



Sandy-Saulteaux Spiritual Centre

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Part of the Family

At Sandy-Saulteaux, our work connects us to our ancestors and prepares the way for the children yet to come. All of these generations are part of the family and by nurturing families we nurture intergenerational healing.

In this work, we are excited to announce a new partnership with Family Ways Lodge. This grassroots organization is dedicated to the holistic healing of Indigenous & non-Indigenous communities through direct service delivery. They offer workshops, ceremonies, advocacy, counselling and land-based programming.

"Passing on traditional knowledge and fostering positive experiences are essential to the healing and prosperity of future generations. By engaging youth in cultural practices, we empower them with identity, purpose, and a sense of belonging" explained Family Ways Lodge member Christin Harris of Garden Hill Anisininew Nation.

The original vision came from a relative who passed on both the lodge and its legacy to Denny Murdock of Fisher River Cree Nation. Denny sits in the head seat of Family Ways Lodge which brings together a team of five, who collectively have a strong grounding in traditional teachings as well as trauma-informed clinical expertise.

While the partnership with Sandy-Saulteaux is new, some Family Ways Lodge members have been connected to our Centre for many years. By working together, we can offer teachings and ceremonies from different communities and perspectives that foster a holistic approach to viewing the world.

Family Ways Lodge will be offering leadership to Sandy-Saulteaux's Return of the Buffalo family retreats, providing a healing space on the land for Indigenous parents and children who have been separated, or are at risk of separation. They will also be leading our seasonal sweat lodge ceremonies and other events for our guests. Welcome to our family!

By donating, volunteering and participating in the learning at Sandy-Saulteaux Spiritual Centre, you too are a part of the family here. Thank you for working with us toward intergenerational healing.



Can you tell what we are building together with Family Ways Lodge here? It's a place where people can deepen their relationship with Creator, and with all our relatives. Turn the page to find out!

A New Lodge at Sandy-Saulteaux

Over a couple of beautiful spring days, Family Ways Lodge put up a new sweat lodge at our Centre, where they will lead ceremonies for many of our guests.

We said farewell to the Knowledge Keepers who have supported our students, families and guests over the past year. We wish them all the best!



Guided by Rob Apetagon, young helpers harvest willow saplings from along the riverbank.



Greg Robson holds the saplings in place as they are tied together with red cloth, to form the shape of the lodge.



Christin Harris looks in at the finished lodge, now covered in a thick, dark tarp.

A Place of Pride

A pivotal gathering that took place on our grounds in 1990 is now featured on a Canada Post stamp. Part of the Places of Pride series, the stamp honours the 3rd North American Native Gay & Lesbian Gathering. That's where Myra Laramee introduced the term "Two-Spirit", in what became "an act of liberation", as Albert McLeod told Canada Post. "It really enhanced that ability to self-identify as Indigenous, but also as queer people."

Albert explains "Two-Spirit refers to diverse Indigenous understandings of gender, relationships with the spiritual realm, ancestors, and love and support from family and community members. It can describe someone's sexual, gender and/or spiritual identity."

Watch Albert McLeod tell the story at bit.ly/2SpiritStamp.



The stamp highlights the sweat lodge, the drum and the pipe as important elements in this historic gathering held on our grounds. SSSC continues to be a place where Indigenous people are reclaiming traditional ceremonies that connect us to our ancestors, to the Spirit, and to the power of our unique identities as Indigenous peoples.

Ministry Students are on the Move

SSSC's ministry training program prepares Indigenous leaders for helping and healing roles in church and community. We honour both Indigenous and Christian spiritual beliefs.

In April, our Learning Circle visited different settings in Winnipeg to reflect on Urban and Youth Ministry. SSSC grad Rev. Deb Anderson-Pratt joined us to share her experiences with Regina Native Outreach Ministry.

In May, our students explored preaching and worship by assembling online for the Festival of Homiletics held in Atlanta. "I feel like I've been drinking at the Well of Life and Hope", said our Elder, Rev. Lee Claus, at the end of a week of sermons and workshops on the theme of Preaching to Heal the Divide.

In June they were back at SSSC to consider the Gospels, with Sheila Klassen-Wiebe from Canadian Mennonite University.

We asked our students:

What was the biggest AHA moment of the past year and what are you looking forward to?



Janet Kewaquom-Root

About a month and a half ago after worship, my sister said she had noticed that I was speaking with more confidence and commented that the sermons were more meaningful. She could see what she called 'real growth'. I felt humble and so happy because I know she wouldn't say those things just for nothing.

I look forward to learning new skills that I can apply when returning to my home community and the people there who I care for and serve as a follower of Jesus.



Brian George

I had many deeply profound moments at the SSSC. My spirit has been strengthened by the scope of theological and spiritual teachings.

This coming year is my last year but I will continue to return to the centre and I will hear laughter and enjoy warm friendships.

Thank you to everyone for helping to create the beautiful ambiance that you abundantly share on behalf of the triune God.



The Learning Circle was warmly received by the Clan Mothers (pictured) and at 1JustCity where we shared food and learned how these unique groups create spaces of welcome and healing in Winnipeg's inner city.

Preparing for Ceremony with the Women's Circle

Offering traditional ceremonies is an important part of life at Sandy-Saulteaux Spiritual Centre. Ceremonies keep us grounded in the wisdom of the Earth and the knowledge of our ancestors.

Once a month, our Knowledge Keeper Melody has been inviting women to gather at the Centre for a day of visiting, learning about traditional ceremonies and helping with the preparations. The women enjoyed being together and we so appreciate all their help with tasks like cleaning medicines and sewing drum bags.

Melody taught the women to make rattles. Now the Centre will have a collection that our guests can use

when they visit. These rattles will help people practice songs that they can share in ceremony one day. Miigwetch!

A lot of effort goes into preparing for ceremonies, from harvesting and preparing medicines, to caring for a drum, a pipe or a sweat lodge. We couldn't do this without the generosity of our knowledge keepers, volunteers and donors!

Rattle Making, Step by Step

STEP 1: Before we began, everyone and everything was smudged. Each rattle is made of two matching pieces of rawhide. From left to right, Alexis Penner, Grace Hayden, Twila MacNair, Connie Budd, Anne Ticknor, Melody McKellar, Fern Reis and Helen Hamende designed their own creative shapes.



STEP 2: Punching holes around the edge, for stitching the two pieces of rawhide together, is easiest to do with a helper.



STEP 3: Alaya and Lyndee Cook use a hand drill to make holes in the rawhide and in the handles.



STEP 4: Alexis stitches the two halves of the rattle together with sinew.



STEP 5: Once the hide is stitched together and soaked, sand is packed inside so that the hide dries in the shape of a rattle.



STEP 6: When we harvest cedar for medicine, nothing goes to waste. Sandra Ross sands the leftover branches to make smooth rattle handles.



STEP 7: The hide is filled with small stones before the handle is attached with sinews.



STEP 8: Painting the rattles makes them long-lasting. To finish the rattle, the handle is wrapped with leather.



Keepers of the Vision

We welcome four new members to our board:



Rev. Shane Goldie is a 2-Spirited Cree/Metis ordained minister in The United Church of Canada. As the youngest serving Ordained Minister, he brings a passionate, inclusive, and justice-driven ministry rooted in love, resilience, and advocacy for 2SLGBTQ+ and Indigenous rights, weaving faith with deep compassion and bold truth.

Rhonda Johns was born and raised on The Six Nations Reserve. She is Upper Cayuga, Bear Clan. She has 2 awesome children and 4 wonderful grandbabies. Through Nations Uniting she has served 15 years providing healing programs for children to seniors and Residential School Survivors. She has been involved in the United Church's Healing Fund, Candidacy Board and Five Oaks.



For almost 4 decades, **Ed Bianchi** has worked with Indigenous people towards the recognition and implementation of Indigenous rights. This includes 22 years at KAIROS Canada as Indigenous Rights Program Coordinator and on the management team, 7 years as National Coordinator of the Aboriginal Rights Coalition, and as an advocate for Indigenous communities.

The Reverend Dr. Teresa Burnett-Cole

Dr. Teresa Burnett-Cole is a minister at Glebe-St. James United Church in Ottawa. She is a liturgist by training and passion, and she regularly teaches on Indigenous issues and worship. She is active in the training of Licensed Lay Worship Leaders. She is a visual artist and musician. Teresa lives with one foot in the Indigenous world and the other in the Settler world. Teresa and her partner, Ruth love camping, kayaking, and walking the dog together.



Remembering Reverend Betty Lou McNabb by Rev. Kristal McGee

As a child, Betty Lou got a ride to church with the school secretary. She was curious about God, wanted to learn about Jesus, and had a strong rapport with the Spirit.

At twenty, she underwent open heart surgery - one of four surgeries she faced with calm trust, courage and circle of care. While in hospice- she shared her daily practice of thanking her heart. In her words - *It gave me 42 years - each beat, a gift.*

When her daughter Miranda was a child, Betty Lou immersed herself in coordinating the Sunday school, ensuring that the whole community engaged in deepening their faith. Her call to ministry lead Betty Lou first to the Francis Sandy Centre and later to the Centre for Christian Studies. Her formation for ministry deepened through the graciousness and tenacity of Indigenous communities willing to engage her wholeheartedly- M'Wikwedong Friendship Center in Owen Sound, Cape Croker United, and being called to serve with Christian Island United Church and Georgina Island United Church.

Betty Lou embodied the message of choose life - new life - with each heartbeat - live to give glory to Creator, in the Way of Jesus, through the power of the Spirit.

Remembering Reverend Janet Severight

Janet Severight was one of the earliest graduates from the Dr. Jessie Saulteaux Resource Centre, completing her training here in 1988. She was the minister in Cote First Nation. Her family writes: "As an Indian Day School and Indian Residential School Survivor that worked toward faith-based healing throughout her life, she was a resilient forgiving loyal person displaying much wisdom. She was a compassionate respectful Elder and Minister that was faithful to the Lord, her family, and her community service work. With a strong work ethic, Janet along with her husband Joe were excellent providers and a deeply rooted family-oriented couple.

Janet was part of the Regina Native Ministry board when Rev. Deb Anderson Pratt was hired. Deb remembers her for her gentle and helpful ways: "She really helped gently guide me in ways to be in the church when I became part of the United Church." Janet passed away on October 16, 2024 in Regina, SK at the age of 95 years.

Did you know that Betty Lou McNabb is the only person to graduate from both Centre for Christian Studies and the Francis Sandy Theological Centre with a diploma designed in a spiral fashion to honour both schools?

Donor Connections: Maureen Scott Kabwe



Maureen & Dorris, 2017

Why do I donate in memory of Kawennenoron Dorris Diabo Montour, Kahnawake United Church? Dorris was a leading Elder of the Kahnawake United Church and involved in almost every aspect of the church's life, since childhood. As a Mohawk speaker, she was part of the Mohawk Bible

Translation Team. Dorris supported the National Consultations visioning Indigenous Ministry.

I graduated from the Francis Sandy Theological Centre's Lay Pastoral Ministry program in 1999.

While I was the minister in Kahnawake, Dorris regularly mentored me over soup and sandwich lunches, as she had with ministers before. Now I have been blessed by a return to part-time ministry in Kahnawake, in support of their ordained minister, Rev Robert Patton and community. I was commissioned there to Diaconal Ministry on May 25.

Will you join Maureen in celebrating the ones who've gone before us, with a gift to support the next generation of Indigenous leaders?

THANK YOU FOR YOUR GENEROSITY!

Everyone below has made a gift since our last newsletter, to support traditional ceremonies, nurture Indigenous leadership and move us all along a path to reconciliation. We are also supported by The United Church of Canada, through Mission and Service.

Rebecca Anderson	Lou Erickson	Tracey Macdonald	Prairie to Pine Region UCW	Olivia
Jann Asmundson	Etonia U.C.W.	Sandy MacGean	Matthew Wiens & Elizabeth	Pamela Thomas
Glenna Beauchamp	Erick Feltham & Pippa Lock	MacGregor United Church	Redekopp	Transcona Memorial
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of Honoured Elder Paul	Ray Jones	McMurtry	Wilma Shirriff	Rebecca Watson
Campbell	Lorraine Kakegamic	Joan McMurtry	Rev. Betty-Lou Skogen	Westminster United
Jordan Cantwell	Bob & Muriel Kenyon	Lila McNeil	Don Smirl	Church, Regina
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in honour of The United	Marilyn Legge and Michael	Robert Patton	Lori Stewart & Paul	Emily Wooster
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Sandra Dunning	United Church of Canada	Andriel Pitter	Lynne Strome	Erica Young
Estelle Encontro	Foundation	Debbie Pomeransky	Bri-anne Swan	Joan Zaretsky
Lori Erhardt	Susan Loepky	Sandy Popham	Ken Thomas	Anonymous (25)



Enskatewenhniá:we
niiohserá:ke
Sa'tekariwa'sóntere

In 1925, the United Church of Canada was formed, bringing together different churches who, despite their differences, found a path they could walk together. Indigenous communities have been part of the United Church from the beginning. The growth of Indigenous leadership

within the Church is an important part of our history. Sandy-Saulteaux Spiritual Centre is funded primarily by the United Church, as one of the ways the Church is living into the apologies it made to Indigenous people.

Thanks to the gifts that United Church members across Canada contribute, we support Indigenous ministers and offer traditional ceremonies and learning opportunities that are open to all people.



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