



Sandy-Saulteaux Spiritual Centre



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Creation is Revelation by Susie McPherson Derendy

It has been said that Creation/nature is the first bible. The written word/bible, also divine revelation, came much later. As I am part of creation, the divine is within me too. Divine revelation which means that God/Creator, Great Spirit or the Sacred Divine has been revealed through the natural world and continues to reveal.

For Indigenous people, theirs is an experiential spirituality, known through living rather than from some pre-established theoretical place. Our ancestors knew this and lived by it, so we also need to learn and know what Creation is teaching us. We are not above nature, we are a part of creation, and live by the same laws as all of nature. Indigenous people knew this divine connection and were strong and resilient in it. That we are here today is testament to that. The natural laws teach about balance and living in harmony, the good wisdom and interconnectedness and helps us to reconnect again and again to the sacred within us and in creation. This is the spirituality we are called to return to, it has always been there, so we are to honor all of life – our own, our fellow human beings, and mother earth. Now, more than ever, we are called to this truth and it will be the foundation upon which reconciliation happens. There was an Indigenous worldview happening here previously and another worldview came along. Now we are called to honor and live in balance and wholeness in the midst of these worldviews.

I heard an elder say that he was told that our Indigenous children are born with everything they need within each one of them. Songs, stories, dances, and ceremony and gatherings awakens one to be who they are created to be, and to all those things in nature and in life that help to sustain them spiritually, mentally, and physically.

I read a reflection recently, titled "The Inadequacy of Words", and it affirmed that in the spirit, sometimes there are no words to describe the depth of knowing and being that is possible.

Susie McPherson Derendy is Keeper of the Learning Circle at the Sandy-Saulteaux Spiritual Centre where "The Earth is Our Faculty".

My Spiritual Journey by Robert Patton



Robert in his shop. Woodworking is one of his many gifts.

When we were born our Creator set us out on journey. Each one of us was given our own special path. We encounter many great moments of beauty and distractions along the way. Each one teaches us. Sometimes the biggest lessons are the mistakes. We must always have an attentive ear, listening for our Creator's voice to gently guide us.

I want to tell you a story of my nearly eight decades long journey. I had fun along the way. Sometimes I didn't listen too much.

I was always active in our United Church here in Kahnawake. A long time ago I became friends with a young minister. He asked if I'd be interested in taking classes on a Shared ministry program in the city. I loved it. I heard the call but, I had a young family and a good job. Still my dream was becoming a Minister in the Church.

In 1980, I went to White Bear, Saskatchewan to attend the First Consultation on Native Ministry. It changed my life. I met many native people from all different nations. I had never met another Onkwehonwe (Indigenous) person from different nations. I learned so much when I listened to their stories, their language, their legends, cultures. I saw their love of our Creator. But I also heard of the struggles they all had -- of racism, of residential schools and of the abuse they suffered, which lead to alcoholism, and poverty.

In 1992 many of my friends in the Indigenous Church urged me to begin seriously on the path of becoming a minister. At the time, I said "OK!" I was so excited. This was the biggest decision of my life. And then everything stopped. I thought my family was with me. But I failed to fill them in what was ahead for them. My life's bubble burst and it took me a while to straighten it out. I still had my dream. Sometimes as I watched my friends being ordained, it brought tears to my eyes because of my own lost dream.

In 2019 I was invited to the Sandy-Saulteaux Spiritual Centre to sit in on a learning circle as an Elder. I loved it and I was asked if I would like to be a potential student. I've been there for over a year. I feel young again and I'm learning so much. My journey continues. I was asked a couple of weeks ago if I would like to become a CDM (Congregational Designated Minister) here in Kahnawake. I said yes and I am so excited. My church family is happy to hear, they are calling this good news and fully support me. In 1992, my mother was so happy to hear my calling to go into Ministry. Today, I know her spirit smiles and she knows I have heard God's call.

Like I said many times, My Creator, "Sonkwaiaieson" is with me and gently pushing me along. This has been my dream. Where will God lead me next? This I know.... no matter, he walks alongside with me. Nia wen Kowa (A great big thank you in my language - Mohawk)

Read more about Robert's journey at sandysaulteaux.ca.

Do you know someone like Robert who might have a call to ministry? (Maybe it's you!) Contact us at 204-268-3913 or sansau@mymts.net to learn more about our Indigenous Ministry Training Program and how we can help people with a gift for ministry answer Creator's call.



Introduction to Indigenous Lands and Issues in Canada

Adrian Jacobs, our Keeper of the Circle, has been hosting conversations with Indigenous elders from across the country to explore the cultural and historic foundations to today's headlines. In February, Terry Leblanc joined him to speak about Mi'kma'kik Lobster Fishing. In March, Grafton Antone shared insights on the 1492 Land Back Lane Land Conflict.

To register for upcoming sessions, visit: sandysaulteaux.ca/events.

April 17: Indigenous Child Welfare with Cree Elder Stan McKay Jr.

May 15: Indigenous People and Resource Development with Nakota Elder John Snow Jr.

June 19: Traditional Lands and Environmental Protection with Gitxsan Elder Ray Jones

Correction:

We apologize for the error in the print edition of our December newsletter.
Eileen Antone's name in the Longhouse is Tsyot sunit.

Radio Stations, Zoom Meetings, Emails & Hope: Ministry Tools in a Pandemic



Hello to you all at the Sandy-Saulteaux Spiritual Centre,

SSSC is a mouthful of words to describe a very nice and enriching place to have graduated from.

Before graduating, I was a part time student minister in File Hills, SK. I got to meet some wonderful people there. I had the honour to be on radio doing worship services

and it was a very refreshing experience. I would like to thank Reverend Deb Anderson Pratt and her daughter Mz D for setting me up with that opportunity at 95.3 THE CREEK FM in Okanese First Nation.

I was ordained in Regina, SK in September, 2020 and in November I started a full-time position serving at the Mountainview/Gitsegulkla United Churches here in the Hazeltons, BC. I have spent Christmas, and New Year's here and I am doing well despite the no travel and stay home orders from the province. We have online services and the turnout's not too bad. I continue to experience new ideas and meet new people as I go along, not face to face, but I communicate on email, messages and zoom. Gatherings, dinners, visitations, church services, and camps are shelved for now. We have planned a baptism for April (hope that goes well). As time goes on and we are free from the pandemic's grip it will be a busier time and a lot of things to catch up on.

Thank you for reading and God bless!

Reverend Bruce Neal

Tune In to Our New Podcast!



We launched the Return of the Buffalo Podcast in December. Return of the Buffalo is the name given to the work of fostering family wellbeing at SSSC.

Our podcast hosts, Marcus Rempel and Henry McKay, are gathering stories from the Return of the Buffalo community and those who inspire us—people like Diandra Rose Powderhorn, who participated in one of our family wellbeing retreats. Diandra has overturned a permanent apprehension order to regain custody of her two beautiful, fun-loving kids. She talks about Sandy-Saulteaux as the place where she first connected with the healing power of Spirit. Hear her story and others at sandysaulteaux.ca/return-of-the-buffalo. Subscribe on Apple, Spotify or Podbean so you don't miss an episode! You can help others connect with these conversations by leaving a review.

Sharing Seeds, Teachings & Blessings

We've had lots to share as we look ahead to the growing season. In a local seed exchange we gave away beans saved from our garden last year, some of which are heading to a Northern Friendship Center that has started a seed library and garden. Through Seeds of Diversity (seeds.ca) our Keeper of the Circle was invited to "Seedy Saturday" Zoom events across Canada to talk about "The Earth as our Provider: Grocery Store, Pharmacy and Hospital". We also held an online seed blessing to give thanks for seeds and all the goodness of life.



Donor Connections: Richard Miller



I have followed the growth of the Centre from its beginning at PCTC, as well as at Francis Sandy. I first met Bernice and Jessie Saulteaux when I served a Board of Home Missions summer field at Wolseley-Sintaluta-Hurricane Hills in 1966. I reconnected with them when I was a minister in Sudbury and General Council met there. Bernice was one of the Native Council advocates for the Native Apology, and

some of my Sudbury area colleagues at the time stated that she was the one who touched them most deeply. She and I reconnected back at Sudbury for the anniversary of the Apology, and again here at Kahnawake when she was the speaker for the 90th Anniversary service.

I retired from ministry in 2007 and from time to time I have done Sunday supply at Kahnawake and occasionally at Kanesatake. In these pandemic times Robert Patton has arranged for online services using Zoom, and I led worship "there" a few times.

My wife Nancy and I are monthly donors to the Centre via the United Church's program. We congratulate all of you at Sandy-Saulteaux on its accomplishments and wish you well in your ongoing work in leadership and ministry.

Will you join Richard and Nancy in making an automated monthly donation to the Sandy-Saulteaux Spiritual Centre? Even a small amount adds up to reliable steady support for the Centre and the work of living out The United Church of Canada's Apologies to Indigenous peoples. Contact robert@sandysaulteaux.ca to set up a monthly donation today.



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