



Sandy-Saulteaux Spiritual Centre

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Keeping The Circle

by Adrian Jacobs, Keeper of the Circle

Rev. Andrew Wesley, Cree Anglican priest from Fort Albany, ON and now living in Toronto, ON, gave each of us Indigenous names in the Learning Circle he was conducting. All staff, students and our Circle elder received names. The name he gave me was "The Guardian." When I introduce myself as the Keeper of the Circle for Sandy-Saulteaux Spiritual Centre I also include this name. It is part of my job to guard the circle.

The name my parents gave me is Adrian Dean Jacobs. Adrian means dark or rich. This is why I wear black most of the time. Dean means leader of ten. I do my best work in small groups and this fits the Learning Circle very well. Jacobs is Jewish (I am not Jewish. Indian agents just gave us these names) and means struggler. I am a struggler and I wrestle with colonial powers on behalf of our people.

The name my Clan Mother gave me is Ganosono, which my grandfather told me means "deer lodge." This name has been in the Turtle Clan of the Cayuga Nation since time immemorial.

The names my children gave me are dada, dad, pops and poppa bear. The name my grandsons have given me is grandpa.

The name Sandy-Saulteaux Spiritual Centre gave me is Keeper of the Circle and together with The Guardian I know clearly what my duty is. I am to keep the circle safe and to deal with things that come to disturb. This is a difficult job. Sometimes I am the reason the circle is upset. I have to take responsibility for this and sometimes I need to apologize. This helps me to address others whose struggle may be disturbing the circle.

At the end of the day, at the end of the Learning Circle, at the end of the meetings of the Keepers of the Vision (our board) it is my concern that we are moving forward together and in a good way. This is a very challenging job and sometimes I get weary. It is your prayers, it is your sweat lodge support, it is your giving financially to this ministry, it is your encouraging phone calls and emails that may it possible for me to do a very tough job. This make me happy. I am strengthened by this. Thank you for your support.



Follow-Up to the TRC Calls to Action

The UCC must report by March 31, 2016 how policies relating to Indigenous peoples in The UCC reflect the **United Nations Declarations on the Rights of Indigenous People**. Keeper of the Circle Adrian Jacobs addressed this follow-up of the TRC Calls to Action in a Colloquium at Emanuel College, Victoria University, Toronto School of Theology, at the University of Toronto on Wednesday, November 4, 2015.

Adrian also helped facilitate the Ecumenical Retreat at Six Nations. About sixty people from United Church, Mennonite, Anglican, Lutheran and independent churches joined together with Indigenous folk from

Six Nations and Southern Ontario to discuss follow-up on Truth and Reconciliation Calls to Action Numbers 59, 60 and 48. Presentations on the Doctrine of



Keeper of the Circle Adrian Jacobs dancing with his aunt's younger sister

Discovery and UNDRIP were accompanied by Haudenosaunee ceremony and the Thanksgiving Address. Participants were powerfully moved and expressed commitments to take action.

The Retreat featured Haudenosaunee social dancing on Friday night. In the midst of a very sobering reality and discussion there were smiles and laughter. Rick Hill reported that, "A world record was set for

the most dancing Mennonites!" Traditional social dance songs were accompanied by cow horn rattles and a small water drum. Men were also invited to join the singers in the row of chairs facing each other in the middle of the dance floor.

In traditional Haudenosaunee style the dancers went around the singers in a counter clockwise manner.



Ecumenical Retreat at Six Nations group photo, Six Nations Polytechnic

Job Opportunities



Keeper of the Learning Circle – is responsible for overseeing the Ministry Training Program including duties of teaching, engaging resource people and elders for the Learning Circle, monitoring progress and shepherding students through the learning process, engaging with student community and church supports, developing curriculum and policies, and engaging the wider educational community to expand and develop SSSC program offerings. The Keeper of the Learning Circle combines the roles of Registrar and Student Dean. Please access our website for the posting and job description. <http://sandysaulteaux.ca>

Keeper of the Centre – is responsible for overseeing the retreat business, facility management, and business affairs of SSSC. The ability to thoroughly understand financial statements and reports, to analyze and prepare sound business and financial plans moving forward is critical. The ability to promote the facilities and programs of SSSC and network with the broader philanthropic community and supportive public is central. Please access our website for the posting and description. <http://sandysaulteaux.ca>

Student Corner



Deb Anderson-Pratt

My name is Deb Anderson-Pratt, I am a third year student minister in training at the Sandy-Saulteaux Spiritual Centre. Here are some highlights of our two weeks of the October 2015 learning circles.

The first week was called Introduction to the Hebrew Scriptures and

Indigenous Original Instructions. This included an understanding of the first 5 books of the bible Genesis, Exodus, Leviticus, Numbers and Deuteronomy. We learned about the Bible time line which was difficult to understand until we discussed the covenants made with the various people in the bible such as Adam, Noah, Abraham and so forth.

The Ancestral Teachings the Keeper of the Circle and The Keeper of the Learning Circle shared of their communities gave us the understanding of Traditional Teachings other than our own. These teachings were similar to my own and yet had their own unique messages, some even had opposite meanings to each other.

We were given a project which we had to present on the Friday morning. We shared a story that had a teaching from our own community and also shared a scripture that went with the teaching. I asked my fellow student and sister Fanny Spence if I could share her project for the news letter, she has graciously given me the permission to do so.



Fanny Spence

Fanny is a 4th year student from South Indian Lake, Manitoba, she has served as minister in her community for the last 3 years. Here is her project, copied from her little booklet she wrote the story in and the essence as she told it and her concluding scripture:

When I was a little girl I cherished my grandfather. I followed him everywhere. I tried and did everything he did and he was a very busy man. He never got tired of me. I think he was my first friend, the first person I ever trusted. He made me feel safe. I was his shadow, not too many times he left me behind. If he went to set a net I was with him. When he hauled water I had my own little lard pails. Everything he had I had. We spent a lot of good quality time together, I felt that love from him and he showed it.

The only time he wouldn't take me out on the lake was when the waves were too big and when it was windy. He always said, "I don't want anything to happen to my Nichanis." Nichanis (my daughter) is what he called me. One windy day he went to check his nets. I couldn't go with him because it was a stormy windy day. I cried for him but he made me understand why I couldn't go with him that day. He said I could go with him when it was a nice day.

My grandfather had a dog that he really loved. I helped him take care of his dog. I helped him feed it and gave him water to drink. The day I couldn't go with him. I was so sad. Then I had this bright idea, since I couldn't go with him I'd do something nice for him. So I said "I'll wash his dog!!!"

So I went to the house and grabbed a bar of sunlight soap. No one saw me. I went to where the dog was tied up, untied him, took a blanket or towel and went down to the bank. The water was splashing against the rocks. I took the puppy, put him in the water. I rubbed the soap on the puppy and used the rocks as a washboard. Then I dipped him in the water over and over. When I thought he was clean enough I took him out of the water and dried him.

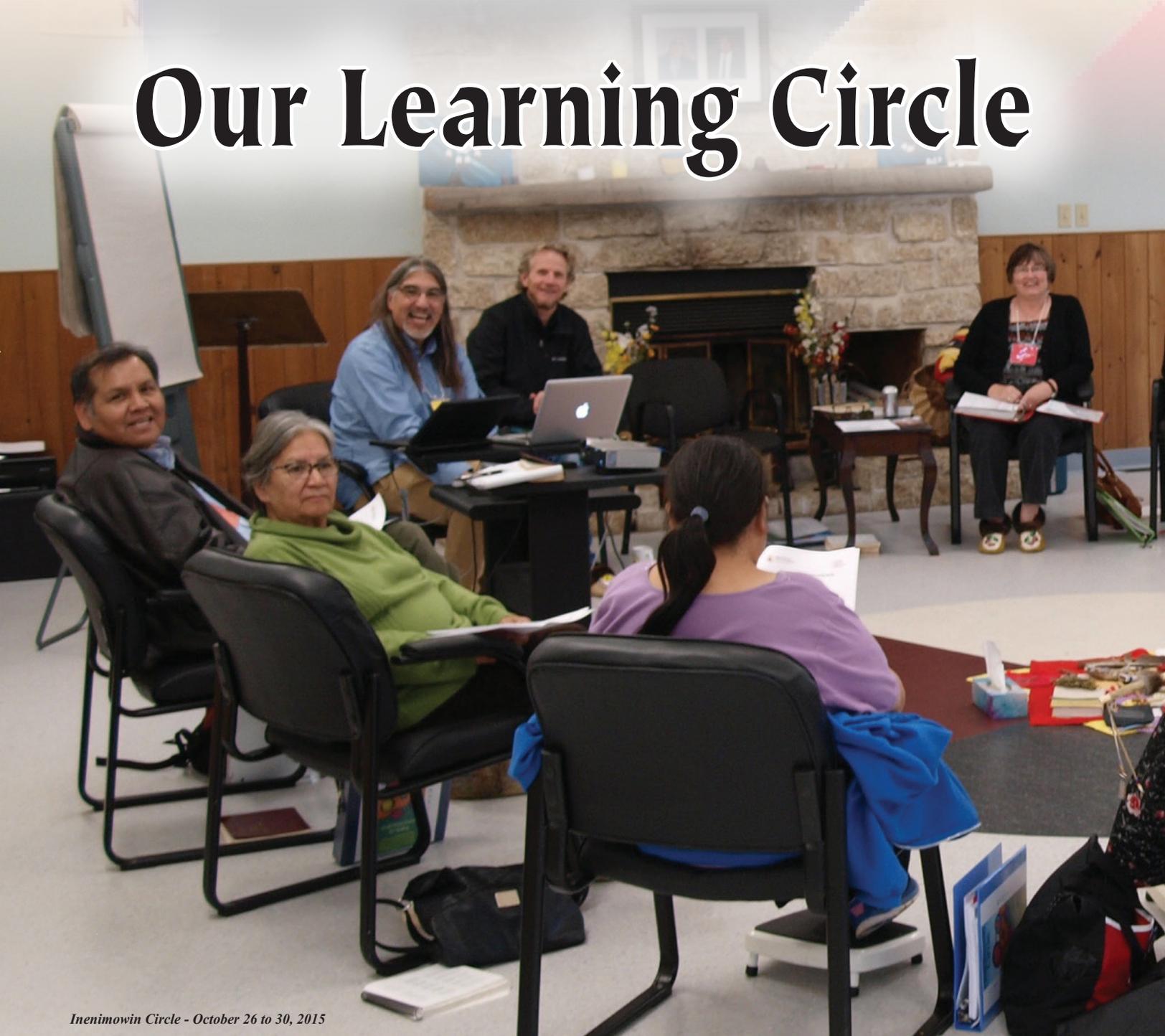
By then the wind had stopped. I took the puppy back, tied him up so he could dry up. The puppy was shiney, black and clean!!! I looked toward the lake, grandpa was coming. Ohhh!!! I was sooo excited. I couldn't wait to tell him what I did. I ran to meet him. He gave me a hug. I told him, "Grandpa, you're going to be so happy. I washed your dog. He's clean now."

I took him to see his clean dog BUTTT there was something wrong??? The puppy wasn't moving. HE DIED! I drowned him!!!! BUT...he was DRY. But grandpa wasn't angry with me, but I know he was a little sad but he didn't show it. He said to me, "Oh Nichanis what am I going to do with you? You're silly (in our language)!"

He went to bury his dog and of course I went with

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Our Learning Circle



Inenimowin Circle - October 26 to 30, 2015

Our Learning Circles are at the heart of what we do here at SSSC. Students here are trained for Christian ministry in The United Church of Canada (The UCC) and other Ecumenical partner denominations. We also train lay community leaders for work in the Indigenous community.

Students come here for eight Learning Circles (eight weeks) each year; the last two weeks of October, the last two weeks of January, two weeks in April (depending on where Easter falls), and the first two weeks of June. Students are also expected to complete denominational conference and presbytery work for an additional credit each year of their five-year program.

The other forty-six weeks of the year our facilities here (we have an overnight accommodation capacity of twenty) houses and hosts retreats, meetings, conferences, education programs, education days for our local public schools, Aboriginal wellness groups, seasonal ceremonies that include sweat lodges, and other meetings of various groups from the Aboriginal ministries of The United Church of Canada. We are a busy place and need the support of faithful givers to keep our facilities in shape for this important part of our cross-cultural educational mandate.



Currently our students come from Alberta, Saskatchewan, Manitoba and Ontario. Ray Jones, our BC representative on our Keepers of the Vision (board) recently announced the establishment of the Dorothy Sullivan Fund that would make it possible for BC students to study at SSSC. We look forward to having BC students training for ministry here. We also look forward to seeing what we can do to facilitate Indigenous ministry, history, culture and current issues training all across Canada in all regions, including Quebec and the Maritimes.

Our curriculum honors both Christian teaching and Indigenous traditional wisdom. The Bible and The Royal Commission on Aboriginal Peoples (RCAP) are our texts. The Final Report of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission with the 94 Calls to Action will be utilized here as well. These Calls to Action include the acceptance of The United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples (UNDRIP).

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him. I miss him and I thank him for all the things he taught me. He kind of laid the consequence down. The consequence was I couldn't go with him for three days. I had to do chores around the house with my grandmother. He made sure that she was to keep an eye on me real good.

And the scripture I will use is Exodus 22: 14-15:

14 When someone borrows an animal from another and it is injured or DIES, the owner not being present, full restitution shall be made. 15 If the owner was present, there shall be no restitution, if it was hired, only the hiring fee is due.

The whole class burst out laughing, not only at Fanny's tragic and funny story, but at the scripture she used. Keeper of the Circle Adrian Jacobs said, while laugh-crying, "That is the best contextual exegesis of scripture I have ever heard!" Even those of us who had heard Fanny's story before had a great belly laugh. I myself saw the deeper message of Love, silent grief our people encounter and the teaching of responsibility for our actions.

The second week was the Inenimowin Circle training, presented by a team of 6. The book 'Wounded Hearts' and bible scriptures as well as the team's personal stories were some of the resources used for teaching.

The week was very difficult for all the students with the sharing of their personal stories. This exercise was a means to start healing in their own lives which would eventually help their congregants and all people in their communities. Our Learning Circle Elder Rev. Bernice Saulteaux (also ANCC's Leading Elder) said, "We have to keep in mind

that everyone is at different levels of their healing journey" and provided the students the comfort in an uncomfortable environment.

The discomfort for the students came with the feeling of all that our circle as we know it was not utilized. Our Traditional Teachings were not incorporated in the teachings with the Bible teachings. Our Elder was not included in the process until it was brought forward to the leaders. The students did not have opportunity to speak in the large circle as that was restricted to the small groups each morning, afternoon and evening. It was a totally different teaching style then what the students were accustomed to. There was also a difficult issue that the student body had to address through it all.

Although there were a lot of emotional issues, discomfort and distaste of teaching style the students persevered by acknowledging their emotions, discomfort and acceptance that regardless of the teaching style the course was part of their training. The difficulties the students overcame in this class will forever remain with them in the future, the teachings will come to mind when they are faced with difficult situations in their communities.

The greatest blessing in this week was that we have a relatively new student who didn't seem to have a voice, this student really grew in the sense that the words shared by this person revealed a very wise person. Although the second week was difficult both weeks teachings will be very beneficial for the students in their future ministry.

Deb Anderson-Pratt
3rd Year Student
Student Body Representative

Events

December 20, 2015	Winter Ceremonies
January 18-22, 2016	HS2 Exodus, Judges and Kings and Indigenous Histories
January 25-29, 2016	TH1 Western Systematic Theology and Indigenous Theologies
April 4-8, 2016	PM2 Baptisms, Marriages and Funerals and Indigenous Rites of Passage
April 9, 2016	Ceremony of Celebration
April 12-16, 2016	HS4 Prophets and Prophecy

Come and Stay at the SSSC **Meet, Celebrate, Learn or Just be**

We want to share the beauty of our space here on the banks of the Brokenhead River. The Sandy-Saulteaux Spiritual Centre offers a peaceful setting for meetings, retreats, weddings, conferences, school group outings, traditional ceremonies and more. We have a spacious meeting hall, dining room and guest rooms for overnight accommodations. You can set your own schedule or ask us about the cross-cultural programming we offer to deepen your understanding of Aboriginal culture.

Merry Christmas to you from Sandy-Saulteaux Spiritual Centre

A Christmas Parable

Indigenous people began to see that the story of the Creator's son was not the strange one told by the newcomers. It was very much like the ancient stories of the land the elders told. A new day dawned and the Original Instructions and the people's struggle with the story of the Creator's son came together into a renewal of hope. Humility once again was the sweet aroma among the people who were thankful for all the gifts from the relatives Creator provided in creation. The willing sacrifice of Creator's son for people and for the newcomers was of the same spirit as that of the animals and plants that gave their lives to sustain one another. The rocks once again sang. The trees once again clapped their hands. The night skies rang out in praise to Creator. Once again people were happy and gathered their minds into one voice of thanksgiving to all their relatives in creation and to Creator and there were smiles all around.



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