



This collection of writings is offered as supplemental material to the publication, *Listen to the Children: Justice Worship Resource with Reference to Epiphany Year A* (2019).

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Selected Facebook Posts from Rebecca Hamilton

Rebecca Hamilton spoke at the BC-Yukon KAIROS regional gathering in April 2019. She is 17 years old and leads the Vancouver student climate action group, Sustainabiliteens. These excerpts are taken from her personal Facebook feed. Used with permission. All dates refer to the year 2019.

April 23

Yesterday was Earth day! I was feeling pretty confused and frustrated so I wrote something for other young folks trying to figure out this wild time we're in.

Yesterday, my Instagram feed heralded the passage of Earth Day with an endless stream of gorgeous nature pictures. Don't get me wrong - I'm overjoyed that folks have such wonderful relationships with this magical, unimaginably complex system called Earth. It gives me hope that you recognize her value in a way that the overwhelming majority of adults obviously don't.

But please know that if you are serious about wanting to protect our mama, it is going to take a lot more than posting nice pictures. It's going to take some serious discomfort. And not the kind of cold-showering-turnip-eating eco-puritan discomfort like that guy in The Good Place. It's going to take the kind of emotional discomfort that comes with knowing that our entire way of life is violently at odds with the physical sustainability of our only planet.

All natural systems are in breakdown. The current rate of extinction is thousands of times above what is normal. Millions of fellow humans are already dying and being displaced by the crises that my community, as a privileged Canadian, disproportionately caused. We all need to sit with these facts for a while.

I spent most of my Earth Day feeling burnt out and DONE with thinking way too much about the end of civilization. I'm learning to figure out self care as we desperately stretch trying to figure out how to close the gaping hole of collective, societal care. I want you to understand that this is HARD.

Our generation is being forced to deal with the burden of cognitive dissonance. We have grown up understanding the science that we are in an emergency and yet around us, we see no action being taken that would seem to match this situation in urgency and scale. Who are we supposed to believe? We know that every day that passes means more species extinct forever, that every tick of the clock brings us that much closer to the looming 12 (now 11) year deadline. And yet, life goes on. We have homework to do, and soccer practice to attend. Parents have jobs and taxes; politicians need to fundraise and appease competing interests through compromise. And so the years drag on, each successive

government term caving into the demands of the powerful fossil fuel industry and consequently kicking climate action further down the road, like a teenager procrastinating on a final project.

I, of course, love nature too, and have taken my own fair share of breathtaking pictures. And when something I love is hurting, I hurt, too. I take “eco-actions” like biking, eating vegetarian, and avoiding single use plastics (feel proud of yourself for using metal straws? Ask me about my Diva Cup) not because I think doing these things will accomplish do much towards solving these ecological crises we are in, but to reduce the discomfort I feel with myself. Also, these actions all make my life better (have I mentioned my Diva Cup yet?).

The collapse is also not your fault. The solution is not for YOU, PERSONALLY to have shorter showers and swap your light bulbs and write on both sides of the paper. Yes, we all do need to do those things, but they need to arise out of a profound shift in our collective values. The only way organized human civilization has a chance of continuing is if we fundamentally change how our society works - and we do it NOW. The only real solution is revolution.

Environmentalism is not a cute lifestyle choice for the select outdoorsy few. It’s the only rational path forward that exists.

I want you to know that you are not delusional for realizing our society is delusional. If you feel uncontrollably frustrated by overwhelming huge wrongness, you are doing it right. If you feel inextricably confused about how we ever let it get to this, you are doing it right. If you feel like crying, you are doing it right.

And the way to dry those tears is not by ignoring the biggest crisis humanity has ever faced, burying the nagging worries under that pile of unfinished homework or at the bottom of your instagram feed. Nor is the solution to constantly berate yourself, obsessing over your every piece of garbage and drop of water spilt. No. The solution is start organizing. Scientific fact doesn’t change. Society does. And you can be a part of making the latter happen.

The best way to dry tears is on the back of a protest sign, or the banner at an art build. On the pajamas you wore all day because you spent hours on video calls. The shoulder of a new friend. Soon you’ll be shedding tears of love for the power of this community.

Because just as this crisis is overwhelmingly huge, the movement to stop it is wonderfully so. By creating a more just world and desperately trying to chart a rational course for the future of civilization, we are doing the most important thing we could be doing right now. We are coming together to fight for what we love, and I could not imagine a more powerful or fulfilling or beautiful feeling.

So stay connected to all that love you have for beautiful nature, because you’ll need it. It’s the foundation of a new paradigm that we have the duty and opportunity to create, together.

May 2

Spoiler: it's because we have the audacity to want a future!

It's incredible to be a part of this beautiful movement with so many amazing young folks from all across the country, literally coast-coast-coast! We're going to ROCK IT tomorrow!

May 4

Umm he [Trudeau] held a "youth summit" on the same day that tens of thousands of youth across the country were striking from school, demanding his government do better to protect our generation.

What did he expect?

We are #inspiredtostrike not #inspiredtoserve !!

So proud of Emma Lim who managed to organize nearly HALF of the summit attendees to support the action in one and a half days !!!!

May 17

What if the leaders of the gas industry were all together in one place? That's happening! In Vancouver! Next Tuesday! Hundreds of fossil fuel execs and government reps from across the world will be converging on the convention centre to scheme about burning our future!

Conference attendees will be met by high school students reminding them of the repercussions of their actions by staging a funeral for our future (cuz it's being threatened by their fossil-fueled climate crisis!). Join us in sending the message that increased gas extraction in this province (and around the world) must end, and be replaced by alternatives that actually create safe and sustainable communities and economies. LNG is not a transition fuel - we can't burn our way out of this crisis!

It's going to be a rad event!! High schoolers, we're meeting to prepare at Tim Hortons at 600 Burrard. 7:30 am may be early, but it's a yes to FREE COFFEE AND TIMBITS!

Adult allies are also very welcome to join us at the convention centre east at 8:15, but please listen to instructions of youth organizers.

Also, if you're feelin like keeping the energy going, the conference is running Tues - Thurs. We teens had many more action ideas than our school schedules allowed for 😊

May 23

We're back at it again! Join the next big international strike day, TOMORROW!!

You asked, we listened - this event features a nifty after school start time: by taking the "strike" out of "climate strike", we're also taking "I had a test" and "my parents wouldn't let me" out of the list of semi-legitimate excuses to not come.

Why are we dying-in in front of the offices of Teck? Well, you know the "100 companies are responsible for 71% of emissions" thing? We looked at that list of 100 companies and Teck is the one that is headquartered in Vancouver! Their current climate criminal campaign is the massive Teck Frontier tar sands mine which, if approved, would make it difficult to meet Alberta and Canada's emission reductions targets.

Come send a message to the company and to the government that we are in a crisis and that we are ending public acceptance of climate criminals!

(I will not actually be at the event but the movement is one interconnected being so my lack of physical presence is a mere formality)

May 29

A (belated) thank you for all the wonderful birthday wishes!! I'm reflecting on how very grateful I am for every one of the amazing people I have met in the last year and couple of months.

The climate strike movement has changed so much not just for public awareness of climate crisis, but also for me and other young people who have become a part of it. A year ago, I felt terrified, alone, and confused about what to do about overwhelming crisis. I'm still confused, but now am part of an amazing community of passionate, engaged, young folks taking awesome action!

Hey family! I would be honoured if you could donate to Climate Strike Canada's fundraiser to celebrate me turning 17 (!). Our movement is already creating real change, but we need your support to become as big as possible. Every dollar will go towards supporting young activists across the country.

If you're not convinced yet, check out the nifty video featuring my friends telling you how rad our movement is!