

OUR VISION STATEMENT

The Diocese of Moosonee – called by God to live and proclaim the Gospel

NORTHILAND

THE NEWSPAPER OF THE DIOCESE OF MOOSONEE • www.moosoneeanglican.ca • A SECTION OF THE ANGLICAN JOURNAL • DECEMBER 2022



The Reverend Vincent Solomon, Urban Indigenous Ministry Developer, Diocese of Rupert's Land, joins in the community walk with the children in Waskaganish on September 30th, "Every Child Matters".

Rolling the Stone Away

Article by Lay Reader Rita Jonah McLeod, St. Peter's Church, Waskaganish, QC.

THE DIOCESE OF MOOSONEE, in partnership with the Cree Compensation Board of the Cree Nation of Eeyou Istchee, had a healing gathering that took place in the Cree community of Waskaganish on September 28th, 29th, and 30th. This event was open to all the Crees of the Diocese of Moosonee along with the people of Kashechewan, Ontario on the east coast of James Bay.

The healing gathering was to help find ways to continue to heal together for the survivors of the residential schools. It was to find ways to work together to the truth and to reconciliation. The survivors are to heal on their healing journey. Each survivor was open to share their own stories. They were determined to heal with the help of each other. They



Chief Clarke Shecapio and Archbishop Fred Hiltz engaged in amical discussions during the Waskaganish Gathering.

tried to open their wooden, broken hearts and they tried to roll the stone away and to walk in the light. It's going to be a long journey from the broken pieces in their lives and to have hope in God's call to each survivor.

This is a very special event hosted by the Diocese of Moosonee. The first evening of the gathering was to serve as a welcoming with tea and bannock; it was to welcome the survivors home - which they had lost in their family's connection. We celebrated their heading home journey and to join together as children of God.

Each survivor was special and unique at the opening gathering. We collected twelve stones to remember each one of them as they walk on their healing journey; to open the brokenness in their lives; to feel free from their bondage that they carried from the residential impacts. It was a time to throw away the stones and to walk in the light of their healing journeys. It was a time

See "Throw Away the Stones" on page 2



Sharon Malherbe of St. Matthew's Cathedral showed Bill Murdock a plaque commemorating the new doors at the cathedral.

New Doors

Article by The Reverend Judie Cooper, St. Matthew's Cathedral.

THE RESIDENTS OF 5TH STREET near Tamarack in Timmins may have been wondering what those Anglicans would be up to next on August 27th. They witnessed parishioners and clergy throwing open the doors, standing on the porch and in the entryway, joyfully singing, "How Great Thou Art", while violins, bassoon, and clarinet added their notes to the anthem. St. Matthew's Cathedral was having a celebration that spilled out of the church and into the street.

The cause of all this joy was the dedication of new doors providing two entry points into the sanctuary of the church. Such beautiful doors they were, topped with a leaded

See "Celebration of Thanksgiving" on p.2.



The Celebration of Thanksgiving continued from page one.

glass transom allowing light to flood into sacred space.

The Reverend Judie Cooper, Interim Priest at the Cathedral, commented that we all go through many doors, most of our lives. Some of them usher us into new places or new experiences. Others become portals to safety or comfort. Many are inviting and beautiful, while others seem more like barriers that constrain us to stay put. The new Cathedral doors are welcoming; open to all who wish to enter. Inside the church, all who come will be encouraged, supported, taught the truths of Scripture, and share at the altar in the Bread and Wine which sustain them and fill their hearts with peace. Those same doors then open wide to let all who've entered leave the sanctuary and go back into the world to bless their communities with loving service and practical achievements.

The Celebration of Thanksgiving included a tribute to the Reverend Sharon Murdoch whose estate provided the funding for the purchase and installation of the doors. Reverend Murdoch was a priest in the Diocese of Moosonee, serving in 12 parishes from 1992 until 2009 when illness required her to leave her position as Dean of the Cathedral at St. Matthew's. Her ministry was warm, authentic, and persistent; it was filled with wit and with excellence in teaching and pastoral care. Those gathered at the Celebration of the Doors



Many parishioners at St. Matthew's Cathedral came out to a Saturday service of dedication for the new doors at the Cathedral to show their appreciation for the generous gift to the parish.

remembered her with great fondness. Sharon Malherbe, People's Warden at the cathedral, was a devoted friend to Sharon who spent many weeks over many months travelling to Kingston to offer in-house support and care for Sharon until her death in 2021. Bill Murdoch, Sharon's father, travelled to Timmins for this celebration. He offered much appreciation to those who had welcomed, befriended, and finally tended to his daughter during the course of her ministry and her time of suffering. The congregation rejoiced in his presence, thanking him for all the work he did to ensure the completion of this project.

The cathedral is thankful for the musicians who volunteered their time and skill to enhance our wor-

ship and our celebration: Mary Ellen Pauli, Jennifer Bentley, Mits Takayesu-Douglas, and Peter Colbert. Thanks were also extended to Judith Barkel, the kitchen crew, and all who prepared the refreshments which followed the service.

Reverend Cooper concluded the service with these words: "*May these new doors to this cathedral always be open to all who wish to enter, and always send forth those who wish to serve. May they secure a sanctuary and a school and a launching pad for new life. May they endure to the glory of God and the good of this community for generations to come. And may we, with thankful hearts, remember our common beginning ... sinners saved by grace ... and live our common ministry ... which is mercy.*"

Throw Away the Stones continued from page one.

to build a good relationship towards their healing journey; to respect the traditional way of the healing gathering; to give them back what they have lost in their own beliefs; and to respect their traditional ways of life. The healing was to implement their own beliefs; to continue practices with spiritual leaders; to lift their spirits by sharing their stories; to continue and to support their families as they walk in the new pathways with the help of the Anglican Church. The healing gathering was to help survivors with what happened to them and for them to feel free to be able to use their mother tongue and share their experiences with

members of the church in Canada. It was to help to develop a good plan with the Anglican Church.

We had a good reunion amongst each other and we heard an apology from the Anglican Church in Canada. This momentum will be remembered. Jesus is the light of the world; he shines upon each survivor and was called to the sacred circle. The unity of this gathering will always be remembered by the survivors, the Crees of Eeyou Istchee. The elders were always present to sit with us at this gathering. We feel aware that their guidance and support still lives in us as we walk on our healing journey. It

was a wonderful blessing to receive each survivor and to share in their stories.

We had a remarkable symbol of small snowshoes and moccasins to pass on that this child was to be remembered, that she/he couldn't do his first snowshoes' ceremonies; it will always pass on to each healing gathering. The next one will take place in Waswanipi in 2023. It was truly a blessing with the guests to share with remarkable, motivational speakers concerned about how to develop with the Anglican Church. We hope that the healing will take place each year to help the church understand the problems of the survivors



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taken away from their language and traditional way of living. Our hope is to walk together in the sight of our Jesus Christ who died for our sins to live with him with the help of the Holy Spirit. We had a good singing jamboree praising God.



Hit the Pause Button! Article by Archbishop Anne Germond, Bishop of Moosonee.

AFTER A RATHER HECTIC TIME of travel this spring, followed by our excellent Moosonee Assembly in June, it was good to hit the PAUSE button of my life and have time to rest and refresh. There were the usual trips out to camp where we: hiked, ate, swam, slept, read, and enjoyed the company of friends but there were also plenty of moments of quiet retreat time to ‘unpack’ all that has happened in the last few months - not just in ministry but personally. I have vivid memories of the day I was ordained as a deacon in the church. The bishop explained that it would be a very intense occasion which I would do well to unpack when I had some time afterwards. It was good advice. Much later on, once things had settled down in parish ministry, I did pause to unwrap the gift of the day - easily recalling its many sacred moments where God was present. I was able to give thanks for the privilege of my new vocation. Pausing to unpack the God given moments of our lives is a good spiritual practice and a good habit for everyone.

It turns out that the notion of pausing is also a biblical one. In Hebrew it is the word, ‘*Selah*’ and is found seventy one times in the Psalms and three times in Habakkuk. There are some differences of opinion amongst theologians about the significance of ‘*Selah*’, with some suggesting that it is a musical notation (remembering that the book of Psalms is the original hymn book), while others support the idea that as it comes at the end of a sentence, verse, or chapter, it means - ‘*think about this*’ before moving on:

Psalm 3.4 I cried aloud to the Lord, and he answered me from his holy hill. Selah. (Think about this).

Psalm 3.8 Salvation belongs to the LORD; your blessing be on your people! Selah. (Think about this).

Psalm 24.1 Who is this King of glory? The Lord of hosts, he is the King of glory. Selah. (Think about this).

Psalm 46.11 The Lord of hosts



Archbishop Anne Germond, Bishop of the Diocese of Moosonee.

is with us; the God of Jacob is our refuge. Selah. (Think about this).

These few verses are rich in meaning - yet in our daily reading of the Psalms, we skip past them too quickly without fully absorbing what we have just heard. The next time you read a Psalm with a ‘*Selah*’ at the end of it, pause to contemplate its deeper meaning. What did you learn about God in that verse? Is there something God might be calling you to do in these verses?

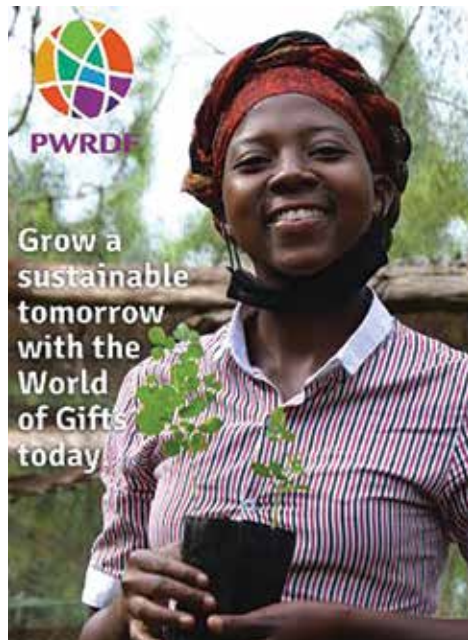
In one of his new books, entitled: “*Being Human: Bodies, Minds, Persons*”, Archbishop Rowan Williams writes about the complex and rich gift of time and how differently religious and non religious people use it or engage with it. Williams notes that for many people living fully secular lives there is not such thing as a weekend. Time for them is a limited commodity, “*every moment of which has to be made to yield to maximum possible result so you can’t afford to stop*” (pg. 79). Our consumer driven society urges us to acquire more and lead purposeful, productive lives in order to serve our communities well. I know more than one graduate who is expected to work an 80 hour week in the company in which they have been hired. Many of them are on probation with no guarantee of full time employ-

ment. This way of life has long lasting implications about our understanding of what is truly important and how we “*cultivate a fruitful rhythm in action and human engagement*” (Williams) in our society.

Sadly, even faithful, religious people are not immune to this mindset as we live our lives on the edges of them hurrying from one good thing to another, never taking that ‘*Selah*’ breath. Take a look at your church calendar and you will know exactly what I mean. I am as guilty of this as everyone, forgetting to pause after a meaningful worship service or productive meeting to allow all that happened move from the edge into the centre of my being. Through the practices of contemplative prayer, meditation, or lectio divina, and I have come to appreciate more and more the gift of ‘*Selah*’ in my own spiritual journey and in my life. It is wonderful ‘wasted’ time.

As the busyness of a new season begins, I invite you to practice ‘*Selah*’ moments of wonder, joy, and praise. I can assure you that God will pass by and be with you in them.

He said: “*Go out and stand on the mountain before the Lord, for the Lord is about to pass by. Now there was a great wind, so strong that it was splitting mountains and breaking rocks in pieces before the Lord, but the Lord was not in the wind; and after the wind an earthquake, but the Lord was not in the earthquake; and after the earthquake a fire, but the Lord was not in the fire; and after the fire a sound of sheer silence. (1 Kings 19: 11-12).*



The Reverend Judie Cooper, Interim Priest at St. Matthew’s Cathedral, Timmins.

St. Matthew’s Cathedral, Timmins, warmly welcomed The Reverend Judie Cooper as Interim Priest on July 1st. 2022. They find her to be a caring pastor, a good preacher, and a leader who helps others discover and use their gifts. She is also funny, a good cook, and a pretty good musician. The Reverend Judie Cooper reports that, “*I love being in Timmins as does my dog, Chewy. Walks around Gillies Lake are awesome. Gospel-Based Discipleship [via Zoom] has introduced me to many across the Diocese of Moosonee. I will greatly miss the new folk whom I’ve come to love so quickly.*”

The Reverend Judie Cooper returns to new ministry adventures in Muskoka, Diocese of Algoma, at the end of October.



The Reverend Judie Cooper during the Ceremony of Thanksgiving.



DIOCESE OF MOOSONEE: ACTIVITIES



Nina Paquette of St. Matthew's Cathedral is one of the many selfless ladies who toil in the parish kitchens of the diocese in order that parish activities might be well supported.



A work crew made up of parishioners from St. Matthew's Cathedral joined The Reverend Judie Cooper in feeding and talking with some disadvantaged persons in the Timmins area.



Archbishop Anne is raising Lay Reader Joanne Jenkins' interest in a new career as a member of the clergy!



The Reverend Anne Marie Carrier and Rita Jonah McLeod posed beside the cake made to honour the missing children as part of the Healing Gathering in Waskaganish.



Donald Duck came to a baptismal service held at St. John's Church in Foleyet and officiated by The Reverend Judie Cooper. Donald Duck added his special voice in praise of the proceedings.



Rosalyn Kantlahtant Elm, Archdeacon for Truth and Reconciliation and Indigenous Ministries in the Diocese of Huron and The Reverend Vincent Solomon, Indigenous Ministry Developer for the Diocese of Rupert's Land, were the two main presenters at the Healing Gathering in Waskaganish.



A set of children's snow shoes with moccasins was part of the focus as people gathered around the altar in a healing circle. These snowshoes will be brought to each Healing Gathering as we remember the children who never came home.

Hope in the Midst of Hopelessness

Article by Canon Phelan Scanlon, St. Thomas Church, Bracebridge, Diocese of Algoma.

RECENTLY, I FOUND MYSELF SCANNING the headlines. These days, that is a dangerous avocation. As I read the stories about mass shootings, the war in Ukraine, our exponential inflationary pressures, and more unmarked graves, I became as Jad Clampett once declared, “lower than a snake’s belly in a wagon rut.” The news is mostly bad these days due to humanity’s majority decision to defy the Creator, reject the redemption of Christ, and ignore the guidance of the Holy Spirit. All bad, right? Then I saw a glimmer of light in the midst of today’s prescient gloom.

At first it looked like another ‘bad news’ story (after all, does good news make the papers?) about young neo-Nazi racists in Ontario. Hmm. ‘Do I really want to read this?’ I wondered. To my amazement, the story was full of hope. It turns out that there is a social activist group in the Greater Toronto Area which targets and helps young, angry racists. They go by the moniker, “ETA” (Estimated Time of Arrival, referring to their fast response time), and their purpose is to intervene in the lives of at-risk young men who are angry and



Canon Phelan Scanlon, St. Thomas Church, Bracebridge, Diocese of Algoma.

espousing race hatred ... before they act out their racism in acts of violence. According to the article, (“*Young, White, and Full of Hate*” by Wendy Gillis, *Toronto Star*, June 5th, 2022), no other social agency in the GTA wants to reach out or otherwise intervene with young racists out of personal distaste and fear of legal repercussions. The police say that concerned friends and family who know of such budding racists have not much choice beyond the scope of doing nothing or calling the police once a crime has been committed. But

ETA has a different approach: to get to these young people before they act out. According to the article, people who are spouting dangerous, potentially violent views are referred to ETA by family, friends, school boards, and workplaces. Naturally, those who are referred must consent to ETA’s intervention. About ninety percent do just that, some even self-refer. What ETA does is simple in concept but difficult in practice: they reconnect at-risk youth with society, sometimes beginning with a simple conversation. ETA finds that, in many cases, a violent racist ideology is just the last ingredient in a toxic mix of abuse, poverty, isolation, lack of education, poor mental health, low self-esteem, and other contributing factors that drive young people to seek community in online hate groups. Sometimes, when the underlying issues are addressed, the race hatred evaporates.

Yes, one of the groups to which ETA refers people is the Church. This is where we see Christ at work. While Christians are tempted to avoid racists, or bar them from our company, Jesus calls us instead to reach out in love to the isolated and marginalised. By embracing the reject-

ed, the hated, and the isolated, Jesus was able to bring healing to those who needed it most (insert here Matthew, Zacharias, the lepers, Mary Magdalena). He restored isolated and rejected people to ‘community’. It is in relationships that our worst instincts are ameliorated and our most noble ideals affirmed. The Holy Spirit works best when we get together to discuss what She is doing in our lives.

Jesus invites people to return to community with God and with one another. ETA is doing this work. Sometimes anger and racism are symptoms of isolation and social rejection which can be mollified by a return to community. A conversation with someone who is espousing hatred may be difficult but it may be worth doing. The Church is a place where people can connect with their Redeemer and with other redeemed sinners. Because we are the Body of Christ, we are called to a ministry of reconnection ... and attainable wholeness. Let us remember that the Latin root word for ‘religion’ is ‘re-ligare’: to connect or bind. The Church has a responsibility to help people bind with Christ as a holy alternative to the forces of hatred and violence.

“Feed My Lambs”

Article by The Reverend Judie Cooper, St. Matthew’s Cathedral, Timmins.

UP TO 25 LAMBS OF JESUS have turned up at St. Matthew’s Cathedral every Friday at noon throughout this past summer and now into the fall. They come because we call out to them; we invite them; and we welcome them. And as we would with anyone entering into our homes, we then offered them food and drink. They have shared with us their wisdom for surviving in tough times, living rough when necessary and both keeping and sharing their faith. They have prayed with us and they have even prayed for us. We have watched with amazement as individuals share their possessions generously with others who have even less than themselves.

I’ve watched a homeless woman fashion a rake out of twigs and



Peter Colbert worked in the kitchen to prepare food for the ‘lambs of Jesus’.

sticks so that she could rake up grass on the hill by the church, ensuring that no trash and nothing harmful would impact children using the back entrance to the cathedral for activities. I

have been welcomed right under the tarps of an encampment, honestly asking for their help in relocating their temporary outdoor homes. I have found them to be keepers of their word ... finding as they promised I would, their belongings all moved to a better location and 26 bags of trash - much of it not belonging to them - placed for pickup. There are a lot of “I’s” in this last paragraph but it is not all about me at all.

Peter Colbert, Nicky Alexander, JoAnn Jenkins, Lionel Bonhomme, Sharon Malherbe, and Cheryl Shaw have all contributed conversation, food, and prayer as channels for befriending people who happen at this point in their lives to need a helping hand. The little crew at St. Matthew’s and the people of the streets have affirmed each other as loved and

valued by the Good Shepherd who cares for all His lambs.



Merry Christmas
& Thank you!

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“God Is With Us”

Article by Archbishop Anne Germond, Bishop of Moosonee.



Archbishop Anne Germond, Bishop of Moosonee.

“Look, the virgin shall conceive and bear a son, and they shall name him ‘Emmanuel,’ which means ‘God is with us.’ (Matthew 1.23)”

GOD IS WITH US. What a beautiful way for us to think about the upcoming Christmas season, and what a beautiful way to describe the past year in the Diocese of Moosonee.

As you prepare for the celebrations that will be taking place in your homes, churches, and communities know that God is with you in the midst of the joyful mess of it all. God is with you as you plan for family gatherings. God is with you in your Advent worship as you light the candles of Hope, Peace, Joy, and Love, and on Christmas Eve the Christ Candle. God is with you as you sing Christmas Carols and break bread together in the Great Thanksgiving in your Christmas services and celebrations.

God is with you in your baking and gift wrapping and gift opening. God is with you in the feast you will share, the visitors and guests you will welcome into your home. God is with you in the excitement and anticipation of all that will be. God is also with you in the ‘blue’ moments when you remember loved ones who are not with you. God is with you when you weep over dashed promises and unrealized dreams. God is with you through it all.

Emmanuel, ‘God is with us’ has been with us in Moosonee this year.

After a two year drought of being able to gather in person for worship and fellowship, bible study, and the sacrament of Confirmation, several events have taken place over the last several months.

God was with us in the pivotal June Assembly in Cochrane where we affirmed ten recommendations for the diocese as a way forward into the future God is calling us to. God was with us and with many people who travelled to Waskaganish in September for a Healing Gathering to listen to stories of pain and hurt and to find hope and new life in the ashes of the past.

God was with every young person in the James Bay Deanery who was confirmed by Archbishop Fred this autumn. God was with those whose lives were filled with joy this year and God was with those whose lives have been touched and tinged with sorrow, loss, illness, and despair. God was with us as we gathered at the Church of the Epiphany in February to bid farewell to a much loved bishop as we commended Bishop Tom Corston into God’s care and keeping. God was with us as we did the same for Reverend Iris in September.

God was with us as we said farewell to Archdeacon Larry Armstrong and Reverend Phelan Scanlon, and a number of faithful clergy retired, including Dean Valerie Isaac and Reverend Vivien Clarke. And God was with us as we welcomed Reverend Judie Cooper for a short interim at St. Matthew’s

Cathedral and is with us now as we welcome the new Episcopal Administrator for Moosonee, Bishop Victoria Matthews.

Thanks be to God for being with us in very real ways this year.

Some things did not turn out as we expected them to this year as Covid lingered and as people did not return to church as we hoped. There are a number of parishes vacant. This is often the way, isn’t it? There is no perfect life or church family or diocese; just as there is no perfect Christmas. The struggle is real!

The story of Jesus’s birth in Matthew’s Gospel reminds us that the preparations for the first Christmas were anything but proper or perfect. Joseph, called a righteous man, discovers that his son - wife-to-be is pregnant. Now we know that the child is of the Holy Spirit but such things were unheard of at that time. To Joseph, the pregnancy is a violation of social convention for an unmarried woman. He decides to divorce Mary, deciding to do this quietly in order not to shame her. But God had other plans for Joseph and for Mary. God interrupted Joseph’s plan with a plan of God’s own choosing. God sent an angel to appear to Joseph in a dream with a message that went like this: ‘Joseph, I know that this is not what you expected but it is all going to be okay. God is about to do something wonderful despite the fact that according to Jewish custom and law you are in a rather

socially unacceptable situation.’

Somehow, Joseph has to trust this strange news even though it catches him off guard. He does trust. He trusts the messenger angel that this child is from the Holy Spirit. He believes that this child already has a name, Jesus and that he will save people from their sins. He has no idea of the journey that is before this child. A journey that will take him from Bethlehem to Jerusalem - from a stable to a temple to a cross and to an empty tomb. Joseph knows none of that but in this moment he trusts that God is opening a door for him and for Mary and for a life beyond the embarrassment he feels.

This is the message of Christmas. It is a message for our own lives. God is with us in Jesus, a human being who will show us a different way to be if we trust and believe in him.

As Mary and Joseph journeyed to the first Christmas, they did not know where God would take them; all they knew was that something wonderful had been promised and that they too had been beckoned to follow. We too are invited to rise and follow God’s call, not knowing where the journey will take us, or the path that God has sent before us.

May you know the presence of God our Creator, Jesus our Redeemer, and the sustaining, strengthening Holy Spirit with you this Christmas and throughout the New Year.

THE CHRISTMAS CHECKLIST

FOR CHURCHES



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Restoring the Past, Caring for the Present

Article by Canon Patricia Dorland, Diocese of Moosonee.

IT WAS IN THE WINTER OF 1908 when three Cree packers arrived in Moose Factory with news for Archdeacon Robert Renison: they had heard that white men had pitched tents at Little Lakes' Camping Ground and that there was another site about one mile further on. Renison, a missionary stationed at Moose Factory was intrigued to hear of this as the then contemporary travel route for European commerce was by way of Hudson Bay and James Bay.

It was not long before Renison and a Cree guide set off from Moose Factory by dogsled and snowshoe to investigate this new development in the hinterland. He considered it a social call that would take him 400 miles south in temperatures of -50° F. It was February 6th, 1908 the manager of the survey company of Foley, Welsh and Stewart received the missionary warmly and plans were made for a Church of England worship service. The site for this inaugural outside service was located just below the site of Bishopthorpe, built in 1913 for Bishop Anderson, the fourth Bishop of Moosonee.

Following the service, Renison, again with his guide, dogsled and snowshoes, followed the packers trail south about 100 miles towards McDougall Chute, a fur trading post, reaching the Watabeag area a few miles north, to hold another first Church of England service. This location was likely the most northern site of the railway construction camps as the Temiskaming and Northern Ontario Railway, making



Norma Leavoy was one of the many volunteers, mostly from the OPP Matheson detachment, who worked on the restoration project to save the building which had been St. Anne's Anglican Church in Watabeag.

its way north, arrived in Cochrane in the fall of 1908. It is a conjecture of the author of this article that the name Watabeag is derived from the Anishinaabemowin word 'Waabang' meaning east and it may refer to being east of a large body of water.

Two years later, in 1910, the Archdeacon made a return visit to the area and arranged for the logging of tamarack and pine trees to provide building material for a new church. Watabeag had developed into an area of farm settlements. A half acre of land was deeded to the Anglican diocese. Local volunteers from the area provided the labour. Renison had procured a funding donation for the building from Miss Ann Clough of Torquay, England.

At her request, the church was called St. Anne's in memory of her mother. Above the altar hung a large replica of a painting done by Miss Clough depicting an Epiphany scene of people of all nations coming to worship the Christ child. This painting now hangs in St. Stephen's Church in Constance Lake.

By late 1986, the desire to have the church demolished was made known by Bishop Caleb Lawrence. The property had been handed over to the municipality for perpetual cemetery care but the church structure was unsafe and deemed a hazard to the area. However, residents in the area of Matheson/Watabeag still had a strong connection with the church. So much so that when news spread of the pending demolition,

Norma Leavoy gathered a committee and began working to save the building. Norma had been baptized in that church and her great-grandparents, parents, father, and husband, Roger Leavoy an OPP officer are all buried in the adjacent cemetery. With the lead help of Constables Henry Malboeuf, Robert Lamb, and Norm Teigen, the OPP Matheson detachment and surrounding community members and businesses got the project underway in the spring of 1988. Piece by piece, the building was dismantled, and as far as possible, whatever materials could be used in the reconstruction were set aside and catalogued for reassembly. In 1989, a new floor was laid and in 1990, the roof and bell tower was put up. In 1991, the exterior work was completed and in 1992 the interior was finished. This four year labour of love came to a happy ending when on August 8, 1992, a ceremony was held to reopen St. Anne's Church as a community space.

Since that day, the community church has been available for weddings, funerals, and family gatherings. The Church of Christ is not about logs and mortar but we acknowledge that sacred space is important to all of us. Church buildings hold memories of rites of passage, of celebrating Holy Eucharist together as a faith family, and of Christmas pageants. We give thanks to Norma, the OPP Matheson detachment, and others in the surrounding community, and their driving commitment in restoring a place that tells an important story.

Traditional Skirts

Article by Canon Patricia Dorland, Diocese of Moosonee.

EARLY IN SEPTEMBER, an article posted in social media shared the story of ribbon skirts being gifted to an Anishinabeck Police Service unit in Sault Ste. Marie. Cathy Syrette, Executive Director of the Indian Friendship Centre made the skirts that will become part of the standard uniform for events and ceremonies where a police-issued duty belt is not required.

At our diocesan June Assembly in Cochrane, a few women who attended that event chose to wear their own ribbon skirts. They considered the event to be an important occasion and for them wearing the skirt was an expression of their Indigenous identity. The significance of making and wearing a ribbon skirt was something I wanted to learn more about and so I had conversations with Louise Saganish from St. Barnabas Church in Waswanipi and others.



Rita McLeod & Rev. Anne-Marie Carrier

In Louise's tradition as an Inland Cree, skirts were what women always wore until the mid 20th century. The skirts worn

every day were a couple of inches off the ground and the material was from what could be purchased. For special occasions, the skirt could be sewn from a couple of more colourful prints but there were no ribbons or fancy decoration. As women's fashion changed to wearing pants post WWII, the younger Cree women especially, followed the new trend. However, in the last decade or so, Indigenous people are seeking to restore their traditional ways, teachings, and ceremonies. Ribbon skirts are part of that returning to tradition. However, the skirts are taking on a much different look as the length of the skirt, the colour and placement of ribbons and the material chosen are reflective of an individual's Indigenous expression. Ribbons sewn together to form one band are often made by women who have their own families. Ribbons spaced apart can mean the woman is single. The colours can be symbolic as in black, yellow,

red and white or they can be colours that the woman is personally drawn to. On September 30th, I saw many skirts worn made from the 'Every Child Matters' panel with orange and black ribbons sewn around the panel. One thing Louise was very clear about, if you are gifted a skirt, you wear the skirt as a sign of respect and to honour the person who made it for you.

A woman wearing a skirt with her arms raised is reflective of a mitchuwap (a frame pole tent teepee). The mitchuwap offers protection and is considered a nurturing and safe place for a family. The length of the skirt touches the ground to connect with Mother Earth. Ribbon skirts being made today are borrowing elements from various Indigenous areas and that is a good thing. Sharing creative and meaningful artistic expression works towards helping Indigenous people develop and proudly claim their identity.

