

Year End 2022 Report - Fiona Brownlee

This year was a year that had more in person events and broadened the work that I do for the diocese as part of the Indigenous Ministry team. It went from events with families to events remembering Residential Schools to preaching in parishes to walking with my home community of Wetaskiwin for the National Day of Truth and Reconciliation. I remain grateful for those who support this work, for the clergy willing to embrace this ministry, for Anglicans all across the diocese who know there is no reconciliation without truth.



Like last year I will go through my work by focusing on the different projects I was involved in and the people who engaged with them.

Remember the Children Weaving Project

This project was dreamed up by Jamie Hurlburt in the fall of 2021. Jamie is a weaver and member of Christ Church, Edmonton. They envisioned taking a mobile loom to different city parishes and doing a piece that would envision the different burials, known and unknown, of children who attended residential schools. We asked 5 parishes in the city of Edmonton, Christ Church, St. Faith's, Church of the Good Shepherd, St. Luke's and All Saints Cathedral, to take part. Gratefully all the parishes took part. Starting with the beginning of Lent and going through most of the Easter season the loom was in each parish for two weeks. Almost 100 people took part in the weaving, from children as young as 6 and adults into their 80's. As Jamie





Cathedral.

told the participants each line of weaving was one child who had died at residential school. Jamie also wove in a special pattern to recognize the burials that have become known since the early 1960's. In June there was a special service held at the Cathedral to bless the finished piece and to unroll it for the first time. There were tears, tobacco was laid down, poems were shared and prayers were said. In September and October around the National Day of Truth and Reconciliation the weaving went to 5 different parishes and was warmly received. The hope is that in the new year even more parishes will be able to experience it. Both Jamie and myself have made ourselves available to be with folks on the Sunday's. In the meantime the weaving lives at the

Red Dress Events

Each year in early May communities across the country remember the Murdered & Missing Indigenous Women, Girls, and 2 Spirit Folk (MMWIG2S), they remember their sisters. In April a group of us gathered to plan a Ribbon Skirt Workshop to be held later that month at the Cathedral to make red ribbon skirts for use on the national day of remembrance, May 5th. A group of Indigenous, settler, and newcomer women gathered on April 23rd, to sit in circle and learn from Noella Steinhauser about ribbon skirts, why they are made, and why we wear them as women. Tracy Bradley assisted us in the making of the skirts. On May 5th many of those same women gathered in the First Peoples Chapel for a time of prayer before joining the memorial walk in the City of Edmonton.





For the second year in a row, the Reconciliation Team of Immanuel, Wetaskiwin, organized to hang red dresses in two of the City of Wetaskiwin's parks for the first week of May. On each dress there was attached a print out of information about MMIWG2S in Canada. The team heard from many in the community how much this was appreciated. On May 5th they gathered at the Peace Cairn, a space blessed and prayed over by local elders, to pray and sing for the women and girls who are missing from their communities.

Preaching and Working with Children

One of my greatest joys is being invited to preach about reconciliation, I love being with local parishes to encourage them on this journey. I am also really grateful to be working with children, who really are the most open about reconciliation. Spring of 2022 saw a number of these opportunities come about. At the beginning of May I was invited by St. Thomas', Sherwood Park to come be part of a Messy Church event on the Saturday and to preach on the Sunday. The theme of the Messy Church was reconciliation and it made a good jumping off point for the Sunday sermon.



The following Sunday found me preaching at my home parish of Immanuel, Wetaskiwin. Fortunately I was well received. At the end of May the Reconciliation



Team of Immanuel held its annual Heart Garden event. This year we made an altar frontal, which team member Gloria Rogers took home and added ribbons around the bottom of it. We also planted our garden together. This garden is dedicated to all the children who went to Residential Schools and especially those children who did not



return home. The garden flourished over the summer and continues to be a sign of hope in our community.

In June I was invited to preach twice around National Indigenous Peoples Day.



The first time was a repeat event. For the past several years I have been invited by Pastor Anne Zimmerman to come and preach to her congregation of Lakeland Lutheran in Cold Lake. I have been friends with Anne for a number of years and she regularly invites me to come and preach. We both see it as part of the ongoing full communion between Lutherans and Anglicans. The second time was for Canterbury House in Edmonton. Their chaplain, the Rev. Colleen Sanderson invited

me to share with the seniors living there. She then invited me back in the fall to preach just before the National Day of Truth of Reconciliation. It is refreshing to meet seniors who get why truth and reconciliation are so important for Canada and for the lives of Christians living in our country.

National Day of Truth and Reconciliation

For the last several years many parishes in the diocese have acknowledged Orange Shirt Day, now known at the National Day of Truth and Reconciliation, on the Sunday closest to September 30th. My role has been to encourage them and provide them with any resources they may need. This year a number of them used the Remember the Children weaving to honour residential school survivors and especially those children who didn't return home.

This past year was the 7th annual Orange Shirt Day walk in Wetaskiwin. The Reconciliation Team from Immanuel has been in partnership with the Wetaskiwin & District Heritage Museum for the walk. This year we had over 100 people join us for the walk and the event after it.



Conclusion

I want to give thanks to my friends and colleagues in Indigenous Ministry, Archdeacon Travis Enright, Fred Matthews, Rev. Nick Trussel, for their continued support and creative nudges and for all in the Synod office who answer my questions, post my stories and are such good cheerleaders. I am also so grateful to all the parishes that reach out and ask me to come preach, for information, for resources and for praying for all involved with this ministry. I want to give thanks to my First Nation sisters, Gloria Rogers and Bonny Graham, who with me make up the Immanuel Reconciliation Team with me and who are so willing to take my ideas, run with them, and share their ideas with me. I wouldn't be doing what I do without their love, prayers and support. Finally I want to thank Creator for giving me a curious spirit and open heart to hear truth and work towards reconciliation.

Respectfully submitted
Fiona Brownlee

