KEEPER OF THE LEARNING CIRCLE

Sandy-Saulteaux Spiritual Centre is a place of spirit where both Indigenous and Christian spiritual beliefs are respected, shared and understood. We are located on 36 peaceful acres of wooded parkland beside the Brokenhead River, one mile east of Beausejour, Manitoba, Canada. From the strength of our Elder’s wisdom, SSSC fosters teachings of respect, healing, and wholeness among all peoples and with all of creation. We are a non-profit organization involved in theological and cross-cultural training. “*The Earth is Our Faculty*” describes our orientation in education. The earth produces our language, our elders read the lessons of the earth and create our cultures. We have lived well for many millennia in this land.

The United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples guides our work in leadership development and connection to the land. The educational mandates contained in Canada’s Truth and Reconciliation Commission’s Calls to Action are taken seriously and are embedded in our curriculum and program work. The Calls to the Church, prepared by the Caretakers of Our Indigenous Circle, expresses our vision for the ongoing development of Indigenous Peoples’ mission and ministry and communities of faith within The United Church of Canada. Our learning circle and community-based education model has led the way in providing an Indigenous approach to learning and has fostered respect and engagement of non-Indigenous people, churches, schools and social agencies.

SSSC trains Indigenous community lay leaders in helping and healing capacities. We also train people for Indigenous leadership roles in The United Church of Canada and other churches. We affirm a style of leadership appropriate to Indigenous culture and the Indigenous church experience. We are constantly testing curricula and approaches to increase our effectiveness in our Indigenous context.

Sandy-Saulteaux Spiritual Centre is an expression of The UCC apology. The door is open to the Indigenous self-determination articulated in the Calls to the Church, including Indigenous self-theologizing. SSSC ministry development is a student-centered, andragogical approach and not the parental pedagogy of the colonial approach. The Learning Circle is a place where every student is a teacher and every teacher a learner. Students are supported in and by community, by the Keepers of the Learning Circle, resource people, LC elders, and community Vision Keeper mentors.

The Keeper of the Learning Circle oversees the Indigenous Ministry Training Program. While this role has its own unique focus and set of responsibilities, its responsibilities require collaboration, flexibility, and trust to support students in all areas. Whether one is orienting new students to the candidacy pathway; connecting them to the education and support processes at SSSC (including indigenous education); visiting students in their home and ministry communities or ensuring the education brought to the Learning Circle holds practical familiarity with real world application and not abstract theorizing, it is clear that the Keeper of the Learning Circle will require a deep familiarity with Indigenous people, communities, and the lived experiences of colonial impact and identity restoration.

The Keeper of the Learning Circle will need be attuned to the flow of the program’s calendar, both as Learning Circles approach and during busy times of reporting to ensure the many details and logistics are covered. The ebb and flow of this work is that there are busy times and less busy times; high levels of cooperation and communication are needed to work as a team that displays the principles of Indigenous leadership. They will need to develop an ability to troubleshoot in times of crisis and work to meet goals amidst challenges and complexities. For example, the focus will shift in preparation for busy seasons, in helping to meet reporting needs, circle logistics, and to prioritize student needs in the rhythm of the school’s calendar. In this way, the Keeper of the Learning Circle sets the tone for forms of reciprocal community care of all who enter the circle. In light of this, below are the responsibilities of the Keeper of the Learning Circle:

● Impeccable Administrative Skills and Recordkeeping

● Budget & Finances (With support from Keeper of the Centre)

● Relationship & Community Building - Talking/Listening/Sharing Circles/Meals/Being Present

● Being a Supportive Presence to Students

● Shared access to student files and upkeep

● Co-Writing & Sending Reports

○ Program staff are writing reports for students who they are in primary relationship with, this may change from year to year on a student’s pathway.

○ Reports are/may need to be sent to Indigenous Office of Vocation, Student’s Community, Student’s Field Placement, National Indigenous Council.

○ Keepers of the Learning Circle will need to work with these community partners to develop a form of reporting style that works (i.e. take advantage of the opportunity to create our own report style in the wake of the structuring process).

○ This Reporting style should include a mode to receive reports back from community, field placements, Vision Keepers, IOV, NIC as feedback for students.

● Orientation/Intake/Assessment for New Students and Student’s Learning Pathway

● M. Div. Course Accreditations from SSSC Circles - Communication with Emmanuel & VST - Team effort with Keeper of the Circle being primary person of communication.

● Communications with Indigenous Office of Vocation

○ The Keepers of the Learning Circle reports on both student progress and student readiness; they also both weigh in on a student’s field placement site. Clear, trusting, and open communication that involves all parties will need to be established and respected.

● SSSC Ceremony of Celebration (Student-led, with support from the Business Assistant and Bookkeeper, and both Keepers)

● Staff Support for the Program Committee (A policy making body whose purpose is to oversee the development and implementation of all programming). The Program Committee approves New Student Applications & SSSC Financial Bursaries. It is concerned with 5 Key areas, some of which are more closely supported by each Keeper:

○ Policy (Policy Development, including Student Handbook & Student Policy & Procedures)

○ Curriculum (Including Input on teachers and elders for upcoming learning circles)

○ Recruitment

○ Outreach/New Programming, including continuing education programs

○ Student Life

● This position has the opportunity to be a hybrid remote with flexibility.

● This position has the opportunity to be 0.6 to Full-Time at 35 hours/week.

● Annual Salary beginning at $60,000/year depending on qualifications and experience.

● Compensation also includes employee benefit and pension package of The United Church of Canada.

● The successful candidate must be Indigenous, Metis or Inuit.

● Start Date September 2024.