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Publisher | [Bishop Geoffrey Woodcroft](#)
Editor | [Jude Claude](#)
Accounting | [Joy Valencerina](#)
Advertising | [Angela Rush](#)
Layout & design | [cityfolkcreative.ca](#)

[Rupert's Land News](#) is published 10 times per year (September - June) by the Diocese of Rupert's Land, in the Anglican Church in Canada. It connects churches and communities from Portage la Prairie, MB, to Atikokan, ON, by offering news, events, opinions, and ideas to 4,000 readers per month. RLN is available in a variety of formats:

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[Editorial offices:](#)

Anglican Lutheran Centre
935 Nesbitt Bay
Winnipeg Manitoba, R3T 1W6

RLN exists to explore issues at the intersections of faith and life. In doing so we solicit and publish a range of opinions, not all of which reflect the official positions of the Diocese. We acknowledge that we meet and work in Treaty 1, 2, and 3 Land, the traditional land of the Anishinaabe, Cree, and Dakota people and the homeland of the Metis Nation. We are grateful for their stewardship of this land and their hospitality which allows us to live, work, and serve God the Creator here.

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Good News?

As a child, I was versed in a particular understanding of the “good news” of Christianity. It went like this: God created us in love, we sinned and were separated from him, we are now all by our nature sinful and destined for hell and eternal punishment, but God loves us so much that he sent his son to die on our behalf, and if we confess that we are sinners and believe Jesus is God, we may live forever with him in heaven.

The terror and the hope of this script made me incessantly attend to my own internal convictions and pushed me to regularly share my faith with others. For example, I remember as white hairs showed up around the snout of a beloved dog in my life, thinking on how she would eventually die, and having sessions in which I held up her soft ears and whispered to her that God loved her so much, and that she only needed to confess her sins in her heart and believe in Jesus to be saved.

I can understand how this worldview functions as “good news” to some. Outsiders who entered our spaces were told of God’s great love for them. For those who were suffering, or who already felt “damned,” the “good news” of salvation offered hope.

Unfortunately, it also functioned as divine justification for the fidelities of the predominantly white evangelical communities who championed it, and marked these fidelities as holy and good amidst a damnable world in need of salvation. These communities were marked by reactionary discourses, by the enforcement of heterosexual family forms, by subtle or blatant racist logic, and by imperialist and colonial commitments played out through evangelizing and missionary efforts.

There is not enough space in this editorial to narrate the eventual deconstruction of my initial Christian faith, but I will say that ultimately, I found compelling good news well outside the church before I was able to make sense of it again within any church. It was non-religious queer activists who demonstrated to

me the things I understood to be attributes of God: love, justice, peace. I found something like the “kingdom of God” in networks committed to love, which lived into joy and mutual care, and which believed in the possibility and necessity of a different world.

This embodied experience of good news has merged for me with theology. And in reflecting on the sharp distinction between the “good news” of my childhood and that of my present faith, I wonder if the question “What do we understand to be the good news?” might be a clarifying one for our faith communities.

This month’s issue asks contributors to engage with the question of “good news.” The answers are, I think, deeply enriching. In “Becoming Equal Partners in Christ,” Elder Ellen Cook writes about treaty relationships and asks “Have we truthfully and wholly begun to travel in two boats side by side as equals without the other trying to steer the other’s boat or canoe?” She reflects on steps made towards Indigenous self-determination within the Anglican Church of Canada, and the significance of Sacred Circle. Next, Pat Stewart is interviewed about the history of Sunshine House, a community drop-in and resource centre on Treaty 1 land focusing on harm reduction and social inclusion, and what the community at Sunshine House has meant to her. Next Alcris Limongi and Alan Lai are interviewed about their new ministries with the Centre for Christian Studies. They discuss how liberationist pedagogy informs the work of CCS and how the organization is offering ministry in a changing world. Finally, our Parish Profile section features the “small but dedicated” parish of St. Mary’s, Sioux Lookout.



Jude Claude is the editor of Rupert's Land News.

Worthiness of the Gift

GEOFFREY WOODCROFT

Best to tell of the *Good News* entrusted to you, and perhaps better still for someone to hear that *Good News* from you and transmit it onwards.

Disciples of Jesus Christ pour themselves into the story we rehearse throughout Advent and Christmas. We listen attentively to scripture as it is read aloud, sung passionately, and illuminated in experiences of holiness. I believe this to be a very clever historic function of the Church—to illuminate the context of Christ's story for a fractured world which is seeking healing and kindness, and to do so by weaving the disciples into the story.

We disciples were awestruck when Christ's story and song met our present realities. We witnessed a new birthing of possibilities, unbridled forgiveness, and wise teaching. We were afraid of letting go until angels of this age calmed us. We were uncertain until light-holders guided us. And we were humbled as we witnessed God birthed in timelessness. Disciples experience scripture *lived out* in our neighbourhoods and in our families because we seek God in the present moment as we seek and serve Christ in all persons, loving our neighbours as ourselves. None of this, however, is simply happening for the Church, but for a world which is asking to be rescued from tyranny, oppression, violence, and forgottenness. And it is Christ's disciples who are constantly preparing to be Christ to that world.

A season of illumination is upon us, not to fill us with light, but to *allow the light within us to be poured upon the world*. Long ago magi travelled to pay homage to the Christ child. They were prepared with great gifts, costly and delivered with risk. The magi brought gold, frankincense, and myrrh to the child. (I wonder how Jesus used those gifts? Perhaps the gifts secured safety and good health during his exile in Egypt?) I suspect a greater gift the magi brought was the courage to risk. They traveled

long distances with great riches for many months, clearly in the sight of King Herod. Warned in a dream, they blatantly disobeyed King Herod, refusing him information that would jeopardize the life of the infant and the holy family. The magi perpetually empower disciples to courageously proclaim that God is living within the human family, and to bring freedom, healing, and kindness to a broken world.

How shall we disciples talk about this story of God, a story into which we poured ourselves by devoutly listening and singing, and which we experienced in awe as it was lived-out in our neighbourhoods? We were surprised when we discovered Christ in our family member or neighbour. Now in Christ's illumination is the blessed time for disciples to further that relationship with those within whom they have found Christ. Disciples connect the dots between the Christmas story and the story that faces humans every day, calming fears, and challenging unjust structures.

Let your light shine before others, so they may see your good works and glorify God.

All your works praise you, O Lord, and your faithful servants bless you. Gracious God we thank you for feeding us with the body and blood of your Son Jesus Christ. May we, who share his body, live his risen life; we, who drink his cup, bring life to others; we, whom the Spirit lights, give light to the world. Keep us firm in the hope you have set before us, so that we and all your children shall be free, and the whole earth live to praise your name; through Christ our Lord. Amen.

- Book of Alternative Services pp 214-215



Geoffrey Woodcroft,
Bishop of Rupert's Land

Becoming Equal Partners in Christ's Discipleship

ELDER ELLEN COOK



Photo: [Gero Camp](#)

Have we truthfully and wholly begun to travel in two boats side by side as equals without the other trying to steer the other's boat or canoe?

The oldest treaty, the two-row wampum belt, was a treaty between the Dutch and Haudenosaunee in the early 1600's. The agreement between the nations was that they would travel through life together side by side. The intent of the treaties was to live as equals, nation to nation, as brothers and sisters, as ones who shared the richness of this land. Another treaty is the "Dish with One Spoon" wampum which all Indigenous nations were invited to join. This treaty specified how land can be shared to the mutual benefit of all its inhabitants. According to the Haudenosaunee, the treaty originated many hundreds of years before contact and contributed greatly to the creation of the "Great League of Peace" between the many Indigenous nations which inhabited Turtle Island at the time.

It is fairly clear, however, that the treaties that were made with the Crown have not honored the agreement to share land and its

resources equally. The discrepancies between the settlers' lifestyle and the impoverished conditions in which our people live is still visible throughout Canada. Many are still living without the basic necessities, such as clean drinking water and adequate housing.

Historically, our traditional ways were disparaged by many as being pagan and savage. This was what we were taught in school as children, and many of us learned to be ashamed of who we were. It was ingrained in us that the spiritual way of life which sustained our ancestors for tens of thousands of years before contact was inferior and should be rejected from our ways of being and knowing. For centuries, there was significant effort to convince our people to believe that everything our ancestors held sacred was to be thrown out the window as worthless and heathen. It has been a slow process turning this mindset around to a more understanding, Christ-like way. I often wonder how life would have been different for us as Indigenous people if the early missionaries would have said, "Tell us about

your God to whom you pray, and we will tell you about ours, and let us see if we can, together, figure out how things can be done."

I believe we experienced a resurgence and gained strength as Indigenous people in 1970 when our leaders responded forcefully to Pierre Trudeau's White Paper which sought to complete the ultimate goal of assimilation by dissolving the Indian Act and thus, all treaty rights. The chiefs and Elders gathered together and created their own paper which they titled 'Wahbung: Our Tomorrows,' which stood for a fundamental step towards self-determination of First Nations people. The eloquence and thought with which they responded to the White Paper instilled in us a sense of pride in our leadership. This helped open the door to allowing our people to live their way of life and we became stronger nations. The action of the chiefs, Elders, and leaders instilled a pride in our identities as peoples that we never before experienced.

Since the TRC report was released, there has been focus on the churches to work towards reconciliation. Granted, since 1993, when then-Primate Michael Peers officially apologized for the church's role in residential schools, the Anglican Church moved even further towards improving relationships. There have been a series of steps towards self-determination in our ministries, including Canon 22, which was endorsed at the General Synod in 2010. This then led to the establishment of the Spiritual Ministry of Mishamikoweesh, a new diocese in the Anglican Church of Canada. This was approved by General Synod in 2013 and Reverend Lydia Mamakwa was installed as the first bishop in June of 2014. The appointment of a new National Anglican Indigenous Bishop was also a major step that was a long time coming and was welcomed by us.

The Gospel in the Centre of our Sacred Circle is a very important part of being who we are as Indigenous Anglican people, disciples of Christ Jesus. Any event or meeting is carried out with the Gospel in the centre.

It was with joy that I experienced the first Sacred Circle with my sister in Fort Qu'Appelle

in 1988. I was not an official representative, but I was involved as an observer. It was called the Native Convocation then, but it was still a big step for Indigenous people, especially when Reverend Charles Arthurson was selected to be the first Indigenous bishop. The people who gathered there laid the groundwork for the Sacred Covenant, which I see as a living document, and is a guiding light on our continuing journey to self-determination and to being a living faith reality of the Gospel life in our communities. We have continued to work on this covenant which truly defines our unique role within the church.

I attended a gathering in Phoenix in 2008 with Episcopalians and Canadian Anglicans to discuss the church's repudiation of the Doctrine of Discovery. General Synod officially sanctioned the repudiation in 2010. The Doctrine of Discovery was recognized as being fundamentally opposed to the gospel of Jesus Christ and the church's understanding of the inherent rights that individuals and peoples have received from God.

The ninth Sacred Circle held at Prince George was my first official attendance and it was an extremely emotional time to see so many Indigenous people of diverse cultures and languages come together under the umbrella of the Anglican Church of Canada. To see so many ordained Indigenous people under one roof, enjoying time together, worshipping together and working together made me, a cradle Anglican, realize how far our relationship had progressed, and how we are learning to steer our Indigenous ministries' ship.



Elder Ellen Cook is nêhinawêw ᑎᐱᐱᐱᐱᐱᐱ. She is from Mispawistik, The Singing Waters, Grand Rapids, Mispawistik Cree Nation. She is a Cree teacher who teaches Cree speakers how to teach Cree, and has been engaged in Indigenous language revitalization programs, as well as environmental activism. She is a long-term member of the diocese.

“It’s Community”: Pat Stewart on the Work of Sunshine House

JUDE CLAUDE

I know Sunshine House as an effective community organization which has fostered grassroots organizing and mutual aid efforts, which operates largely by and for marginalized communities, and which has had direct and indirect beneficial impacts on myself and on loved ones. And so, I was extremely pleased when I met Pat Stewart, a beloved member of my parish, St. Matthew’s Anglican church, and

learned that she was (then) serving on the board of Sunshine House. Only upon sitting down with Pat for this article to discuss her work within the Sunshine community, did I learn that her involvement with Sunshine house went back to its founding. During our discussion, Pat and I talked about the development of the organization and what Sunshine House has meant to her.

Photo: [FLY:D](#)

Sunshine House is [self-described](#) as “a community drop-in centre focusing on harm reduction and social inclusion,” which works “to provide programming that fulfills people’s social, community, and recreational needs.” Currently Sunshine House offers several [indispensable community programs](#), including its twice-weekly afternoon drop-in program which provides “space for community members to come in for a cup of coffee, a meal, conversation and fun activities,” “Like That,” which is a program that provides a space where people exploring gender and/or sexual identity can gather at Sunshine House for fun, skills building and recreation” and its weekly Brunch program.

Recently, Sunshine House has also launched Manitoba’s [first ever formal overdose prevention site](#). The introduction of the Mobile Street Van/Mobile Overdose Prevention Site is momentous in advancing harm reduction work in the province and serving community health.

Stewart’s involvement in the founding of Sunshine House grew out of her earlier work as a nurse in The Pas, Manitoba, Treaty 1 territory. Stewart had gone to The Pas in the 80s to work at the community college to develop

an RN nursing program which would cater to the needs of Indigenous students and which would incorporate Indigenous cultural practices. This work was met with significant resistance from non-Indigenous residents of The Pas. However, a variation of this initial vision was eventually obtained when the [Swampy Cree Tribal Council](#) based on the [Opaskwayak Cree Nation \(OCN\)](#) was able to secure federal funding for the nursing program’s development. Stewart worked with the council to establish a bachelor’s nursing program (rather than an RN diploma program), which included skills needed to work in a remote community, and some “tribal-level services that were kind of specialties, like an Environmental Health Officer.”

While working in The Pas, Stewart met with a “new cultural experience, a respect for faith and Creator” amongst the Indigenous Christian community there. This profoundly affected her.

During her time at The Pas, the HIV health crisis was becoming more apparent. Stewart remembers young, gay individuals talking with her about their experiences, and instances of suicide attempts amongst gender and sexually diverse populations.



Pat Stewart

Passionate about community health, Stewart eventually transitioned to working at The Village Clinic in Winnipeg, a community health center which worked with many clients with HIV. At Village Clinic, Stewart met colleagues and friends who would eventually go on to establish Sunshine House Winnipeg. Amongst these friends would be John Schellenberg who was Outreach and Education Coordinator at Village Clinic, Carrie McCormack who was to become the Executive Director of Kali Shiva, and Margaret Ormond, Sunshine House's eventual long-term Executive Director.

Stewart was involved in HIV prevention work while at the Clinic. "We were renting a house over on Good St., near Broadway, and doing prevention work." This outreach work was particularly geared towards sex workers, many of whom were members of racial minorities. "They needed hospitality. They need a warm spot. They needed a socializing spot." In turn, Stewart remembers "young volunteers that went out on the street doing prevention. They had backpacks. They had snacks. They had condoms. They had needles. They had all this stuff for harm reduction." The house was eventually termed the "Living Room," and they were able to secure federal research money for their work by being part of a large cross-Canada study, headed by the University of Toronto, on "men

who had sex with men."

Eventually, the Village Clinic discontinued the Living Room, but Stewart says, "I couldn't get out of prevention work." Later Stewart joined Osmond and other former Village staff in doing prevention work apart from Village Clinic. Several independent organizations gathered at what was to be the community health centre, [Nine Circles](#), including Kali Shiva AIDS Society, the AIDS Shelter Coalition, and the Manitoba Aboriginal AIDS Task Force.

Former members of the Village Clinic were searching for a house to continue the work they had begun with the Living Room. During this time Stewart was serving on vestry at St. Matthew's Anglican Church, and she learned of an unoccupied house owned by the parish. In early 1999, after agreeing with St. Matthews to rent the house at the cost of expenses, outreach work was begun again.

Stewart says the house hadn't been established very long when "we had a community meeting with the participants" to determine a name for the building.

"There had been someone—Dion Sunshine. She was a trans woman who pushed for this kind of house. Sunshine actually made it to the house. She came for a Saturday night out of Saint Boniface. I think Margaret went and picked her up. Dion died a couple of days later, just after seeing it for the first time."

Quite a bit later, in 2006, Sunshine House would receive full federal funding to buy the building where it is currently located, at Logan and Sherbrook.

Stewart recalls memories of her time with Sunshine House. She noted how the organization was unique for its model of solidarity, and how this distinguished it from various charity models. "Our number one choice was always to hire participants for our staff." Much of Sunshine House's current embodiment has developed from the work of participants. "We did not appreciate barriers between us and the people we were trying

to enable a service to," she says. "We really just wanted solidarity."

Stewart remembers Sunshine House's commitment to informal opportunities for learning, and various modules which were developed to equip Sunshine House participants with various skills. There was a car repair module, a bike repair module, an art module, and sessions of Indigenous drum building. She remembers too Program Coordinator JD Ormand developing JD and the Sunshine Band, which is still performing.

She remembers too how during the beginning of Levi Foy's (Sunshine House's current Executive Director) time with the House, Sunshine House began outreach to immigrants and refugees. Sunshine House was reaching out to community members living in the Manitoba Housing building on the corner of Logan, inviting people for brunch, and providing a social place for them. "We had picnics in the community, a dance over in the freight house. We wanted to be a resource in the community... It's kind of natural that we got involved with refugees," Stewart says. But she notes that she didn't realize how extensive this work was until she heard an immigration lawyer on CBC "make reference to Sunshine House and how they had helped about 70 people who had crossed the border."

She comments on the development of the "Like That" program in recent years, and speaks about how for Sunshine House, "the whole thing is to be yourself."

This connects for Stewart with what she has valued and loved about Sunshine House.

"At one annual meeting just a few years ago. We were having everyone that wanted to say what Sunshine has meant to them. I said it meant to me just a major community in my life, because it doesn't matter what your background is, everyone matters equally here. We reach out to one another as friends. To me, this is just one of the biggest joys of being involved in Sunshine House is seeing people feel like they can be themselves."

Margaret Ormond was a dear friend of Stewart's. When she died last year, a four-day vigil fire was held for her on Sunshine House's grounds. Stewart says that during this time these values were resonating with her, because "it's something that Margaret would feel comfortable with... Implementing these values meant a lot to her."

The vigil fire "was a chance for everybody to come at any time and sit there." During this time Stewart reflected on Ormond's life, and the history of Sunshine House. "It's one of those places that has worked at reconciliation for a couple of decades.... I received the blessings of those relationships. It's helped me all through the years."

"It's community... this is what Sunshine House has meant to me. It has been a very important community. These people I went through some hell with. We were together all these years."

I ask Stewart about how she understands her faith alongside her experiences with Sunshine House, and if she might comment on what it might mean to inhabit "good news."

"You know one word that comes to mind is something I want for society. More of a *leveling*. It's where the mountains are brought low and the valleys high. It's an Advent thing. It's images from the Magnificat."

She says, in reference to Sunshine House, "That's the joy of being part of a place like that. That joy gives you hope."

A letter written by Pat Stewart in memorial for Margaret Ormond is available to read on [Sunshine House's website](#).

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to Sunshine House.**

Ministry In a Radically Changing World:

A Conversation with Alcris Limongi and Alan Lai about the Centre for Christian Studies

JUDE CLAUDE

Photo: Atahualpa Cáceres Primera

Recently, Centre for Christian Studies had a Covenanted Service for Alan Lai and Alcris Limongi, as they joined CCS staff as Principal and Program Staff, respectively. In December, Alan and Alcris met with me to discuss their new ministries with the Centre for Christian Studies.

Centre for Christian Studies [describes itself](#) as a “national theological school grounded in the tradition of diakonia” which “prepare(s) people for ministries in the United Church of Canada and the Anglican Church of Canada” and which “offer(s) lifelong learning for anyone who wants to deepen their faith-in-action. Students at the Centre are educated for “justice, compassion and transformation.”

CCS facilitates a variety of educational [programs and courses](#). The school is the only one of its kind in the United Church of Canada, focusing on the training of diaconal ministers and offering a diploma in diaconal ministries. Beyond the diaconal ministry program, CCS also offers “continuing studies” for casual students, as well as various certificate programs.

The Centre offers “Learning on Purpose” (LoP), a 2-week introduction to “learning in community, self-awareness, group skills, conflict, making change, and approaches to theology, scripture, pastoral care, education, worship, and social justice.” The program is particularly geared towards helping discern calls to ministry. Additionally, CCS hosts various “Learning Circles,” “6-day in-person intensives (or 8-10 week online courses), exploring various themes in ministry and faith-based leadership and action.”

Referring to CCS’ history, Limongi says “the institution is 125 years young. Young because it

continues to evolve.” She highlights the student-centered approach of the program, which is tailored according to each student’s “vocation, passion or interest.” CCS’ shorter courses are adaptable to the schedules of students who may be juggling school, ministry, employment, or family life.

CCS’ pedagogy is unique in its practical orientation, and for its non-hierarchical approach; everyone—students, teachers, staff—comes to the learning process as equals. “It’s a continuous process of growing,” says Limongi, “not only of learning.” Evaluation is a part of CCS’ programs but is more “conversational,” says Lai, than in other academic settings. “It is about... action and reflection through conversation.”

The Center for Christian Studies is undergoing a period of transition. Lai comments on the “historic” elements of his and Limongi’s appointments to CCS. Both are ordained ministers, and not explicitly deacons, though they both have a passion for diaconal ministry. Both are also members of racialized minorities, as well as immigrants to Canada; Lai was born and raised in Hong Kong, and Limongi in Venezuela.

Limongi discusses the challenges she has faced as a Latino immigrant in ministry in largely white church communities. She reflects on her time with a United Methodist church in the US which asked her to initiate Hispanic ministry amidst an influx of Mexican refugees to the US. Upon embarking on outreach she soon recognized that many families “had to bring their kids to work and didn’t have childcare,”



and so she set out to start programming for kids. But to do so, she had to address misguided assumptions held by her church community. She says she told them "If you really want to start the Hispanic ministry, you need first to learn Spanish... To realize that not everybody's Mexican." Limongi led members in a learning process involving weekly classes with presentations on different Latin American countries. The Hispanic ministry in turn established with these volunteers, a one-on-one reading mentoring program for children and an ESL class for parents. "At the end" Limongi says, "there were relationships, and that's what transforms us."

Limongi has a passion for contextual ministry "I've been doing ministry since I was 19 years old, but it has been always community based." While doing cancer-focused pastoral ministry in Ottawa she says that she "focused on how to create a culture of care," that brought everyone together in networks of mutual support. She brings this knowledge and education to her work with CCS.

Lai and Limongi share the experience of having been raised in families of teachers. Lai identifies teaching as his main passion in ministry, one which has served him well in pastoral settings, and as a professor with the Vancouver School of Theology, and which is uniquely fitted to his work with CCS.

Both Lai and Limongi speak to the importance not only of diversity, but of truly intercultural communities which make room for a multiplicity of voices to share in power. "This country is diverse" Lai states. "The Christian church in the Canadian context is diverse," but physical diversity is not enough, says Lai. Next, we must ask whether everyone has opportunities to serve and to teach, and whether they are allowed to speak with different voices or are instead forced to adapt themselves to a singular culture.

Limongi, who has done anti-racism work for the General Council Office of the United Church of Canada since 2009 says that we "need to recognize the value of the diversity of

perspectives and experiences as an asset." She says that she has experienced within CCS a real desire for the "redistribution of power in relationships... They're walking the talk."

Commenting on CCS' work going forward, Lai says "the hospitality of openness and welcome is there. Now we're here, and what is possible needs to be discerned." He speaks about the importance on building on what CCS has already been doing and notes the particular importance of the organization's feminist and liberationist roots.



Alcris Limongi and Alan Lai

Lai talks about how church ministry and the identity of the church has been impacted by the Covid-19 pandemic, which he says "exposed a lot of assumptions about ourselves, and about the world... The pandemic showed us a reality that we couldn't get distracted from." Here Lai mentions the assassination of George Floyd and surrounding dynamics of "violence and hatred." He notes that this has also been a time of disconnection and isolation, declining church membership, and multiplying questions surrounding the identity of the church and Christian ministries

"Collectively, we need to be honest to ourselves and able to offer a kind of community building which is open, safe, honouring, and diverse as possible." He also emphasizes the *opportunities* presented by the pandemic for ministry. "We are in a world in which everybody is asking for meaning and community." He stresses that we need "to be humble, to listen," to the needs and concerns of others.

Limongi echoes this sentiment: "I was at the

national gathering for the unmarked graves and especially focusing on trauma. I was very moved by the deep sense of community. It was about listening, with respect, with care, actions to bring healing and justice. To remember the children, to hold the families, to weave actions towards healing and justice. One of the biggest questions for us could be how can we decolonize ourselves? Is that destroying our old self?" Limongi emphasizes instead how a stance of humility might help us "recover the prophetic voice of the church." "We need to listen to Indigenous people," she says. There is the "good news of hope, of caring for one another, of God's prophetic voice making visible what is invisible in society."

Lai ties this framing of the good news into the season of Advent. The message of the season, "Christmas, Emmanuel. In a nutshell it is God's promise that God is with us, not leaving us orphaned. God will not let violence and cruelty or injustice be the last word. Be surprised, God is coming. God is with us."

This good news is relevant to the present-day Anglican and United churches in Canada. Lai states:

"It is hopeless if you think those good old days are gone... you're mostly right. I am with you. That is hopeless. But what is the good news? Do you see the other way? Do you see that is not the only interpretation? It is not the only manifestation or learning model you can have. .. There is more than one way to do theology"

He harkens again to CCS' approaches to theology and to Christian ministry, with its fundamental theological conviction based in feminist theology and liberation theology. He recognizes that some may be turned-off by these influences, but at the same time he encourages people to consider that these are grounded in a "community empowering way that has been functioning for ages." "When you stand in the dominant camp you think that is the only way," but "Jesus came as a carpenter, as a refugee. Once you open your mind, it is good

to be in the minority I think." "Christianity should never become dominant in one way or another." "Christianity functions best when we are not in the dominant situation."

With this in mind, Lai again emphasizes the opportunity presented to Christians. "We need to be courageous enough to imagine something new." Models used by CCS may be particularly useful for discerning direction for ministry. These models emphasize the practical skills of "conversation, discernment, waiting, anticipating, trial and error."

Lai is optimistic about using communications to connect with those who have a vested interest in CCS, and to hear from others about how church ministry could serve them. He also suggests there is strength in the partnering of academic theology with the learning models used by CCS "It is not the time to debate which is better. We need both." He and Limongi both also share an excitement for ministry in non-English languages, and they hope to explore whether there might be a need for CCS to offer learning opportunities in Chinese or Spanish.

Another avenue for growth which Limongi notes CCS is particularly equipped to support is the ministry of all believers. She highlights the desire of lay people to access tools that are relevant and theologically sound for current ecclesial needs and diverse ministry contexts. Anecdotally, she mentions a pastoral care team at one of her previous churches which wanted theological courses on grief as they cared for people with cancer. "I think this is a big potential... the need is so great because times are changing. They have changed."

Once a month the Centre for Christian Studies hosts "[CCS Fridays](#) "online". These free (registration required) one hour Zoom workshops are a great way to get involved with the community at CCS. Other ways include attending an [event](#), [volunteering](#) with the centre, or by registering for a [course](#).

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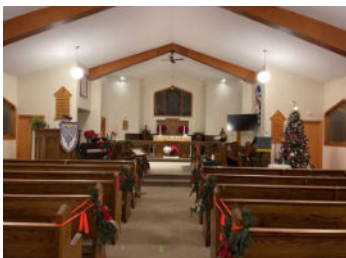
A BRIGHTWATER COMMUNITY

75 Falcon Ridge Drive • Winnipeg, MB R3Y 2C2

Parish Profile: St. Mary's, Sioux Lookout



Church of St. Mary's, Sioux Lookout.



The church's sanctuary, ready for Christmas amid COVID-19.



At the ordination and commissioning of St. Mary's Ministry Support Team. From left to right: Muriel Anderson, Bishop Geoff Woodcroft, Bill Morris.



One of several quilted banners made by a church parishioner. The parishioner created one for each church season.

Our church was built in 1910, when a lady in England donated 50 pounds for the church's construction. At her request the church was named "St. Mary's."

The first Anglican service for the church was held in Mullin's Pool Room on June 5, 1910, led by a Lutheran minister. The first service *in* the church took place on July 24, 1910, with 45 people present. The first communion service was then held on September 4, 1910, and included eight communicants. The present church opened on June 1, 1958. A minor fire in 2008 resulted in a complete renovation of the interior of the church.

Our church family is best described as welcoming, compassionate, and determined. We serve the municipality of Sioux Lookout and communities to the north, all the way to Hudson Bay. Many people from the north attend Sunday services when in town for medical appointments or to visit family.

Our worship service is traditional and uses the Book of Alternative Services and the Common Praise hymn book. The service is led by our eight-person Ministry Support Team, of which two members are ordained.

The congregation and team support each other. The team also works to encourage families with children. In the last decade 29 young people have been confirmed, and many children have been baptized in our parish. Three or four times a year "Messy Church" is coordinated with members of the United Church in an effort to meet the needs of young families and to connect them with the church.

St. Mary's team has representation on the Pastoral and Palliative Care Team at the local hospital, as well as on the Ministerial Committee. We also participate in several ecumenical services throughout the year, including "Walk with the Cross" on Good Friday, "Candlelight Memorial" the week of Christmas, "Lessons and Carols" on Advent 4, and a service to close the Blueberry Festival in August.

St. Mary's is small but dedicated.