



Sandy-Saulteaux Spiritual Centre



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Decolonized Leaders by Adrian Jacobs, Keeper of the Circle

Decolonized leaders arise from Indigenous community recognition and look to the land, their language, and their elders for guidance. Decolonized leaders listen to their people and affirm the genius and dignity of their circle. Decolonized leaders are secure in their own identity and willingly share leadership responsibilities with others. These are the kind of leaders you are supporting at SSSC.

Jesus was born to this kind of leadership model. He was securely established in his Jewish home, learned his spiritual responsibilities, and the trade of his family. He listened and learned for 30 years and then stepped out to change the world in 3 years. The first thing he did after receiving gifts and affirmation from God his father was to choose people to train. Women and men were mentored by his example and after a short training time were sent out to do what he did. His disciples changed the world.

When I see Jesus in the manger in Bethlehem, I see the vision God had for his life. I see just how important his training was and how it took up most of his life. I see that when the time came, he turned the world upside down. The tables of theft were turned over. The sick and the oppressed were healed and made free. The angel's announcement of peace on earth came to pass through ordinary women and men who followed a well-trained servant – Jesus.

Merry Christmas to all and a Happy 2022 New Year! Please remember our students in training in your prayers and support!



Students gathered for Learning Circles in October, together in person for the first time since January 2019! Thank you to our donors who helped make this happy reunion possible. We look forward to welcoming more groups to this space, now that we are open again to guests. Photo credit: Scott Douglas

History In The Making

by Susie McPherson Derendy, Keeper of the Learning Circle



Elenor Thompson

On behalf of all our friends and supporters like you, I travelled to Oxford House to be a part of an historic event on September 19. Elenor Thompson became the first SSSC graduate to be ordained in her community by the new National Indigenous Council (NIC) Region. A service to honor the special occasion was celebrated with those in attendance including family, friends, and community members. Other special guests included: Rey Anderson, NIC Elder; The Right Reverend and Cree Elder Stan McKay; Gloria Cook – Community Capacity Development Coordinator for Keewatin Circle; Grant Queskekapow; and Pat Bird from the Pine to Prairie Region. A month later, I traveled to Cross Lake for Sam Ross’s recognition as a Designated Lay Minister, an equally moving occasion.

I was deeply honored to officiate the formal part of the ceremony in Elenor’s service. These services are a confirmation of a vision for Indigenous Testamur that began with the SSSC Keeper of the Circle Adrian Jacobs. Up until now, Indigenous ministers in

rural communities had to travel to urban centres to be ordained or recognized. Together, you and I and communities like Oxford House and Cross Lake are part of the movement to return to communities the control that was taken away by colonialism.

Indigenous Testamur begins in community and is confirmed by the community – and it is central to the process of Indigenizing and decolonizing the training for Indigenous community leadership.



Sam Ross

Decolonization In Action



Adrian Jacobs holds up a replica of the Two Row Wampum, representing the river of life and a way to travel it together, in peace and friendship. This belt and its story are part of a sacred bundle that was passed to Canadian Mennonite University (CMU) in ceremony this fall. CMU presented us with a bundle of symbolic books and precious seeds. This bundle exchange builds on many years of conversation between our two schools. More than a MOU that can be filed and forgotten, the bundles are gifts and signs that acknowledge our relationship and respect for each other as centres of teaching and learning with deep commitments to faith and community. Carrying these bundles will remind us of our commitment to continually strengthen our partnership.

Happy News!

by Marcus Rempel

In the sea of orange t-shirts and masked faces, a mother and her five children walked past me. "Cara, is that you?" Sure enough. We shared happy greetings and happy news. Cara had successfully closed her last files with CFS just a week earlier. Cara was one of the pilot project participants in our family healing retreats. One of my favourite photos from that time is of Cara and her five kids poking their heads out of the bean tipi—a photo we could not share, regardless of Cara's permission, because the children were wards of CFS at the time. No more!

Marcus Rempel is team leader of Return of the Buffalo, the work of fostering family wellbeing at SSSC. Your donations this year meant more families like Cara's will get to spend time here this fall, strengthening their connection to land, to culture and to each other.



Thank you to everyone who joined us for our 2021 Annual General Meeting!

It was great to see many faces in our virtual circle as we reflected on the past year and announced our return to in-person gatherings. Special thanks to graduate Rev. Deb Anderson-Pratt who shared about the important impact SSSC has had in her life. Your care and support help make stories like Deb's possible.

Welcome Back!

by Deb Versluis



As the new Hospitality Co-Ordinator you may find me in many places at Sandy-Saulteaux Spiritual Center. My focus is on making sure that visitors have everything they need to enjoy their time here. You can find me in the garden, harvesting fresh vegetables for the kitchen to use, and overseeing summer student work. Sometimes I'm at my desk on the phone, booking transportation, sending emails, or creating meal plans for groups who will be visiting. Often, I'm ordering supplies, putting things away, scheduling, planning, and greeting guests as they arrive.

I began at Sandy-Saulteaux Spiritual Center when I was asked to create a meal plan and cook for the very first Mamawe Ota Askihk in 2017. Before that my work background had been as a private business owner, office administrator, and a bank employee. My personal passions include food sustainability, growing, harvesting and preserving food, music, knitting and scrapbooking.

We are once again open for retreats, after being closed for over 18 months due to Covid 19. I'd like to welcome everyone back as we strive to provide you with an enjoyable and memorable experience. Our hall, kitchen, dining room and cabins are ready, staff have returned, and we look forward to serving you soon!

The Sandy-Saulteaux Spiritual Centre is located on thirty-six acres of woodland on the Brokenhead River near Beausejour, MB. We offer a peaceful place for groups to meet, learn, work or rest together. You can plan your own visit or ask us about customized cross-cultural programming. Learn more at sandysaulteaux.ca.

Tipi Teachings by Adrian Jacobs

The things you learn when you put up a tipi! I know that was not a full sentence but it does express my surprise from our time together on Saturday, October 23rd.

I learned that there are three kinds of tipi; Cree, Anishinaabe, and Lakota/Nakota. We had an Anishinaabe tipi from Cree Star Gifts. I learned the most difficult part of the job was to set up the original tripod of poles. I also learned that the person we asked to help us with setting up the tipi, Bruce Kakakaway, our recent graduate, had

asked another recent graduate Elenor Thompson and a visitor Sheila Robson to help him. Bruce was familiar with the Lakota/Nakota tipi, Elenor knew most about the Cree tipi, and Sheila knew about the Anishinaabe tipi.

It was fun, though a little confusing to be hearing instructions of what to do coming from three directions! We worked through this cacophony with laughter and ended up with a beautiful tipi!





Thank you to all our helpers and to everyone who chipped in on Giving Tuesday 2020 so there could be a new tipi at the Centre. The tipi is a space for learning on the land and meeting in a circle. It catches your eye as soon as you arrive here, a sign of welcome letting you know you're in a space where Indigenous ways of being are celebrated. See more photos of our day, past tipis at the Centre and share your memories with #SSSCTipiTime on Facebook.

2022 Learning Circles

Join us in the new year to learn something new! Our ministry training Learning Circles are open to anyone looking for a continuing education opportunity.

- January 17-21: Systematic & Indigenous Theologies
- January 24-28: Baptisms, Weddings & Funerals

Online and in-person participation options are available. Contact us for details and to register.

Circles for Reconciliation



SSSC has been hosting a Circle for Reconciliation in collaboration with Brokenhead Ojibway Nation (BON). Circles for Reconciliation are small groups made up of half Indigenous and half non-Indigenous Canadians who meet to explore themes of truth and reconciliation. Ours is the first in-person Circle since the beginning of the pandemic, with meetings alternating between the SSSC hall and the BON Health Centre. BON is SSSC's closest First Nation and the community at the mouth of the river that runs past the Centre. It feels good to be getting to know these neighbours a little better! Our Keeper of the Learning Circle, Susie McPherson Derendy, has co-facilitated a Circle in the Brandon area. Anyone can register for a circle from anywhere in Canada. Learn more at circlesforreconciliation.ca.

A Warm Friendship

Our friends at 1JustCity are committed to reconciliation and offer programming to celebrate the resilience and diversity of Indigenous cultures. They support three drop-in community centres in Winnipeg's core neighbourhoods. Our Keeper of the Centre Rob Smith attended the 1JustCity pow wow in August with a gift of 45 blankets for distributing to people who need them.



Rob Smith with Indigenous Cultural Safety Leader, Lori Abraham, of 1JustCity.

Remembering Jules Lavallee

by Adrian Jacobs

Jules was one of our elders who did sweats and other ceremonies for SSSC. He was the one person who really showed me the vision of SSSC by holding his hands out saying that Dr. Jessie Saulteaux had two parts of the vision for DJSRC and SSSC; the ministry training program and cross-cultural education. He said this at the Feast for Friends in 2012, the first after I became Keeper of the Circle here. He showed me that even though the residential school system did horrible things to our children he still showed respect for Christians. I will miss him and wanted so much for SSSC to see him again in our work.

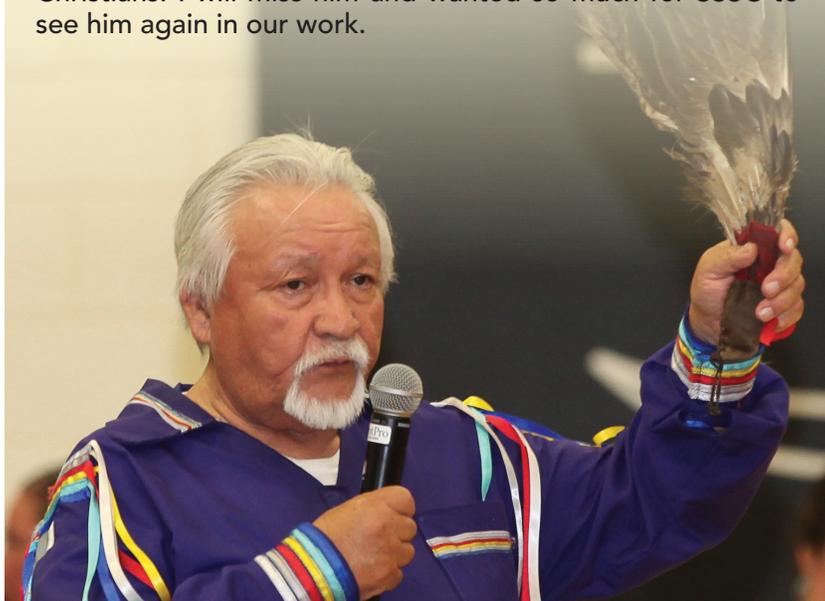


Photo credit: Louis Riel School Division

Donor Connections: Valerie G. Barnes Connell Jordan



My first experience of "Dr. Jessie" (how I will always think of the now, Sandy-Saulteaux Spiritual Centre) was a visit with Elders in 1987, at the Centre's first home, Prairie Christian Training Centre (PCTC). We listened much and talked a bit; we learned.

In 1991, at a Lay Pastoral Minister's training in Winnipeg, I learned the Centre had a new home near Beausejour. I knew I wanted to see it so a group

of us piled in my car. We arrived for the opening of the new lodge and spent a wonderful afternoon in this lovely spot on the Brokenhead River.

One day in 1993, out of the blue, I had this intense feeling, "I have to get to Dr. Jessie." When I went into PCTC the next day, I learned they needed a driver to take a group of people to Dr. Jessie. I was flabbergasted, but happily said, "Yes, for sure!"

With passengers from Africa, India and West Germany, I set off. We spent several days around the Centre, sharing in education circles and my first experience of the Sweat Lodge. Some very important moments for the people I took there and for myself - the beginning of a life-changing journey for me that continues today.

Over the years I met so many wonderful people at the Centre, including Dr. Jessie Saulteaux. What an extraordinary woman!

When I lived in Pinawa, I spent much time volunteering and attending events. Once I was asked to pick up three young women from northern Japan coming for classes. It was an extremely cold night. Thankfully I dressed warmly, as the heater in my car failed to come on. I fretted all the way to the Winnipeg airport, wondering what I would do.

When I arrived, to my delight, the heater kicked in! I said a prayer of thanks, picked up my charges and headed back to Dr. Jessie. They were all hoping to see the Northern Lights during their visit. Well, that was the next miracle! We got to the turn in to Dr. Jessie and, all of a sudden, the Northern Lights shone across the road. A night I will never forget and another prayer of thanks from me.

I was elected to the Board in 2006. For the next three years, living in La Ronge, SK, I called the Centre weekly to keep track of what was happening and travelled there twice a year for meetings.

Recently I have re-connected and am happy to see (virtually) some of what is happening. I look forward to being able to come and see for myself, especially the garden. I remember a small garden when John and Alice McFarlane and Janet Silman were there. Tobacco was a consistent crop at the time.

There is so much more I could say about this wonderful place, sometimes my home away from home.

Will you join Valerie in supporting this place where Christian and Indigenous spirituality meet and people from many walks of life experience profound moments of renewal? Give today by mailing in the form on the last page of this newsletter or visit sandysaulteaux.ca/ donate to make an easy online gift.



Tell Us Your Story!

We want to know how the Sandy-Saulteaux Spiritual Centre has impacted your life or the life of someone you care about.

Email:

erica@sandysaulteaux.ca





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