including beloved Church geraniums). Also learned, is how eager city dwellers are to better understand food production (organic produce, Mennonite farm techniques, maple syrup processing) which brings tourists to St. Jacobs by the busload, yet they do not have access to actually getting out to see the land that provides the abundance. For example, tourists don't get out to see the corn on the stalk, they only see it at the market stall.

The work of Kayanase as a plant nursery brings forward awareness of what wants to grow graciously in our community and supports our biodiversity with the least amount of human intervention. Kayanase's plants will thrive on our property, reduce chemical use and waste less water. And having this earth-conscious garden planted on mainstreet St. Jacobs allows for our signage to have maximum exposure to reach out with education to those who can make a difference in their home community. Our tourism agency says 800,000 people walk past our current lawn every year. Our garden signage can educate many regarding earth care. It also offers a key opportunity to teach about the resiliency and brilliance of the Haudenosaunee people who were some of the original peoples of this land and who by law are to be inheritors of treaty benefit from the Haldimand Proclamation of 1784.

How is the world a better place because a diverse community of people are building a garden together? The global Climate Change conversation always comes back to local choices of awareness as to how our planet got into this time of potentially devastating challenge between humans, and also between humans and creation itself. Humans changing consciousness - towards neighbours, earth, air, sea, and sky and all creation that lives within - leads to humans changing behaviours that threaten the existence of all that God so lovingly made and called "Good". ELFEC as an interrelated organism of Church and Society is a change agent, but also a recipient of changed consciousness about how we are to live in this Anthropocene Era of human choice and consequence. We must dream, as the reconciled together, of a future different than our past in order to live into and out of the kindness that has become unnatural to us.

If there has been a disappointment, it is only in that the physical signage cannot be produced (material, font, colours...) until the congregation has completed it's renewed streetscape strategy with our Village neighbours.



## Reconciliation (Peace) Garden St. James St. Jacobs

From the application to ELFEC for funding...

*This proposal seeks to use some of the front lawn space of St. James, St. Jacobs, to create a landscape feature that members of the congregation are currently referring to as a "Reconciliation Garden." When the garden is ready for the public we will call it a "Peace Garden."*

*St. James St. Jacobs is on main-street St. Jacobs, a major tourist location in Ontario. The proposal is to create a landscaped garden feature that the congregation, the community and the tourists will enjoy as well as be educated and uplifted by.*

*The development of the garden will be a multi-stakeholder effort including the congregation, the congregations of our ecumenical ministerial, the Grand River Six Nations whose Treaty Territory is our home, the local Business Improvement Association, our schools and community groups such as the Girl Guides.*

*The land for the garden is right across from the Mennonite History Centre, we wish for the garden to be in full bloom in 2025 when our Mennonite colleagues will celebrate the 500th Anniversary of the Anabaptist movement. We intend for the garden project to grow us closer together in Lutheran – Mennonite co-operation, in general ecumenism and in Right Relations with our Indigenous Neighbours, particularly the Grand River Six Nations building on existing ongoing relationships.*



## ELFEC matching grant to address social needs and/or environmental impact.

IN FALL 2017 PR. KAREN APPLIED FOR A MATCHING GRANT FROM OUR ELFEC PARTNERS TO BEGIN THE WORK OF DEVELOPING A RECONCILIATION OR PEACE GARDEN AT ST. JAMES IN ST. JACOBS.

TWO THOUSAND DOLLARS WAS AWARDED TO BEGIN WORK WITH KAYANASE, ECUMENICAL PARTNERS AND LOCAL COMMUNITY GROUPS.

### OBJECTIVES:

Landscape using Indigenous Plants from *Kayanase Ecological Restoration Centre* of the Grand River Six Nations Reserve.

Have the landscape features not just be planted, but planted in a way that raises awareness to the Social Justice Issues and provides ecological education on native plants species and natural medicines as well as protection of land and water resources, and concern for climate change.

Social Development outcomes will include ongoing Ecumenical and Six Nations partner meetings for planning, design, and implementation as well as ritual opening and advertising work. In all these efforts relationships will be strengthened and awareness will grow.

Community goals include rebranding our Lutheran Church on the main street of St. Jacobs. We want others to see us as a church of Jesus Christ at the heart of the community, and the community's concern, but extending to the whole world. This will also include conversations with the secular Business Improvement Association of our area as they have tourism masterplans for St. Jacobs.

We dream of local school children and Girl Guides helping to plant and maintain the garden. We dream of tourists sitting in the garden and later telling the people "back home" about the kind-heartedness of the St. Jacobs Lutherans for providing a gracious community space to enjoy nature and watch the horses and buggies go by. We dream of growing in ongoing relationship with our closest neighbours the Mennonites and also other ecumenical partners. We intend to help our ecumenical partners meet their dreams of better knowing the people of Six Nations whom we have deep relationships with. We also dream of making the absolute best use of our property in service to the Gospel and in awareness of the need to change land-management habits in light of Climate Change and earth care (eg. chemicals and fertilizers on lawns running into waterways...).



In Fall 2017 Pr. Karen thanked ELFEC for their generous gift.

In January 2018 St. James hosted Environmental Activist Deborah Tagornak to address Climate Change concerns - particularly how actions "in the south" impact the melting Arctic "North".

Lent and Easter bulletins and Services featured Climate Care and ecological justice around the world. In March St. James' members began to rethink the congregation's lawn.

In April Pr. Karen met with Kayanase staff about 2018 purchases for Spring 2019 planting. Cheque to Kayanase and "Report Back" to ELFEC due in September. **Delivered \$1499.51 27-09-2018.**

In March (and September) conversations have been had with Ministerial Colleagues, Brownies/Guides and Youth & Young Adults about the garden as a shared experience of care for creation and reconciliation.

In early June ReDevelopment Team met with Brian Shantz about altering the streetscape to meet accessibility needs of the community and congregation.

In late June a brief update was provided to ELFEC during Synod Assembly 2018 by Pr. Karen "the grant money has financed an important process as well as a project". Bishop Susan has tentatively agreed to help "Open" the garden with Six Nations and Mennonite colleagues.

In July rebranding and signage strategies were discussed with the ReDevelopment Team of St. James. A documentary filmmaker became interested in filming our planting.

By August, our leaders had incorporated Indigenous Leaders into four activities for the congregation and Synod in the upcoming year.

The new St. James "Thanksgiving for Baptism" is being used.



What is Kayanase?  
How is it different than a local Nursery?

Kayanase is an ecological restoration and native plant and seed business based on the Six Nations Reserve near Brantford, Ontario.

Kayanase is about restoring Mother Earth holistically, through the collection of native seeds, to seed processing, seed propagation, planting, monitoring and eventually back to healthful biodiversity!

Kayanase is dedicated to improving the health of Mother Earth using science-based approaches and Traditional Ecological knowledge.

