



# Sandy-Saulteaux Spiritual Centre

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## The Earth is our Faculty by Adrian Jacobs

Rev. Andrew Wesley, our Basic Pastoral Care resource person, elder and Anglican priest, instructed the Learning Circle to take tobacco in our left hand (closest to our hearts) and to go out onto our 39 acre property and give thanks. I had a very profound experience and wept as I greeted and thanked all our relations here at Sandy-Saulteaux Spiritual Centre.

We are so fortunate to have knowledgeable elders and Christian leaders who can role model respect for Aboriginal culture and Christian faith. Ministry students grow in their understanding of both elements so vital to working in the Aboriginal community. The church is living out its Apologies as it seeks to heal the harm done by the policy of assimilation.

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## Wisdom Scripture Learning Circle

Adrian Jacobs guided the circle participants through the Wisdom scriptures to explore the images of God and the Spirit that are found in the books of Job, Psalms, Proverbs, Ecclesiastes, Song of Solomon and Lamentations. Students reflected on how these images and metaphors had meaning for their own lives and journeys of faith. The Wisdom of Aboriginal Elders was shared – stories from community elders and grandparents that made an impression or stayed with us. Some students who grew up in a non-native environment discovered something of their lost cultural teachings. Students made a presentation the final day sharing wisdom from the Bible and wisdom from the Aboriginal community via songs, poems, stories, art, and proverbs. The resulting presentations were a powerful way to end the circle.



Fanny Spence of the Wisdom Scriptures program

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## RESPONSIBILITY

by Alex Beardy

I listened  
 I believed  
 YOU  
 THEN  
 I slept  
 I forgot  
 Who is responsible  
 I listen  
 I believe  
 ME  
 NOW  
 I am awake  
 I remember  
 I AM RESPONSIBLE

## Basic Pastoral Care Learning Circle

One of our non-Aboriginal learners who joined the October circle summed up the experience well:

*"This cross-cultural experience was a valuable learning for me as much as the Pastoral Care Course. It was an experience I will never forget. The respect they (the students) have for their elders, the stories they tell so willingly and the respect for tradition was truly humbling. Thanks be to God for opportunities such as this to learn from and appreciate different cultures."*

Shirley McLaren (DLM student)



U of Winnipeg Students doing dishes

## Feast for Friends



This year's Feast for Friends saw more than 140 Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal friends of Sandy-Saulteaux Spiritual Centre come together. ANCC and MB-NWO Conferences of the United Church of Canada together with the Centre for Christian Studies and North End Ministry Centre partnered again to provide a great opportunity to educate everyone about Aboriginal issues in Canada with presentations by: Jamie Robinson, MB Treaty Commissioner; Aimee Craft on the Stone Fort Treaty (Treaty 1); and Michael Champagne and Ko'ona Cochrane on the Idle No More movement. Stan McKay and Donna Kennedy led us in a fun and silly game of Indian Baseball. Mike Maunder lead others on a nature walk introducing everyone to our faculty of the land. Gary Dano taught using rocks the 7 grandfather teachings and Elder Jules Lavalee conducted a sweat and closed our day with a reminder of Dr. Jessie Saulteaux's vision of honouring both the Christian and traditional Aboriginal teachings at SSSC. It was a beautiful sunny day and smiles were everywhere.



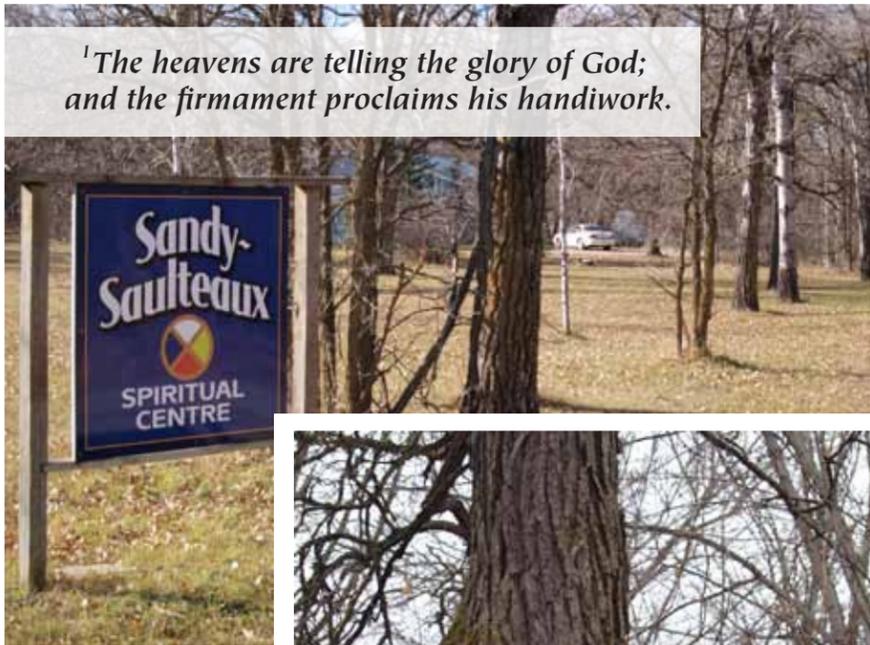
## The Earth is our Faculty - continued

I take breaks every now and then and leave my computer and office to walk in silence and reflection on our beautiful property here just a couple of kilometers east of Beausejour, MB. The Broken Head River winds its way around us and we see eagles, bears, foxes, coyotes, squirrels, deer, and lots of creeping things. The trees and medicines silently grow everywhere and the fish folk make their presence known on occasion.

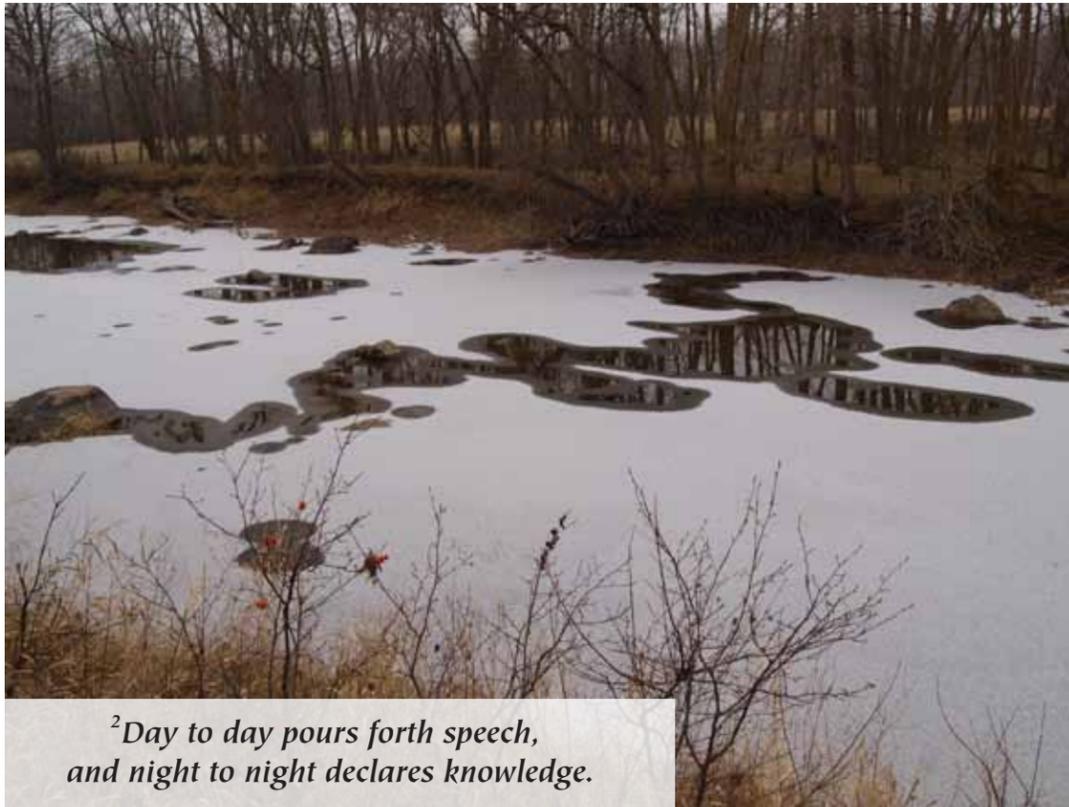
One day I thought to myself, our elders have taught us what the earth taught them. We are meant to continue this teaching to our future generations. Our elders will pass away but the earth will endure. Our teacher the earth will endure. THE EARTH IS OUR FACULTY! This profound insight gave me a great sense of hope.

# Welcome to our Earth Faculty

*'The heavens are telling the glory of God;  
and the firmament proclaims his handiwork.*



*Burl Trunk*



*<sup>2</sup>Day to day pours forth speech,  
and night to night declares knowledge.*

*Beginning of Winter ice*



*A path of death*

*Creator's Christmas tree Decorations*



*Brokenhead River at Low Level - Background*



*Beavers Hard at Work*



*<sup>3</sup>There is no speech, nor are there words;  
their voice is not heard;  
<sup>4</sup>yet their voice goes out through all the earth, and  
their words to the end of the world.*



*A Moss Skirt*

## Experiencing the Power of Healing in Worship

Years of the policy of assimilation have resulted in many Traditional Healing practices, teachings and ceremonies suffering greatly. At SSSC we “strive to be a place of deep spirit where all may gather to experience Aboriginal Spirituality and Christianity” in the UCC tradition. Our courses encompass and integrate both perspectives. There were two Learning Circles in October: *Basic Pastoral Care* led by Rev. Andrew Wesley and *Psalms and Wisdom Scriptures* led by Adrian Jacobs, Keeper of the Circle.

Our life has many beautiful moments interspersed throughout the day-to-day business of our lives – a beautiful sunset, a walk with a friend, listening to the music of the birds or a favorite song on the radio. Each of these “mini-retreats” is an opportunity to heal the fissures and crevices of life’s hurts and brokenness of our souls.

During the Learning Circle on Pastoral Care, we experienced one such special time as Rev. Andrew Wesley led us in a Healing Service that embraced both Traditional Aboriginal teachings and Christian praxis.

We gathered solemnly barefoot in circle and the ceremony service began. One at a time we stepped into the circle. Negative energies surrounding us were swept away with the eagle fan. Then each one moved to a bowl of water with cedar boughs to wash hands and face in preparation for a smudge from head to heel. As the last participant returned to their place, Rev. Andrew, washed and dried the feet of each one as Jesus once did.

Rev. Mark Hammond assisted by leading liturgy and prayers as the anointing ceremony began. Rev. Andrew once more knelt and prayed as he anointed each person’s forehead, hands and feet with chrisem (blessed aromatic oil). Throughout the service each offered their own personal prayers. As the service drew to a close – we donned our coats and shoes. Taking an offering of Tobacco, we dispersed out to a private space in the woods or along the river to offer Thanksgiving to our Creator/ God and his son Jesus for our many Blessings.

The powerful presence of the Holy Spirit could be felt as each of us quietly reflected on the beauty and truth experienced through the ceremony. After months of a very painful sciatic nerve Rev. Wesley did a special ceremony and prayer for our Keeper of the Centre. Adrian reports, “Since that prayer ceremony the sciatic nerve calmed down noticeably and now I am able to get around with only the slightest bit of tenderness. Thank you Creator, Jesus, and my Elder Andrew!” Andrew gave Adrian some medicine to apply as well and everything added up to healing!



## Recruiting Students

Keeper of the Circle Adrian Jacobs visited Ontario and Quebec over the summer recruiting students and sharing the vision of SSSC. The loss of Francis Sandy Theological Centre in its amalgamation with Dr. Jessie Saulteaux Resource Centre is keenly felt and we want to assure the FSTC constituency that we will do our best to be a presence in the east and train Aboriginal students for ministry.

## Welcoming the Special Rapporteur on the Rights of Indigenous People to Winnipeg



James Anaya was welcomed to Winnipeg by a crowd of about 600 people by Jingle Dances at the corner of Portage and Main in downtown Winnipeg. Many Aboriginal people, leaders, and allies braved the cold north wind to welcome the UN Special Rapporteur on the Rights of Indigenous People. Many made presentations to him at a separate meeting at the Ramada Inn speaking of their struggles as Aboriginal people in Canada.

## I hear the Elders speaking when I listen to the Voice of Creation

Sometimes when we lament the passing of our elders we fear the loss of all their knowledge. We can be comforted in part knowing that the teachers that taught them (our Mother the Earth, the animals, the fish folk, the medicine families, the tree beings, the crawling relatives etc.) are still with us today and stand ready to teach anew this generation. I hear the elders speaking when I listen to the voice of creation, just like the Psalmist did in Psalm 8. (See centre pages 4 & 5 for illustrations of Psalm 8)

## Thank You for Supporting by Adrian Jacobs on behalf of the staff and board

We are so thankful for all our faithful and generous supporters. It is my pleasure to sign the donation receipts and the thank you letters. Each one is testimony to your tangible love. Please consider a special gift this Christmas season and forward your end of the year donation. We have exciting plans for the future of Sandy-Saulteaux Spiritual Centre and you can be sure the Aboriginal community will be strengthened a little bit more.



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Beausejour, MB  
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