



**The logo for the 11<sup>th</sup> Sacred Circle was designed by Rev. Dixie Bird from Prince Albert, SK.**

***Great Spirit,***

Whose breath I feel in the wind, whose voice I hear in the birds, whose eyes I see in the children,  
Listen to us.

You are the God of all our yesterdays, all our todays, and all our tomorrows.

You know the plans you have for all your people.

As we gather in the Indigenous Anglican Sacred Circle, show to the Indigenous Peoples of Canada your will for us in the life of your Church. Give us eyes to see the sacred way you have prescribed for us. Teach us to walk in the footsteps of your Son, the Chief of Chiefs. May our hearts beat as one with Yours. You make all things new. May we, your Church, and all creation rejoice in the new way you are preparing for us, and your church in the name of our brother, Jesus Christ. Amen  
(Sacred Circle Prayer)

Dear people of God in Algoma and Moosonee,

During the last week of May, I was privileged to attend the 11<sup>th</sup> Sacred Circle of Indigenous ministries of the Anglican Church of Canada at Fern Resort, on the traditional homelands of the Ojibwe near Rama First Nation.

My time at Sacred Circle was meaningful personally, but also because I represented you, recalling our dioceses commitment to reconciliation, justice seeking and truth telling with the Indigenous peoples of our land as we strive towards a new, hopeful future, and the healing of broken promises and relationships. We cannot change the past, but we must not forget the pain and hurt that is part of our history as a country and Church, here in Canada. To echo the words of the Coventry Cathedral Litany of Reconciliation, “Father forgive.”

Sacred Circles are opportunities for Indigenous Anglicans to meet for prayer and worship, fellowship, discernment, and decision making - which happens by consensus. The Gospel is always at the very heart of Sacred Circle. We spent quality time every morning in talking circles as we engaged in Gospel Based Discipleship. As it always does when we do GBD, the gospel came alive to us, and through the Spirit's power our hearts were opened afresh, burning within as the good news of Jesus came among us.

Every Sacred Circle is unique but this one was also historic for a number of reasons. I was honoured to have been present as Archbishop Chris Harper was installed as the 2<sup>nd</sup> National Anglican Indigenous Archbishop. This happened in a moving ceremony at the opening Eucharist by our Primate Archbishop Linda Nicholls and members of Sacred Circle.

Many bishops from across the Anglican Church of Canada attended that celebration at Sacred Circle to support and affirm Archbishop Chris's new ministry. National Bishop of the ELCIC Susan Johnson was in attendance as well as international partners from Aotearoa (New Zealand) and Amazonia. Their presentations in plenary sessions are available online at [www.Anglican.ca](http://www.Anglican.ca)

Archbishop Chris and his dear spouse, Tracy, are well known in Algoma having once served as the incumbent at St. Michael and All Angels in Thunder Bay. We are delighted that his office has confirmed he will visit the Diocese of Moosonee from September 30<sup>th</sup> to October 1<sup>st</sup> in Waswanapi for the Healing Gathering – “Walking Together in Healing and Hope”.



**Our National Indigenous Anglican Archbishop Chris Harper with his spouse Tracy following his installation at Sacred Circle. Monday May 29<sup>th</sup>.**

The other reason this Sacred Circle was historic was because members were invited to accept and sign the documents which will guide the way forward for the self-determining

Indigenous Anglican Church in Canada. These documents are called The Covenant and Our Way of Life and can be found here <https://www.anglican.ca/wp-content/uploads/SC-covenant->

These ‘living, organic, guiding documents’ were presented to Sacred Circle members who discussed them in talking circles and then one by one members lined up to add their name and their “Yes” to a new way of life as Indigenous Anglicans within the Anglican Church of Canada. As the document states, *“It is not about going back to an idealized time in our history. Rather, we are reclaiming what was dispossessed from us and what the Creator called us to be. We are coming home.”* (Our Way of Life page 5)



**“Coming home”.**  
**Members of Sacred Circle sign on to The Covenant and Our Way of Life.**  
**Tuesday, May 30<sup>th</sup>.**

The vision for Indigenous Anglicans through self-determination as expressed in Our Way of Life is to improve the quality of Indigenous Anglicans, ‘spiritual, emotional, physical and mental life’ and to promote healing from the historical trauma that stems from Canadian colonization and oppression. The themes of God’s healing and God’s reconciling love were present throughout Sacred Circle as holy tears and joyful laughter resounded through the gathering times.

It is envisaged that embracing The Covenant and Our Way of Life will result in a new way of living in harmony with one another. They will have expression through these Sacred Teachings:

- Trusting respectful relationships that recognize that conflict is a natural, normal part of life as we strive to rebalance harmony.
- The wisdom of leadership that is invested in Elders.
- Taking responsibility for one another.
- Living out our Indigenous humanity.
- Using honourably the gifts the Creator has bestowed on each person.
- Walking in each other’s shoes instead of judging.

- Consensus in decision making.
- Living in balance with the whole of creation.
- Placing the Gospel at the centre of the Sacred Circle.

(Our Way of Life page 6)

Our dioceses were ably and wonderfully represented at Sacred Circle by Elsie MacDonald (St. Thomas's, Thunder Bay, Algoma), Sandra Fox (St. Paul's, Thunder Bay, Algoma and member of the Anglican Council of Indigenous Peoples), Caroline Chum (Co-Chair of Sacred Circle, Moosonee), Rev. Isabel Dube (St. Stephen's, Constance Lake, Moosonee) and Rev. Canon Grace Delaney (St. Thomas's Moose Factory and Church of the Apostles Moosonee).



**Moosonee members of Sacred Circle: Caroline Chum (Co-chair of Sacred Circle), Rev. Canon Grace Delaney, Rev. Isabel Dube.**

While we were not in the same Talking Circles, we spent time together during meals and in Plenary sessions finding much to talk and laugh about. From one another and new friends we received fresh strength and renewed energy for our respective ministries.



**Algoma members of Sacred Circle. Lay Readers Elsie MacDonald and Sandra Fox. Sandra, on the right, is a member of ACIP.**



**Membership of the Anglican Council of Indigenous Peoples**

In and amongst the many moving moments of Sacred Circle, there was one that stood out in particular as we presented Archbishop Chris with a unique and meaningful gift to mark his installation. Our dioceses purchased a “Healing Blanket” for Archbishop Chris from the Indigenous Friendship Centre in Gravenhurst. Red in colour we remember the Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women and Girls. It has Indigenous symbols on it. The back of the blanket is black and the four healing medicines of tobacco, cedar, sage and sweetgrass were sewn onto it.

On Tuesday evening, members from Algoma and Moosonee invited the Archbishop and Tracy to meet us at the Sacred Fire in order to present the blanket and offer a blessing. Canon Grace Delaney spoke first and talked about the significance of a blanket to survivors of Residential Schools for whom a blanket was one of their few personal possessions and a source of great comfort. She went on to explain that when marriage ceremonies take place in some Indigenous communities a blanket is wrapped around the couple and children to mark their becoming a new family.

What happened next was both spontaneous and moving. Our members wrapped +Chris and Tracy in the Healing Blanket while offering good words and blessings to them as they embark on their new chapter in their lives. Thank you to our members for offering such a heartfelt blessing and powerful way to welcome our new National Indigenous Archbishop.



**The Healing Blanket – given with love and promise.**

On the first day of Sacred Circle, I was pleased to have the opportunity to reconnect with our former Bishop of Algoma, Stephen Andrews, who drove up from Toronto to Fern Resort to attend +Chris's installation. He sends his good wishes and assures me that Algoma continues to be in his daily prayers. We continue to pray for him and Fawna in their daily life and work.

As the National Indigenous Peoples' Day on June 21<sup>st</sup> approaches, many of our parishes will be offering services of worship or attending celebrations in First Nation communities. Let us mark that day well, celebrating the many gifts and traditions of Indigenous Canadians.

As we did at Sacred Circle, during the week of June 20<sup>th</sup> - 23<sup>rd</sup> let's wear red shirts on Tuesday 20<sup>th</sup> June in honour of missing and murdered Indigenous women and girls, orange shirts on Wednesday 21<sup>st</sup> June in recognition of the children who went to residential school and those who never returned home, and black shirts on Thursday to stand in solidarity with all who mourn those who died in residential school or as a result of violence against Indigenous people.

*Living Reconciliation* and pursuing peace is a task that is entrusted to each of us. It is our calling as disciples of Christ and a way of being as we live into our baptismal promise to transform unjust structures within our society, challenging violence of every kind. As we continue to walk in harmony with Indigenous peoples may we live reconciliation well, for "The Great Spirit has chosen us to represent him in the sacred task of helping others find and walk this path of peace-making and healing – turning enemies into friends." (2. Cor. 5: 18 FNV).

As we represent God, may we bring the message of healing, harmony, and peace back to others.

Your bishop and partner in the Gospel,

+Anne

Archbishop of Algoma and Moosonee  
Metropolitan of the Ecclesiastical Province of Ontario



**International partners from Aotearoa (New Zealand) present gifts to our Primate Archbishop Linda Nicholls and the Primate of the Anglican Churches of South and Central America, Archbishop Marinez Bassotto.**