



Church of the Ascension 1476 Sparks St. Sudbury ON

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From Fr Aidan...

As I sit down to right my first piece for the Ascension Witness I am overjoyed! I am overjoyed because it has been a busy but great few months as your new rector here at the Ascension. First, I would like to take this opportunity to thank all of you for the warm welcome that you have given Sarah and I and our new baby over the last few months, it has been a blessing! I look forward to getting to know you all better in the weeks and months ahead. That being said I thought I would take this opportunity in the Witness to tell you a little about myself and my faith journey and how I came to be here with you at the Ascension.

I was born to a family with strong Anglican roots, was raised in the Church, attended Church and Sunday school regularly, and went through the sacraments in the Anglican Church of Canada. I was involved in youth group activities and later taught Sunday school. I grew up in a middle-class home and had a normal, happy upbringing and childhood. I come from a fairly large family; I have one older brother, a younger brother and a younger sister. These relationships have all shaped me and formed me in many ways. Although I was raised in a Christian household, I never became serious about my faith and spirituality until my university years when I attended Huron College in London Ontario. Long story short I needed to fill a whole in my academic schedule and the only course that fit was introduction to theology – I enrolled in that course and that set me off on this beautiful journey. Attending Huron College has been one of the most important experiences of my life; for both my spiritual and academic development. My time at Huron was very fruitful and it is here that I started to explore my call to the Priesthood. This exploration of my call would eventually lead me to transferring into the Bachelor of Theology program at Huron College. Throughout my time at Huron, I formed many relationships that have been very seminal to my call to the Priesthood and spiritual formation.

I started my Masters of Divinity at Wycliffe College, University of Toronto, in 2013, and this has been enormous in my spiritual development. Living in community and increasing my prayer life by participating in the daily office and other forms of prayer has been a blessing. While at Wycliffe I met Bishop Stephen Andrews who invited me to come

and explore the Diocese of Algoma and I decided to come here and it has been one of the best decisions of my life. I spent two years as the summer pastor at St. Christopher's Church in McGregor Bay and a year as the incumbent of the Manitoulin Island Parishes. I have now come here to be with you at the Church of the Ascension and it has truly been a blessing. Throughout my journey I have come to see that God calls all of us and moves us and directs us throughout our lives. Our job is to try and always be open to his leading and I feel truly blessed that God has lead me to this Diocese and this parish with you. I look forward to learning more about all of your faith journeys and seeing where God will lead all of us collectively as a community in the years to come!

Yours in Christ,
Fr. Aidan Armstrong

From the Rector's Warden...

In spite of summer, when things tend to slow down somewhat, there was a lot going on the Ascension over the summer months :

- We completed our trial summer worship with The Church of the Epiphany.
- The concurrence committee completed its work, our new rector was appointed , has since arrived and settled in. (both in his new duties at the Ascension and now as a new father at home)
- Rectory repairs and maintenance were completed in most part prior to the arrival of our rector, with a few items shortly after arrival.
- The golf tournament was a success with a good time had by all.

And now, life at the Ascension has returned to its usual busy pace.

Board and committee meetings have resumed their usual schedules and outreach programmes are in full swing. It takes donations not only of cash and or goods but of time, talent and effort to make it all happen.

The warden's would like to pass on thanks and gratitude to all who serve on committees, to all who donate to the Christmas Baskets, to those who donate food, clothing, cash and personal hygiene items for Barrydown College, to those who donate to the Christmas Baskets , to sandwich Sunday for the Mission, to Out of the Cold, to Messy Church, to Godly play and in many other ways. Not to diminish the value of donations of cash and goods which are so necessary, we are also very cognizant that donations include more and we are thankful for and grateful to those who are generous with their donation of time, of their talent and kindness of spirit, to the ACW for their ongoing year round contributions, in ways to numerous to list. Thank you, Thank you and Thank you. It cannot be said enough times and enough ways to express our feelings.

The wardens always welcome any questions, concerns or comments you may have. We are steadfast in our commitment to the Church of the Ascension's mission: , "sharing in the gathering work of Christ so that his newness of life overflows into our hearts, homes, churches, and community".

In preparing for Christmas there is much activity going on in our homes and in the church. Let us not forget Advent as a time to pray, to reflect on and prepare for what is to come.

Respectfully yours,

Pat Cunningham
(Rector's Warden)

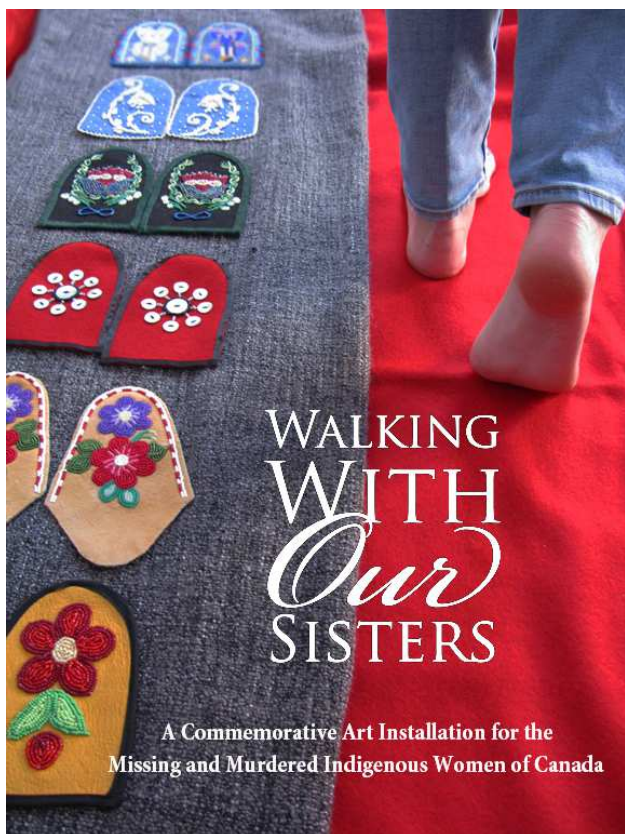
ARK Committee...

Our refugee sponsoring group, ARK is reflecting during this Advent season. Our Syrian family of a lady and her 4 children have not arrived as yet in Sudbury. For weeks, ARK members and supporters have been on a bit of a 'roller coaster' of raised expectations that Manar's exit visas will be stamped. We then receive disappointing news that Manar has once again been told a by the Lebanese Security office to Manar; "Come back in 10 days". Dutifully Manar makes the 1 1/2 hour bus trip each time. I think of being 'turned away' this Advent. How many times was Christ's family turned away at Christmas time?

Thank you for your prayers for Manar and family.

ARK Committee
(Jane Cox, Gwen Bonas,
Jen Cawley-Carusio, Heather Jeramaz,
Caroline Thain, Erma Howe)

Walking with Our Sisters



The "Walking with Our Sisters" commemorative art installation, to honour the missing and murdered Indigenous women and girls of Canada, as well as children who did not return from the residential schools, will be in Sudbury early in the new year, at a specially designed space in the Laurentian University McEwen School of Architecture, Elm Street, Sudbury. The opening ceremony is January 7, and the installation will be open for ten days.

If you would like more information about the Sudbury installation, click on the link. There also is a Facebook page for the Sudbury group, Walking With Our Sisters Sudbury - M'nidoo Kweok Gathering 2018 -<https://www.facebook.com/groups/297352037263370/> about/

Outreach...

Outreach is part of Parish Life. It is an ongoing thing with many dedicated parishioners trying to make life a little better for the less fortunate. Here is what has been going on in November and is happening in December.

-we donate loaves of bread, lunch meat, and fixings on every second Sunday of the month.

-we support families in need. You have donated canned goods, money and food cards for the Christmas hampers. The hampers will be prepared and delivered on Dec 11th. [each basket has the fixings for an entire Christmas dinner.]

-we are still part of the Out of Cold dinners. These meals become a reality because of all the volunteers who help to prepare and serve them. Holy Redeemer Church sends many volunteers at these meals. We are also twinned with All Nations Church. Lynn Charbonneau, from All Nations, has joined Luke and Marie as a third captain. Thank you Lynn.[she comes with volunteers from All Nations.]

-we remain a tremendous help and support for Barrydowne College. In the last 6 weeks, you the Ascensionists, have donated food, utensils, clothes, grocery cards, baby supplies on a weekly basis. Two bags of mitts, scarves, and hats have been given.

-we supply 25 Xmas gifts for BC at Christmas. Your generosity was just so awesome! I felt so proud this morning when I delivered the Christmas cards to BC. There were 39 of them. You are all such good, loving and caring people!

Thank you from the Parish Life Committee.

Honouring Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women and Girls Conference November 29-30/17 Holiday Inn, Sudbury

"Truth comes before reconciliation". Lori Cameron, Cathy Jewell and Jane Cox listened, learned and tried to walk some of the path in 'Looking Ahead To Build The Spirit Of Our Women' at this conference. 2 lovely, Indigenous ladies Bev and Joyce, who work as Social workers in Blind River and the London area were at our table. The land was honoured. An Eagle Staff ceremony entered the room. Many participates of the ceremony courageously held out pictures of their missing or murdered women. (We could hardly breathe as the experience was so deep.)

Sudbury's Police Chief Pederson spoke. "I am so privileged. What we take for granted isn't even a hope for some. Asking for a non-violent life isn't asking too much. Leadership isn't a position but an action."

The goal for a keynote speaker, Katherine McCarthy was to create in all of us; "More

compassion and kindness." From Newfoundland and of Irish and Mi'kmaq descent, Katherine spoke from her book 'Invisible Victims: Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women'. She gave troubling statistics, gave us some insight from The Indian Act, Residential Schools, the Sixties Scoop and much more. Proceeds from her book sales were to be donated to the family of Carol Nora King who will shortly travel from Nfld to Saskatchewan for the trial of their murdered daughter/sister/cousin.

The second keynote speaker (and MC) was Ryan McMahon based out of Treaty #1 territory (Winnipeg, MB). An Anishinaabe comedian, writer and community activator, Ryan focused on what is important - the land.

Workshops included Human Trafficking, Berry Fasting for Self, Family and Community, Social Media and MMIWG, Healing Blanket Activity, and Healing from Trauma.

There is so much to learn from our First Nations neighbours. Cathy, Lori and I were made to feel so very welcome on these days. Perhaps we 3 women represented other parishioners of the Church of the Ascension and the Anglican Church of Canada in Reconciliation.

Jane Cox

Journeying Towards Reconciliation— Update...

We held our first KAIROS Blanket Exercise at St. John's North Bay on November 9th. Despite a bad turn in the weather, 38 people attended!!

The Blanket Exercise is an experiential role play activity developed over 20 years ago by KAIROS, a National ecumenical organization committed to justice and peace. KAIROS "unites Canadian churches and religious organizations in a faithful ecumenical response to the call to "do justice, and to love kindness, and to walk humbly with your God" (Micah 6:8)."

With the simple use of blankets representing Turtle Island (the land that we know as North America), participants play the role of the Indigenous people. Narrators tell the story while participants imagine life in the context of being the original people of this land. A few facilitators play the part of the Europeans and the blankets shrink and move as Canadian history unfolds. As this occurs, many participants are forced to move off of their blankets. Treaty-making, colonization, and the tragedy of what happened to the



land and its People is heard and experienced. After the Exercise, we participate in a debrief sharing circle, where we are invited to listen to each other's experience, insights, and reflections.

Our experience was beyond any expectation. The event is rich, moving, educational, experientially meaningful with many "aha" moments. The realizations, the consciousness-raising of our history and of the present realities that Indigenous individuals, families and communities face are powerful. Stories are shared by Indigenous and non-Indigenous participants. Non-indigenous participants share feelings of sorrow, shame, care and empathy. The circle is rich with apology, grief, compassion and hope.

It is apparent that the Blanket Exercise is a powerful vehicle in the process of reconciliation. Most of us have already heard about the horrors of the Indian Residential School System, and the continuing tragedy and struggles that our Indigenous brothers and sisters still face. This exercise brings that knowledge to a deeper emotional understanding which breeds empathy, compassion and connection with each other as we all share in this painful history. Through this experience, we also experience hope as we sit together, side by side, connected in this one circle, sharing in our sorrow for what has been and what remains. We express a commitment to build meaningful connections of love and compassion with those in our society who have been oppressed, ostracized, marginalized and mistreated. We need to be in relationship with one another if we are to be reconciled.

We make sure that there is support people available should anyone find the Blanket Exercise triggering. We smudge with sage, a sacred medicine. We pray. We suspect some of the participants were changed by the experience, having increased their understanding in a deeply-felt way.

On November 9, we were blessed to have an Elder with us, Evelyn McLeod, from Garden Village First Nation. Our facilitators were three members from North Bay (Rev. Beth Hewson, Danielle Benioton and Johanna Kristolaitis), and three members from Sudbury (Marlo Corbiere-our lead facilitator, Cathy Jewell, and Erma Howe). Rev. Beth hosted us with hospitality and grace. We were blessed to have Sister Pricilla Solomon consult with us as we prepared and practised for the event.

Rev. Beth and I will meet again shortly to plan our next event. Both North Bay, Sudbury and Thunder Bay have expressed interest in experiencing this in the near future. We hope to spread this experience across our Diocese as a vehicle that creates deeper understanding as we commit ourselves to the journey towards reconciliation.

Respectfully submitted by Erma Howe

From the Church Office Mice...

The last couple months have been grand! Fr. Aidan and I have been both getting our bearings. I've been full of questions to ensure I am meeting his vision. Fr. Aidan has been asking lots of questions to get a feel for how things run in the office and getting his bearings. He's a quick study!

We are continuing with our current methods of communication and publications in the parish. They have served us very well but, as with anything, they need a review to ensure they are still meeting the purpose in which they were intended. Most have not had an update in a long time and are well overdue. So, in the New Year the Media Committee will be meeting to identify some opportunities for modification. This is where you come in. We can't presume to know which methods of communication you find most helpful and why. In the New Year, we will be asking for your feedback. I encourage you to take the few minutes and respond to our questions so we ensure the communication methods we are using are best suited for the needs of parishioners. That way everyone will be up to date with the latest missions and events in the church and community.

On behalf of the 'Office Mice' we wish you and your cherished family and friends a Christmas season filled with the reminder of the love of God for each and everyone of you. May you be blessed to see His works in the people you meet and the opportunities for discipleship that present themselves today and everyday!

In the love of Christ,
Joan Servent

A tickle for your funny bone...

Good News, Bad News for Pastors

(By James Berkley and Kevin A. Miller, Leadership, Vol. 15, no. 4.)

GOOD NEWS: Your church's new recovery group is well attended.

BAD NEWS: Your spouse and kids are in it.

GOOD NEWS: Your church is getting lots of free publicity recently.

BAD NEWS: It's on the crime-reports page.

GOOD NEWS: Your youth director is finally getting kids to attend church.

BAD NEWS: They're going to the church down the street.

GOOD NEWS: With your new wireless microphone, everybody can understand your sermons.

BAD NEWS: The hard-of-hearing suddenly discover they disagree with you.

GOOD NEWS: People have caught the vision for church growth.

BAD NEWS: Now they ask why it's not happening.

GOOD NEWS: The people missed you during your vacation.

BAD NEWS: They also missed attending church and giving their tithes.

GOOD NEWS: The new donated computer is loaded with all the best technological advances...

BAD NEWS: ... for 1983.

Please look for publication details for the next edition of The Ascension Witness in the Weekly Enews and Announcements and in the Bulletin. Items for the next Edition of The Ascension Witness can be forwarded to Glenn Lloyd at argeedblu@gmail.com.

Please include "Ascension Witness" in the Subject line of your email.

Agnus Day



Your privacy

Every week the church bulletin and news and announcements is posted on the Church of the Ascension's website. Sometimes these items include names of individuals within the parish. If you prefer not to have your name on the website, or photos of yourself posted, please let Rev. Anne know so that she ensures your privacy.

The church website address is www.churchoftheascensionsudbury.ca

Address changes

If you have moved recently, if there are any changes to your address or phone number, or if you have changed your email address, please let the Parish Assistant Joan Servent know so that we can keep our database up to date. Joan can be reached at ascension@vianet.ca and is in the office on Wednesdays.



Family Name: _____

Person 1 _____

Person 2 _____

Address Family As _____

(John & Mary Smith, Mr. & Mrs J. Smith, The Smiths)

Address _____

City _____ Postal Code _____

Phone ____ - ____ - ____ (Please include all 10 digits)

Email address: _____