



Sandy-Saulteaux Spiritual Centre

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Why I am here at Sandy-Saulteaux Spiritual Centre by Adrian Jacobs, Keeper of the Circle

When I heard and saw Elder Jules Lavallee speak some closing words at my first Feast for Friends (September 2012) here at SSSC I knew I was in the right place in the right time of my life. Elder Jules held both hands in front of him with his palms face up. He was describing the original vision of Dr. Jessie Saulteaux for what was then called the Dr. Jessie Saulteaux Resource Centre.

"The vision is, on one hand, the ministry training program for church leaders in the Native Church. On the other hand, is the honour given to traditional teaching and ceremony. Both are equally valued." I have carried his image and share it wherever I go when talking about what we do here at SSSC. Indigenous leadership for the Indigenous church is why I am here. To be part of the church's apology for the damages done by colonization and the restoration of Indigenous dignity, traditional teaching and ceremony is why I am here.

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My Dakota friend Harley Eagle drove me out from the Winnipeg airport to SSSC for my interview for the Keeper of the Circle (principal/director position) in April of 2012. We walked the trail along the Brokenhead River and came to what would become my favorite place, a bench right by the water. Suddenly we noticed a bald eagle coming down the river and then it swooped up into the sky right before us. I felt this was a welcome sign from the Creator and my Dakota friend was happy too.

The question "why?" is the theme of this issue of our newsletter. The answer to why is the heartbeat and energy source for what we do here at SSSC. You will read and see the reasons why our board, staff, volunteers, and clients are here on this beautiful land in Treaty One territory. Our hope is that these whys are the reason you support us with your prayers, energy and finances.



A Brief History

by Stan McKay, SSSC Keepers of the Vision member

In 1980 a new grassroots movement of Indigenous Peoples from the United Church initiated The National Native Consultation. This movement voiced a need for church leaders to be trained from our communities. A pioneer program led by elders in northwestern Ontario and northern Manitoba was training elders to be ordained so they could minister to their churches. Out of the consultation came a desire to expand this type of training and a plan was developed. In 1984 the Dr. Jessie Saulteaux Resource Centre was formed. Two years later, at a meeting of the

annual Native Fellowship gathering at Five Oaks Education and Retreat Centre, the Francis Sandy Theological Centre was founded. In 2011, these two Centres amalgamated to form a single new First Nations, Metis, and Inuit theological school called the Sandy-Saulteaux Spiritual Centre. Sandy-Saulteaux exists because there were visionary people who saw the needs of our churches. Thanks to their work, we can acknowledge people from the Indigenous Church who are called to ministry and support these calls with training that is culturally appropriate.

2017 Learning Circles

Do these topics spark your curiosity? Our learning circles make a great continuing education opportunity. Consider joining us at the Centre to learn alongside our students. Contact us for details.

January 16 - 20 BS4 Daniel and Revelations

January 23 - 27 CE4 Healthy Growth and Development

March 27 - 31 H/CDS/ATS People of the Plains

April 3 - 7

TH4 Interfaith

May 29 - June 2

AT3 Storytelling

June 5 - 9

HS3 Creation & Genesis

For more events, visit sandysaulteaux.ca or follow us on Facebook

The 'Raison d'être' of the Sandy-Saulteaux Spiritual Centre?

- To **cherish** and **uplift** the wisdom of the ages from Traditional teachings, Indigenous Spirituality, the Christian Faith and indeed other great Faith expressions as well.
- To **celebrate** the beauty, the wonder, the mystery, the joy, the majesty of the Great Unknown – God – Truth.
- To **recognize** our connections and oneness with the Earth and all of Creation – "All My Relations".
- To **acknowledge** the importance and the power of moving with humility, respect, courage, honesty, hope, faith and love.
- To **generate** leaders in a world desperately in need of healing and reconciliation."

– Rev. John R. Thompson, SSSC's Western Chair of the Keepers of the Vision

"The Sandy-Saulteaux Spiritual Centre exists so that folks from First Nations Communities can learn the Christian and the Traditional ways and not lose their culture."

– Judy Delorme, honoured elder and friend of SSSC

"The aroma of wood smoke and the rustling of the remaining aspen leaves greeted me as I stepped out of my vehicle. My breathing slowed and deepened as my shoulder muscles began to relax and I felt a sense of tranquility. Having enjoyed retreats at the centre before, I recalled the sense of peace I feel when I visit. And to think I'd only driven from Beausejour, some two miles away!"

– Bart Coleman, Zion Lutheran Church, Beausejour

Why does SSSC matter to you? We'd love to share your story in an upcoming newsletter. Send your words and pictures to sansau@mymts.net or give us a call at 204-268-3913.

Jessie of the Morning Star

by Chuck Kroeker

Look up to the eastern sky just before the first light comes
You will see the morning star shine just before the dawn
That star is like the love of God,
Great Spirit watching over us,
and Jessie Saulteaux looked to that bright star her whole life long

She was Jessie of the Morning Star...

Jessie's people lived upon these plains before they counted time
The people knew the beauty of the Earth is in our hands
Jessie said take what you need,
take what you need and nothing more,
Jessie knew each one of us is bound unto the land

She was Jessie of the Morning Star...

God has given each his part, God has given each her gifts

God has given breath and hope and spirit to us all
Jessie was a child of God, Jessie knew the Spirit's touch

Jessie gave her life and love responding to God's call

She was Jessie of the Morning Star...

Songwriter Chuck Kroeker started his musical project "Carlos and the Suspiroes" in 2014. You can hear his album at suspiroes.com and find more of his music on [Youtube](https://www.youtube.com). He visited the Dr. Jessie Saulteaux Resource Centre (one of the founding Centres of SSSC) in the 90s and was inspired to write this song by Dr. Jessie's personal example of spirituality and respect for Creation.

Why is it important to me to be a student of SSSC?

by Deb Anderson-Pratt

I come from a family that has had a long history of various denominations coming into our home. Many of these churches baptized my siblings and me into their churches. As a baby, I was baptized Anglican. At age 7, I was baptized born-again Christian. At 9, I was baptized Mormon but excommunicated by them at 15 because I had a child out of wedlock. Finally, at 22, the Catholic Church baptized me in order to get married.

As a result of all the negative preaching from these denominations, as a young married woman I refused to have anything to do with "church" until 1988 when I met Rev. Charley Fox of the Lutheran Church. I served as his secretary/assistant and he eventually convinced me there was a gentle God.

In late '88/early'89 I attended classes at Dr. Jessie Saulteaux Resource Centre (DJSRC) but I didn't continue after my discernment year. I quit because I felt my lifestyle at the time was not minister material. It also wasn't a call from God for me but someone telling me I should train for ministry.

In that first year of training I became involved with the formation of All Native Circle Conference (ANCC). That experience with both DJSRC and ANCC showed me that my Traditional Teachings were just as important as the Christian Teachings I'd encountered in my life. Both DJSRC and ANCC were formed with the idea that First Nations peoples could and would be trained and ordained with First Nations understandings and with governance by First Nations.

The Elders involved with the formation of ANCC realized the difficulties our people were experiencing in training for ministry through the mainstream. ANCC would have our own systems in training future ministers with our own rules and regulations that suited our understandings. I understand SSSC was also set up on the same basis.



Deb offering her leadership at the SSSC Ceremony of Celebration in April.

I returned to training as a result of feeling a call from God directing me to this path. So why SSSC? At SSSC I have the freedom to speak, learn and develop my own understanding of both the Traditional and Christian Teachings offered here. I have had the honor and privilege to watch my fellow students grow in this as well. Some were never allowed to even speak about or to be a part of Traditional Teachings as a result of missionary control in their communities. Whether it's Traditional or Christian Teachings, we have the opportunity to take them back to our communities.

Keeping the Centre – An Invitation from Rob Smith



Since becoming the Keeper of the Centre at the Sandy-Saulteaux Spiritual Centre in May I have enjoyed seeing the impact that the Centre has on many people's lives. I have seen this in the groups that have come for cultural camps, healing in the sweat lodge, and learnings in the learning circles.

Over the past year, we have made a concerted effort to promote our Centre's rental facilities. As a result, **our Centre is being used more fully these days as groups of all ages find a welcome here** - for staff retreats, school learning events, board meetings, training sessions, cultural camps and more. From July to September 2016, as compared to the same period in 2015, we saw 163 more guests stay overnight in one of our lodges, 1524 more snacks and meals served in our kitchen and 291 more people visit our site.

I am glad to see so many people enjoying the beautiful space here. These guests also help support our ministry training program.

I have been working on some items for improving the facilities at the Centre. Here are some exciting developments:

- Insurance proceeds from the collapse of the Grey Hall allowed us to replace the shifting and sinking foundation under Lodge 1 which cost us close to \$100,000.00.
- Funding from the Thomas Sill Foundation allowed us to replace the aging kitchen dishwashing system that we use to provide food services to our ministry students during learning circles and guests that rent the facility at a cost of close to \$20,000.00.

We have ongoing needs to keep the Centre in good shape and continue our ministry of hospitality. **Can you help us with the following costs?**

- The fireplace and the chimney in the hall can no longer be used until they are replaced for an estimated cost of \$10,000.



Replacing the foundation under Lodge 1 was a big job!

- The aging phone system that our ministry students and staff rely on for communication requires replacing at a cost of \$6,600.00.
- We have a library of resources in storage, waiting for the space to be displayed and accessible to our ministry students and guests. Now that Lodge 1 has been repaired, we have a firm foundation to hold the weight of the books. The remaining work of remodeling the library space, purchasing furniture and purchasing a computer with cataloguing software will cost around \$10,000.00.
- The foundations under Lodges 2 and 3 also need replacing for an estimated cost of \$100,000.00 each.

You will find a [donation form](#) on the back of the newsletter.

Thank you for prayerfully considering how you can support the Sandy-Saulteaux Spiritual Centre. I hope you will join me in sharing your gifts to make the Centre a welcoming place to meet, rest, heal and learn for years to come.



Now that Lodge 1 is back on solid ground, we'll be able to house a small library here, along with the guest rooms.

PS: I am pleased to announce that we have been selected to receive an Indigenous Innovation Demonstration Fund grant to begin developing an Indigenous Family Reunification Centre here at SSSC. I look forward to sharing more details with you as our dream takes shape to bring families together and reduce the number of children in care in Manitoba. This funding comes from the National Association of Friendship Centres, Indigenous and Northern Affairs Canada and the J.W. McConnell Family Foundation. The funding announcement was made at the Indigenous Innovation Summit in Edmonton which I attended on SSSC's behalf. I had the honour of meeting and learning from some of Canada's leading social innovators, entrepreneurs and Indigenous leaders. - Rob

John Snow Jr. Appointed to BANFF Centre Board of Governors

Congratulations to our student, John Snow Jr., on his appointment by the Alberta Lieutenant Governor in Council to the Board of Governors of the BANFF Centre for Arts and Creativity! The BANFF Centre is a global learning organization leading in arts, culture, and creativity. John is the Student Minister at Samson United in Maskwacis, Alberta, and sits on the United Church Permanent Committee on Finance. He brings more than 30 years of Corporate and Aboriginal resource experience as a Global

Indigenous Resource and Investment Advisor. John is a descendent of Treaty 7 signatory Chief Jacob Goodstoney of the Stoney Nakoda Nations who signed Treaty in 1877.



John Thompson Receives Distinguished Alumni/ae Award



journey of healing and reconciliation. He established the

Congratulations to our Western Chair of the Keepers of the Vision (our board), John R. Thompson, who received a Distinguished Alumni/ae Award from Emmanuel College in April, recognizing his dedication to his ministry and his help in setting the church on a

Alberta Conference Native Ministries Committee, planted the seeds of Keewatin Presbytery by teaching liberation theology at Norway House and was the first staff member to All Native Circle Conference's Council on Sharing. John carries out his ministry at Oxford House these days, a Cree community 950 km north of Winnipeg where he not only performs all the baptisms, funerals and weddings in the area, he is also the "official" skate sharpener and the "unofficial" pizzeria.

Indigenous Spirituality and Theology Consultation



The World Council of Churches brought together Indigenous Theologians from around the world in August to reflect together and to articulate Indigenous spiritual and theological understandings of what a Pilgrimage of Justice and Peace means. Keeper of the Circle Adrian Jacobs was welcomed to this gathering in Australia by his Aboriginal hosts.

The TRC Calls Churches to Action

Keeper of the Circle Adrian Jacobs spoke at this event in October in Saskatoon where over 100 church and native leaders wrestled with the Canadian Truth and Reconciliation Commission's Calls to Action to Churches. Keeper of the Learning Circle Deanna Zantingh and student Deb Anderson-Pratt also participated.



Make a year-end donation to support SSSC's ministry and get up to 53% tax-back!

From Apology Towards Reconciliation

To mark the 30th Anniversary of the United Church's Apology to First Nations Peoples in August, church members gathered in a circle at Sandy-Saulteaux for storytelling followed by a feast. It was an opportunity to reflect on our history and envision a future of reconciliation.



Keepers of the Vision

Our Keepers of the Vision/Board Member Ray Jones welcomed us all to Gitxsan Territory, BC for our annual face-to-face meeting in September.



From left to right: Rev. John Thompson, Rt. Rev. Stan McKay, Deanna Zantingh, Adrian Jacobs, Rev. John Young, Barb Shoomski, Rob Smith, Ray Jones, Martha Pedonquette. Behind the camera: Don Winstone, Deb Anderson-Pratt. Absent: Rev. Lee Claus, Fjola Hart-Wasekeesikaw, Rev. Maggie McLeod.

A Haudenosaunee Miraculous Birth Story by Adrian Jacobs, Keeper of the Centre



Among the Wendat or Wyandotte people of Southern Ontario, about a thousand years ago, a baby boy was born to a young mother. When her mother asked "Who is the father?" the young mother said it was the West Wind. This didn't sit well with the little boy's grandmother who then tried to get rid of him several times. She finally saw that this boy was special and had a special purpose given him from the Creator. This little boy grew into The Peacemaker who left his own people and

came to the Five Nations called Kanienkahaka (also known as Mohawk), Oneida, Onondaga, Cayuga and Seneca. His message was about quitting war, listening to each other and making decisions by consensus. The time that followed was called The Great Peace and this was made possible because human dignity was encoded in The Peacemakers Great Law. The Peacemaker Jesus also came to bring this same message of dignity to the peoples of this world.

MAY THE PEACE OF THE PEACEMAKER BE WITH YOU ALWAYS AND HAVE A HAPPY NEW YEAR!



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