



SACRED CIRCLE DAILY REPORT



DAY 4: August 20, 2015

MEMORY KEEPERS

CHRIS HARPER,
ALGOMA

YOLANDA BIRD,
SASKATCHEWAN

WEATHER

WARM WITH RAIN IN THE MORNING
AND SUN IN THE AFTERNOON.
A WELCOME RELIEF FROM THE
HUMIDITY EARLIER THIS WEEK.

Morning Service

The fourth day of Sacred Circle started with music and prayer led by The Rt. Rev. Barbara Andrews from APCI. She informed everyone about a tragedy that recently happened in APCI where an Indigenous father and son perished in a car crash. All Sacred Circle members sang a traditional mourning song in the Nlakapamux language. The filmed recording will be sent to the family.

Suicide Prevention

There was an emotional presentation on suicide models of prevention. The Rev. Canon Ginny Doctor facilitated the session that included five presenters.

Bishop Michael Hawkins talked about the ASSIST program and "To Save a Life", a movie targeted to teenagers. Bishop Adam Halkett talked about prayer walks in communities that visit homes affected by suicide. Dorothy Patterson discussed Brightening the Spirit, Breaking the Silence, a group with successful events that use tools such as tables of memories and open mikes. The Rev. Norm Casey discussed music programs for youth.

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The Rev. Nancy Bruyere related her challenging personal journey and how it helped define her current work to help others facing similar situations.

The memory keepers were extremely moved by the presentation and had a number of comments about this issue.

“The prayer walks are powerful because they encourage people to come out and talk about it and how it has affected them. Most families try to avoid embarrassment and don’t want to face reality. The isolation of small towns creates added stigma. The whole community is affected.”

“It really bothers me when people say they are in a better place. The Church needs to counter this message.”

“It was encouraging to learn about funding opportunities available to deal with this issue.”

Moving Forward Feedback

Talking groups reported back on the draft proposal that was presented Tuesday.

There was unanimous support for greater Indigenous self-determination. Strong support was expressed for the creation of a fifth Indigenous province and for making the term of office for the National Indigenous Anglican Bishop identical to other bishops.

The memory keepers had further comments.

“It would be great to have a fifth province that is without borders. It has to be able to go beyond diocesan boundaries.”

“I felt the bishops tried to translate the idea into non-Indigenous imagery of the church. Bishops should have an Indigenous awareness program. Ongoing dialogue is necessary for continued reformation of the church.”

“The Indigenous Bishop’s limited term is sad and scary. “

“The word separation is dangerous – it is really a deeper dialogue and conversation developing relationship.”

The Youth Inspire

The youth presentation opened with an indigenous song, followed by a question and answer session that discussed nine separate recommendations.

The topics included the importance of networking, sexual violence and harassment, church structures, empowering young adults, environmental justice, music and sports programs, welcoming back residential school survivors, and the culture of the Long House.

An inspiring video produced and directed by Danielle Black and narrated by Shilo Clark was shown about the youth’s experience during this Sacred Circle. Friendship, bonds, culture and the Sacred Fire were themes that were prominent in the

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video. The presentation closed with a traditional song calling women to their personal power.

The memory keepers were very impressed with the presentation.

“When the youth member talked about sexual violence, she hit it right on the nail. I had a huge lump in my throat and my heart was pounding. It reminded me of the murdered and missing Indigenous women.”

“Our bodies are called to be temples before God, but sometimes the world and society disrespect people.”

“The video was professional. When people were running in the water there was a cross on the lake, from the sun’s reflection. It was amazing!”

Keynote Address

The Rt. Rev. Susan Johnson, Primate of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in Canada gave the keynote address.

Bishop Johnson explained some of the history of the ELCIC and noted their support of Indigenous issues even though their Indigenous membership is minimal. At their recent General Convention the church repudiated the Doctrine of Discovery.

She stated that discussions around poverty and climate change are actually Indigenous issues and asked the Sacred Circle to be in partnership with the ELCIC.

A memory keeper said, “It was important that the ELCIC repudiate the Doctrine of Discovery and then going further to have Black Thursday to remember the missing and murdered Indigenous women was impressive.”

Sacred Circle’s Got Talent

The night ended with a talent show featuring Sacred Circle members. There was singing, dancing, storytelling, skits and more. A great time was had by all!

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