



The Anishinabe Spiritual Centre Newsletter

The Storyteller

DECEMBER 2023

Vision

**Wasse'aandimikaning
a place of
enlightenment
for spiritual
nourishment, growth
and healing.**

Mission

**Wasse'aandimikaning
provides the
opportunities to find
the Creator within
self, others and in all
creation as guided
and inspired by our
ancestors, elders and
Jesuit tradition.**

Welcome to Eddie MacDonald, new Director!

The Anishinabe Spiritual Centre Board of Trustees welcomes Edwina "Eddie" MacDonald, as the new Director, who started on September 5th, 2023 with a Meet and Greet the first day.

Mrs. MacDonald, a member of the Michipicoten First Nation, was living with her family, husband and four sons, in Acton, Ontario. She was working as Pastoral Minister, St. Joseph Patron of Canada Parish, Acton, ON within the Diocese of Hamilton.

She came highly recommended from the Diocese of Hamilton.

She is a strong and joy-filled woman of faith in Christ, evidently committed

to the strengthening of Indigenous Catholicism, possesses obvious exemplary people skills, is an excellent communicator, with an obvious desire for creative listening and reconciliation in her personal relationships. She is committed to hospitality, and bridge building.

We welcome "Eddie" with open arms with all the skills she brings with her, a welcoming, openness and faith filled attitude as she truly will help the Anishinabe Spiritual Centre move forward.

***Rosella Kinoshameg, Anishinabe
Spiritual Centre Board of Trustees
Chair***

Aaniin! Boozhoo!! Hello! Christmas Greetings!

Minobii Niibaa Anami'e Giizheidad (Happy at Night Prayer Day)

I am very happy to be here at the Anishinabe Spiritual Centre in beautiful Espanola, overlooking peaceful Anderson Lake. Being a northern girl, it is good to be back looking at the rugged landscape instead of the Toronto skyline! With the blessing of my family and the commitment of my husband to visit me once in a while, I come with a heart full of hope and joy. I felt called to journey back to the north to aid St. Kateri in building bridges of hope and healing following the aftermath of the Truth and Reconciliation; Every Child Matters; Missing and Murdered Women and the list of many wrongs against the Indigenous community, past and present. Only through the Creator can we move forward with prayers and supplications; daily offering of tobacco laid down with gratitude; praying of the rosary and pleading for prayers from our saints in heaven, and especially for me, St. Kateri Tekakwitha (more on my relationship with St. Kateri in later newsletters!)

I am truly blessed to join the fabulous team here at the Anishinabe Spiritual Centre: Paul our extra-ordinarily skilled and dedicated maintenance man; Aaron, our receptionist, booking coordinator, historian and all around great guy; the dynamic duo from the kitchen, Susan and Marcia who can take



5 loaves and fishes and well you know the rest of the story; Zachariah, man of many talents who will drop anything to help and finally, our resident cat Boots who has us all wrapped around his little paws.

The Anishinabe Spiritual Centre would not be the place it is today without Father David Shulist, Pastor

at St. Gabriel Lalemant in Birch Island (and the former Director who's skill kept the Centre alive after Covid, and let's not forget he is Gardener extraordinaire!); Father Tony who offers his love and prayerful dedication to the good people at Our Lady of the Highway Church in Cutler and St. Rapheal's in Sagamok; Father Paul, who's youthfulness and faith is poured out for the Holy Cross Mission parishioners by the bucketful; Father Louis-Martin who leads with a distinct quietness and strength at the Church of the Immaculate Conception Parish in M'Chigeeng and finally Father Mark who has supported all the parishes and priests as needed.

Together, we are moving forward. We have wonderful resources and groups like the Damigoong Bimiikaadwining program that is in its 31st year of preparing and supporting those who minister to near and far-reaching parishes. We have the Christian Life Community who is actively using the Listening to Indigenous Voices program to bring about truth, reconciliation, AND healing. They are also taking this local ministry and bringing it out into the Diocese.

The Centre supports many different groups coming in for retreats as well as individuals. Also, I am very happy to announce that we are a part of a group that is still in its infancy called Catholic Indigenous Leaders. This group is taking the year to pray the Rosary in 5 different Indigenous Languages each month (see the invitation and use the link for any month!) and which links us up right across Canada. As you can see our calendar continues to grow with activity! We also have upcoming Language classes, Indigenous Artisans sharing

the how of making traditional items and also an amazing youth opportunity to share in cultural practices. WOW!! SHATAATAAHAA!!

None of this could be done without the Holy Spirit moving the hearts of each of us. We have Adoration and Benediction each week (please see the January calendar of events). We are building an Arbor so we can have a Sacred Fire to burn. We are in constant prayer for the Creator's direction, path for us to travel to do His will.

We ask you to join us in prayer, in daily gratitude for his creation, for his people to whom he loves. We ask you to come and join in with something that moves you here at the Anishinabe Spiritual Centre. My vision is ***to build a thriving Spiritual Centre serving indigenous an non-indigenous people called to the Anishinabe culture and to the catholic faith, representing a beacon of hope for our fellow indigenous communities across the country.***

I ask you to join us in making a difference... ***Please support us financially***, as without it, this healing movement of the Spirit can not continue.

Chi-Miigwetch and many Blessings be yours,

Eddie MacDonald

Director

Anishinabe Spiritual Centre



The MacDonald family at their camp in Batchawana Bay

Warmest of Welcome!

I would like to extend a warm welcome to Father Mark Hoelsken, who has been hired to work on staff with the Anishinabe Spiritual Centre (this is a first folks!!) Many of you may know him as he has been supporting the Jesuit Fathers over the last year. We are blessed to have his place confirmed here with us, leading us in more spiritual, teaching and program

planning opportunities. Father is truly an asset, as he comes with a lifetime of experience from working out west and in the far Alaskan north with our Indigenous brothers and sisters. And he is our Techie too!! If you haven't yet had the pleasure of meeting him, please be sure to drop by and say hi to this gentle, happy Priest with the most infectious laugh!



Getting Together to Support Others

The Anishinabe Spiritual Centre hosted its first Indigenous Artisan Craft and Bake Sale this past November. What a success! The Artisans were pleased with the Bake Sale which the ASC did most of the baking for (we have limited volunteers here, hint hint!). Sue and Marcia offered soup, sandwiches, hot chocolate and cookie decorating for the children all by donation. We raised almost \$1000 that offset our expenses but more importantly we were able to donate \$500 to the Espanola Christmas Hamper program which helps marginalized families have a joyful Christmas. As St. Francis says "it is in giving that we receive." May all those who helped create that special day be doubly blessed.



Elders at Work

The Damigoong Bimiikaadwining is the group the ASC was initially created to support! Its mission over the last 31 years has been to raise up Indigenous leaders in a fully alive Catholic Church. This group of spiritual leaders has been serving their communities. Their program is being considered by other Indigenous Communities and Dioceses

because it has been so successful in providing the spiritual support where priests are far and few between. We are grateful to their perseverance and pray for more individuals to answer the call of this special ministry. Call Aaron and he will put you in contact with Father Paul or Rosella.



A Reflection on the Truth and Reconciliation Day at the Anishinabe Spiritual Centre 2023

By Eddie MacDonald

Reconciliation Day on September 30th. More than 30 individuals came by to start off the day right with a Sacred Fire and Sunrise Ceremony. Outside, the deep fog cast its reach to the road and beyond. The people arrived and the circle grew larger, all awaiting the light of day. The sacred fire fed by attentive Firekeeper Edward with the drum at the ready by Singer Harold. The Pipe Carrier, Elder Art, sat well-prepared as the circle grew to 30 or more. Except for the occasional crackle of the fire at that early hour, silence accompanied the slowly evaporating fog. The ground carpeted with orange and yellow leaves, made the setting seem almost mystical, so beautiful, and rich with promise!

The Pipe Carrier explained the happenings of the morning to a slightly shivering group as the drum began. Harold's voice seemed to be carried over the lake, the drum's beat reverberated through the damp ground. As

the circle worked its way through tradition, the sharing then started. As did many tears. Tears of life lost and tears of challenged living. Yet, through the despair came the occasional self-deprecating comments and laughter, (a norm of which one experiences with the Anishinabe people) and most importantly, of hope. Indigenous and non-indigenous passed the feather and shared together in this almost three-hour session. It was so heartfelt, so full of truth!

Following this incredible Sunrise ceremony, all the prayers held in the tobacco of those in the circle were put into an orange cloth and hung by the lakeside. Hungry and chilled, the majority of participants came in for coffee and fresh muffins before heading off to the small chapel for Adoration and Benediction. This unassuming small chapel with full windows and a walk out onto the lake actually needed more chairs brought in the hour-long Adoration. Father Tony was overjoyed!



in Anishinabemowin and smudging throughout the Mass, the feeling of reconciliation in and through Christ was palpable.

There was a spiritual high coming out of Mass. People gathered with each other, not strangers as they were early in the day. As everyone gathered for a final meal of wild rice and vegetable soup, Bannock, tea and cookies the group spoke positively about the experience, looking forward to next year.

Looking back, the Mass and Adoration was truly spectacular and deeply moving. The Sacred Fire kept all focused and the Sunrise Ceremony opened the way with heartfelt sharing. The day was infused with Anishinabe tradition that opened a way, a bridge of faith that helped link two different worlds, if only for a few hours, in harmony. As one participant wrote ***"Today was full of reflection on the suffering of our Indigenous sisters and brothers, yet how I felt Christ and the spiritual awareness of us being one! This was truly an incredible experience! Chi-Miigwetch!!"***



After a brief break, all made their way up to the large chapel, which is a hexagon shaped room that has seats going upwards three levels high that looks down to the altar. Again, there are floor to ceiling windows, overlooked the trees, the occasional bench and the lake. Three priests celebrate Mass along with Father Mark in Anishinabe tradition. With songs sung

Be sure to leave your email address so we can stay in touch (and save some trees AND money!)
Contact Aaron at anishinabe.centre@gmail.com will email you our monthly activities on our calendar:)



If you wish to donate:

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