

# Parish Profile

## Gathering Table: A Faith Community in the Anglican Church of Canada



December, 2021





**Gathering Table: A Faith Community in the Anglican Church of Canada**  
**228 Pearl St.**  
**Thunder Bay, ON P7B 1E4**  
**<http://gatheringtable.ca/>**

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Dear Prospective Incumbent:

In 2018, Gathering Table arose as an intentional new ministry following the dissolution of St. Luke's and St. John's in Thunder Bay. Our goal is to be an inclusive missional faith community that is striving to live out our founding vision and values.

We are seeking an Incumbent who will:

- walk, weep and rejoice with us as we continue to discern our calling and shape our identity.
- offer servant leadership, effective communication and teaching – all through the Anglican lens of scripture, reason, and tradition.
- engage with us in the many community building and missional ventures we either lead or participate in as part of our ongoing ministry in God's world.

We offer a \$16,000 annual living allowance, the Diocesan compensation package of \$40,078 salary, plus \$175 per year of service up to 25 years, plus \$7601 travel allowance.

Thank you for your interest in our faith community. If you discern a call to travel with us, please submit your application to the Archbishop of Algoma, 619 Wellington Street East, Sault Ste. Marie, Ontario, P6A 2M6 or e-mail [bishop@dioceseofalgoma.com](mailto:bishop@dioceseofalgoma.com) Telephone 705-256-5061.

**Please ensure you provide the following with your application:**

- If you reside outside of the Diocese of Algoma, a signed statement that you have received permission from your bishop to make application to this diocese.
- A current curriculum vitae.
- A letter of introduction describing your "Vision for Ministry" at Gathering Table and why you think you may be suited for this position. Please base your response on your knowledge of the parish outlined in the attached Parish Profile.
- A copy of your recent sermon, published article, or video presentation
- The names and contact information of three references.

Yours in Faith,

**Gathering Table Concurrence Committee:**

Erminie Reid (Chair), Kim Bienvenue, Ted Hamill, Brenda O'Neill, Gail Pell, Dale Sparkes,  
Jim Sutton

## Parish Beginnings

**G**athering Table came into existence on June 4, 2018 after the dissolving of St. John the Evangelist parish, and St. Luke's parish on the day previous. Respectively, these Anglican parishes were the first ones on the north and south sides of Thunder Bay since the late 1800's. As a new parish of the remnants and gathered peoples, we now serve Christ in the world as the faith community of Gathering Table at the former St. John's building.

This beginning, or as some might say, a journey of death and resurrection, started in July, 2015, when an assessment of the viability of all Thunder Bay-North Shore parishes was undertaken by the Together in Hope Committee. In January 2017, the final report recommended that four parishes be merged as soon as possible with a new name. A Discernment Committee was then formed to determine the best way forward, given the spectrum of traditions, cultures, worship styles and buildings. The Committee met, prayed and broke bread together until December, 2017. At that time, it was discerned that St John's and St Luke's should be dissolved to facilitate the formation of a single – point parish with a new name, a fresh expression, and a redefined vision under the leadership of the Rev. Canon Dr. George Porter based out of a renovated and painted St. John's building.

A New Parish Team then prepared a new parish proposal, which was submitted to Bishop Anne Germond for her review and approval. On May 10, 2018, she issued the mandate letter for the closure of St. Luke's and St. John's, and the establishment of Gathering Table. We held our initial worship service in the parish hall on June 10, as renovations to the church building were underway. On Sunday, September 30<sup>th</sup>, 2018, at 2:00 pm, Gathering Table celebrated our opening in the church with the Right Rev'd Anne Germond, Bishop of Algoma presiding and the Rev'd Dr. D Jay Koyle preaching.

## A Parish Snapshot – June 2019 to March 2020

Prior to the declaration of the COVID-19 pandemic, at a typical Sunday worship service, there were



mostly persons aged 50+, occasional teens, and a smattering of younger adults and children. Our mosaic of parishioners included people of various ethnic diversity, LGBTQ+ folks, Food Cupboard recipients, homebound/assisted living members and people who came in "off the street" on occasion. We also considered our community to include those persons who tuned in to our weekly Sunday worship broadcast.

Each of us has their own reasons for being part of this faith community. For some, it is an essential part of their spiritual life and growth; for some, it is to offer our various gifts; for some, it is a calling or vocation; for some, it is to be salt and light in the neighbourhood; for some, it is to be in a safe welcoming place; for some, it is simply to be in familiar community and surroundings; and for some, it is a variety of reasons.



In our church building worship space, the pews have been angled towards the main altar, our gathering table, which is front and centre at the level of the congregation; there are no communion rails and kneelers. The logistics and posture of receiving communion while standing is indeed a different experience for some parishioners. In the chancel, behind and slightly above the altar, all choir pews have been removed and replaced with moveable chairs on one side for the choir. On the other side, an electric piano, an amplified acoustic guitar, hand drum, harmonica, and microphones support the contemporary worship music. We have a recently refurbished pipe organ to lead traditional worship music. On most Sundays, both contemporary and traditional music enhance our worship.

No doubt there are some parishioners who feel that traditional hymns with choir and organ are the proper way to conduct a service just as there are those who feel that the vitality of a more contemporary style of music is what the church needs in these times. There are those who miss kneeling at an altar rail for communion and those who are excited to be part of a different approach to the Eucharist. But these differing views co-exist with a charitable acceptance of the differences. The physical changes to the altar and choir area were a major commitment to the intent to do things differently, and they have been generally embraced. This is a good example of less concern about how things should be done and more focus on relationships.

Relationships form the bonds of this community and are still forming. Some of us have only known each other for a relatively short time, but Gathering Table provides opportunities and the privilege of getting to know folks with differing backgrounds, life situations and faith journeys. We hope that our acceptance, indeed embrace of diversity extends beyond the organization of worship to both the people we welcome into our faith community, and those we encounter as we serve in the broader community.

As an example, the people who make use of our twice a month Food Cupboard mission are welcomed to worship and to after-service coffee hours and meals in the parish hall. This provides opportunities to meet and talk with them. For some parishioners, this is a stretch outside of their comfort zone, but the intention is there and is being developed.



Another example is the relationships we are fostering with members of the Lake Superior Scottish Regiment (LSSR) and the 2294 Service Battalion Royal Canadian Army Cadet Corps.



Gathering Table is the Regimental church for the LSSR, whose members participate in the worship service nearest Remembrance Day and assist with our twice-

annual "Nearly New" sale. The Cadets have assisted us with many projects during parish work days.

In terms of supporting other missions in our community, these include Grace Place community ministry, Mission to Seafarers, Camp Gitchigomee, PWRDF and others. Our parish has gatherings such as the Friday Craft Group, Wednesday and Thursday Bible studies, and we host such activities as Saturday craft sessions, Tuesday camp meetings, and Wednesday organic farm vegetable distribution.



Our Vision and Values - very aspirational statements, were laid down and accepted at Vestry. These yearnings have not been fully realized in this new parish. But the will is evident in our self-assessment of the current challenges and strengths (see page 9).

Beyond our Vision and Values, there is a desire among some parishioners to see Christianity as an exciting and creative adventure and not just an adherence to time honoured views and practices that may no longer resonate with the cultural realities of this time and place. Our intent is to be a more dynamic, intentional way of being church. This is a work in progress that will never come to an end but we have faith that we can work on fresh expressions for this place and time while respecting our Anglican roots. At Gathering Table, we hope that relationships will be foremost.

Our Parish Council has adopted a consensus model of governance, rather than a voting system that could politicize decisions and leave some people disappointed or angry. So far it's working for us.

Lastly, but reflecting a critical component of our identity, we have declared that our building is located on traditional Anishinabek territory. This is one step of many in the healing and reconciliation process that we have taken. We have taken others, and recognize our responsibilities to continue this journey

### **A Parish Snapshot – March 2020 to Present**

Provincial pandemic lockdowns significantly changed the way we gather, worship, build relationships and serve. Our worship services continued to be live-streamed (<http://gatheringtable.ca/>) and a full service bulletin is available for downloading.

As of October 2021, the maximum allowed for indoor worship is whatever number of persons that still maintains at least 2m physical distancing between each individual or social bubble at all times. If using the church buildings for meetings or gatherings, 2m of physical distancing must be maintained between individuals or social bubbles. Masking, sanitizing and record keeping are required for all activities, and the serving or sharing of food and beverages is not yet permitted indoors during official church activities.

In spite of these major changes, we are carrying on. About 300 people tune in to the weekly broadcasts, which include some parishioners recording scripture from home. Lay readers occasionally lead the service. Some pre-recorded music by our musicians and on-line music resources, both traditional and contemporary music are used. A Prayer Chain has been initiated, and many are being more intentional about keeping in touch with each other, via phone calls or emails. Zoom has become our friend for meetings, Table Talk and Bible studies. Our Food

Cupboard continues every second and fourth Sunday, following Health Unit requirements. Parishioners continue their ministries for the church and other missions. We are very much looking forward to getting back to “normal”, but recognize that the way we are church and will be church has evolved – as it must. But our faith in God’s love, our relationship focus, and our call to serve has not.

Gathering Table has prepared a Stewardship Plan as part of our 2020-2021 Missional Objectives. The three key principles of our plan are a) to care for the corporate gifts we have (e.g. buildings, grounds, financial transparency, using professional asset managers, regular review of our founding vision and values), b) provide opportunities for parishioners to share their time and talents, and c) provide opportunities for parishioners to share their treasure, including a newly established Stipend Endowment fund. The stewardship plan will be rolled out in early 2022. Except for our solar panel loan which is paid back as solar power income is generated, Gathering Table currently has no debts. Our monthly EOP offerings are about \$5900 from 32 donors; in 2020, total parochial offerings were approximately \$129,600.

### Parish Statistics

Parish Attendance	June - Dec. 2018	2019	2020
Average Sunday Attendance	69	74	N/A
Average Sunday School Attendance	3	4	N/A
Easter Octave	N/A	221	N/A
Christmas	165- 3 services	145 - 2 services	N/A
Average Sunday Internet Attendance			~300
Baptisms	1	2	1
Confirmations	0	0	0
Weddings	2	0	1
Burials	3	3	5
Households		146	140
Homebound Members		20	20



## Our Founding Principles

In early 2018, following considerable discussion, the New Parish Team brought forward the following identity statement and values of the proposed new church, which were subsequently approved by Bishop Germond:

### Gathering Table is:

- + a gathering place on traditional Anishinabe territory where people come together to share stories and conversation, memories and meals;
- + the place where identity is formed and transformed, community is known, values are shaped and dreams are honoured;
- + the place where Jesus the Risen Lord is revealed in bread breaking, foot washing (mutual service), and hospitality extended and received; the place where the God in whom we hope gathers people from north and south, east and west, setting before them a feast of rich food in the promised Kingdom!
- + a community seeking to discern the living message of the biblical narratives for this place and time.

### Who We are and What We Value

**Worship...** We are a Eucharistic community, not only because we share together in the bread and wine but also that we are the Body of Christ, profoundly connected to one another and offered for the life of the world. Our decisions about, and practices of worship will be guided by this vision.

### Hospitality...

We exercise the art of hospitality, making room for all and relationship building that draws people to Christ as a way of sharing the genuine love we know in Jesus in order to serve the people he loves – all people. Our decisions about, and practices of hospitality will be guided by this vision.

### Formation as members of Christ's Body...

For us to faithfully and effectively share the Christian story, we must become the church this story calls for. We are a baptismal community, not only because we celebrate baptism, but also because we engage in formation that equips us to live as a sign, foretaste, and instrument of the Kingdom revealed in Jesus. We also introduce, nurture, and incorporate those seeking life in Christ into this same way of living through a flexible but deliberate process involving worship, scripture, reflection, prayer, relationship building, service and hospitality. Our decisions about, and practices of formation will be guided by this vision.

### Caring for one another...

An important aspect of our life in Christ concerns how we care for one another – sharing faith, building friendships, providing mutual support, and sharing resources. These are essential elements of meaningful relationships.

Act

*justly*

Love

*mercy*

Walk

*humbly*

Micah 6:8

When people of our faith community are unable to gather with us due to illness or other serious situations, we extend our fellowship to them through pastoral care, visitation, and other acts of support. The care we offer to one another is the privilege and responsibility of all the baptized and not the clergy alone. Our decisions about, and practices of pastoral care will be guided by this vision.

### **Sharing in God's mission in the world...**

Church implies mission; it makes no sense to think of one without the other. The image of a table, as a place of meeting and sharing, is important to our understanding of witness and ministry to, in, and with the wider community. We are not concerned only with feeding people; we gather with them to build relationships, personally connecting with those often overlooked or neglected, and seeing them as sisters and brothers through Jesus. Our decisions about, and practices of missional service will be guided by this vision.

### **Supporting those in the faith community...**

The daily life of those in our faith community is important. Therefore, through community events, the provision of devotional resources, and other means, we support the daily lives so that faith may be our life rather than one aspect of a lifestyle. Our decisions about, and practices of supporting the daily rhythms of those involved in our faith community will be guided by this vision.

### **Hope by which we live...**

One of the most compelling images of the Kingdom of God, both as it is present among us now and in its promised fullness, is that of a great feast prepared by our God. We are a community of embodied hope, not only because we watch for the fulfillment of this vision with restless imagination, but because we believe our actions today have meaning and will bear fruit, since God's promises – this promise – can be trusted. Our decisions about our kingdom life, and practices of hope and promise will be guided by this vision.

### **Diversity we seek for our faith community...**

Diversity is God created. It is good. It is our vision that the community reflects God's embrace of all humankind. Through our narratives, worship, and attitude we seek to understand and express our commitment to welcoming and making space for all God's children, regardless of differences, as equally loved and embraced by God through Jesus Christ. We will deliberately live this in all facets of parish life, particularly during worship, hospitality, missions and ministries. Our decisions about, and practices of diversity will be guided by this vision.

### **Governing our life together...**

As Christ served, we are called to servant leadership. We will embody grace, humility, honesty, respect, compassion and inclusion. We will in all governance matters, speak the truth clearly, pursue wisdom and practice consensus in decision-making. Our decisions about, and practices of governance will be guided by this vision.



## **Challenges and Strengths**

As we continue beyond our third year and search for a new Incumbent, we offer the following “self-assessment”:

### **Challenges**

- To keep our founding values and the love of God through Jesus as the basis for all of our doing and being;
- To learn/practice Love of other as the great commission;
- To be faithful stewards of the gifts and opportunities before us;
- To be intentional about being a diverse community, engaging all people; existing, new and homebound members, those online, neighbourhood people and anyone who walks through the doors or calls.
- To address possible post-COVID-19 reluctance of some to attend in person.

### **Strengths**

- We are a congregation that wants to live with hope and vision and that intentionally makes space for others; we have a core of servant disciples;
- We have an innovative worship setup that is reshaping worship yet is faithful to Anglicanism, and includes a collegial mix of Common Praise hymns with organ, and contemporary hymns/music;
- We are missional - oriented through our in-house programs and hospitality, and through the many community missions we participate in;
- We are intentional about providing opportunities for welcome and fellowship, and for growing in our individual and collective faith journeys

## **Unique Groups**

*Note: Unless otherwise noted, the Unique Groups noted below did not gather during COVID-19*

### **Anglican Lutheran Group**

On February 16, 2011, the Evangelical Lutheran Church Women of Thunder Bay, invited their Anglican sisters to join them in preliminary discussions on poverty. The group has developed and organized the following three point mandate (1) to help eliminate poverty in Thunder Bay through education; (2) to hold fundraising events to fund an annual bursary and assist other poverty related charities and (3) to educate members on poverty related to issues in Thunder Bay and promote education as a way out of poverty. A key project is the Bursary (up to \$5,000 annually) awarded to an individual entering a post-secondary program thus assisting them to begin to break a cycle of poverty. We keep ourselves educated regarding local poverty through speakers and by volunteering at a variety of organizations. There are currently 7 Gathering Table members in the group and 42 members from five additional Anglican churches and two Evangelical Lutheran Church in Canada churches in Thunder Bay and the Thunder Bay District.

## **Craft Group**

The craft group meets once a week in the church for both social and charitable reasons. Meetings are open and hospitable for anyone who wishes to drop in and have coffee and goodies. Knitted items are donated to local schools, Mission to Seafarers and residents of long term care and we continue to look for other projects.



## **Camp Gitchigomee**

Camp Gitchigomee is a children's Christian camp located on Sandstone Lake, about 90 km southwest of Thunder Bay. It is a former Thunder Bay Deanery camp. Approximately 14 people at Gathering Table are active volunteers with Camp Gitchigomee. Most volunteers are staff at one of the three week-long camps in July, are on the Board of Directors, or serve in a variety of ways. For the summers of 2020 and 2021, the camps were cancelled due to COVID-19. Monthly Board meetings and the annual Volunteer Appreciation Supper are held at Gathering Table. Please see the website for more information:

<https://www.campgitchigomee.ca/>

## **Food Cupboard**

The Food Cupboard at Gathering Table is a ministry of food distribution on the second and fourth Sunday of each month, when 90 to 150 people typically receive food sufficient for at least two days. Many recipients attend Sunday worship and share in coffee hospitality before the Food Cupboard opens at 11:30.

The Food Cupboard is supported by parishioner donations of food, money and time – both on distribution Sundays and on preparation days. Support is also provided by another Anglican and two Lutheran parishes, and by the Regional Food Distribution Association. Food bags are available through the church office to meet emergency needs during the week.

During the COVID-19 pandemic, food distribution has continued according to schedule. Operations have been modified several times to comply with revisions to the Diocesan, Provincial, and local District Health Unit regulations.

## Grace Place

Grace Place provides services for the homeless, working poor, and hurting here in Thunder Bay. A hot meal is served three days a week and food hampers are available once a month. Guests have access to free haircuts and a free store that stocks clothing and small housewares. An overnight program is also available from November to the end of March for people who may not be able to access other shelters in the city. Guests can have a hot supper and a hot breakfast and are given a bag lunch. Grace Place provides a warm and safe environment where it is needed most. Eight to 10 parishioners help at Grace Place one day a month.



## Man Alive

Man Alive is a men's non-denominational Christian Bible Study and fellowship group. Our group is 10 years old and have been meeting at Gathering Table for two years now on Wednesday evenings from 7 to 9. There are 17 members and the average weekly attendance is 10. The group primarily uses the Bible and other Christian resources such as Max Lucado's 12 part study "Unshakeable Hope" to guide our discussions. We start and end with prayer and break for coffee/tea and cookies. New members are welcomed.

## The Mission to Seafarers: Port of Thunder Bay

Photo courtesy of MTS



The mission in Thunder Bay provides a Centre for hospitality to approximately 60-130 ocean going vessels per year. They provide: visits to the ships by the Chaplain or volunteers, local transportation, Christmas gift bags, and Wi-Fi/internet to help seafarers stay in touch with their families. Other than a part time Chaplain, the Mission is all volunteers. Individual members of Gathering Table contribute in fund raising events, as drivers, in preparation of the Eucharist, and as committee members. Many members of the congregation contribute through financial donations and donations to the Christmas

bags. Annually the Craft Group of Gathering Table knits toques and neck warmers which are highly appreciated by the seafarers on those cold days on Lake Superior.

## **Music Team**

Our music team is unique because on most Sundays, our worship offers a blend of both “contemporary” and “traditional” music offered by committed, talented musicians and choir/singers. The traditional music is typically played on the organ, and led by the choir, while the contemporary music is offered by New Song, with electric piano, acoustic guitar, hand drum and led by singers. All of our 13 vocalists (and one budding 3 year old granddaughter) sing all songs of praise / hymns; often, all instruments are used in one piece of music. New Song is a worship group that originated from the former St. Luke’s as an alternative to choral hymn book music accompanied by the organ. But now we have both!

During COVID-19, our pianist and guitar player (wife and husband) have been recording a number of instrumental pieces for our Sunday on-line worship. We are currently seeking an organist.

## **Prayer Chain**

The Gathering Table Prayer Chain ministry was established in March of 2020 both as a foundational need for the parish and in response to the new threat of the COVID-19 virus. Approximately twenty-two people signed up to be on the Prayer Chain. Prayer requests are sent out via email to the entire chain. Prayer requests are expected to be responded to in a timely manner and to be kept confidential. It is also expected that permission is granted by the individual or by their family before being placed on the Prayer Chain. The Prayer Chain receives and responds to multiple prayer requests weekly.

The Prayer Chain has been a vital component of our parish life since the advent of the pandemic. In a time when we are unable to meet in person, it has allowed us to stay connected and minister to the needs of our parishioners as well as to those in our larger community.

## **Prayer Ministry**

Our “prayer ministry” at Gathering Table is not particularly structured. Many of us pray informally for each other as needs in our families, the church community and the wider community arise. There is a “prayer station” set up behind the choristers. This area is used, at the end of Sunday services, primarily for one-on-one and small group prayer, sometimes with the use of anointing oil. Several people within the congregation, all comfortable with extemporaneous prayer, make themselves available on an “as needed” basis. There are rarely less than two people gathered at the prayer station, for and in prayer.

## **Prayer Shawl Ministry**

This ministry provides shawls or mantles for those who are ill or may be experiencing a difficult time. The card which accompanies the shawl explains that “these mantles sustain us when life is hard and remind us that God chooses to dwell in us”. The shawls are knitted weaving prayers into the shawls to create a vessel for God’s mysterious presence in other people’s lives. There are 6 knitters within the parish who have faithfully continued during isolation.



## Table Talk

Table Talk is an open group that meets weekly to discuss personal perspectives on theological concepts. The current Incumbent selects a topic and provides a page of selected scripture verses that contain relevant information. Participants can suggest topics and relevant scripture. The Incumbent provides context and insight to the original language meaning of key words in the texts under consideration. Participants share their understanding, interpretation, or aspects of their experience that relate to the topic. Over the past year, Table Talk has continued via Zoom.

## Tech Team (Internet Ministry)

<http://gatheringtable.ca/services/>. The services can be viewed in real time or later. In addition, the sermons are extracted and saved on our website <http://gatheringtable.ca/sermons/>. The Tech Team operates in pairs; one to do the PowerPoint and one to operate the cameras via our streaming software StreamSpot with the team lead creating the PowerPoints weekly. These are streamed on Facebook and YouTube as well. There are three cameras located around the church. Two TVs are located at the front of the church, one in front of the balcony and one in the Parish Hall. This allows the team to stream the service throughout the building. The sound system allows for various mics and headsets. Recent upgrades include a new sound board and the capability to broadcast the sound to hearing impaired people.



## Financial Summary 2019 – 2021 \*

<b>Revenues</b>	<b>Actual 2019</b>	<b>Actual 2020</b>	<b>Budget 2021</b>
Total Apportionment Related	124,423.31	129,028.16	130,649.00
<i>Total Receivables</i>		7360.81	7,200.00
<i>Total Fund Revenue</i>	63,998.84	29,398.47	13,350.00
<i>Total Mission Revenue</i>	12,479.41	16,201.56	11,520.00
<i>Total Fundraising Revenue</i>	15,482.99	1471.00	3550.00
<i>Total Cost Recovery</i>	12,923.34	1,299.36	1770.00
<i>Total Investment Income</i>	16,132.43	19,838.39	9,920
<i>Total Diocesan Consolidated Fund</i>	6,852.62	9,354.00	9,910.00
<b>Total Revenues</b>	<b>252,292.94</b>	<b>212,720.39</b>	<b>187,869.00</b>
Expenses			
<i>Total Salaries &amp; Related Expenses</i>	92,651.44	81,144.16	82,612.91
<i>Total General Purpose Expenses</i>	10,429.57	7,260.08	10,485
<i>Total Property Expenses</i>	64,199.35	43,085.32	46,850.00
<i>Total Diocesan Obligations</i>	35,242.57	44,278.48	53,000.00
<i>Total Fund Expenses</i>	64,802.53	3,063.49	3,800.00
<i>Total Mission Expenses</i>	8,067.46	13,058.30	11,3370.00
<i>Total Fundraising Expenses</i>	1,531.69	450.00	500.00
<b>Total Expenses</b>	<b>276,924.61</b>	<b>192,339.83</b>	<b>208,617.91</b>
<b>Net Operating Income (- Loss_)</b>	<b>-24,631.67</b>	<b>-6,857.64</b>	<b>-22,450.91**</b>
* full financial statement available upon request			
** Budget 2021 includes extraordinary items of searching for a new incumbent			
<b>Gathering Table Investments as at 31 December 2020</b>			
Diocesan Consolidated Funds (3)			\$310,203.23
Investors Wealth Management			\$60,014.05
Mission Endowment Fund			\$ 84,156.66
Stipend Endowment Fund (Started June 2021)			\$2,050.00
<b>Total Investment Assets</b>			<b>\$455,423.94</b>

## Concurrence Committee Questionnaire Results

A questionnaire was sent to the parishioners at Gathering Table by the Concurrence Committee in early 2020. There were 19 surveys returned and the following is a summary of the responses.

### Overall Summary

#### Main Strengths:

- People
- Outreach
- Willing to try new things

#### Main areas of need:

- Expand outreach programs and social justice
- Youth
- Financial

We are a new creation becoming Gathering Table. We are making progress, but a common concern of the respondents is that we are still weaving together parishioners from the two former congregations as well as new members. Some mentioned this issue with respect to the people, but many saw it more as a challenge to determine our identity as Gathering Table and leave behind our former identities.

### Summary of Questions

*1. Please share a personally meaningful story of your experience at/of Gathering Table or why Gathering Table is important to you.*

- They liked the people and families, and meeting new people
- Very welcoming place
- They enjoy the outreach i.e. Food Cupboard
- Sermons are meaningful, appreciate learning about the Anglican Church, Bible and book studies are a good way to talk about one's faith in groups
- They enjoyed the music, both choir and New Song
- Several people commented on the new parish, how they are making new friends, how it is getting better, "bumps are smoothing out", but there is still work to be done "the walls, although not broken, are softening."

*2. There are some areas of our parish life that need to, or could, be enhanced, explored, or developed at Gathering Table. With these ideas in mind, complete this sentence: "I think that God is calling this congregation to ..."*

In this question there were three main recurring themes:

**Outreach:** helping those in need and becoming more aware of community needs; some would like to add more than outreach programs; be more welcoming to the Food Cupboard neighbours, and increase support

**Youth:** reconnect with youth; try to attract younger people; make services all-inclusive and relevant to the needs of young people

**Building community:** many different forms but emphasized inclusivity; a welcoming environment, awareness of Indigenous issues, awareness of LGBTQ+ issues, and building meaningful relationships.

Other thoughts included:

- we must continue the path that we have started, work towards our vision, not go backwards.
- continue and expand small group education
- visit seniors
- become better stewards of the environment
- become less a place of the “book” and more a place of teaching
- respect our Anglican roots, but move to a new and more modern/meaningful way to worship



*3. An incumbent in any parish is expected to fulfill many roles. Given that it is not possible to find an individual that can be an expert in all areas, what do you feel would be the main priorities of parishioners at GT? (List up to 3)*

Recurring themes: good teacher and preacher; good leader and mentorship; willing to stay the course that we’ve already set; and good communicator. Many people mentioned the need for quality sermons.

Specific themes: well versed in Scripture; heart for youth and Indigenous people; consensus leadership; able to build bridges, mediate within parish, facilitate continuation of parish formation; financial literacy and aware of stewardship; “open-minded willingness to step into congregation that doesn’t know its own identity”; tech savvy and willing to work within social media to promote themselves and GT; inclusive and welcoming.

*4. What challenges will a new incumbent meet at Gathering Table? How can we best support and bless our new Priest?*

Challenges: We are a congregation still searching for our identity which relates to the formation of our new church; financial issues, aging congregation and small office space were also mentioned.

Support: We are willing to support a new incumbent with many saying that we need to be patient, understanding, prayerful, positive, and welcoming. Many people emphasized good communication and being honest and open about our challenges. Other suggestions included wearing name tags; introducing ourselves often; organizing social events to become acquainted with the new Incumbent; putting together intentional plans for orientation and support for the new priest; having good lay people and wardens to support the Incumbent.



## Welcome to *Our City*

Thunder Bay is our city, where we live, work, raise families, worship, enjoy the outdoors, serve each other, wrestle with challenges, and where we are blessed to build our lives and community.



Below please find an overview of our city. Additional information can be found at the City of Thunder Bay website [www.thunderbay.ca](http://www.thunderbay.ca). Unless otherwise noted, photos are from this website.

## History

The City of Thunder Bay was formed in 1970 from the amalgamation of the adjacent cities of Fort William and Port Arthur, and two outlying municipalities. While the name was determined from a plebiscite, Thunder Bay is also the name of the immense bay at the head of Lake Superior, known on 18th-century French maps as *Baie du Tonnerre* (Bay of Thunder). The city is often referred to as the "Lakehead", or "Canadian Lakehead", because of its location at the end of Great Lakes navigation on the Canadian side of the border.

For thousands of years, First Nations people have walked on this land; their relationship with the land is at the centre of life and spirituality. We are gathered as treaty people on the traditional territory of the Anishnaabeg of the Fort William First Nation and acknowledge this people's stewardship of this land through the ages. The Fort William First Nation reserve is immediately south of the City, on the south side of the Kaministiquia River. They are signatory to the Robinson-Superior Treaty of 1850 and their mission is to promote & ensure the physical, mental, emotional & spiritual well-being of their people and community.

European settlement in the region began in the late 17th century with a French fur trading outpost on the banks of the Kaministiquia River. It grew into an important transportation hub with its port forming an important link in the railway shipping of grain and other products from western Canada, through the Great Lakes and the Saint Lawrence Seaway. The harbour is now a busy two-way transport hub.



Forestry and manufacturing play important roles in the city's economy. While they have declined in recent years, the economy has been bolstered by a "knowledge economy" based on medical research and education, and a service economy - particularly for mining and health services for the region. The local economy has benefitted from local entrepreneurs who have transformed the north hub of the city into a dining and entertainment district - where Gathering Table is located.

## Population

The 2016 census puts Thunder Bay's population around 108 000 or 122 000 when outlying First Nations, municipalities and townships are included. A recent estimate put the population at about 137 000 when undocumented persons are included. The median age is 44.5 years, while ages 0-14, 15-64 and >65 make up 14, 65 and 21 percent of the population, respectively.

## Employers

Thunder Bay's largest employers listed below are in the health care sector, social assistance, education, public administration, manufacturing and forest products. This variety of employment opportunities has contributed to the ethnic diversity of the City.

- Thunder Bay Regional Health Sciences Centre ([www.tbrhsc.net](http://www.tbrhsc.net)), an acute care and teaching hospital associated with the Northern Ontario School of Medicine ([www.nosm.ca/](http://www.nosm.ca/))
- Lakehead Public School Board ([www.lakeheadschoools.ca](http://www.lakeheadschoools.ca))
- Thunder Bay Catholic District School Board ([www.tbcschools.ca](http://www.tbcschools.ca) )
- St. Joseph's Care Group ([www.sjcq.net/](http://www.sjcq.net/) )
- Lakehead University ([www.lakehead.ca](http://www.lakehead.ca)), including the Law School ([www.lakeheadu.ca/programs/departments/law](http://www.lakeheadu.ca/programs/departments/law)) and world-renowned Paleo-DNA and forensics Laboratory ([www.lakeheadu.ca/centre/lucas/laboratories/paleo-dna/contact-us](http://www.lakeheadu.ca/centre/lucas/laboratories/paleo-dna/contact-us) )
- Confederation College ([www.confederationcollege.ca](http://www.confederationcollege.ca))
- City of Thunder Bay and Government of Ontario
- Alstom (formerly Bombardier Transportation) (<https://www.alstom.com/alstom-canada>)
- Resolute Forest Products ([www.resolutefp.com/installation\\_site.aspx?siteid=135](http://www.resolutefp.com/installation_site.aspx?siteid=135))



## Indigenous Youth

There are two indigenous high schools in Thunder Bay, Dennis Cromarty High School ([www.nnec.on.ca/index.php/dennis-franklin-cromarty-high-school](http://www.nnec.on.ca/index.php/dennis-franklin-cromarty-high-school)) and the Matawa Education Authority ([www.matawa.on.ca/services/education](http://www.matawa.on.ca/services/education))

These schools offer indigenous-led education opportunities, primarily for students from remote northern Ontario First Nations communities. At the same time, a number of students have had a challenging time adjusting to the sometimes lonely “big city” life, and sadly, encountered some pockets of racism here. Tragically, a number of Indigenous youths have lost their lives in the Neebing-McIntyre floodway in the past few years, prompting some to call this waterway the River of Tears. City police have responded by calling for a re-investigation of these and other sudden deaths of Indigenous persons. The City has also focused its efforts on addressing issues of reconciliation, respect, tolerance, integration, and social justice through and with several agencies and the City police. Other events raise awareness of the plight that Indigenous youth face in the city, including a Medicine Walk and the River of Tears Powwow. The River of Tears has become symbolic of a challenge our city faces; it also prayerfully names a movement to break the inertia of social discrimination.



Photo courtesy of TVO

## Cultural Amenities

In 2003, Thunder Bay received an award from the Government of Canada as one of Canada's Cultural Capitals. Since that time, the arts and music scene has blossomed even more. This is evident by the growing collection of public art, the displays at the Thunder Bay Art Gallery and the Baggage Building Arts Centre as well as many private galleries. There are also vibrant professional and amateur music and live theatre scenes including:

- Thunder Bay Community Auditorium (<http://www.tbca.com/events>)
- TB Symphony Orchestra ([www.tbso.ca](http://www.tbso.ca))



- Thunder Bay Art Gallery ( [www.theag.ca](http://www.theag.ca) )
- Magnus Theatre ( [www.magnus.on.ca](http://www.magnus.on.ca) )
- Cambrian Players ( [www.Facebook.com/CambrianPlayers](http://www.Facebook.com/CambrianPlayers) )

The city is also serviced by four community hubs of the Thunder Bay Public Library ([www.tbpl.ca](http://www.tbpl.ca) ).

One of the best sources of information about the arts, dining and entertainment in Thunder Bay is the Walleye magazine ([www.thewalleye.ca](http://www.thewalleye.ca))

## Recreation

Thunder Bay offers a wide variety of year-round indoor recreation opportunities at:

- Community centres
- Pools and arenas
- Older adult centres
- The Botanical Conservatory

Winter time brings out the hearty folks to enjoy the many outdoor rinks, tobogganing hills and nearby downhill or cross-country skiing, snowshoeing, ice-climbing and ice-fishing opportunities. Many enjoy the outlying large network of snowmobile trails, or enjoy a brisk walk along the cleared trail system in the city. In addition, there are many curling rinks and teams.



The City and surrounding area bursts with recreation opportunities in the summer, and include:

- Golfing, swimming, biking, hiking and skateboarding
- Camping, boating and fishing
- Playing recreational baseball, soccer, tennis and ultimate Frisbee,



- Enjoying one of the neighbourhood parks
- Watching professional baseball and soccer teams
- Marina Park and Prince Arthur's Landing activities including Indigenous Day celebrations, weekly concerts in the park, sail and power boating, Canada Day celebrations and the very popular Blues Fest
- Fort William Historical Park



Additionally, there are numerous volunteer opportunities with service clubs and organizations, or at one of the many national and international sporting and cultural events hosted in the city.



## Airport Facilities

Thunder Bay International Airport is among the top 20 busiest airports in Canada and is served by the country's major airlines. It is an important hub for regional airlines flying to destinations in Northern Ontario and Manitoba. Airlines currently flying out of Thunder Bay include: Air Canada Express, Air Transat, Bearskin Airlines, Nakina Air Service, Porter Airlines, Sunwing Airlines, Superior Airways, Wasaya Airways and WestJet Encore



## Weather

For precise information about Thunder Bay's weather, we recommend the Environment Canada website at: [https://weather.gc.ca/city/pages/on-100\\_metric\\_e.html](https://weather.gc.ca/city/pages/on-100_metric_e.html) . But in general, Thunder Bay has more hours of sunshine and less precipitation than Toronto, Ottawa, or Sudbury. The average temperature is comparable with Quebec City, Sudbury, or Winnipeg. Most of us quite like the variety of seasons, and take in some activities during each. 😊

