

## **AGM 2022 - Or Shalom**

### **TOCC Annual report September 2021-September 2022**

The Tikkun Olam Coordinating Committee (TOCC)'s mandate is to inspire our membership to act on Or Shalom's values of Tikkun Olam and Tzedakah—to “pray with our feet” - to educate, inform, organize and inspire the Or Shalom community and others to deeply consider and act on repairing and healing our world, in the areas of social justice and climate issues, both foundational values of Or Shalom.

Our three working groups focus on the following major areas of concern:

- Climate Crisis
- Equity and Anti-Racism
- Indigenous/Reconciliation

While each working group is discrete, an overview of TOCC actions shows that the learning benefits and outcomes inevitably overlap and complement each other.

#### **ACTIONS**

- Last November, Or Shalom hosted a KAIROS Blanket Exercise in the sanctuary. Initiated by members of the TOCC and facilitated by a team led by Melany Gleeson-Lyall from Musqueam Band, our KBE provided a powerful exercise in experiential learning for some 40 Or Shalomniks from young teens to elders. Standing on blankets representing traditional Indigenous lands on pre-contact Turtle Island (now Canada and the US) and hearing a historical narrative of the ongoing impact of European settlement, participants saw Indigenous lands shrink as blankets were folded smaller and smaller, Indigenous homes broken as children were forcibly sent to residential schools - where they were robbed of family, language, and culture, and sometimes their lives - or were "scooped" from their communities in the sixties, with often devastating results. Finally, participants heard about some recent Indigenous initiatives aimed at redressing historical wrongs. This visceral experience was followed by talking circles where each person was able to share their response to the exercise in a nonjudgmental atmosphere.
- **Greenfaith Rally:** The TOCC organized some 30-40 Or Shalomniks to participate in the Greenfaith Faiths4Climate Justice event, one of over 500 multi-faith protests around the world calling on national and international governing bodies to urgently step up policies and actions to ensure a just and liveable future for today's children and generations to come. The gathering started with drummers and speakers from Indigenous host nations, followed by musical offerings and teachings from leaders of multiple faith groups, including a creative midrash from Reb Laura Duhan-Kaplan about Noah and the Raven on board the ark. Despite the rain, over 125 people were present at the peak of the event, with the Or Shalom contingent being the largest and most spirited.
- In February, the TOCC participated in the REDress Project Memorial March to raise awareness and demand action for the hundreds of missing and murdered Indigenous women and girls across Canada.
- In March, Mary and Avril helped organize some 10 Or Shalomniks to take part in Just Transition 2025, a highly creative rally as part of a National Day of Action calling for the passage of a just transition act, envisioning progressive programs to slash pollution, create meaningful work, and right a host of other wrongs in the realms of Indigenous rights, housing, energy, transit, public health, and more. A positive and entertaining event, full of ideas and possibilities for a better

future. As Avi Lewis (“Minister of Just Transition”) reminded us: “Transition is inevitable. Justice is up to us.”

- In May , members of the TOCC and the Or Shalom community joined hundreds of folks from a variety of faith communities, First Nations, and organizations, connected by 2-metre lengths of colourful ribbon, to form a human chain that “hugged” Burnaby Mountain, stretching in both directions from the gates of the dangerously expanding TransMountain tank farm, to encircle much of this threatened, beloved green space.
- In March, the TOCC attended a townhall meeting in support of the Nuchatlaht nation, which is in court to reclaim title to their territory on Nootka Island; attended Temple Sholom’s Anti-Oppression Zoom meeting, and participated in Victoria’s Kolot Mayim’s online workshop Building Bridges: Celebrating Diversity in Jewish Life - An Indigenous and Jewish Dialogue on Truth and Reconciliation.
  - In May 7, members of the TOCC and the Or Shalom community joined hundreds of folks from a variety of faith communities, First Nations, and organizations, connected by 2-metre lengths of colourful ribbon, to form a human chain stretching in both directions from the gates of the dangerously expanding TransMountain tank farm, to encircle much of this threatened, beloved green space.
- In June, Or Shalom was proud to host a community-wide event where the founder of Tag Meir spoke about efforts to address racism in Israel between Israeli Jews and Palestinians. The event was well attended both live and on zoom (about 40 people).
- In July, members of Or Shalom and the TOCC attended the Vancouver Pride Parade with JQT.
- In September, members of the TOCC and the Or Shalom community participated in a Climate March with local politicians and environmentalists.

## **LETTERS**

- Last November, the TOCC led the community in writing letters to both local and federal government representatives, calling for urgent action on the climate crisis. Or Shalomniks responded with overwhelming support, with over 50 members submitting their personal signed letters which members of the TOCC both mailed and hand-delivered to constituency offices.

The TOCC also sent:

- a Letter of Condolence to the Beth Israel Congregation in Fort Worth, Texas regarding the attack and hostage-taking in the synagogue;
- a Letter of Condolence to Chief Willie Sellars, Williams Lake First Nation re the discovery of mass burial sites;
- a Letter of Solidarity to the Tk'emlups Nation re mass burial sites, and
- a Letter of Support of Dr. Tim Takaro’s climate activism to BC’s Chief Justice and Attorney General.

## **D. Additional Actions**

- The TOCC also made recommendations to the Or Shalom Building committee for reducing the synagogue’s carbon footprint;
- Sent invitations, notifications and updates via Newsletter, Doar and Or Shalom listserv; and
- Issued a High Holydays Supplement for self-assessment.

**E. Tzedakah: Empty your Pockets project**

Tzedakah - This year the TOCC solicited suggestions for tzedakah recipients from the community and recommended five recipients to the Board. A total of \$4,187 was raised over the High Holidays (\$6,482.73 including the Tzedakah donation fund) and will be distributed equally between:

- Battered Women's Support Services
- Tag Meir/New Israel Fund
- Ukrainian Stop the War Coalition
- Kilala Lelum (Urban Indigenous Health and Healing Cooperative)
- Project Isaiah

On behalf of the TOCC, we wish to extend our appreciation to our tremendously awake and aware community for its involvement and activism. We look forward to sparking one another towards more learning, more healing, and more activism in the year ahead.

Submitted with thanks,

Mary Adlersberg, Michal Fox, Jane Heyman, Maxine Kaufman-Lacusta, Alexis Kellum-Creer, Avril Orloff, and Malcolm Steinberg

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