



this issue

Algonquin Land Claim

A Cottage Story

Mādahòkì Farm

EDITOR'S INTRODUCTION

Here we are in our second Advent in a Covid world. By now we hope that most of our Emmanuel seniors have received their Covid boosters, and that the under 18's are well into getting their first and second shots.

In spite of living in a Covid world, our Emmanuel community has continued to move forward as a lively and active congregation, with activities for families, youth, adults and seniors. We are active in worship activities, faith study, social outreach, and furthering our understanding of indigenous relations. Our website is undergoing a major overhaul and re-design and will be launched in the New Year. In this issue of the newsletter you will find stories of the many activities and interests that our people are engaged in.

If you have items for publication, suggestions or comments, please send them to:
newsletter@emmanuelunited.ca

A number of the contributions to this issue highlight our growing interest in and commitment to right relations with indigenous Canadians.

Christmas Blessings to all in the Emmanuel family.

Phyllis MacRae, Editor

Jon Jones, Publisher

Willie Selkirk, Technical services

Richard Johnston, Proof reading



FROM BRIAN'S DESK

Looking for Signs

Sitting at the corner of Botsford and Smythe this morning looking over at our Emmanuel electronic sign I was thinking of Jesus being asked for a sign. In John's Gospel the people crowd around him and demand, "What sign are you going to give us then?" I suspect that they were looking for more than just an inspirational message on a church sign board. They wanted something concrete from Jesus. "Are you the Messiah, the one sent of God or are you someone else?" What's great is that Jesus always points around them to see the signs. Are the sick being healed? Does it look like the end is coming? Look about folks and read the signs.

The other signs I noticed this morning were all the ones for winter. Snow plowing services had their signs along Pleasant Park Drive, people had some of their shrubs wrapped, the forest looked devoid of leaves on the trees ready for another winter and the forecast on the radio called for snow. We are always looking for signs. No more so than now, as we near, hopefully, the end of this pandemic. What are the signs telling us? What to make of increased cases or people in the ICU, or vaccinations for children under 12? What will be the sign that it is truly over, if ever?

And we are looking for signs of God's desire in our world, in our community of faith and in our own lives. What are the signs God is posting? If Jesus and the Gospel are held true then we should probably look in the unexpected places and to the unexpected people. They will bear the signs of God's inbreaking love. No one expected angels to sing to shepherds and no one saw a sign in a manger birth.

God is still giving us signs and our prayer this season is to open not only our eyes but to open our lives to seeing, to hearing, to believing in the signs God sends to us.

Blessings, Brian

Rev. Brian Copeland



PASSAGES AND BLESSED EVENTS

We remember the following members of our Emmanuel family who passed away this summer and fall:

Marion Seely – May 15, 2021

Millie Fyfe – June 6, 2021

Harold Godding – July 19, 2021

René Péron – August 12, 2021

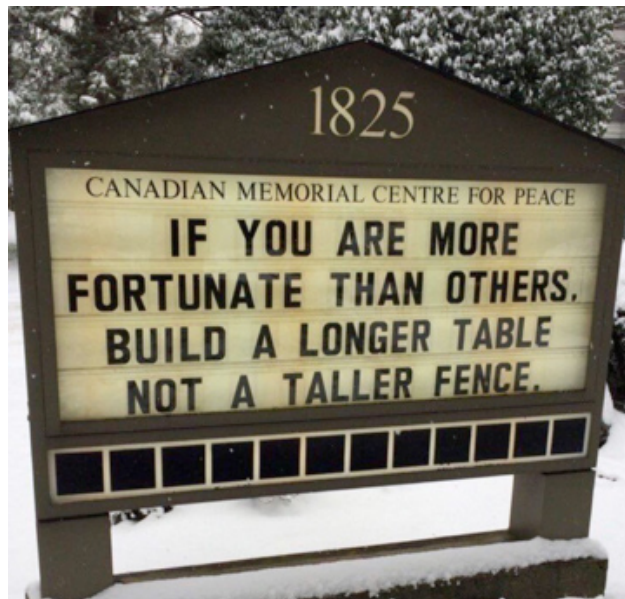
Jack Lines – October 19, 2021

Florence Barrette – December 2, 2021

Baptisms:

Percy George Hywarren Flake, son of Tia Hywarren and Thomas Flake,
October 10, 2021

Amaya Bongila Kula Dianga, daughter of Garmai Mulbah and Benkido Guy Dianga,
October 10, 2021



PASTORAL CARE LETTER

Matthew 11:28 "Come to me, all of you who are weary and carry heavy burdens, and I will give you rest." This Scripture speaks to me of Grief. Grief is our reaction to loss.

Grief and Loss are front and center in this Covid Pandemic. Can you identify any losses in your life presently? Losses are in our lives every day, especially as we age. These losses are not always deaths; there are lost dreams, relationships, routines, health, and anything really, that has left our lives. Grief is felt differently by everyone.

The processing of grief is not a straightforward process. It can get messy. One day things are going fine, and you feel content with your life, another time you feel overwhelmed. Grief can affect our emotions, thoughts, behavior, and even how we feel physically. It really takes time to heal losses. The "grief work" involves developing a new relationship with what you have lost.

Grief can affect our appetite, sleep habits, health, focus and many other parts of our lives. The outward expression of grief is mourning. This can be seen through crying, writing, religious rituals and many other ways.

When we mourn in a healthy way, we gradually accept the loss, and our lives adjust accordingly. In many of these situations, uncertainty about how and when the situation will be resolved may complicate the grieving process and make the loss harder to work through than it otherwise would be. Self-compassion and awareness become so important. Why not speak to yourself like you would a treasured friend, when you are struggling with losses?

Roxanne Delmage
Pastoral Care Provider



Roxanne with Flo Barrette



THE LIFE OF OUR COMMUNITY

DAY PILGRIMAGE FALL 2021 AT BAXTER CONSERVATION AREA

What makes a perfect day? Picture a beautiful fall day—cool and foggy to start—and then a glorious hot and sunny day with blue skies. You are in the forest and beside the river. Overhead, there is a canopy of spectacular autumn leaves. That was the setting for our fall Pilgrimage on October 6th at Baxter Conservation area. But the day got better!

There were 22 people just grateful to be out of the city and seeing some friends in person for the first time in about a year. The theme of the day was “Listen to the Spirit”. The worship service included a reflection on situations where people (including our own Anne Squire) had listened and responded to the Spirit. We were asked the question, “When we refuse to do something because we feel inadequate or too busy or too important, are we denying the work of the Holy Spirit in our lives?”



Photo: Phyllis MacRae



Following worship, Roxanne introduced us to the practice of Lectio Divina—reading and reflecting on a word or phrase of scripture that resonated with each of us. We walked by ourselves on the pathways as we contemplated these words. Then, in groups of 3 we shared what had been meaningful to us and why. It was interesting that from the 2 scripture choices of Jeremiah 33:3 or Mark 7:34, most people had chosen words from Jeremiah, even though the Mark scripture was better known.

After lunch and an opportunity for more walks, we gathered together again, with Bill Meek leading us with an introduction to meditation. This was followed by a guided forest walk meditation. Many indicated this was the highlight of the day and said they would never walk in the forest in the same way again.

Communion was led by Brian who took us back to the way it was in the early days of the Christian Church. (look up the word “Epiclesis”). Colleen and Dick had picked their own grapes and made juice from them. Many of us were thrilled to have that for our communion, while others felt more comfortable with the self-contained communion elements.

The day ended with many going to Kelly’s Landing for ice cream, while others chose to drive home while giving thanks for being able to get together in person and having the opportunity to grow spiritually in such a marvelous setting.

If anyone would like a digital copy of the entire program, please email Jill at halifaxmaclean@gmail.com and maybe next time you will be able to join us in person!

Jill MacLean



ROXANNE DELMAGE AND HER FAMILY

Roxanne Delmage has been Emmanuel's Pastoral Care Provider since August 2019. Roxanne and her family are members of Barrhaven United Church near where they live. She attends services at Barrhaven and Emmanuel.

Roxanne and her brother grew up in a military family and moved quite often with their Dad's postings. During his army service the family moved to Val d'Or, QC, Saskatchewan, Chilliwack, BC, and to Ottawa in 1977. Their mother was brought up in a Roman Catholic family in Miramichi, NB and Roxanne attended the Catholic Church as a child. As an adolescent she began to struggle with the Catholic values and ideas of guilt. A friend of her Dad's was a United Church minister and was the UC chaplain at the Chilliwack base. Roxanne started to attend the UC services where she felt at home and shared the values that she found there.

Roxanne met her husband Craig Delmage in Ottawa when both families moved to Ottawa in 1977 and Roxanne and Craig met as students at JS Woodsworth High School. They married in 1989. Craig worked in computer security and retired from Algonquin College in May 2021.

Roxanne was trained as a nurse and graduated in 1986 with a BSCN degree from the University of Ottawa. She worked as a nurse for the Victorian Order of Nurses (VON) for 14 years, and then worked for 17 years at Revera Long Term Care. She mostly worked on day shifts and retired in August 2019.

She continues to work at Algonquin College teaching a couple of labs per semester (Medication Administration). She teaches in the Developmental Service Worker Program. DSWs support folks with disabilities.

Erin, Roxanne and Craig's eldest daughter, was born in 1991 at the Grace Hospital. Erin was born full-term but weighing only 4 lbs. She had a disability from birth which is a rare genetic disorder called Wolff-Hirschhorn Syndrome. Erin's birth changed Roxanne's life and after her birth she worked part-time.

Roxanne and Craig waited for three years before having their second daughter, Lindy in 1994. Lindy was born a healthy girl weighing 8 lbs 8 oz. Lindy has also entered the nursing profession. In spring 2021 she graduated with a BSCN degree from Trent University and George Brown College. Immediately on graduation she went to work for Ottawa Public Health in the immunization clinics. Now she works in the school program tracing cases.

Roxanne and Craig and their daughters have been members at Barrhaven United Church since 1989. When Roxanne retired, Rev Diane Cardin, then Minister at Barrhaven, encouraged her to undertake training in Pastoral Care. Roxanne took the 6-week pastoral care course offered in Ottawa. In August 2019 she was hired by Emmanuel to replace Carol Scott as our Pastoral Care Provider. Carol trained Roxanne for two months before she moved to New Brunswick.



The beginning of Covid in March 2020 changed Roxanne's job entirely. She could no longer visit people in their homes and in the Long-Term Care residences. She quickly adapted to working in the on-line virtual world. She now meets people individually on the phone or on Zoom and she leads a weekly coffee Zoom meeting for conversation and Bible study, that is well-attended.

Roxanne looks for opportunities to be helpful wherever help is needed. She has assisted seniors to get set up with Zoom and helps trouble-shoot when they have technical problems. In the spring of 2020 she took part in organizing a sewing group that produced cotton face masks for Emmanuel people. This was quick thinking as, at that time, masks were not available in the shops, as they now are. The mask project eventually produced over 300 masks. Roxanne also initiated a knitting group to bring together knitters who were isolated at the time. She was very aware of the needs of isolated seniors and worked actively with the Pastoral Care Team and with Joyce White and Keeping in Touch to ensure that Emmanuel could reach out to those who especially needed contact.

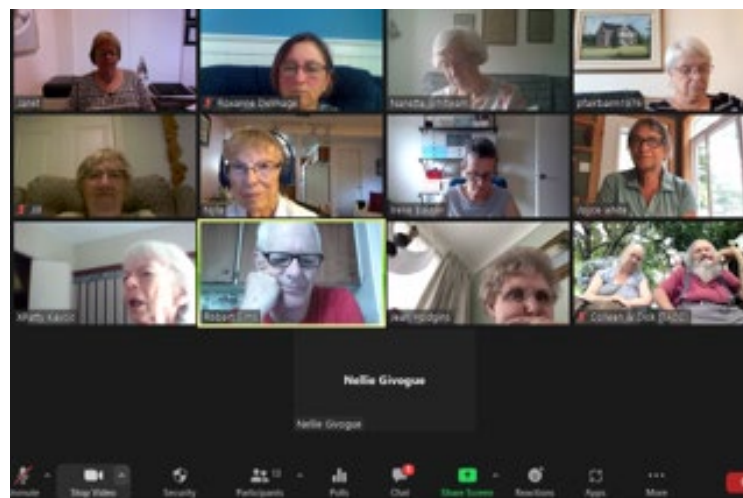
Erin is now 30 years old. She attends a day program on Zoom and she and her mother go on daily walks. Erin loves people and remembers them. She is very emotionally intelligent. She fits in anywhere and just accepts people as she meets them.

Roxanne says, "My work at EUC has enhanced my own spiritual journey, and for this I am very grateful." Emmanuel is very fortunate to have Roxanne and Erin as part of the Emmanuel family. We look forward to the time when we can join them in person.

Phyllis MacRae



Roxanne and her dog Tilly at a blessing of the animals at Barrhaven UC



Friday morning coffee Zoom



EMMANUEL'S VEGETABLE GARDEN 2021

The vegetable garden in the Botsford yard was planted by Pat Harris and Val Lines, who also weeded and watered over the summer.

The yellow and green bean and cucumber production was prodigious! We also grew broccoli, carrots, parsnips, okra, zucchini, radishes, a few peppers and tomatoes, lettuce, spinach and two crops of kale. Val's attempt to grow onions failed miserably this year.



The raspberry bushes produced a fair number of delicious berries. There were also a few strawberries, some of which we were able to pick and eat and some of which the squirrels enjoyed!

Kids activities were held in the garden four times during the summer. Each session we worked in the garden for bit and picked some produce to use to make our snack and to take home, made the snack, and finished up with some games. The snacks we made included fresh veg and dip, spinach smoothies (which garnered one thumb up, one so-so and the rest thumbs down), no bake raspberry cheesecakes, zucchini fritters cooked on a camp stove, and homemade salsa.



Val Lines



YOUTH AND FAMILY ACTIVITIES

We aim to have family and youth activities at least once a month. Here are some of the activities that we've done together since the last newsletter.

Late June 2021 – Youth who are interested in exploring confirmation gathered in the Botsford yard on a Sunday morning after church. After a box lunch, the youth talked with Rev. Brian and asked him some of their faith related questions. Then we read and discussed the United Church of Canada Creed, and youth painted a part of the creed that spoke to them.



Oct 11, 2021 – Families met at the end of Churchill Ave in Westboro. We walked through the woods and along the shore of the Ottawa River, talking and enjoying being together in nature on a fantastic fall day. The trees were still vibrant, there were lots of ducks on the river, we saw a heron and there were rocks to climb. We ended in Val's backyard for hot chocolate and a fire to roast marshmallows and make smores.





Oct 30, 2021 – Youth met at the outdoor patio at O'Briens on Kilborn for a pizza supper. Even though it was the end of October, it was surprisingly warm on the patio! Then we walked down the road to the greenspace and played a modified game of 'Capture the Halloween decoration' in the dark, followed by a game of personhunt. We ended with hot chocolate and delicious cupcakes from Carol Campbell in Ellen's backyard, another game and a prayer time. It was so much fun!!

Our next activities include 'Advent Adventures' in the church parking lot on Nov 28, and a teen faith and fun activity day in the week before Christmas.

Val Lines



Emmanuel children and other young people enjoyed making gingerbread houses at home during Advent.



Coming soon to Emmanuel!

Rainbow Hub Youth Space (RHYS)

In conjunction with Dana Doucette, EORC youth and young adult minister, we are planning a series of monthly drop-ins for LGBTQ2I+ aged 12-18. The first drop-in is tentatively planned for the last Friday in January, We are presently working on hiring a mental health worker to give guidance and be at attendance for each session. We are also connecting with community partners and planning guest speakers and communication strategies. It's going to be an exciting initiative.

Ellen Brohman



CHIPEMBI'S CHURCH OFFICE BUILDING PROJECT

In June of 2021, Emmanuel United Church along with Bells Corners United and the Chipembi Congregation of the United Church of Zambia entered into agreement to jointly construct a church office building adjacent to the church in Chipembi with funds raised by all three parties and with the labour and commitment from the members of the congregation and the communities within the Chipembi Mission Station.

The building will include a main conference room, a lounge area, an office for the minister, a vestry room and washroom facilities. Currently the minister's office and the vestry room are too small and not functional. There is no space to accommodate visitors. As well, the new building will allow for meeting space for church meetings.

The building will not only benefit the Church but the entire community. The conference room will be used as a classroom for adult literacy lessons in the afternoons, or sewing classes for the women of the community so that they can obtain a skill that will allow them to earn some money to support their family. The building will also provide a much needed place for youth programming and activities. It will also be used during Camp Chipembi.



Construction of the Church Office Building has begun. The foundation has been dug, most of the materials for construction have been procured, the footings are in place, the foundation box has been put up, and the slab concrete poured. It is hoped that much of the build will be completed before the rainy season begins in December.

The photos are of the work mobilized by the congregation from the commencement up to date.

Keith Jeacle



THE ORDINATION OF REV. LWAO

The policy of the United Church of Zambia on ordination is that after completion of theological studies at a university, one has to serve a probationary period of two years before they are recommended for Ordination. When the Church is satisfied with their performance, a recommendation is made to higher courts of the Church that he/she should be Ordained as a full-time minister in the United Church of Zambia.

After the actual ordination, the serving Church is mandated to hold an Ordination Reception officiated by the Presbytery Bishop and attended by all ministers in Presbytery and members of the Congregation.

Rev. Chilambwe Lwao is the minister of the United Church of Zambia, Chipembi Congregation – our global partner in Zambia. Fresh out of university, Rev. Lwao was welcomed to Chipembi in the spring of 2019.

Following completion of his probationary period, he was Ordained as a full-time minister on April 18, 2021 in Kabwe, home of the UCZ Synod. However, due to COVID restrictions at the time, the Ordination Reception in his honour had to be postponed. The reception was finally held on October 17, 2021 in Chipembi with much joy and excitement.

The Zambian Minister of Information and Media, Chushi Kasanda, was guest of honour at the reception.

Many speeches were delivered and congratulatory messages read, including those from Emmanuel United Church and Bells Corners United Church.

“ ... We are overjoyed as a partner community of faith to know that you are ordained to this high calling and will be in all the years which are ahead a faithful servant of Jesus bringing a word of hope, a light of justice, a hand of peace to the ministry which is now your calling. ...”



Rev. Chilambwe Lwao

Rev. Lwao also had to give a statement on how he was called to ministry and the experience he has had in the Church before getting ordained.

This joyous event concluded with much singing and dancing, and of course, lots to eat.

Keith Jeacle



A COTTAGE STORY – ARETA CROWELL

This story starts in a freshman history class at McGill University in 1952. Marg Cragg (now Armstrong) introduced herself to me as one PK (preacher's kid) to another! Later she persuaded her parents to loan their island cottage to our family while her father was away on sabbatical. Thus, the Hockins were introduced to Eagle Lake, near Sharbot Lake, north of Kingston — a long way from Montreal. While there, my parents were encouraged to explore other available islands by Marg's uncle the Rev. Ed Cragg, who owned another island on the lake.

My parents fell in love with the idea and became the third island-owning clergy family in 1956. On the day after I became Mrs. Clarence Crowell, they began their occupation — tenting while they built the “bunkie” and then the first larger building which is still the kitchen of the original cottage.

Can you imagine doing this in a time with no cell phones, only a boat and a long walk to where the car was left if anything happened? Messages had to be sent by mail — or, eventually through local friends they made in the village of Parham. One advantage of our island life was that no one could drop in unexpectedly, no one could suggest it would be easy for Dad to come back for a parochial problem! We all loved it. Everyone pitched in as over the years we added a larger cottage, and a boat-storage/summer house called “the boatel.”

Even after the Crowells moved to California we remained closely connected to our island. Until Covid, my son Rob missed only one summer there. As my sister's family grew it became evident that the entire clan could not be accommodated together. Rob and Cyndie, now ministers, were in Buffalo by the time we four decided to build another cottage. Getting it done was a challenge, but we did it in 1986. One and a half trailer loads of supplies were delivered to the shore but we had to transport it all to the island ourselves. We had to set a tight deadline for the work crew since we had to bring them daily to the island and they knew we would soon be gone back to California, but the shell was finished on the date agreed. That cottage became Rob's passion. He has planned and done all the interior finishing and most of the improvements over the years.

My parents had established a routine after retirement: winter with us in Los Angeles and summers (May-October) at the cottage. Clarence and I had always planned to do the same, and so, after we retired in 1998, we had a lot of cross-continent driving trips until he could travel no longer.



Areta emerges from the lake



Fortunately Russ loves the cottage too – and he has been involved with it from the beginning. He and Clarence carried in the kitchen chairs on their shoulders in 1957; together they helped paint the original building, and Russ even swam over once when there had been no way to send a message to expect him. It was not a long swim. That was in the days when we drove to a half-mile from the mainland docking spot. (No longer the case.) For those who don't know, Russ and his first wife were our good friends from before our first marriages. They and their children were often at the cottage with us.

Emmanuel has many connections on Eagle Lake: Marg and Bob Armstrong, Graham and Janet Campbell – and Russ pointed out Larry Reed's cottage, though they were unknown to my family. Phil and Linda English's family bought their island from Marg's uncle. I knew Ted and Kathryn before I met Phil and Linda. My sister Edna and Ian Miller and their family, who share the island with us in the original cottage, were very active at EUC in the 70's.

Opening and closing the cottage each season is a challenge, which is harder every year as we age! It is the equivalent of 3 flights of stairs from the dock to the cottage, and every can of propane for fridge and stove is heavy! We are off the grid of course, but added solar years ago to power cell phones and the water pump which makes cottage life really feasible. We swim daily and have lots of time to watch the loons, follow the nesting and chicks development. We enjoy canoeing and hiking in the wilderness which is all around, visiting heron and osprey rookeries. and delighting in the humming birds which fight over our feeder.

The cottage is the spiritual homestead for the family. My parents, my first husband Clarence, sister Lynn, and Edna's husband Ian all have memorial spaces there. Family records are kept there, all the pictures. It was like being in exile for Rob, who lives in Los Angeles, to be kept away due to Covid cross-border travel limitations. Truly it is a place to feel connected to the holy spirit, a place where I feel deeply blessed.

Areta Crowell



The Crowell Cottage on Eagle Lake. Painting by T. Fenton

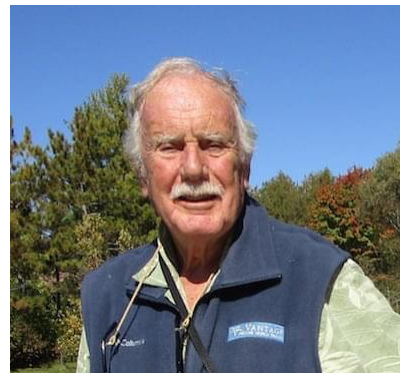


Singularity

Each Sunday I confess my sins,
supposing that contrition wins.
My lack of true regret requires
the warrant of a rabbi living
ages past. He pardons me
regardless, and with costless grace.
This easy mode removes me from
all bodies bleak and byzantine
that fight systemic wickedness.

That early teacher promised to
his followers a graver loss,
a cogent and corrective cross:
a passing of priority,
of privilege and authority,
a trial of every soul's endeavour
swimming up a downstream river,
threats and strife at every turn —
because the ego has to burn.

© E. Russell Smith 2021



And Still People Say

Some people say
there is no god...
no wondrous energy
that swirls us into being.

If the moon with all her agency
can move these waters
in six hour cycles
with such regularity,

such that humans designed
clocks and calendars
to measure Mystery,
surely some wondrous force exists.

Tides pull back,
expose snails
that crawl slowly
over the face of this rock.

Seaweed and periwinkles
live and thrive in this world
where I, a mere human,
could never exist.

Birds shriek and call,
inform me
of their dominance in this place
of primordial beginnings...

Stones shimmer
with minerals embedded,
gifts from eons of stardust, really,
come down to bless this Earth.

And still people say
there is no god ...
no wondrous energy
that swirls all this into being.

This morning's dawn
on the liminal shore
of Deep Cove
tells me otherwise!

*Carol Grace Scott
Deep Cove, Grand Manan
October 24, 2021*



VETERANS' HOUSE UPDATE AND NEW INITIATIVES

In October a package was sent by MHI to Emmanuel as a participant in the EOORC fundraising program "United We Stand". We were asked to snap a photo of those involved at Emmanuel with a virtual cheque of \$10,550. This represents the amount that was raised for the campaign by the Emmanuel congregation. Phyllis and I obliged and Pierre took the photo. The photo has been incorporated in MHI publicity materials.

MHI was overwhelmed with the support provided by the United Churches in the Eastern Ontario Outaouais Region. The total raised from the congregations was \$115,000. Those donations were doubled by sponsor the Canadian Corps of Commissionaires to reach a total of \$230,00. Moreover a grant of \$50,000 was donated by the Seeds of Hope grant from the national church. A donation of \$100,000 came from an anonymous family foundation who became aware of United Church fundraising efforts. This resulted in a grand total of \$380,000 to support the Veterans House initiative.

Three videos have been made available. The first is the fundraising program wrap up. The second is an interview with veteran Bill Beaton who speaks about the positive impacts of living in the Andy Carswell Building at Veterans House. He is most eloquent. The last is a new tour of the now fully furnished building from individual rooms, each with a UCC-crafted afghan as a welcome. Any of these videos could be used in our services.

At Veterans House, staff are still working to fill all the units.



The full capacity is 40 and they have 32 moved in and are processing another nine applications. The rent-up process (as they call it) has been slower than expected. A lot of work is going into identifying eligible tenants, but there is sometimes a reluctance on the part of some homeless people to move into a more structured setting like VH. CEO Suzanne Le hopes they will be fully occupied by the end of the year. The coming of winter will be an incentive to some.

The next MHI project encompasses Julian of Norwich Anglican Church in Nepean. Discussion has been ongoing with MHI, the congregation of Julian and the Anglican Diocese of Ottawa to develop a 67-unit housing community (similar to the Haven) on the church property. It will be called The Anchor. This is a great example of churches repurposing their land and building for a productive use. Plans are not yet firmed up and much work needs to be done by the parties. Also, interesting discussions are happening between MHI and another Ottawa charity organization to designate 4-6 units in the Anchor project for Indigenous families, an encouraging step. Six units of the 67-unit community occupied by indigenous families, would represent 10% of the total. Welcome news!

Janice Péron



Cheque for MHI. Photo: P. Péron



HABITAT FOR HUMANITY UPDATE

For the first time since Covid, the fall Home Show was held from October 29th to 31st at the EY Centre. Pierre and I took the Friday afternoon shift. Folks were in the mood to spend and we had very nice items to sell. Our sales that afternoon were the highest that we have ever experienced, making the work a real joy.

The Restores have been going strong throughout the pandemic with only brief shutdowns as ordered by the province. They are located on Iber Road in Stittsville (huge) and on Belfast near the Trainyards. Office staff have mostly been working from home.

Covid did restrict volunteer opportunities at the build sites with sponsor group days being virtually eliminated since March 2020.

Habitat has a newly installed CEO, Mushtaq Kazani who brings much useful experience. We look forward to an opportunity to meet him. Alexis Ashworth stepped away in September of this year, with thanks from the organization.

In recent years, the number of units built has increased. It took 3 years to build 16 units at Leacross Landing in Orleans. A celebration to mark the completion of the project was held in October which included the volunteers. Unfortunately, we were not able to attend. The build at Titus Landing includes 16 units, 4 which are fully accessible. Next year a build of 15 units will commence in Kemptville in conjunction with partners. This build will include townhomes and stacked town homes with some accessible units.

Pierre and I continue to look for opportunities to volunteer on site. We volunteered at Titus Landing for a couple of days in July. But, a few opportunities did not fit our schedules or appeal to our aging backs! We hope to volunteer at Kemptville.

Pierre and Janice Péron



Titus Landing. Photo: P. Péron



INDIGENOUS ARTWORK



"The Meeting of the Eagle and the Dove" by Mervin Meekis

Have you ever wondered about the story behind this artwork that hangs on the wall in the upper hallway at Emmanuel? You may also have seen it used as the Indigenous Justice logo used by the United Church of Canada. The artist, Mervin Meekis, lived on the Sandy Lake First Nations Reserve in northern Ontario. The reserve is at the tail end of the Severn River, which flows in to Hudson's Bay. The most recent population count of the Sandy Lake First Nations Reserve is 2687. Sandy Lake has been under a boil water advisory for the past eighteen years. Interim upgrades to the water treatment system have just been completed. Long-term expansion and upgrades are underway and expected to be completed by July 2022, but there have been delays for the past several years.

In 1986, at the 31st General Council in Sudbury, the United Church of Canada responded to the request of the Indigenous People that an apology be given to them for the church's part in colonization. Indigenous leaders and United Church Moderator Right Rev. Robert Smith gathered in a teepee and the church's apology was offered for their consideration. At that time, "The Meeting of the Eagle and the Dove" was presented to the United Church as a gift.

At that same General Council, Dr. Anne Squire, was the first lay person to be elected moderator and served from 1986-1988.



The Indigenous nation responded to the church in 1988, at the 32nd General Council in Victoria, B.C. ...*“It is heartening to see that The United Church of Canada is a forerunner in making this Apology to Native People. The All Native Circle Conference has now acknowledged your Apology. Our people have continued to affirm the teachings of the Native way of life. Our spiritual teachings and values have taught us to uphold the Sacred Fire; to be guardians of Mother Earth, and strive to maintain harmony and peaceful coexistence with all peoples.”*...

In 1988-89, Mervin’s daughter Rochelle was in my Grade 2 class at Robert E. Wilson School in Vanier. Rochelle and her sister and mother came to Ottawa from Sandy Lake, seeking more educational opportunities for the girls; her father Mervin remained on the reserve. I remember hearing stories of life at Sandy Lake and attending Rochelle’s pow wow dance performance on the weekend. Recently I reached out to her through phone conversations and I watched a video of her and two elders walking a forest path where red clothing was hung in the trees, in memory of missing and murdered women and girls. Rochelle works for the Native Women’s Association of Canada and is an Assistant Elder and Helper in a Resiliency Lodge, a healing centre near Ottawa.

In 2000, her father Mervin died at Sandy Lake. Each day she feels grateful to him and smudges in his memory. She writes “my father was a true warrior, fighting to protect our people through art.”



Robert E. Wilson School in Vanier. This mural is not by Mervin Meekis. Photo: Joyce White

Rochelle does not return to Sandy Lake often. There certainly is no direct flight; she would have to travel to Toronto and then fly to Winnipeg. The last 545 kms of the journey are to the north by bus and then taxi to the reserve, which is just on the other side of the Manitoba border in Ontario. On Sandy Lake Reserve, the native language is Oji-Cree. Miigwech to Mervin Meekis for his artwork and to Rochelle for reconnecting with her Grade Two teacher.

Joyce White

Read more about the apologies of the United Church:

<http://united-church.ca/sites/default/files/apologies-response-crest.pdf>

Read more about the mural at Robert E. Wilson School:

<https://worldchangingkids.ca/archives/6481>



NATIONAL DAY FOR TRUTH AND RECONCILIATION AND ORANGE SHIRT DAY, SEPTEMBER 30, 2021

On the first National Day for Truth and Reconciliation, the Beechwood Cemetery Foundation partnered with the Project of Heart, the Assembly of 7 Generations, and the First Nations Child and Family Caring Society to host a public Day of Reconciliation education and action.

In the Sacred Space at Beechwood Cemetery a memory labyrinth of 57,000 artistic wooden tiles, each a little larger than a scrabble piece, was meticulously laid out by youth volunteers from the Assembly of Seven Generations. The tiles were the work of students in high schools from coast to coast to coast where there had been residential schools.

This Project of Heart began in 2005 with an Ottawa High School teacher, Sylvia Smith, and her Grade 10 students at Elizabeth Wynwood Alternative School. While studying history, they found only 63 words about Aboriginal history in their textbook of 400 pages. The students were shocked when they heard more about Residential Schools and wanted to learn more.

Each student did research on a Residential School and created artwork on a small wooden tile. Included in the project was a call to action for students to “walk the talk”. At their initiative, “Project of Heart “ spread across the country with kits being sent in the mail.

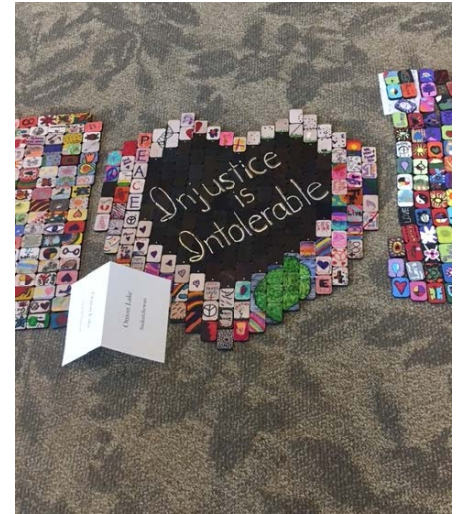


Photo: Joyce White

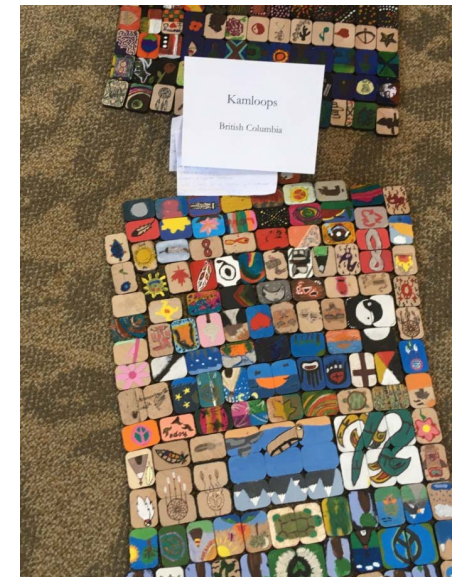


Photo: Joyce White

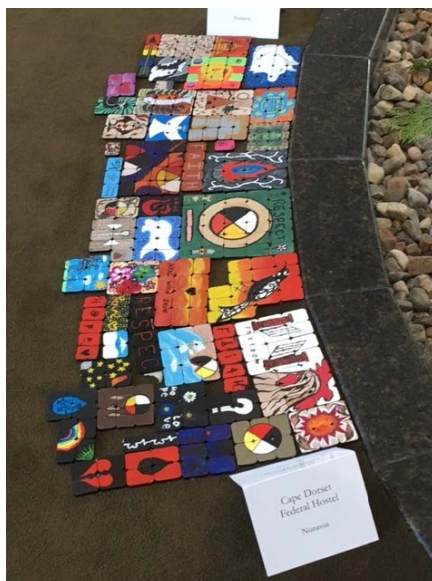


Photo: Joyce White



Photo: Joyce White



Following the labyrinth walk, we visited four gravesites. Two were key figures in the establishment and mandatory attendance in residential schools: Nicholas Flood Davin and Duncan Campbell Scott.

Spirits were lifted when we visited the gravesite of Dr. Peter Henderson Bryce, a Medical Officer who inspected the health conditions in Residential Schools in western Canada and British Columbia. He reported that students were deprived of adequate medical, dietary and sanitary living conditions. He condemned the treatment of the Indigenous students at the hands of the government of Canada. He was later forced into retirement and his findings were never officially released by the government. Cindy Blackstock arranged for an orange mailbox to be left at his gravesite and people were delivering letters, thanking him for taking a stand at the time.

At Dr. Bryce's grave there was a reading of "Spirit Bear, Echoes of the Past" written by Cindy Blackstock. Spirit Bear helps people of all ages learn from history, an important part of reconciliation.

Olive Dickason is not well known but at her site we learned that she was a Métis journalist, historian and professor, who, through her writing, contributed much understanding and knowledge of the history of Indigenous and Métis people. She was a key figure in establishing Indigenous Studies courses at Universities.

Joyce White



Photo: Joyce White



Photo: Joyce White



Photo: Joyce White



MADAHOKI FARM – INDIGENOUS EXPERIENCE

My experience at Madahoki Farm started with an email from a member of the Right Relations Group at EUC. Were we aware that there was a new Indigenous event place holding “Tagwagi (Autumn) Festival” on the Greenbelt, in Ottawa? I decided it would be an adventure to take in with my daughter Erin on our weekend break from Zoom, phone calls and Skype, during this Pandemic.

The Madahoki Farm, at 4420 West Hunt Club Road (the previous site of Lone Star Catering), is located on the traditional unceded, unsurrendered territory of the Algonquin Nation. Mādahòki means “to share the land” in the Anishinaabe language and reflects the agriculture and Indigenous community focus. “Indigenous Experiences”, an event planning and catering company, assumed the long-term lease from the National Capital Commission.

Madahoki is a gathering place with the intention to build on the growing interest in agritourism, farm-to-table culinary experiences and authentic cultural experiences from an Indigenous perspective celebrating the connection to the land.

One of the main attractions are the four “Ojibwe Spirit horses” that now live here. Ojibwe Spirit horses are from Southwestern Ontario, around the great lakes area including Walpole island. There are only about a hundred and fifty Spirit Horses left in the world after almost being driven to extinction in the early 1970s. They were considered a pest as farms encroached on their grazing lands.

“It really affected my family, and then when I heard about how the government deemed them to be worthless and wanted them destroyed, I connected it to what happened to most Indigenous people. They were a nuisance just like the culture of aboriginal peoples,” said Metis Artist Rhonda Snow. She was instrumental in saving these horses.

This site will host more festivals and events. It also has a permanent Marketplace with many indigenous products such as the Sacred Medicines, art and traditional indigenous crafts. You can also buy traditional foods and sit and enjoy them onsite. It was a great outing, and I encourage others to watch for the events to have their own adventure to this site.

Roxanne Delmage

<https://indigenous-experiences.ca/madahoki-farm/>



Mādahòki Farm. Photo: Roxanne Delmage

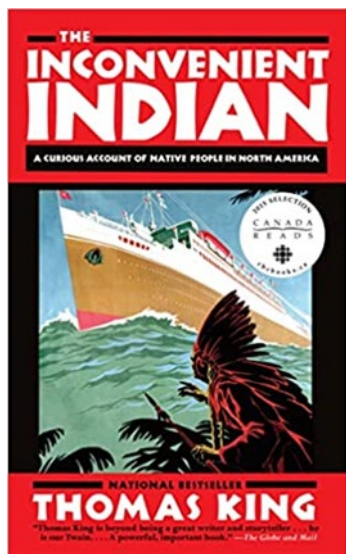


BOOK REVIEWS

“The Inconvenient Indian” by Thomas King

Doubleday Canada 2013

A note on terminology: King uses the word native to mean indigenous from time to time, and his usage has been copied here.



I first came across Thomas King when he appeared in “The Dead Dog Café Comedy Hour”, a 15-minute comedy skit on CBC Radio between 1997 and 2000. He was also the creative mind behind it. It was a humorous satire on native life.

I had always assumed that King was Canadian, but in fact he was born in California, of Cherokee descent on his father’s side. Of course, borders created by Europeans don’t necessarily mean much to the First Nations. He now holds both US and Canadian citizenship.

The Inconvenient Indian is also full of satirical humour, and irony. At the start, King says that he was reluctant to describe the book as a history. But it is a sort of history, ranging from early times to modern developments.

I found the brief mention of some of the US and Canadian legislation instructive. The humour serves to lighten the topic of the book.

From time to time throughout the book, King’s wife Helen makes interjections like some sort of Greek chorus. The first one she makes is near the beginning, when she tells him not to start the book with Columbus. So he immediately starts talking about Columbus in Chapter 1. He refers to native peoples as Indians throughout the book. A friend told him that if he was going to do that, he should refer to those of European descent as Cowboys. He doesn’t do that.

He says that North America no longer really sees Indians, only the “cultural debris” of the societies that once were - the beads, the feathered headresses, fringed deerskin dresses, and so on.

These are the Dead Indians that live on in our imaginations and sometimes still appear at awards shows, museum openings, and even on the floor of the House of Commons (Phil Fontaine in 2008). Settlers have been quite content with Dead Indians.

He says that North America no longer really sees Indians, only the “cultural debris” of the societies that once were - the beads, the feathered headresses, fringed deerskin dresses, and so on. These are the Dead Indians that live on in our imaginations and sometimes still appear at awards shows, museum openings, and even on the floor of the House of Commons (Phil Fontaine in 2008). Settlers have been quite content with Dead Indians.





Thomas King

Live Indians, on the other hand, are intriguing, perplexing and annoying to the colonists. Although a large proportion of the pre-conquest population died out through disease and conflict, the remainder persisted and were an inconvenience to the settlers, so had to be moved out of the way and become invisible.

To summarize it, he says that Dead Indians are dignified, noble, silent and suitably garbed. Live Indians are invisible, unruly, disappointing – and breathing. The third category he defines, Legal Indians, are those who are recognized as Indians by the Canadian and US Governments. All Legal Indians are Live Indians, but not all Live Indians are Legal Indians. North America hates the Legal Indian because of treaty rights, he says.



He talks about attempts in the US government to relocate native groups and to terminate their rights (Removal Act, 1830; Termination and Relocation Acts, 1953). The Cherokee were forcibly relocated from the Carolinas to the Indian Territory (now Oklahoma) in the mid-19th century. About a century later, relocations of natives happened in Canada, such as that of the Newash and Saugeen Ojibway from the land south of Owen Sound to the Bruce Peninsula.

Residential schools were created from the 1840s. Large numbers of them were built in both the US and Canada, and they were run along very similar lines. Some of the rationale for them had been to provide clean water, good nutrition and sanitary living conditions, but the reality turned out to be far from the ideal.

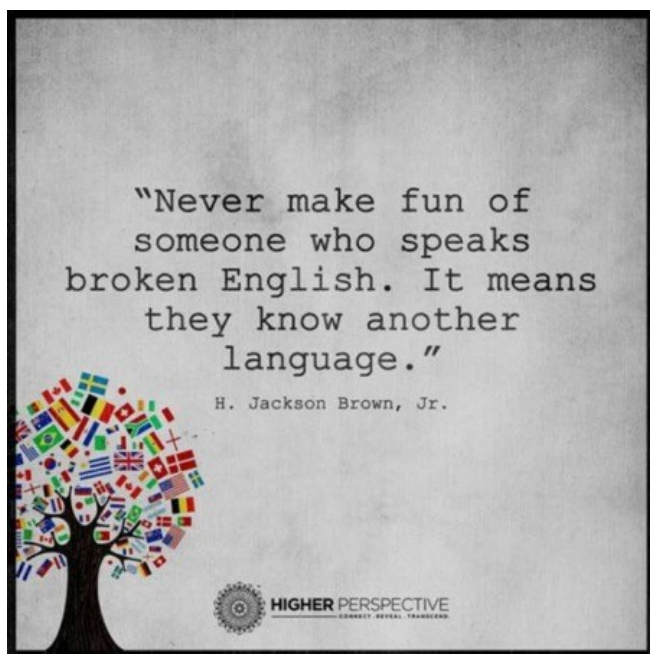
King offers an alternative vision for native education in which there would have been a partnership between the natives and non-natives that would have provided the native children with culturally appropriate education and would have perhaps enriched the non-natives as well.

He talks about the rise of native activism in 1969, starting with the occupation of Alcatraz, and the American Indian Movement. He says that the latter was badly organized with unclear objectives. The siege of Wounded Knee was the most serious event they participated in, in which the AIM occupied the village on the Pine Creek reservation and held it against federal forces. Both sides were heavily armed, the government side more so. The siege went on for 71 days and could have resulted in a blood bath. In the event, only one person was injured (FBI) and two were killed (AIM).



Organizations to further native objectives and air grievances were formed on both sides of the border from early in the 19th century, but many were ineffective. This was often because they put trust in the mechanisms of the state to deliver results, which rarely happened. King says that the concept that Justice is blind and everyone is equal before the law reminds him of a story in which Coyote tells a band of ducks that he has their best interests at heart.

King poses the question that Whites have often asked. *What do natives want?* He says it's the wrong question, because different nations want or need different things. A better question is *"What do Whites want?"*



He answers it himself – they have always wanted land, whether for settlement, mining or hydro development, among other reasons. This is the main point of the book – he says that the question you need to understand is the question of land. Treaties were not vehicles for protecting land, they were vehicles for acquiring land.

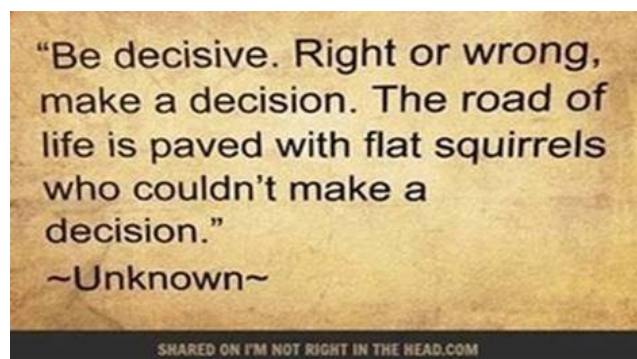
But, King says it's important to talk about some positive developments, such as the Gwaii Haanas National Park Reserve and the Alaska Native Claims Settlement Act.

He says the problem continues to be *"unexamined confidence in western civilization and the unwarranted certainty of Christianity"*.

At the end of the book there is an appendix containing a transcript of Shelagh Rogers' interview with King on CBC Radio in 2013, which is entertaining but repeats many of the ideas in the book.

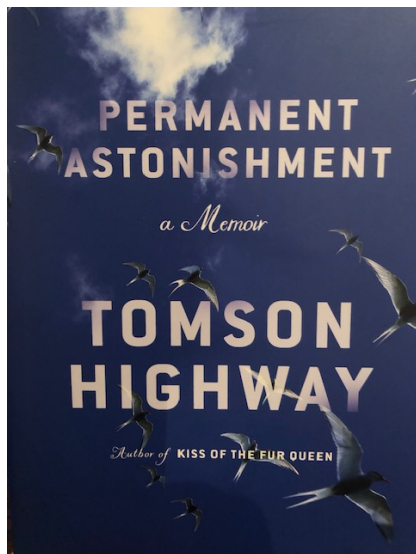
I found the book well written, informative and easy to read despite the seriousness of the topic. I thoroughly recommend it.

Jon Jones



“Permanent Astonishment: a Memoir” by Tomson Highway

Doubleday Canada 2021



Tomson Highway is one of Canada’s best-known indigenous writers and playwrights. He was born in the far north near Brochet, Manitoba in 1951 and lives today with his partner of 35 years in Gatineau, QC.

His first non-fiction book *Permanent Astonishment: A Memoir* was published in the fall of 2021 and in November won the \$60,000 Hilary Weston Writers’ Trust Prize for non-fiction.

He is the author of the well-known plays *The Rez Sisters* and *Dry Lips Oughta move to Kapuskasing*, and others.

In 1998 he published a work of fiction, *The Kiss of the Fur Queen*.

In October 2021 Highway was interviewed by Tom Power, host of CBC’s radio show Q. He was asked why he wrote this memoir and replied “I needed to assess my life. (Writing a memoir) is a good way to assess your life”.

In the same interview Highway said that this is the first volume of a planned five-volume series of memoirs.

This volume takes us from his birth in December 1951 in a snowbank (as he is fond of saying) in the far north of Manitoba, to the age of 15 when he graduated from the Guy Hill Residential School near The Pas, Manitoba. Each September, he and his younger brother Rene would leave on the float plane to fly south to spend the school year at Guy Hill and return the following June to spend the summer with their family.

Tomson and Rene (a well-known dancer who died in 1990 at age 36 of AIDS related causes) were the youngest of the 12 children of Joe Highway and his wife Balazee. Seven of the children survived to adulthood. Except for Tomson and Rene, none went beyond grade 7 in school.



Highway's story is very moving and uplifting. He says he is the last of his kind, meaning the last of generations of indigenous people who grew up in the remote north of Canada, living a truly traditional life on the land. His father was a famous prize-winning dog sled racer. The family lived sometimes in the Cree and Catholic village of Brochet. But most of the year, Joe and Balazee and their children (when they were not at school) lived in the wilderness, running a commercial fishing business. They lived in tents and travelled by canoe and dog sled. Highway tells marvellous stories of times spent with his family at their various fish camps on the lakes all around northern Manitoba. He says they had no modern technology. For light at night they had candles, kerosene lamps, the campfire, the moon and the stars.

For entertainment, they had music, singing and dancing. Joe Highway played the accordion. As there was no electricity, a prize possession was a transistor radio. At night the radio would be hung as high as possible in a tree. From there they could get broadcasts from a powerful transmitter in Nashville Tennessee. For this reason Highway says that country music was the favorite music of all the indigenous people of the North. None of the family could speak English but they loved the music and sang along. Highway says that, although trained as a classical pianist, today he still loves country music and is about to release a country music album sung in Cree.



Tomson Highway



There is a lot of laughing in this memoir. Highway says his parents were laughing people. He describes Cree as “the world’s funniest language”. He adored his parents who were together over 60 years in a marriage of love.

Much of the action in this book takes place as Tomson and his little brother spend the school year at Guy Hill Residential School. His father was desperate to have his two youngest children get the best education possible and learn English. “He wanted desperately for his children to have a life that wasn’t so very harsh.” Highway says his father knew that the world was changing and that he wanted his children to have the best opportunity to move ahead in the new world.

Tomson Highway’s description of his time at residential school differs markedly from that of many other indigenous writers. He went to school each September with enthusiasm, carrying the expectations of his father. And then would return home each June to spend a happy summer with his family at the fish camps or in the village of Brochet. In 1966 at age 15 he graduated from Guy Hill with one of the highest marks in Manitoba and then went to high school in Winnipeg. At Guy Hill he learned English, which he describes as a painful and hilarious process, and learned to play the piano, which has been an important part of the rest of his life. The staff at the school are described for the most part with great affection and appreciation for what he learned from them.

In one chapter only does he speak of sexual abuse of the middle-sized boys by one of the Catholic lay brothers, a dorm supervisor, whom he names. He makes it clear that he loved all the other staff, lay and Catholic, men and women. Although he is sympathetic to the conditions of life that led some Catholic boys and men to take up the lowliest jobs in the church and the schools. He refers to the harm that was experienced by legions of boys like him in the schools:

The field is littered with dead male bodies. From what I understand that is their experience. And one day, I hope that they write about it because I can’t. And to those who can’t, I have tried my best to write this story of survival for you.

In his interview on the CBC, host Tom Power remarked on Highway’s “unique ability to find joy in almost anything.” The author concludes this moving chapter of his life with the following:

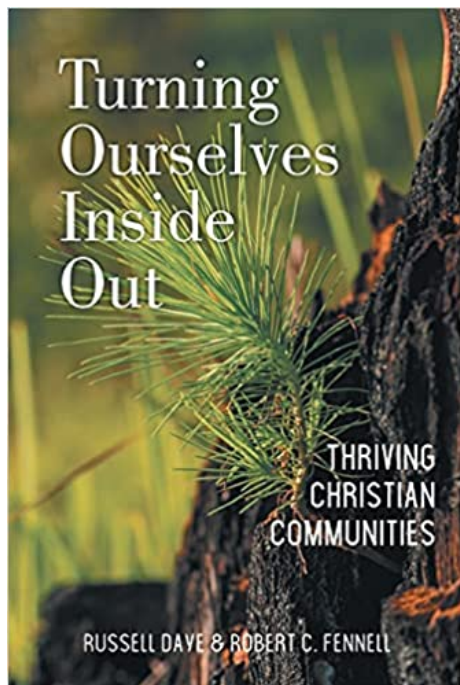
But why? Why waste my time thinking about something that happened sixty years ago? When there are so many people out there to fall in love with and be loved by? When there are so many people out there to thank for the love, they’ve given me, my parents not least. When there is so much laughter, so much joy, to be engaged in, so much music to dance to? When the very act of breathing, for me, is reason a-plenty for permanent astonishment?

Phyllis MacRae



“Turning Ourselves Inside Out” by Russell Daye and Rob Fennell

Fortress Press 2021



In October, I attended an online book launch (via zoom) for this new book. There are some similarities between it and *Thriving Churches*, a book written during the same time that many at Emmanuel studied, but there are differences as well.

The two United Church ministers interviewed about 35 congregations in Canada and some in California. Some site visits were done in person and others virtually. They met with churches that had self-identified as “thriving”. Russ and Rob had expected to find a lot of commonality, but were surprised to find that on the surface, this did not happen. The churches had a variety of leadership styles and differing theologies; to some prayer was very important, to others not so much.

After reflection, they realized that indeed, the churches had certain values in common.

These included:

1. The willingness to take risks, which they called the virtue of courage. It could involve money, the building, theology—some were through necessity and some by choice.
2. The virtue of love or being open-hearted. They led from the heart, not the brain with their theology.
3. They had a sense of integration—they worked together and with the outside community.
4. They had what they called *kinosis*—the willingness to be turned inside out. They had to self-empty in order to give of themselves.
5. There was a turning point in their church’s history - usually a challenging situation where they came out on the other side, healthier.

They said we have to recognize that main line churches are no longer at the centre of society. We have to let go of that, step out in faith, and trust in the Grace of God. We cannot depend on our past or what we know. The authors (and the churches) saw our task as going into the community - not expecting them to come to us and to serve the community with NO expectation of them coming and joining. What made them different from secular organizations was their clear vision of God’s mission in the world and their part in it.



Main line churches were described in 3 ways:

1. Black holes—suck in time, money and energy, are narcissistic, trying only to survive and either do nothing or some ineffectual things.
2. Red dwarf stars—die a slow but dignified death. They are grateful for their history, collapse is underway, and they will shrink to the end.
3. Super novas—trust wherever the Spirit leads outward, embrace leadership risks, turn inside out for the greater good of the community and the world. They may not last forever—but what a way to go!

Jill MacLean

All of the above was expressed by the authors at their book launch. *Turning Ourselves Inside Out* is available through Amazon both in kindle and paperback.



Members of Global Partners deliver Christmas Market orders. Photo: P. MacRae



Hillcrest High School for the first National Truth and Reconciliation Day



THINKING OF THE ENVIRONMENT AT CHRISTMAS

Since we will be in Advent when you receive this newsletter, it seems appropriate that we give thought to how we can enjoy the Christmas season while respecting Mother Earth.

I have been examining how we can rethink, reduce, reuse, recycle, and rejoice with a Green Christmas and would like to share what I have discovered and reflected upon.

Some background facts; although some of this research comes from the UK, I do think it can be very informative for us in Canada.

- Our waterways are choking from plastic and our landfills are becoming ever taller mountains
- 159 Million paper crackers, once pulled, are thrown into the landfill every year
- 1 billion cards never get recycled because of their plastic and glitter
- 299 million plastic cups are disposed of into landfill following Christmas
- 125 tons of plastic wrap on food is used at Christmas
- 100 million bags of rubbish are thrown in the landfill.

This is depressing but keep reading and discover some "Good News."

Christmas Trees: We all love to sit around a Christmas tree, and there are many artificial trees that look just like a real tree. However, the environmentalists urge us to buy a Real Tree. They can be recycled and returned to the earth as mulch, whereas the artificial ones become part of the landfill over time.

Here is my story: For 20 years our family was invited to a friend's woods in Campbell's Bay QC to cut down a tree that the children had chosen. The invitation included a hot meal with two elderly sisters, taking many pictures and coming away with treasured memories of our day spent with two good friends and the joy of choosing that special tree. The time came when they sold the farm, and a few years later both died so the visits stopped.

As we got older and there was just the two of us, it became harder and harder to transport and put up a real tree and so we succumbed to the one-time purchase of an artificial one. However, that was then, and this is now. The present wisdom seems to be, if you already have a fake tree, use it until it has seen its day and then get rid of it because it has properties that can lead to asthma and other respiratory illnesses. If possible, go for a real tree! As for Frank and I and our fake tree, it will remain, but the fake snow will be vacuumed off the branches in hopes that it will be less harmful.

Emmanuel has a lovely artificial tree which is used each year in the sanctuary. If we follow the present wisdom, we will continue to use it until it has no further use and can be replaced with a real tree.

Lights: How I love the old lights of yesteryear, but we are told that the LED lights, which I don't happen to like, are cooler, safer and use 90% less electricity than the incandescent bulbs. How can I not leave behind the old for the new? Our exterior lights will be reduced to one light bulb inside the angel by the door.



No more lights surrounding the roof. We have had to get someone to do that for us, so it saves money on both counts. Wisdom asks us to use solar lights or to turn the LED lights off and not allow them to shine all night on the exterior of our homes. Finally they suggest we turn the lights off on the interior tree when we are not in the room. Emmanuel in its' desire to follow the efficiency guidelines no doubt does use LED and the tree lights are off when the building is empty.

Decorating: Making decorations as a family was one of our traditions each Advent Sunday after church. We spread a quilt made by my grandmother on the living room floor as we delved into the crafts that we were going to make that day; of course, sipping hot chocolate as we worked and played.

Each Advent I tenderly unpack the boxes of treasures so carefully put away the previous year. Every box has its own story to tell bringing with it memories of a time and place.

There are angels made of wood and others fashioned from macaroni, dried fruit with red ribbons, hearts and stars made from bright red and sky blue cotton material; glass trinkets to be filled with small candies and even my paper mâché bell and cardboard camel that I made at age 7 hang upon the tree in their rightful place.

During the ice storm in Ottawa, Frank and I gathered limbs from downed trees and made crèche scenes for our three children, each one unique in its composition. They were filled with antique characters that our mothers had passed on to us.



Crafting your own decorations or buying locally is recommended to help lessen our carbon footprint. Shipping by air or by boat from China is a long way for all these goods to travel.

You don't have to look far to see beautifully handcrafted work right at Emmanuel. Our quilters have sewn many wonderful hangings out of 100% cotton fabric, and they greet the family as we enter each Sunday. As well, there are large banners over the piano to signify our liturgical seasons like Advent and Christmas.

In past years cardboard angels have been hung from the ceiling proclaiming the Christmas story, and the steps in the sanctuary are adorned with real poinsettia plants, sometimes many of them. All of this sounds environmentally friendly, wouldn't you say?

Candles: For all of us who suffer from allergies, switching from petroleum-based candles to beeswax or soy in our homes is helping the air we breathe. Emmanuel uses oil in the candles making them more efficient to burn and scent free.

Gift Wrap: The environmentalists ask us to avoid excessively packaged items. Instead they suggest we wrap gifts in material like a new dish towel or face cloth, which then becomes part of the present. It is very easy to make attractive bags from cotton materials you might have which can be reused for many years. Some shops sell organic linen bags and some use recycled materials such as vegan ink, natural twine, and NO plastic so it all can go in the blue box and not the landfill. Fair trade sells recycled cotton bags.



I have seen on the internet how attractive presents can be made by using newspapers and brown paper adorned with little pinecones and dried flowers. Creativity is the name of the game!

If you need to send your gifts in the mail, package them in real popcorn rather than the polystyrene peanuts.

Gift Tags: I hope you kept last year's Christmas cards because they make perfect gift tags, or if there are artists in the family, a hand drawn one is even better.

Gifts: Your gifts might just be "fair trade" items of which some are sold at Emmanuel. Fair trade is an economic system of socially responsible companies buying products from small farmers and other small businesses at a fair price. More than 80% of fair-trade coffee is "shade grown" and organic. That is to say "shade grown" coffee does not contribute to deforestation or loss of wildlife habitat.

So look for fair trade coffee, tea, cocoa, chocolate bars, vanilla, olive oil and gift bags at Emmanuel. We then advance our commitment to social, economic and environmental justice.

Cards: There is so much that can be said about cards, but we can begin with recycled paper. This means fewer trees will be cut down for this purpose. Again, we are told to buy cards without glitter, for the micro plastic that is in the glitter is harmful to our lungs. This is so difficult because glitter is everywhere at Christmas.

How about making cards with reused cards, or if there is an artist in the family, create some handmade ones. These are the ones I cherish and keep. If you buy, buy locally from someone who makes them right here, perhaps at Emmanuel?

The best we can do is to send e-cards to save more trees and pollution caused from travel. I have to be honest: I like a book instead of reading from the computer.

I want to be able to hold the card in my hands as I read the annual letters over many times before they are packed away to be reminded of their content the next year. When our cards come all the way from England, Australia and even out west, it certainly makes sense to help the environment, save trees and money by using e cards.

Ethical shopping: To close I would like to speak about this topic. Who makes all our Christmas items? Where do they come from? Are they produced on the back of slave labour? Not knowing the conditions Third World country people are working under calls us to ask many questions.

In this Pandemic Year, with some good hard effort, we can have a Green Christmas.

Patty Kavcic



FROM THE LIBRARY

When will the library reopen? I am sure several of our church members are wondering, too. Two factors have caused the library to remain closed.

The first factor was the impact of COVID 19 on our church. We had a number of openings and lockdowns from March 2020 to July 2021. During one of the open periods in August 2020, Gord, myself and a summer student did a complete overhaul of the card catalogue boxes and the books. We discarded about 10-12 boxes of books.

The second factor affecting the library was the discovery of airborne mould. The Property and Grounds Committee hired a company to fix the problem. All books and equipment in the library were abated and packed in boxes.



*The Librarian, Sue Hodges, hard at work.
Photo: Gord Hodges*



*The Librarian's helper, Gord Hodges.
Photo: Sue Hodges*

A part of the wall and flooring on the north side of the library had to be removed for abatement as well. The Property and Grounds Committee will have the wall and flooring repaired. Once all repair work is complete, I hope to unpack the all the books and reopen the library as soon as possible.

Thank you for your patience and understanding. And thanks to Bill Meek and the Property and Grounds Committee for working so diligently on this issue.

Susan Hodges, Librarian



CHILDREN'S BOOKS

The author, David A. Robertson, curated a list of books for children written by Indigenous authors regarding residential schools. He posted his list on twitter. He then repurposed the list for CBC Books. This list is at:

<https://www.cbc.ca/books/48-books-by-indigenous-writers-to-read-to-understand-residential-schools-1.6056204>

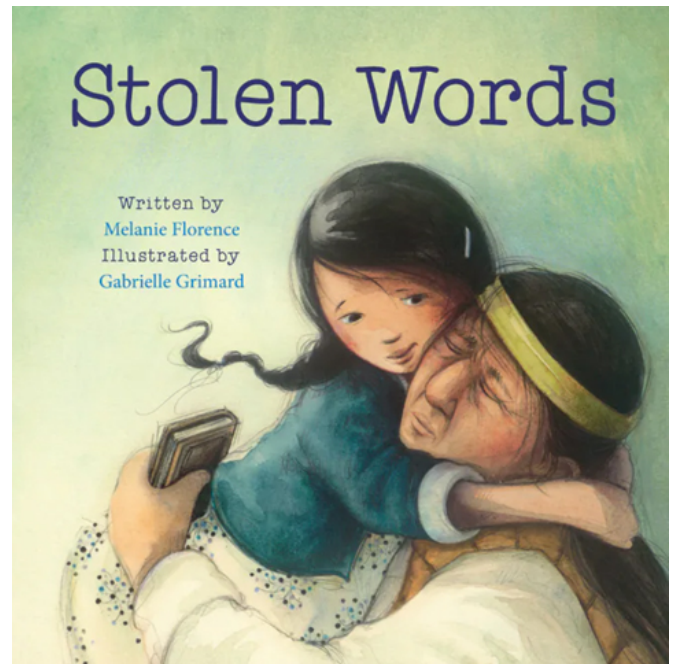
Two books from Robertson's list were selected and purchased for the library.

The book, *When We Were Alone*, written by David A. Robertson and illustrated by Julie Flett, is about the experience of a grandmother in a residential school. The grandchild asks the grandmother questions about the colourful clothing she wears, her long hair and her Cree language. The grandmother tells how their clothing at the residential school had to be dark, their long hair cut short, and she was not to speak her Cree language. The indigenous children were to be like everyone else – as the school dictated. Robertson relates that his own father endured many of the same things in his residential school.



Stolen Words was written by Melanie Florence and illustrated by Gabrielle Grimard. The granddaughter asks her grandfather to say some words in Cree for her. The grandfather has lost the ability to speak his language. He tells his granddaughter that it was stolen from him at the residential school he attended. He relates his experience of being taken from his home and sent to a residential school. The granddaughter sets out to help him relearn his language. Her teacher helps her find a Cree book. The child and her grandfather work together to help her grandfather get back his language. Through this story, we begin to see the intergenerational impact the residential school system had on the children taken from their homes and separated from their families.

Sue Hodges



**Reading
can seriously
damage your
ignorance.**



HIGHER PERSPECTIVE
CONNECT. REVEAL. TRANSCEND.



THE CANADIAN FOOD GRAINS BANK

The Canadian Foodgrains Bank is a Canadian charity that provides a Christian response to hunger. The United Church of Canada and fourteen other Canadian churches or their agencies are sponsoring partners.

I became involved with a growing project from Woodstock Ontario. A growing project is a group of farmers that plant crops with donated or partially donated inputs. There are many growing projects across Canada. I saw the results of the Foodgrains Bank on an educational trip to Kenya and Rwanda and was impressed. Last year almost a million people were helped by the Bank's programs



The Foodgrains Bank does short term work giving food to hungry people. Programs such as conservation agriculture provide longer term help to farmers in developing countries. The Foodgrains Bank also advocates for increased government aid for developing countries. Canada should be giving 70 cents of every dollar of goods and services produced in Canada to hungry people, much more than the 28 or so cents we currently give.

The Foodgrains Bank has a good website with lots of pictures and videos: <http://www.foodgrainsbank.ca/>

Consider donating to this outstanding charity with high ratings for global impact. Create your own letter to government leaders advocating for hungry people.

Bill MacLeish



DUAL CHURCH CITIZENSHIP - DOUBLE THE BLESSING!

Both-And.

Here and There.

Wherever I am, I seem to be missing my friends in 'the other' place. Wherever I am not, I wish I were... Sound complicated? It is challenging! Perhaps Areta and Russ or others can also relate to the challenges of regularly shuttling back and forth between two diverse church communities. □

Thanks to the wonders of technology and the masterful people who know how to set up and administer zoom links, I have been able to stay connected wherever I am with Heretics and Teleos gatherings at Emmanuel, and weekly Sunday discussions and progressive spirit newsletters at Central United, able to access church services, meetings, and gatherings in both places.

Yes, it is somewhat difficult to shuttle back and forth, keeping the strands of connection taut and vibrant. But even more so, are the blessings that would not be possible without the perspective of participating in two similar yet vastly different communities. In fact, sometimes I feel like a honeybee, gathering the rich pollen from one place that sometimes inadvertently gets passed on to the other. Each community has its own progressive bent. Both are committed to be seekers and followers of the Way, seeking ways to activate social justice, environmental justice, and Love of Neighbour.

From being 'inside', but also looking in from 'outside', I can sometimes notice where and how each community endeavors to speak Truth to power with their own unique voice.

Truth be told, sometimes I feel impatient, wondering why 'this' community can't see things the way 'that' one does, or why 'that community' seems to be more engaged about an issue than 'this' one is. But that's actually where the tension of diversity offers its blessing. If we only see things through one lens, it's easy to think that all congregations see things from their specific perspective, and we can fall into a 'comfortable pew' syndrome. To expand on that imagery, if we see through bifocals, things might come into sharper focus in order to see how/where to accelerate the process of becoming better Questioners and Seekers, and ultimately become more animated Activists. (I have intentionally capitalized some words as roles I try to assume on my own Journey.)

So, yes, I miss seeing Emmanuel's full congregation (on zoom or in-person) on a regular basis, but 'you' (collectively and individually) mattered to me before I moved to New Brunswick, and continue to be embedded in my heart-space. You influenced me then, and are not forgotten now. What has changed for me, is that I now have more people in my Jesus-pool of Questioners, Seekers, and Followers to engage with.



Perhaps that is what happens when congregations within the EOORC meet and visit each other beyond our individual doors and property boundaries, and collaborate on broader issues and projects for the greater good of All-our-Relations, and for Love of Neighbour... while embracing being unique, morphing, growing, merging, cycling around, being unique, morphing, growing...

Being a pollinator bee going between beautiful garden patches is not such a bad thing after all. For me, that's where blessings abound!

Carol Scott



Swallowtail Lighthouse, Grand Manan. Photo courtesy of Tripadvisor



THE ALGONQUIN LAND CLAIM IN EASTERN ONTARIO

The land claim agreement with the Algonquin indigenous people living with us in Eastern Ontario has now reached the final negotiation stage. Following a petition to the Governor General in 1983 and 32 years of preparatory work, discussions on detailed provisions, land selections, and rounds of consultations, a significant milestone was achieved in 2016 when the Agreement-In-Principle was jointly ratified by the Algonquins of Eastern Ontario and the provincial and federal governments. It identifies the lands within the agreement area selected by the Algonquins for their ownership, requirements for protection of existing lands and for developing selected the lands, protection of hunting and fishing rights, and provisions for existing land use practices. Once the final agreement has been approved, there will be a new modern-day treaty in place and ready for implementation of the provisions. The possible date for the final approval step before starting implementation is 2023 or 2024.

Why is this exciting development important? First, the agreement will "... achieve a just and equitable settlement of the long-standing claim of the Algonquins of Ontario ...", as stated in their objectives. Second, our Church and where we live are located within the proposed claims area. So, we are interested in following the progress closely in light of our interest in and support of our indigenous neighbours.

For example, the Emmanuel Right Relations Group and the Emmanuel Social Action Committee are looking into ways to advance reconciliation by listening, learning, and carefully looking for ways to establish closer relationships with local indigenous people and groups.

This Newsletter item for the Emmanuel community is intended to describe what the land claims agreement is all about, the procedural aspects, and where the negotiations stand now. It provides information about the developments since a petition dated almost forty years ago in 1983, who's involved, what the ground rules are, the current status, and what's next. Think of this article simply as a backgrounder for learning about the Algonquin Land Claim.

The information in this article has been largely taken from three very informative websites provided by the Algonquins of Ontario, the Ontario government and the federal government¹²³.

What Is This Land Claims Agreement All About?

Comprehensive land claims agreements, which eventually become modern treaties once approved, define the ongoing legal, political and economic relationships between indigenous people, the provincial or territorial governments, and the federal government.



Negotiation of a land claims agreement is the current way that indigenous peoples pursue redress from the long-standing injustices and impacts they have experienced following arrival of European settlers. In the province of Ontario alone, work on 59 agreements is underway at various stages: 13 are being implemented, 36 claims are being negotiated currently, of which the Algonquin Land Claim is one, and 10 potential claims are being researched.

The current claim negotiation and implementation process has five steps.

Submission of a claim: An Indigenous community submits a written statement, together with supporting documents, setting out the claim.

Assessment: In assessing a land claim, Ontario analyzes the land claim documents submitted by the Indigenous community, researches relevant history and issues related to the claim, conducts a legal review, consults with other ministries in the government to determine what interests could be affected by the claim, and decides whether to accept a claim, based on the review process.

Negotiation: Negotiating the settlement of a land claim helps to achieve legal certainty regarding the lands in question, promote opportunities for economic, cultural and community development for Indigenous and non-Indigenous communities, and improve relationships between the government and Indigenous peoples and between Indigenous communities and their neighbours.

The “parties” to a negotiation are the groups involved in settling the claim: the Indigenous community that submitted the claim and the provincial government work out the details. The federal government makes the final approval on behalf of Canada.

The parties develop a negotiation framework agreement that outlines:

- the issues that will be addressed in the negotiation time frames
- any funding that the Indigenous community will get to support its participation in the negotiations
- the process for consulting with the public on the issues related to the claim will be confidential.

During a negotiation, the parties work to reach agreement on the elements of the settlement, identify lands that may be transferred to Canada from Ontario to be set aside as a reserve, and calculate any financial compensation that is owed to the Indigenous community. Regular public consultations are held to get input from the general public and stakeholders (such as municipalities, corporations and agencies) that could be affected by the settlement of the claim. Indigenous communities whose established or credibly asserted Aboriginal or treaty rights may be adversely affected by the proposed settlement are represented by designated representatives. The parties identify and develop solutions to address the potential impacts of the land claim such as arrangements for the continued use of land by third parties (for example, the use of roads on lands that will become reserve) where appropriate.



Settlement and Implementation: Following negotiations, the parties may sign an Agreement-in-Principle, a document that sets out the general elements of a settlement. Settling a land claim can involve transferring Crown land to Canada to set apart the land as reserve lands for a First Nation. The province typically does not cancel Crown land leases, easements, mining claims, timber allocations or other licences and permits during their term.

This document is the basis for developing a Final Agreement.

Final Agreement: A Final Agreement details agreements reached between the indigenous community, the province and the federal government on the issues raised in the land claim. Each of the parties to a negotiation needs to approve and sign the agreement. Once signed, the agreement is a legally binding document. This means the obligations it sets out for each party are enforceable under law.

All parties to the negotiation, the Indigenous community, Ontario and Canada, then implement the final agreement by carrying out the obligations described in it.

Algonquin Land Claim in Eastern Ontario

So much for the process and the mechanics. Let's turn to the features of the Algonquin land claim.

The Algonquin Land Claim is largest land claim being negotiated in Ontario. Once signed, it will be the province's first modern-day constitutionally-protected treaty.

The Algonquins of Ontario (AOO) assert that they have Aboriginal rights and title that have never been extinguished and have continuing ownership of the Ontario portions of the Ottawa and Mattawa River watersheds and their natural resources. The claim process was initiated by a petition⁴ sent in March 1983 from the Chief, Council and People of the Algonquins of Golden Lake on behalf of the Algonquin Golden Lake First Nation to His Excellency Edward Schreyer, Governor General of Canada. The final paragraph of the petition asks "... to settle the questions of compensation for their past use and occupation of our lands and resources, and of compensation for the taking of those lands ...".

The Claim Area Covers Most of Eastern Ontario

That we recognize the strength of our rights and claims, but that we would not wish to create more injustice by seeking justice ourselves, not to dispossess other without compensation as we have been dispossessed ourselves;

WE THEREFORE PRAY:

That all lands in the Province of Ontario which form part of the watershed of the Ottawa River below the Mattawa River that are now in the possession of the Crown be immediately confirmed and recognized as belonging to our Nation;

That the Governments of Canada and of the Province of Ontario make no use or disposition of these lands or any parts of them or any resources appertaining to them without the consent of our Nation;

That discussions begin with your Governments under your personal auspices and direction to settle the questions of compensation for their past use and occupation of our lands and resources, and of compensation for the taking of those lands which have been patented;

Petition of Algonquins of Eastern Ontario, 1983 (part)

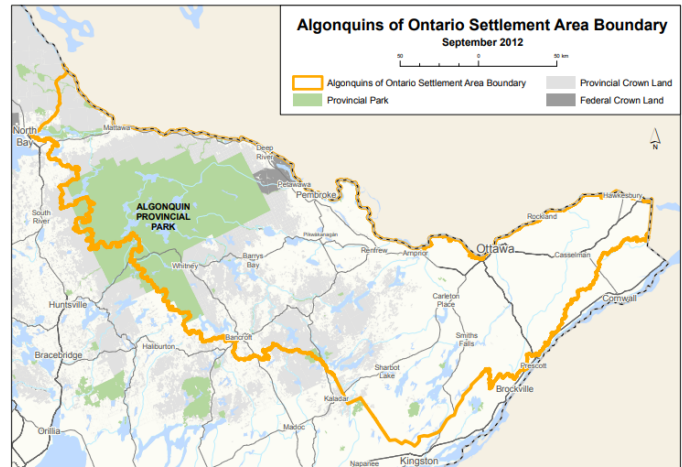


The Claim Area Covers Most of Eastern Ontario

The area covered by the agreement is huge, defined geographically by the watersheds of the Ottawa River and the Madawaska River which was historically used and occupied by the Algonquin people of Ontario (see the following map⁵). It spans almost all of Eastern Ontario – from North Bay to the Quebec-Ontario border and from the Ottawa River to the St. Lawrence River. The claim area covers a significant share of Southern Ontario, 27% in fact, encompassing 36,000 square kilometres in eastern Ontario, with a population of more than 1.2 million people.

You can think of the claim area as being subdivided into thirds: starting in the western third with Algonquin Park and environs, a middle area of mostly Crown land and scattered communities where the areas for wildlife harvesting rights have been identified, and an eastern third which is largely occupied by farms and communities including the City of Ottawa.

People of Algonquin descent in the land claim territory are represented in the negotiations by the Algonquins of Ontario. The ten groups within the agreement area are: the Algonquins of Pikwakanagan First Nation (near Golden Lake and the only Algonquin First Nation in Ontario), and nine communities: Antoine, Bonnechere, Greater Golden Lake, Kijicho Manito Madaouskarini (Bancroft), Mattawa/North Bay, Ottawa, Shabot Obaadjiwan (Sharbot Lake), Snimikobi (Ardoch), and Whitney and area.



Negotiating The Agreement

The Algonquins of Ontario developed four objectives for the negotiation:

- Reaffirm the honour and pride of the Algonquin people
- Ensure the survival and prosperity of the Algonquin people and culture
- Raise awareness and understanding about Algonquin history and culture
- Achieve reconciliation of the relationships of the Algonquins with the Governments of Ontario and Canada.

Joint objectives for the agreement were subsequently developed by the Algonquins of Ontario and the two levels of government, first written in 1994 and renewed in 2006⁶:



We are committed to achieving a just and equitable settlement of the long-standing claim of the Algonquins of Ontario, and in doing so, we intend to:

- *Avoid creating injustices for anyone in the settlement of the claim*
- *Establish certainty and finality with respect to title, rights and interests in the land and natural resources with the intention of promoting stability within the area and increasing investor confidence*
- *Identify and protect Algonquin rights*
- *Protect the rights of private landowners, including their right of access to and use of their land*
- *Enhance the economic opportunities of the Algonquins with the intention of also benefiting and promoting general economic and commercial opportunities in the area*
- *Ensure Algonquin Park remains a park for the appropriate use and enjoyment of all peoples*
- *Establish effective and appropriate methods and mechanisms for managing the lands and natural resources affected by the settlement, consistent with the principles of environmental sustainability*
- *Consult with interested parties throughout the negotiations process and to keep the public informed on the progress of the negotiations.*

Progress To Date

Creating a new Land Claim Agreement takes time, decades in fact. As shown in the timeline table below, the claim was initiated in 1983, in the form of a petition to the Governor General of Canada and it took a few years before to get the arrangements in place before commencing negotiations.

Starting in 1991, arrangements for negotiating the land claim were established by the parties. In 2013 and 2014, over 2000 people participated in extensive consultations involving 150 meetings. The consultations included land owners, cottage associations and those who hold direct interests in the Crown land parcels identified for potential transfer to Algonquins of Ontario ownership.

A significant milestone was the ratification of the Agreement-in-Principle in 2016⁷. This document sets out the main elements of a potential settlement, which would include:

- the transfer of 117,500 acres of provincial Crown land to Algonquin ownership
- \$300 million as settlement capital provided by Canada and Ontario
- defined ongoing rights of the Algonquins of Ontario related to lands and natural resources within eastern Ontario.



The Agreement in Principle lists practical features of the arrangements:

- land will not be expropriated from private owners
- no one will lose existing access to their cottages or private property
- no one will lose access to navigable waterways
- no new First Nation reserves will be created as part of the treaty
- approximately 4% of the Crown land in the claim area is proposed for transfer
- the vast majority of the Crown land base will remain open to all existing uses
- after transfer, Algonquin lands will be subject to municipal jurisdiction, including the same land use planning and development approvals and authorities as other private lands
- land transfers will restore historically significant sites to the Algonquins, contribute to the social and cultural objectives of Algonquin subject communities, and provide a foundation for economic development for the region.

1983	The Algonquins formally submit a land claim to Canada and Ontario, asserting that the Crown never entered into a treaty with the Algonquins and that they have continuing rights over the lands and natural resources in their traditional territory.
1991 to 1992	The governments of Canada and Ontario agree to enter into negotiations with the Algonquins.
1994	All parties agree to publicly release a Statement of Shared Objectives and a Framework Agreement to guide the conduct of the negotiations.
2006	All parties reaffirm the shared objectives and the current phase of negotiations begins.
2012	All parties reaffirm the shared objectives and the current phase of negotiations begins.
2013 to 2014	More than 2,000 people attend tripartite public information sessions to learn about and provide comments on the Preliminary Draft Agreement-in-Principle. Members of the Ontario negotiation team: organized more than 150 meetings with land owners, cottage associations and those who hold direct interests in the Crown land parcels identified for potential transfer to Algonquins of Ontario ownership, conducted discussions with local municipal representatives regarding proposed Algonquins of Ontario land selections in their municipalities met with angler and hunter groups, environmental and park groups, and other sectoral interests. Algonquins of Ontario hold meetings to review the Preliminary Draft with Algonquin voters.
2015	Algonquins of Ontario Proposed Agreement-in-Principle is initiated by the negotiators and made publicly available.
2016	Algonquins of Ontario Agreement-in-Principle is ratified and signed by Ontario, Canada and the Algonquin Negotiation Representatives.
2017	Ontario makes a Draft Environmental Evaluation Report available for public review and conducts a series of public meetings as well as engagement online, by telephone and through correspondence.
2020	Supplemental Report to the Draft Environmental Evaluation Report: Proposed Settlement Lands Made under the Algonquin Land Claim Declaration Order , October 2020.
2021 & Beyond	Negotiations continue towards possible final approval perhaps by 2023/2024.

Timetable of events in the land claim



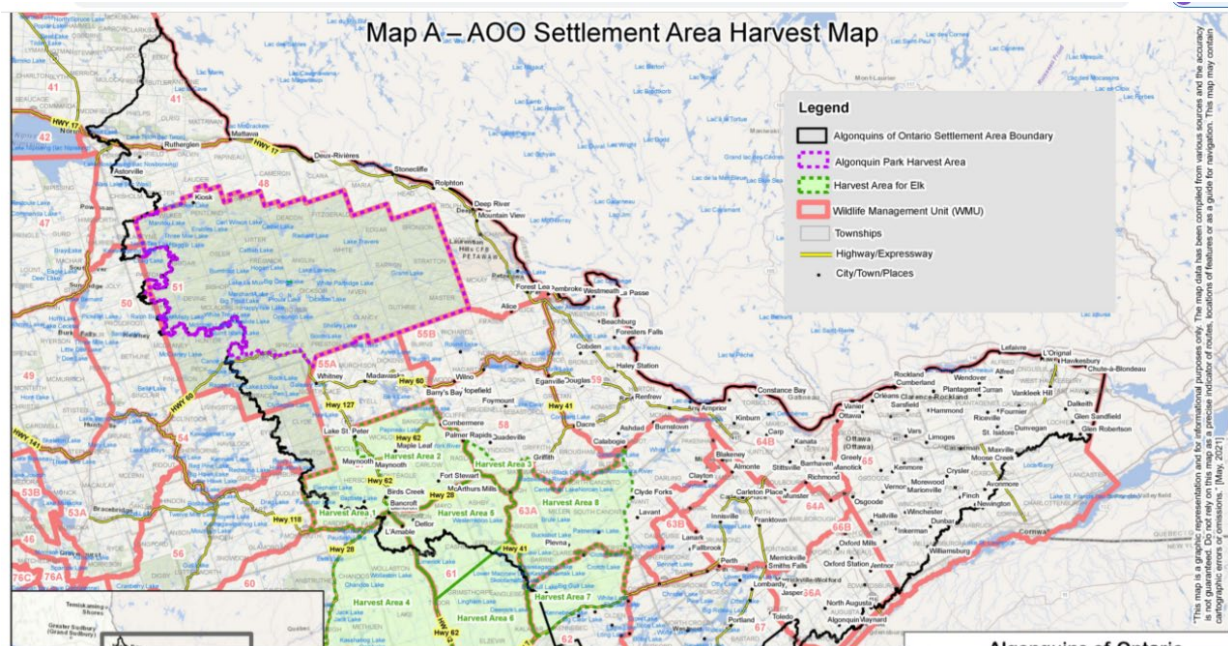
Harvesting of fish and wildlife is an important activity for indigenous peoples. There are provisions in the Agreement-in-Principle for: existing recreation or hunt camps to continue on lands that will be transferred; Algonquin harvesting rights will be subject to provincial and federal laws necessary for conservation, public health and public safety; the Algonquins have developed a moose harvesting plans with Ontario⁸; and, fisheries management plans are to be developed for the Algonquin settlement area. As indicated in the map⁹ below, the areas set aside for traditional wildlife harvesting cover most of the central third of the agreement area.

The October 2016 Press Release announcing the ratification of the Agreement in Principle documents the support of the Algonquins of Ontario, and the provincial and federal governments¹⁰.

“The signing of the Agreement-in-Principle today marks a critical step forward in a journey that began almost 250 years ago when the first Algonquin Petition was submitted to the Crown in 1772. As we move forward into the next phase of our negotiations, the Algonquins of Ontario look forward to working in cooperation with the Governments of Canada and Ontario to improve upon what we have achieved to date and build a strong and equitable modern-day treaty. We believe that together we can work towards reconciliation and securing the long-delayed justice that the Algonquin people deserve.”

Robert J. Potts

*Principal Negotiator and Senior Legal Counsel,
Algonquins of Ontario*



Algonquins of Ontario Settlement Area showing areas set aside for traditional wildlife harvesting



“This major step toward Ontario's first modern treaty shows what's possible when strong partners work together in the spirit of reconciliation. More than a million people share this land with the Algonquins of Ontario, and a modern treaty will clear a path for neighbours to become partners, bringing new economic opportunities to their communities.”

The Honourable David Zimmer

Ontario Minister of Indigenous Relations and Reconciliation

The signing of the Agreement-in-Principle is a momentous milestone and a significant step forward on renewing Canada's relationship with the Algonquins of Ontario. We are working together to resolve one of the largest land claims in the country. Achieved in a spirit of co-operation and partnership, this landmark AIP brings us closer to the first modern-day treaty in Ontario and our shared goal to find a balanced solution that advances reconciliation for the benefit of all Canadians.”

The Honourable Carolyn Bennett, M.D., P.C., M.P.

Minister of Indigenous and Northern Affairs

Returning to the final entries in the timeline table, the 2017 Draft Environmental Evaluation Report lays out the potential environmental effects and proposed mitigation measures for the parcels of land selected by the Algonquins.

Indigenous communities, stakeholders, the general public and agencies reviewed the Draft EER and provided comments. The process is designed to: build a common understanding of the environmental effects and identify appropriate mitigation measures.

Since then, further negotiations have resulted in changes to the proposed AOO land selections. The 2020 Supplemental Report to the Draft Environmental Evaluation Report: Proposed Settlement Lands provides updated information for public review and comment.

Feedback from the review of the Supplemental Report will be added to the comments and feedback received during the consultation period on the 2017 Draft Environmental Evaluation Report in 2017. This feedback will be considered in developing the Final Environmental Evaluation Report that will be released for public review.

Current status

A round of consultations on the environmental evaluation reports was completed in December 2020. After almost 40 years following the original petition, remaining steps include release of the final version of the Environmental Evaluation Report, completion of the negotiations, and then ratification of the final agreement by all parties. While there is no firm date for approval of the final agreement, 2023 or 2024 have been suggested. The result will be a Final Agreement in the form of a modern-day treaty.



In Closing

I hope that this background article has provided some useful information about the Algonquin Land Claim and its significance for the Algonquins of Ontario and for their neighbours within the claim area. It is a long, arduous, but respectful process required to create a modern treaty in this day and age.

Looking ahead following the final approvals by the parties in a few years time, the implementation of the provisions of the treaty by each of the parties will mark the beginning of a new relationship, not only between the organizations representing three parties to the agreement, but more importantly, among the indigenous people and the people of Ontario.

Graham Campbell

Member of the Emmanuel Right Relations Group

November 22, 2021



Courtesy of Mādahòkì Farm



References:

- ¹ <https://www.tanakiwin.com/our-treaty-negotiations/overview-of-treaty-negotiations/>
- ² <https://www.ontario.ca/page/algonquin-land-claim>
- ³ <https://www.rcaanc-cirnac.gc.ca/eng/1355436558998/1539789262384>
- ⁴ <https://www.tanakiwin.com/wp-system/uploads/2013/10/j-Algonquin-Petition-of-1983.pdf>
- ⁵ <https://files.ontario.ca/maa-algonquins-ontario-settlements-area-boundry.pdf>
- ⁶ <https://www.tanakiwin.com/our-treaty-negotiations/statement-of-shared-objectives/>
- ⁷ <https://www.rcaanc-cirnac.gc.ca/eng/1355436558998/1539789262384#chp3>
- ⁸ <https://www.tanakiwin.com/wp-system/uploads/2021/08/Map-A-AOO-Settlement-Area-Harvest-Map-without-Monitor-Locations-20210510.jpg>
- ⁹ <https://www.tanakiwin.com/fishwildlife/harvest-area-map/>
- ¹⁰ https://www.tanakiwin.com/wp-system/uploads/2016/10/NewsRelease_AOOEventOct2016.pdf



EUC COUNCIL LETTER TO THE NCC IN SUPPORT OF RE-NAMING THE SJAM PARKWAY

At its meeting on 16 November 2021, EUC Council approved a motion to send a letter to the National Capital Commission (NCC) in support of a local initiative to rename the Sir John A. Macdonald (SJAM) Parkway. The motion passed: 11 for, 5 against, 4 abstentions. This article provides the background on this initiative.

a) *Who initiated the letter?*

The Thursday Morning Discussion group, aka the Heretics, has been reading and discussing several books and articles related to the intersection of theology and social justice through the lens of attempting to follow the Way of Jesus: the way of Love, Justice and non-violence. We recently read a book by Sarah Augustine entitled *The Land is Not Empty - Following Jesus in Dismantling the Doctrine of Discovery*.

The group learned that when European monarchs sent out explorers, they were armed with *Terra Nullius*, a theological and legal doctrine that gave land title to Christian European states who would assume sovereignty over discovered lands. Under this doctrine, discovered lands were considered devoid of human beings if the original people who lived there were considered heathens, pagans, and infidels, in other words, not ruled by a 'Christian prince'.

The land was not empty when John Cabot arrived 1497.

It is estimated that the Americas were occupied by 100 million Indigenous Peoples (about one fifth of the human race) who had been living their traditional lives on the land since time immemorial, but because they were not Christians, the land was deemed empty.

Terra Nullius became the cornerstone of the Doctrine of Discovery, which emanated from a series of Papal Bulls (formal statements from the Pope) and extensions, originating in the 1400s. Discovery was used as legal justification for colonial dispossession of sovereign Indigenous Nations.

The last chapter in Augustine's book is titled: *People of Faith, Rise Up!* During the group discussion that ensued, we explored ways we, as members of a community of faith within the UCC, might participate in acts of reparation for the harm done to Indigenous peoples, using Christian theology as moral justification. It was suggested we could begin with a gesture of reconciliation locally, and we were reminded of the petition to rename the SJAM Parkway.

Did you even know that the Ottawa River Parkway had been renamed? To quote Kelly Egan¹, a reporter from the Ottawa Citizen "That should never have been done in the first place - totally out of the blue in 2012, without consultation, on a road built 70 years after Sir John A. died, to which he had zero affiliation, personal or political".





The SJAM Parkway. Photo: Lynn Solvason

b) Link between the Parkway and Indigenous Peoples

On 27 May of 2021, Tk'emlúps te Secwépemc First Nation announced they had uncovered the remains of 215 children buried at the site of the former Kamloops Indian Residential School in B.C.ⁱⁱ. Days later, three Ottawa city councillors, Jeff Leiper, Theresa Kavanagh and Catherine McKenney, whose wards include the SJAM Parkway, showed their support for a petition to rename the Parkway and called on the federal government to launch an Indigenous-led process to rename the road as soon as possibleⁱⁱⁱ. Albert Dumont, who co-authored the petition^{iv} is a member of the Kitigan Zibi Anishinaabeg Algonquin First Nation.

He is also Ottawa's English Poet Laureate and brother of Barbara Hill-Dumont (who blessed our REDress Project in May 2021). Albert Dumont reminds us that Indigenous Peoples had been living, meeting and trading for thousands of years along the Ottawa River and they taught the newcomer Europeans vital skills such as how to navigate the mighty Ottawa River and survive the cold winter. Chaudière Falls and Victoria Island are considered sacred sites to the local Indigenous people.

Sir John A. MacDonald was the first prime minister of Canada and the dominant figure in Canadian Confederation and should rightfully be remembered and honoured as such^v. However, he also personally set in motion all the most damaging elements of Canadian Indigenous policy.



Macdonald's government enforced policies that starved Indigenous people to force them from their land and onto reserves, expressly to clear the way for the building of the railway and encourage more immigration from Europe. The policies outlawed Indigenous ceremonies and centralized and expanded a residential school system that took generations of children from their families and tried to wipe out their languages, spiritual practices, and cultures, as detailed during the Truth and Reconciliation Commission. The name of John Macdonald is traumatizing to many Indigenous people and there is a desire to remove it from a parkway that runs through an Indigenous heartland.

This is not about 'cancel culture'. Macdonald is still our first prime minister and his record speaks for itself, both for better and for worse. He remains the Father of Confederation but we can't deny that he is also the Father of the Indian Residential Schools System.

c) Letter from the Discussion Group, and the EUC Council Motion

Carol Scott agreed to prepare a draft letter which was sent around to the Heretics group with an open invitation to make revisions or suggestions. Revisions were made, and there was discussion regarding on whose behalf the letter to the NCC should be sent. Options considered were on behalf of the Heretics, the EUC Indigenous Relations Group, the EUC Council, or even EOORC. Some of the group suggested that the letter might have greater weight with the NCC Executive and Council if sent from an official body of our church, rather than an ad-hoc discussion group.

It was generally agreed to ask the EUC Council to endorse and send the letter. Lynn Solvason agreed to bring such a motion to Council.

There was debate about this at Council and although the motion did pass (11 for), the record shows there was opposition to sending the letter (5 voted no), and some members were undecided (4 abstained). It is positive that the vote passed, but somewhat discouraging to some of the group, that even a small symbolic act of reparation, in support of a request by our Indigenous neighbours, would not be enthusiastically endorsed. History is not changed by the naming or un-naming of a road^{vi}.

The Council vote makes it clear that there are barriers to reconciliation with Indigenous peoples in Canada. A lot of information is available from the Truth and Reconciliation Commission's report, but progress on addressing the Calls to Action is slow. Why? Is it perhaps due to individual differences in the way people interpret the things we've been learning about colonialization?

d) Theology and Reparation

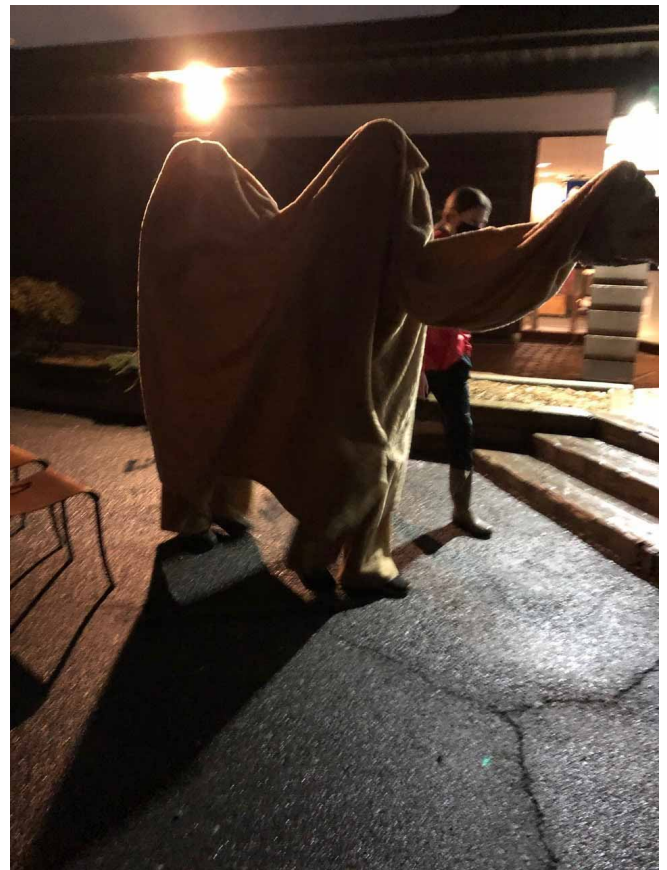
Has a century and a half of paternalistic policies and systemic racism led us to a 'denial of blame'? Perhaps a 'denial of blame' is rooted in a deep-seated fear for loss of White Privilege. Maybe some people believe no one is to blame because everything that was done was justified, legally and morally, through the Doctrine of Discovery. A big hurdle to accepting blame is guilt.



Layli Long Soldier, an Oglala Lakota poet, in an interview about her book *Whereas*, which explores the freedom real apologies can bring, asks that people listen to the stories of indigenous peoples, not with shame and guilt, *but freedom from denial*.

Whatever the reasons, a refusal to hold certain individuals or groups accountable for the legacy of colonialism, is arguably a major contributing factor which makes it difficult to start making the necessary changes in our society. The Thursday group discussed how acts of reparation might fit with our understanding of following the Jesus-Way of Love of Neighbour and Social Justice. The United Church was one church body that ran the Residential Schools and participated in upholding various aspects of the Indian Act.

TRC Call to Action #49 says ‘we call upon all religious denominations and faith groups who have not already done so to repudiate concepts used to justify European sovereignty over Indigenous lands and peoples, such as the Doctrine of Discovery and terra nullius’. Some feel the UCC cannot progress with meaningful reconciliation without going a step further and addressing what, in Christian theology, justifies colonial policies. UCC Indigenous minister, Rev Alf Dumont, said it is no wonder the United Church’s apology has never been accepted by the Indigenous people^{vii}. It was only acknowledged.



A Camel in training



Crèche figures by Anne Squire. Photo: Phyllis MacRae



It indicates to us that Emmanuel needs to do much more work and education to understand Right Relations if we want to make progress towards reparation and reconciliation with Indigenous people. Suggestions include looking at the big picture; sorting out how we interpret the things we learn; and addressing the TRC Call to Action #59 by broadening the discussion to include the entire congregation. Still, the open discussion held at the Council level on November 16th offers a hopeful aperture to further engagement!

Lynne Solvason and Carol Scott



Crèche figures by Anne Squire. Photo: Phyllis MacRae

References:

- i <https://o.canada.com/news/local-news/egan-sir-john-a-wrong-name-for-parkway-in-2012-even-more-wrong-today>
- ii <https://www.cbc.ca/news/canada/british-columbia/tk-eml%C3%B4ps-te-secw%C3%A9pemc-215-children-former-kamloops-indian-residential-school-1.6043778>
- iii <https://www.cbc.ca/news/canada/ottawa/ottawa-sir-john-a-macdonald-parkway-1.6050034>
- iv <http://albertdumont.com/sir-john-a-macdonald-parkway-yes-no/>
- v <https://www.theatlantic.com/ideas/archive/2021/06/defense-canada-prime-minister-john-macdonald/619236/>
- vi <https://ottawacitizen.com/opinion/sutcliffe-why-i-support-renaming-the-sir-john-a-macdonald-parkway>
- vii The Other Side of the River: From Church Pew to Sweat Lodge, by Rev. Alf Dumont, United Church Publishing House, June 2020





EMMANUEL UNITED CHURCH

inclusive • compassionate • justice-seeking • welcoming all

November 29, 2021

Dear: Marc Seaman (Chair),
Tobi Nussbaum (CEO)
National Capital Commission Board of Directors

We are members of Emmanuel United Church in Ottawa, who have been reviewing the recommendations of the Calls to Action by the Truth and Reconciliation Commission, specifically the Calls to the four church bodies which ran Indian Residential schools. As a group, we seek to respond to relevant, current situations for Right Relations with Indigenous Peoples through the lens of our mandate for Truth and Justice in the call for Love of Neighbour.

As a community of faith, we believe we cannot have (re)conciliation without active reparation for harms done by ourselves, our governing bodies, and our church ancestors. As a congregation which gathers on unceded, unsurrendered Indigenous territory within the city of Ottawa, we are asking that the NCC participate in an act of reparation by removing the name of the first Prime Minister of Canada from the Ottawa (Kitchissippi) River Parkway. It is now well-known that John A. Macdonald and his government implemented policies that adversely affected Indigenous peoples for generations, such as through the implementation of the Residential School system, which was an outcome of the Indian Act created in 1876.

We are aware there are also many other voices calling for the current name of the Parkway to be changed from the SJAM Parkway. We wish to add our name to those who are requesting it be re-named with a more respectful one, preferably as suggested and agreed upon by the Algonquin Anishinaabeg peoples of this region.

We write this confident that you are already well underway in proceeding with the renaming. We shall continue to follow the decisions of the National Capital Commission with great interest.

Respectfully,



David Wray, Chair
Emmanuel United Church Council

Cc: David McGuinty, MP Ottawa South, John Frazer, MPP Ottawa South, Jim Watson, Major of Ottawa, Jean Cloutier, Ottawa City Councillor for Alta Vista Ward, Jeff Leiper, Ottawa City Councillor for Kitchissippi Ward, Theresa Kavanagh, Ottawa City Councillor for Bay Ward, Catherine McKenney, Ottawa City Councillor for Somerset Ward, Anita Jansman, Eastern Ontario Outaouais Regional Council of the United Church of Canada, Albert Dumont, Kitigan Zibi Anishinabeg



691 Smyth Road, Ottawa, Ontario K1G 1N7
(Ph) 613-731-0437 (Fax) 613-733-0125
www.emmanuelunited.ca



STEWARDSHIP SUNDAY OCTOBER 31, 2021 (HALLOWEEN)

Stewardship Sunday this year happened to be on October 31 so, for that day, we had a double theme.

The Stewardship theme is Strength in Each Other and this has been emphasized by the symbol of people holding hands and the invitation to everyone in the congregation to color in a paper person so it can be displayed in the church. As it was Halloween, each person who came to the church to pick up their Stewardship pledge package was given a very special cookie treat prepared by Sandra Copeland, the participation was excellent with about 60 pledge packages being handed out that day. Thanks to those who picked up the packages for delivery to others.



The second theme for October 31, was, of course, Halloween. Our Stewardship team included Keith Jeacle and Sandra who dressed for the occasion and Joyce White who helped with identification.

As seems to be usual with drive through events, it rained but we were all warm enough to keep our spirits up.

When you see the newsletter, we hope that you have already sent your pledges back to the church. We also hope that you have looked at the Time and Talent survey and marked in what you like to do and those items that would be a new adventure. If you have not filled in the Time and Talent survey or sent in your pledge, it is not too late.

Remember it is Strength in Each Other that will pull us through.

Ross White



REMEMBRANCE DAY AT VETERANS' HOUSE

On November 11 the Multifaith Housing Initiative held its first Remembrance Day service at Veterans' House. Veterans' House now houses around 40 veterans who were homeless on Ottawa streets. The service was led by officers from the Canadian Legion. It took place outside in the patio area of the Andy Carswell Building. About 50 people attended, members and volunteers with MHI, local Federal, Provincial and municipal political representatives. A number of the VH residents also took part in laying of the memorial wreaths.

After the service there was a reception on the patio outside the community room. We were able to view the inside of the community part of the building. I had an opportunity to chat with a few of the men who are residents. A number of them wore their service medals. Only a few residents were comfortable in taking part in the gathering. Many of the residents find it difficult to mix and mingle casually with strangers. There was an awkwardness for people who are not accustomed to social gatherings and not used to mixing with people like senior forces officers, politicians and other people from the larger Ottawa community.

The service was very moving for everyone who took part, and a good start to what MHI hopes will become an annual event.

Phyllis MacRae



Lt Col (ret) Steve Young (Canadian Army) and Bill Beaton (Canadian Air Force and VH resident). Photos: Phyllis MacRae





Emmanuel United Church



691 Smyth Road
Ottawa, Ontario K1G 1N7
613.733.0437 ph
613.733.0125 fax
www.emmanuelunited.ca

