

KAIROS: Celebration of New Ministry: Jennifer Henry, Executive Director
Church of the Holy Trinity [Anglican], Toronto
Monday, May 7, 2012
By Jennifer Henry

Thank you.

I am honoured by the confidence you have expressed and strengthened by the commitments we have made to each other tonight. I am so grateful.

At a moment like this I am struck that, while both an expression of the churches' public witness and a movement of people of faith and conscience, we are also, always, a community—a community of accountability and affection-- where God lives in the “in-between” of us.

In moments like this, moments of celebration, it feels important to remember that we are a community held up by our ancestors—those who have gone before us who have dedicated their lives to the pursuit of faithful justice. I want to remember those whose action for human rights and ecological care defined their long wonderful lives. I want to remember those whose lives of courageous justice ended far too soon—Robin, Kimy, Pascal, Esperanza, Father Fausto, Shannon, and so many others. We are inspired by their courageous legacy.

We are also a community, a movement pulled forward by our future —children and grandchildren, in whose names we seek a better world. I think we all want to say we have done our best, in the best of struggles, to pass on a world to the next generation that is one step closer to fair, to just, to good. These days this feels hard, but we are compelled to keep trying by the promise of their future.

We live up to our past and into our future as the wonderful, troublesome lot that we are. I spend every day with committed and talented staff whose most troublesome characteristic is their unwillingness to stop working. And we collaborate with you, in churches, in communities, in sister movements, in global partnerships—diverse, imaginative and terribly devoted people—beautiful, graceful troublemakers—and with so many who could not be here tonight but who send their prayers and hopes. Whatever KAIROS is—it is because of people such as yourselves who give it passionate life

In a few minutes we will sing our closing hymn. It is from a member of this congregation, my wonderful home community, who is a great hymn writer as well as a great mentor and friend. He speaks of finding “our hopes in others' dreams.” My hope for KAIROS is that this IS our mandate. To find our hopes, our work, in the dreams of others. Not only their basic needs, not even only their rights, but their dreams—big dreams of peace and justice; reconciliation and restoration. May we work to fulfill the dreams of our neighbours, here or across the globe, to fulfil the dreams of our aching earth, and perhaps most of all, to fulfil the dreams of our God who provides abundant life for all creation.

It is time, now, to say more than “we are NOT going away”. It is time to move forward in boldness, in courage and in imagination to help fulfil God's big, beautiful dream of justice and ecological integrity. And to say “come along, we need all the help we can get.”

Thank you to staff for your dedication, to the Board for your gracious intentionality (including for this service tonight). Thank you to KAIROS circles for your insightful collaboration, to Companions and Communities for your inspiring empowerment, to Indigenous, migrant and global partners for your generous solidarity, and to allies in the movement for your companionship. For all of this and everything else, to all gathered here and in spirit—a profound thank you.

In the rhythm of giving and receiving, please accept a little heartfelt gift of seeds as an expression of confidence in our common future. I want to close with one more appreciation—and that is to the families of all graceful troublemakers, particularly my own. You give my dreams the fertile soil of love and home. For your confidence, I am so grateful.