



AUGUST 10, 2009

*MEMORY KEEPERS*

Liza Iqaluk  
ARCTIC

Mary Jane Monias  
BRANDON

Norm Casey  
HURON

Peter Kichekeesik  
KEEWATIN-ON

Mary Georgekish  
MOOSONEE

*TRADITIONAL TEACHING*

HUMILITY (MATTHEW 17:22-27)

*WEATHER*

BUCKETS OF RAIN, THEN  
BEAUTIFUL SUN.

*VITAL SIGNS*

-191 PEOPLE PRESENT

-11 BISHOPS

-18 YOUTH

-3 INTERNATIONAL PARTNERS

-10 STAFF

-3 VOLUNTEERS

**The story so far....**

One memory keeper summarized the first day and a half of Sacred Circle:

“We gathered together from all four directions of Turtle Island and beyond.

“We came expectant, hopeful, excited, grateful, being led by and to the Spirit.

“Sunday evening we shared in Gospel-Based Discipleship and focused on love and respect. We were reminded that as we gather throughout the week that we should always show respect, listen to one another and be listening for the Spirit to lead us, guide us, and transform us.

“We retired for the evening, tired but happy to have begun renewing old friendships and making new ones.

“Monday morning we started the day with the lighting of the Sacred Fire through the fire keeper, Elder Norm McDonald, who was assisted by National Indigenous Anglican Bishop Mark MacDonald. In that early morning time we felt surrounded by the Spirit and were blessed through a smudge.

“At our opening Eucharist, our Primate talked about the Spirit of God, the breath or wind of God that brings change and especially change

in the church. He also reminded us about humility, and said that when we wait in humility, in the waiting time we can be strengthened and renewed.

“And as we gathered in our talking circles, the wind of the Spirit blew across each group and helped us give word to our hope.”

**Lighting the Sacred Fire**

At 5:00 a.m. a small group gathered in the dark to join Elder Norm MacDonald as he lit the Sacred Fire. National Indigenous Anglican Bishop Mark MacDonald offered prayers and sang several drum songs in both Navajo and Ojibwe.

Once Elder Norm lit the wood (still wet from the night before), he smudged those gathered with sweetgrass, sage, tobacco, and cedar. He also offered smudging to people later in the day, and at least one youth member experienced this for the first time.

Now that it's burning heartily, the Sacred Fire will continue night and day during Sacred Circle. It is a place to gather, or to sit and think alone.

Elder Norm is designated as the faithful tender, and everyone is welcome to visit him for a talk or to pray. Feel free to bring him some snacks, a cup of coffee, or offer to tend the fire for a bit to give him a break.



## What is this GBD?

The 12 talking circles at Sacred Circle are spending time in Gospel-Based Discipleship (GBD) every day. GBD is not a program. It is not a Bible Study. It is an encounter with the gospel, designed to engage people with the gospel appointed for the day.

How does it work? The gospel is read three times, often in different translations, and one question is asked between each reading:

1. What words or phrases did you hear?
2. What is Jesus (the Gospel) saying to you?
3. What is Jesus (the Gospel) calling you to do?

At the evening plenary, some shared what their group had learned from the gospel reading—the story of Jesus finding tax money in a fish's mouth. Several people said they heard words of encouragement: God will provide for Indigenous ministry in their area and nationally.

## First gusts of wind theme

The theme of “the Mighty Wind of the Spirit” is starting to take shape. In a homily at the opening Eucharist, the Primate, Archbishop Fred Hiltz, talked about how the Spirit present at Sacred Circle is the same Spirit of God that hovered over the waters of creation and conceived Jesus in Mary's womb.

When people reported from their talking circles during the evening plenary, references to this wind kept popping up. Some spoke of it as “the Spirit of God,” “the breath of God,” and “the wind of God.”

In this session, Barbara Shoomski challenged the group: “Don't just talk about things. Do them. Then we will be a very Spirit-filled church.”

Those of us here at the beginning of Sacred Circle 2009 are now listening carefully for what the Spirit is saying to us, our communities, and our church.

## Words Heard

“There's a spirit of change in the air, which is good, but it's also scary.”

“We are confident that these youth who are here can fill our shoes. We are in good hands.”

“When the Primate says wait in humility, I think, First Nations have been waiting in humility for a couple hundred years. We're good at that. We've been a faithful people. Now it's time for the rest of the Anglican communion to wait in humility.”

“Jesus says, ‘Go fishing and God will find a way.’”

“He's a quiet man, but when he speaks of God he speaks loud.”

“We all have a spiritual hunger, but sometimes we try to satisfy it in the wrong ways.”

“God's grace just absurdly manifests itself in the midst of all that is going on. Like the coin in the fish's mouth.”

“God created us, and God is in awe of us. We forget this, but we need to remember.”

## Odds & Ends

Roll Call! Ashdown? Absent. Buckle? Absent. But wait, who's sneaking in the back?

The mighty wind tickled us with laughter when we heard for the first time of National Indigenous Anglican Bishop David MacDonald. Who is that guy? Is he old and does he have a farm?