



## Report From Your Board Chair

Hello to all. We have come through our second COVID summer and are looking forward to safe opportunities to start some in-person gatherings. In this message are highlights of the September 13 board meeting and the plans for an upcoming congregational meeting. There are also details of our plans to create a Minister Search Committee for short-term supply minister and also for the eventual retirement of Gretta.

At the board meeting, Ministry and Personnel Chair, Anita DesRosiers, presented her report, which is attached to the eBlast of September 18. We are looking for volunteers to populate a search committee for recruiting a supply minister to cover while Gretta is on a medical leave of absence. Sadly, this leave began in late October of 2020. We are very appreciative of the leadership of Rev. Sarah Miller who had been in the role of supply minister part-time from January to August. With direction and guidance from Revs. Dale Hildebrand and Todd McDonald, Pastoral Relations Ministers from the Shining Waters Region, we have been able to have assigned ministerial support. Rev Martha Martin is temporarily our support person and we thank her for her role at our recent board meeting. (She also provided that leadership to us last November, December and early January. To have a “legal” board meeting, we must have an approved member of clergy present).

To start the process, we are **looking for volunteers for the Supply Minister Search Committee**. Anita will be a member of that group and we need additional members. The recommended size of the committee would be a minimum of 4 with no absolute upper limit. An important initial task would be to update the roles and responsibilities so we know exactly the qualifications and competencies that we seek in a minister. This is a task that we hope to have completed in a few weeks so that we can take action to search for a supply minister. A secondary task, perhaps with this committee as the core, will be to set up the process for selecting a minister when Gretta prepares to retire.

The updated **VisionWorks** document was completed in late August and reviewed by the board at our recent meeting. Our thanks go out to the committee that prepared this submission, led by Scott and with major input from Doug Richards, Emily Trivers and Anita DesRosiers. Please see Scott’s article about VisionWorks on page 6 for more details.

A **Congregational Meeting** will be arranged, probably in late October. This will be a chance to gather together (virtually) and to review some of the issues that have arisen that include several resignations, plus a report from the Governance Guidance Team led by Jean Skillman (see the details below). The meeting will have an education update and briefing by consultant Tom Armour. There will be facilitators and a chance to have small groups in break-out rooms. An agenda for these sessions (yes, we almost certainly need to meet more than once) will be prepared. Our updated mission, vision and values are well highlighted in VisionWorks. As we move ahead from the congregational meeting, we will have an action plan that highlights our goals and names the champions, reporting the deadline and assessment/revision dates that have been established. The views from some of our leaders who have experience in this area suggest that for a relatively small organization like our church, the need for a more formal “strategic plan” is excessive and we lack the resources to do the rigorous changes.

# Book Study

## ~ Indigenous Canada ~

At West Hill we continue the commitment to learn and grow! The Book Study Group is trying something new this time, taking an online course, together! It's free, it's highly recommended, beginner-level, and it's something we can do individually at home (online). Watch the videos, do the readings, and then meet together (on Zoom) to discuss, share your insights, and learn from others! Our first discussion gathering will be October 27th.

**Indigenous Canada** is a 12-lesson Massive Open Online Course (MOOC) from the Faculty of Native Studies that explores Indigenous histories and contemporary issues in Canada. From an Indigenous perspective, this course explores key issues facing Indigenous peoples today from a historical and critical perspective, highlighting national and local Indigenous-settler relations. Topics for the 12 lessons include the fur trade and other exchange relationships, land claims and environmental impacts, legal systems and rights, political conflicts and alliances, Indigenous political activism, and contemporary Indigenous life, art and its expressions.

**Instructor: Paul Gareau, PhD** is Métis and works as Assistant Professor in the Faculty of Native Studies at the University of Alberta. His research and teaching centre on theory and methodology around religion and relationality, gender, Indigenous epistemologies, land and place, and sovereignty/peoplehood.

"I cannot emphasize how transformative this course has been! Now, when I listen to the radio or read APTN news, I understand, and support, the Indigenous call for reconciliation, change and healing. This course should be taken by every person who lives in this place we call Canada."



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REMINDER — YOGA CLASSES (SENIORS DISCOUNT). We still offer special seniors classes (yoga in chairs and for those with mobility issues) Mondays at 10:15-11:15 a.m. and Thursdays 9:00-10:00 a.m. (\$15/class includes tea/coffee & cookies). (Highland Creek Plaza, 376 Old Kingston Road)

We have many more options for all ages. Please check out our website for our class schedule, rates and more information (647-352-4879): [www.inthespirtityoga.com](http://www.inthespirtityoga.com), email [letsconnect@inthespirtityoga.com](mailto:letsconnect@inthespirtityoga.com)

## Topics Covered:

The fur trade and other exchange relationships  
Land claims and environmental impacts  
Legal systems and rights  
Political conflicts and alliances  
Indigenous political activism  
Contemporary Indigenous life, art and its expressions.

## Course Format

Delivery: Online  
Level: Beginner  
Commitment: 12 weeks of study, 2-3 hours/week

This course consists of twelve modules, each with a series of video lectures, a set of course notes and course glossary, and required and recommended readings.

For more information or to sign up: <https://www.coursera.org/learn/indigenous-canada?#about>

**Faculty of Native Studies  
University of Alberta**

# First Nations Study Group

## WHERE DO YOU GET YOUR NEWS OF INDIGENOUS VIEWS FROM?

Our mainline newspapers and TV stations, although improving, mostly cover only a very small portion of Indigenous news. Often mainstream media seems to portray Indigenous people only when they are in conflict with the law or gathered in protest at a blockade. I invite you to explore some of the following news sources from across Canada for a more meaningful connection with Indigenous communities:

### Windspeaker [windspeaker.com](http://windspeaker.com)

Headquartered in Edmonton, Windspeaker is another of the most enduring Indigenous newspapers in Canada. Founded in 1983, it's a national outlet that also publishes several regional newspapers, including Saskatchewan Sage, Ontario Birchbark, BC Raven's Eye and Alberta Sweetgrass.



### Ku'ku'kwes News [kukukwes.com](http://kukukwes.com)

This online Indigenous news magazine is dedicated to telling stories about First Nations in Atlantic Canada. Founded by journalist Maureen Googoo, Kukukwes.com covers everything from the Indigenous economy to local First Nation politics. Completely crowd-funded, Googoo works alongside photographer Stephen Brake.



### Muskrat Magazine [muskratmagazine.com](http://muskratmagazine.com)

MUSKRAT is an online Indigenous arts and culture magazine that honours the connection between humans and our traditional ecological knowledge by exhibiting original works and critical commentary. MUSKRAT embraces both rural and urban settings and uses media arts, the Internet, and wireless technology to investigate and disseminate traditional knowledges in ways that inspire their reclamation. The editor of Muskrat Magazine is Rebeka Tabobondung who is a community documentary filmmaker, poet and Indigenous knowledge researcher.



### The Eastern Door [www.easterndoor.com](http://www.easterndoor.com)

Founded in 1992, The Eastern Door is a community-based paper serving Kahnawake, Que. Covering everything from lacrosse to education, the publication also isn't afraid to tackle tough issues like the community's contentious membership law. Steve Bonspiel, Mohawk from Kanasatake, is the editor/publisher of this Kahnawake Mohawk Territory's award-winning weekly newspaper.



**Wawatay News** [wawataynews.ca](http://wawataynews.ca)

For over 40 years, Wawatay News has told stories from Anishinaabe, Cree and Oji-Cree communities in northwestern Ontario. (Jody Porter/CBC) First published in 1974, Wawatay News covers communities in northwestern Ontario. Also available in Anishinaabe, Cree and Oji-Cree languages, this publication has won more than 16 national and provincial newspaper awards for their work — and that's just in the past five years!



Wawatay Communications Society also offers daily radio programming, television production services and a multimedia website that seeks to preserve and enhance indigenous languages and cultures of Indigenous people in northern Ontario.

**APTN** [aptn.ca](http://aptn.ca)

Aboriginal Peoples Television Network offers full television programming with news interviews, documentaries movies etc. APTN’s documentaries are powerful stories that come from the heart. And, they have the ability to change minds, to change perspectives, to bring truth to light.



**Two Row Times** [tworowtimes.com](http://tworowtimes.com)

The Two Row Times is a free weekly news publication aimed at reaching the Ontario-wide Native market as well as Haudenosaunee communities in the United States. The first full issue of the Two Row Times launched with a print run of 20,000 copies on August 21st, 2013 and is now distributed on every reserve in Ontario and in neighbouring non-Native communities.

The Two Row Times is a hybrid business model of print and web-based publishing that uses social networks such as Facebook, Twitter and YouTube to build our media reach. We are aiming to become a powerful, engaged, and multiplatform news production and distribution system advancing the interests of Onkwehon: We people throughout Turtle Island.



*respectfully submitted by Ruth Gill on behalf of the First Nations Study Group*

## Zooming with West Hill

Please join us for our virtual ZOOM gatherings. **If you don't have a computer, you can simply access ZOOM by TELEPHONE to listen/participate.** Contact the office to get the phone and meeting identification numbers.

**Sunday Morning Service/Perspective(s) at 10:30**

**Tuesday Afternoon Wellness Gathering from 2 to 3**



**Thursday Morning Coffee from 10 to 11**

# VisionWorks 2021

Many years ago, West Hill made the decision to be guided in its planning, decision-making, and prioritizing by a set of commonly held values for living well with self, others, and the planet. At the time, an existing title, “VisionWorks” was adopted as it emphasized both a clear sense of our values and the importance of acting on them. It turns out it was also a helpful resource – encouraging and challenging – for our personal lives as well.

From the beginning, it was decided that the document would be reviewed, and revised if necessary, by a team of West Hill folks every five years to keep it as clear and relevant as possible. That has happened regularly, to the great benefit of those involved in the review and those receiving the updated version.


The values identified in the VisionWorks documents are no different from those embraced by other United Churches and most Christian, religious, and humanitarian organizations: justice, compassion, honesty, integrity, etc. What is unique about VisionWorks is that the foundation for these values is not considered to be a particular religious claim, theology, doctrine, creed, belief, tradition, or person. We have come to choose our values in light of our understanding of life itself, as incomplete as that will always be. Very exciting and controversial stuff – more about that later.

On Monday, Sept. 13<sup>th</sup> the review team presented their final draft of VisionWorks 2021 to the board, where it met with positive responses and expressions of appreciation for the work the review team has done. That team will be presenting VisionWorks 2021 as the topic for the Perspective(s) on Sunday, Sept. 26<sup>th</sup>, with some time for interaction with those who attend our Zoom gatherings.

As well, the team will be offering three opportunities for deeper discussion and reflection, one on each of the three sections of the document in a series of Wednesday afternoon Zoom gatherings at 2 p.m. on Sept. 29<sup>th</sup>, October 6<sup>th</sup>, and October 13<sup>th</sup>. The document and some discussion ideas and questions will be available beforehand. The focus will be on both the meaning and application of values. You’re welcome to come, listen, discuss, question, and challenge.

So, keep these dates in your *vision*, and hopefully things *work* out so you can be part of the meetings on Sunday, Sept. 26<sup>th</sup> and Wednesdays on Sept. 29<sup>th</sup>, October 6<sup>th</sup>, and October 13<sup>th</sup>.

*submitted by Scott Kearns*



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# Outreach News



Thank you for supporting our August Backpack Campaign to help kids going back to school. With your generosity, we raised \$615! Funds have been donated to Family Residence in Scarborough.

Please remember to support your local food bank in this Thanksgiving season. Nonperishable food items and monetary donations would be greatly appreciated. The local food bank near West Hill United Church is run by Scarborough Centre for Healthy Communities, located at 4100 Lawrence Ave E. Scarborough, ON. M1E 2S2 (416-847-4147).



## What's Next??

Watch for our annual Christmas Hamper Campaign!



Outreach Committee Members:

Gill Cockwell, June Dickson, Donna Lockhart,  
Jeanne Hamel, Ingrid Shouldice, Barb Russell

*submitted by Barb Russell*

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*Board Chair Report, continued from page 1...*

**The Governance Guidance Team** is led by Jean Skillman. Committee members include Deb Ellis, Mike Lawrie, and Anita DesRosiers, with Tom Armour as consultant. We have a governance system that is outdated and suitable for a much larger congregation. The board composition, roles and responsibilities of ministers and chairs, and a manual of policies all need to be updated.

As we approach the congregational meeting, we have a request that we invite a “**listening team**” from the Shining Waters Region to see if they have resources and personnel that can help us achieve our goals with more confidence in having good results.

**The COVID pandemic continues, and what about returning to in-person gatherings?...** We are over 18 months into the pandemic and have been meeting via Zoom. We are now in Phase 3 of the Government of Ontario COVID Precautions, making it possible to return to regulated in-person gatherings. It is possible to allow 25% attendance capacity in the gathering hall on Sunday mornings. As you may know, Glenn Cockwell and Scott Kearns have been on site and have facilitated the program with no or very limited attendance. The board approved a gradual return to in-person attendance on Sunday mornings. Attendees will have to be pre-approved, symptom free, fully vaccinated with proof, and pass the check-in procedure. We will allow a maximum of 5 to attend the October 3 program. Annemarie has agreed to be the registrar and check-in person. There must be a wipe-down and sterilization of the doors and meeting hall before and after. The initial 5 attendees will be board members, but we do ask others to apply for future dates. It will be necessary to be mindful and responsive to the Ontario Government and the local public health regulations and guidelines. We will review the situation at the next board meeting on October 12 and will have the experience from the 2 preceding Sundays and the revised guidelines at that time. Please do not show up at the door and expect to be admitted as we are being very slow and cautious to accomplish these steps. We have the technology and the set-up to carry on with our Zoom links to our Sunday gatherings well into the future even when we have significant numbers of in-person attendees. Gary Megson has agreed to make sure we have the necessary sanitary wipes and solutions on hand and that the hall is sterilized in advance and after we finish. For those attending, hand hygiene, masking, and social distancing will be the standard. There will be no coffee/conversation following the initial services.

**Update on the Severance Option:** We are being represented by the United Property Resource Corporation in discussion with the Boys and Girls Club of East Scarborough to proceed on our option to buy the Labyrinth Area (aka the hockey stick). We have until November 24 to accomplish the severance. If we are unsuccessful in being granted the severance rights, the property will revert to the Boys and Girls Club to be developed as they desire. So, while the severance option is decided, we might be able to proceed to work with our partners to develop this space.

If you have questions or concerns, you are encouraged to contact me or a board member.

Travelling our journey together...  
May love abound.



*Michael Lawrie, Board Chair  
Home: 519-740-0761  
lawrieclan@rogers.com*

**West Hill United Board of 2021**

Board Chair: Mike Lawrie

Property Chair: Gary Megson

Ministry and Personnel Chair: Anita DesRosiers

Communication and Marketing Chair: Dennis Augustine

Education and Growth: Deb Ellis

Friendship and Hospitality: Barb Russell

Community Care: Babette Oliviera

**Celebrating the Spirit: Vacant**

Finance Chair & Treasurer: John McKechnie

Members at Large: Emily Trivers, Donna Hall, Peter Thomas, George Oliver, Ellen Dinerman

Jean Skillman: Governance and Strategic Planning

Regional Representatives: Annemarie Leepel and Louise Lawrie

Trustees: Glenn Cockwell, Jim Hyland, Marion Cruikshank, Frank Kilroy, Gretta Vosper

## **West Hill United**

***A warm place to find yourself***

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