



August 2025

Sa:go, (that means Hello, in my language)

Deep, Bold, and Daring are more than just words... My small church in Hamilton, Ontario (Barton Stone-Mount Hope United) found a way to put life into these action words for our UCC's 100th Anniversary.

I'd like to challenge your congregation to join us.

We decided that one way to look to the future of the United Church with hope, was to make a gift to the Sandy-Saulteaux Spiritual Centre. This is a good way to **help Indigenous students become ministers**, to provide leadership in their communities, and to our bigger church as well.

Will you join us? Let me explain...

First... what is the Sandy-Saulteaux Spiritual Centre? It's the "wahbung", amalgamation (in 2011) of two Indigenous theological centres, the Francis Sandy Theological Centre and the Dr. Jessie Saulteaux Resource Centre. Now the Sandy-Saulteaux Spiritual Centre carries on this important work of reconciliation all across Canada.

I'm not the only one who believes that Sandy-Saulteaux Spiritual Centre is **one of the most important things the church is doing right now.**

SSSC students are showing the bigger church a path to reconciliation. They are building up Indigenous communities. And when Indigenous communities are strengthened, that **helps move us all closer to reconciliation.**

Even though they have the desire to enter ministry, many of our **students need financial support to travel** to Sandy-Saulteaux to learn about, and do the hard work of undoing the damage that our forebearers and governments did in colonial times.

I suggested to my congregation that we give as generously as we could to **help cover some of these travel costs.**

What better way to celebrate our anniversary than with a gift for the future of the church?

Travel costs are approximately **\$4,800 per year, per student** over 5 years. Many are traveling from remote communities which is expensive.

So far, there have been 19 gifts from Barton Stone-Mount Hope United, ranging from \$25 to \$2000. Together we've covered almost 3 quarters of a student's travel costs for a year!

Imagine if 3 more churches joined us and we covered the travel costs for 3 students for a full year of their training...

What if 30 churches joined us? We could start telling some of the students who would like to train at SSSC that we have the support to accept them too.

Imagine if Indigenous ministers felt a groundswell of support from across the United Church. Imagine if they heard the message that United Church congregations from across Canada are cheering them on, eager to learn from the gifts that Indigenous communities of faith have to share.

I know many of you are praying for healing and justice for Indigenous communities in Canada. You're taking steps to live reconciliation.

A gift to Sandy-Saulteaux Spiritual Centre is one way to respond to those prayers. It's one way to take **another step in our journey to reconciliation.**

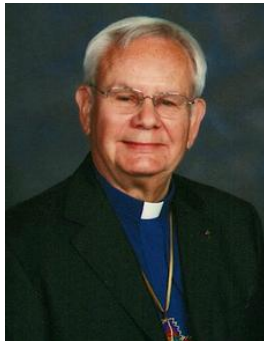
This Anniversary Challenge is a concrete way to live out our land acknowledgments and celebrate 100 years.

I encourage you to tell your congregation about the opportunity to support Indigenous student ministers.

Enclosed you'll find some of the materials I used to begin this challenge with my congregation. I hope they'll be helpful for you too.

If you do, I look forward to hearing how it goes.

Nya:weh, Chi Meegwich...



Rev. Lee Claus
Francis Sandy Theological Centre Grad, 2001

PS: Would you like to join my congregation in celebrating the United Church's 100th anniversary, with a gift to Indigenous ministers? Please reach out to Erica Young (erica@sandysaulteaux.ca or 204-268-3913) at Sandy-Saulteaux Spiritual Centre and she would be happy to help you.