



PARISH PROFILE

**St. John the Baptist Anglican Church
3 Maquatua Road, P.O. Box 29
Wemindji, Quebec J0M 1L0**

Deacon Dinah Asquabaneskum, St. John the Baptist Anglican Church.

Our Church was built in 1985 and an extension was done in 2009 serving the people of Wemindji.

St. John the Baptist Church and Rectory (Residence) are under the department of the Public Buildings and Housing Maintenance of the Cree Nation of Wemindji. As well for the general maintenance and upgrades of the buildings at the request of the Parish vestry.



COMMUNITY OF WEMINDJI

The community of Wemindji is located on the east coast of James Bay. The community was first established on an island known as Old Factory, about 25 kilometres south of the present location. They moved to the present location in the summer of 1959. At first, the community was called Paint Hills, Nouveau Comptoir and the name later changed to Wemindji. The Cree Nation of Wemindji call themselves “Iiyiyuuch, which means the people. In some ways, Wemindji is not much different from any other small community with the services available.

In 2004, Wemindji was the first Cree community to have paved streets and side walks and in 2019, the community of Wemindji celebrated its 60th Anniversary. The slogan used to describe the community is “where tradition lives on”.

LOCAL GOVERNMENT

The Chief and Council of the Cree Nation of Wemindji have a term of four (4) years which consists of Chief, Deputy Chief and five (5) Council Members. Ms. Christina Gilpin is the current Chief and she is the first woman Chief of the Cree Nation of Wemindji. The current Chief & Council are currently serving their fourth year and the elections are to be held this fall 2021.



POPULATION

The population of Wemindji is approximately 1,629.

- Residents 1,439
- Non-Resident 190

CHURCH SERVICES

11:00 a.m. Morning Prayer or Eucharist with Moose Cree (Horden Prayer and Hymn Book)

3:00 p.m. Evening Prayer or Eucharist with East Coast Cree (Walton Cree Prayers Hymn Book)

7:00 p.m. English Program, Book of Alternative Services Evening Prayer or Eucharist, (non-Cree speakers attend this service).

The parish of St. John the Baptist Anglican Church also provides prayer services and communion at the Multi-Services Day Centre (MSDC) at least once a month for the elders as well as visiting the elderly in their homes. Services are held in people's homes when there is death in the family. Community events, the parish is invited to do opening prayers, blessing of feasts and community meetings. The Church also provides services for Weddings, Baptisms, Confirmations and Funerals, Graduations, Traditional Activities (Walking Out Ceremonies).

The Church provides Sunday School services to children of the community. Finding of committed Sunday School Instructors is challenging as well as maintaining the attendance and finding resource materials.

Annual Services:

- Annual Memorial Service at the cemetery (August/September)
- Annual Old Factory Visit Church Service (July) – it hasn't been happening for the last few years now.

Challenges:

In the past, there used to be a Church Choir both in Cree and English services, but now, it is a struggle to maintain the group of choir. Only few commit themselves to be in the choir and are mostly available during funeral/burial services and family services.

The church needs to find some young lay readers who can commit themselves in both services Cree and English. The church also needs to establish a program to reach out to the younger families and youth to be more active in the operations of the church.

OTHER PARISH ORGANIZATIONS:

Vestry Committee:

A voluntary committee which consist of Reverend as Chairperson, Rector's Warden, People's Warden, Deputy Wardens, Treasurer, Secretary and Members. The Vestry Committee Members are appointed at the Annual Vestry Meeting held in January and the term is every two (2) years. The role of the Vestry Committee is to meet on the regular basis to discuss issues concerning the parish, to review the financial issues and as well as scheduling of annual activities.

Anglican Church Women (ACW):

The role of the Anglican Church Women is to provide services to the parish in fundraising activities for the church such as having bake & rummage sales, fostering children in third world countries and contribution to the Primate's Work Relief and Development Funds (PWRDF). A voluntary group and they meet every Tuesday evenings at 7:00 p.m. at the parish hall (basement).

History of the Parish:

A number of Clergy some indigenous and some non-indigenous served as Resident Priest. Including our very own Reverend Sam Hughboy. He was very active within the Church, he continued to be active within the church after his retirement right up to his passing at the age of 97 years old. In past have been at time many lay readers who led and assisted in the Cree Language services. At this time there are minimal licensed lay readers, though a number of other people assist in leading services.

Other Issues:

The parish of St. John the Baptist Church hosted the James Bay Deanery Great Chapter's Meeting in Wemindji and it was a great experience. The parish are also invited to do presentations at the Annual General Assembly of the Cree Nation of Wemindji, just to report on their activities and other issues that they face within the parish.

Cree Nation of Wemindji Administration Office

FACILITIES IN THE COMMUNITY

The community of Wemindji is beautifully laid out and well equipped partially due to various funding agreements from the Cree Nation Government, Eeyou Eenou Limited Partnership Fund with Quebec Government, Funding Agreement with Federal Government, Indigenous Services Canada and Collaboration Agreement with Newmont for the Eleonore Mines Project, just to name a few. The following are the facilities available in the community:

1. Cree Nation of Wemindji Administration Office:
 - a. Local services provided to community members.
2. Tawich Development Corporation Administration Office:
 - a. Mini Mall, Community Grocery Store, Post Office
 - b. Sibi Gas Station
 - i. Hardware Shop
 - c. Garage
 - d. Maquatua Inn (Motel)
 - i. Restaurant
 - ii. Arts & Crafts Shop
 - e. Laundromat
3. Wolf Camp (Janitorial Services) at Eleonore Mines:
4. Youth Centre:
 - i. Youth Programs & Services

- ii. Summer Employment
 - iii. Youth Centre Facility
 - iv. Basketball Court
- 5. Chief Walter Hughboy Memorial Sports Centre:
 - i. Fitness Centre
 - ii. Swimming Pool
 - iii. Gymnasium
- 6. Community Hall:
 - i. Auditorium - Seating capacity 250 people
 - ii. Various programs for the community
 - iii. Cree Language Course for community & non-Cree Speakers
 - iv. Traditional / Cultural events
 - v. Arts & Crafts
 - vi. Traditional Cooking
 - vii. Traditional Programming
 - viii. Wellness Programming
 - ix. Mental Health Services
 - x. Family Services
 - xi. Community Services
- 7. C.O.O.L Facility (Challenge Our Own Limits):
 - a. After school program for kids (5-12 years old)
- 8. Two (2) Schools:
 - a. Maquatua Eeyou School (High School)
 - b. Joy Ottereyes Rainbow Memorial School (JORMS) – Elementary School
- 9. Mayaupui Training Centre:
 - a. Sabtuan Adult Education
 - b. Courses offered in Accounting, Secretarial & Carpentry
 - c. Variety of Courses
- 10. Cree Board of Health & Social Services of James Bay:
 - a. Willie Matches Miyupimaatisiun Centre (Local Clinic)
 - i. Health Services (Nurse, Doctor, Dentist, Social Services)
 - b. Multi-Services Day Centre (MSDC)
 - i. Elderly & people with disability
- 11. Wemindji Trappers' Association – Cree Nation:
 - a. Services provided for the local Cree Trappers and Hunters.
 - b. Hunting & Fishing Supplies
 - c. Permits
- 12. Gookum Sarah's Bed & Breakfast
- 13. Sam's Place (Local Coffee Shop)
- 14. Lees Garage
- 15. Convenient Stores:
 - a. Mawabu Convenient Store
 - b. Uptown Market

16. Fellowship Church (Pentecostal)
17. Kanawhymigoo Childcare Centres (two facilities):
 - a. Wabinjuuksh Centre
 - b. Shiwhymigoo Centre
18. Local Cree Women's Association:
 - a. Programs & Activities

TRANSPORTATION

Wemindji Access Road is 96 kilometers long and is connected at kilometer 518 of the Billy Diamond Highway north of Matagami. The nearest major city is approximately 778 kilometres by road to Amos and then Val D'or.

Access to Community by Air Creebec that flies in from Chibougamou, Val D'or and Montreal and throughout the James Bay Communities; Whapmagoostui, Chisasibi, Eastmain, Nemaska & Waskaganish.

FINANCIAL

The Cree Nation of Wemindji provides an annual grant to the St. John the Baptist Church to offset some of the operating costs. Renovations and extension of the church as well as the construction of a new Rectory was completed in 2016.



Winter view of St John the Baptist Anglican Church



Joy Ottereyes Rainbow Memorial Elementary School



Wemindji Clinic



Tawich Development Corporation Administration Office



Wemindji Community Store



Traditional Teepee



THANK YOU!!