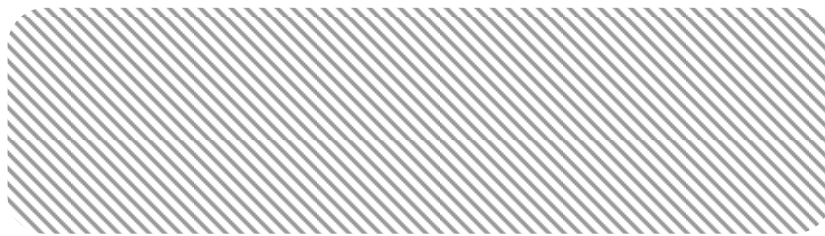


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@
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Jul
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2020



Report From Your Board Chair

I am happy to tell you that, at the time of writing this, we are just a few small details away from finalizing our lease agreement with the Boys and Girls Club of East Scarborough. As you probably know, this organization purchased our property and offered us rent-free access to run our services, events, meetings, partnership programs, socials and fundraisers. For our core activities, we have been guaranteed the continued use of 62 Orchard Park, or if under renovation or unavailable, comparable space at their community headquarters at 100 Galloway Road, about 2.5 km from our church. In addition to the cooperative and partnership arrangement, the financial details give us long-term security as we hold a mortgage with a stream of interest payments amounting to about \$100,000 per year. With the down payment, we will be able to pay off our mortgage and a property development loan to TUCC (Toronto United Church Council) and have a small surplus to do some leasehold improvements. We have exclusive use of an area designated as the church office, some storage space on the main floor and in the basement as well as a storage shed outdoors. This has been a long process to arrive at an agreement that allows West Hill to continue our programs and activities as well as implementing new ones.

It will be our goal to have increased community involvement and to develop and share our space as a Performing Arts Centre.

This process required a large time investment, many meetings and reports, and the input and approval of the Shining Waters Region. We have been very intentional at getting widespread input from the congregation and the Board and requesting and receiving the support of the Trustees. Gretta and Annie have worked tirelessly with our congregational leadership to create what we believe is a win-win situation. Kudos for their time and efforts go to Frank Kilroy, Frank Dixon, Mike Garvey, Deb Ellis and Florence Soknacki. Significant advice and support were rendered by our lawyer, Heather Keachie, and the SW Region, mainly through Jody Maltby.

We remain in the midst of the COVID-19 pandemic and have not met at the church since mid-March. Most of us have adapted to virtual Zoom services for our Sunday gatherings, meetings and groups. It has been the decision of the Board to continue remote meeting until the end of August. Although Provincial Government and health advisors have permitted church groups and other defined gatherings to meet in person, we feel that since most of our members are seniors, and our gatherings involve considerable personal contact, the safest and most prudent action is to avoid gathering in numbers greater than 10. Our thanks go to Peter Thomas and Glenn Cockwell for their technical support for our gathering and to Gretta and Scott for continuing to challenge and inspire us in word and music. Gretta will be taking a well-deserved 6-week break. She has secured some excellent speakers for our Sunday morning gatherings.

Our mid-week activities have continued with a Wellness Group meeting on Tuesday afternoons at 2 p.m. led by Scott Kearns and Deb Ellis, and our Thursday morning coffee session at 10 a.m., both via Zoom.

Our Board will take a break while Gretta is away and we will plan on reconvening in September. In the meantime, our Sunday services and mid-week activities will continue and the church office will operate under summer hours.

Hoping you enjoy a fun and safe summer and can stay connected to our church.

Michael Lawrie, Board Chair

Precious Planet Recipe Corner

with Deb Ellis

Here is a quick and delicious lentil soup; even our teenagers like it! It only takes 10 minutes to throw it all into a pot, and it is gluten-free, grain-free and vegan. Super-healthy ingredients, low-fat and lots of protein. Serve it on its own, over rice, or with a bun for a light summer meal!

1-Pot Lentil Soup

Credit: Minimalist Baker

<https://minimalistbaker.com/1-pot-everyday-lentil-soup/>

Ingredients

2 tbsp water (or sub oil of choice, such as avocado or coconut)
2 cloves garlic minced (or sub 2 tbsp garlic-infused oil)
2 small shallots (or 1/2 white onion diced)
4 large carrots (thinly sliced)
4 stalks celery (thinly sliced)
1/4 tsp each sea salt and black pepper (divided / plus more to taste)
3 cups yellow or red baby potatoes (roughly chopped into bite-size pieces)
4 cups vegetable broth (plus more as needed)
2-3 sprigs fresh rosemary or thyme (or dried if you don't have fresh)
1 cup uncooked green or brown lentils (thoroughly rinsed and drained)
2 cups chopped sturdy greens (such as kale or collard greens)

Instructions

- ♥ Heat a large pot over medium heat. Once hot, add water (or oil), garlic, shallots/onion (optional), carrots, and celery. Season with a bit of the salt and pepper and stir.
- ♥ Sauté for 4-5 minutes or until slightly tender and golden brown. Be careful not to burn the garlic (turn heat down if it's cooking too quickly.)
- ♥ Add potatoes and season with a bit more salt and pepper. Stir and cook for 2 minutes more.
- ♥ Add vegetable broth and rosemary or thyme and increase heat to medium high. Bring to a rolling simmer. Then add lentils and stir. Once simmering again, reduce heat to low and simmer uncovered for 15-20 minutes or until lentils and potatoes are tender.
- ♥ Add your greens, stir, and cover. Cook for 3-4 minutes more to wilt. Then taste and adjust flavour as needed, adding more salt and pepper for overall flavor, vegetable broth if it has become too thick, or herbs for earthy flavor.
- ♥ Store leftovers covered in the refrigerator up to 5 days or in the freezer up to 1 month. Reheat on the stovetop and add more vegetable broth to rehydrate as needed.

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IN THE SPIRIT

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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, email letsconnect@inthespirtityoga.com



Rest now, e Papatūānuku
Breathe easy and settle
Right here where you are
We'll not move upon you
For awhile

We'll stop, we'll cease
We'll slow down and stay home

Draw each other close and be kind
Kinder than we've ever been.
I wish we could say we were doing it for you
as much as ourselves

But hei aha

We're doing it anyway
It's right. It's time.

Time to return
Time to remember
Time to listen and forgive
Time to withhold judgment
Time to cry
Time to think

About others

Remove our shoes
Press hands to soil
Sift grains between fingers

Gentle palms

Time to plant
Time to wait
Time to notice
To whom we belong

For now it's just you
And the wind
And the forests and the oceans
and the sky full of rain

Finally, it's raining!
Ka turuturu te wai kamo o Rangi ki runga
i a koe

Embrace it

This sacrifice of solitude
we have carved out for you

He iti noaiho – a small offering
People always said it wasn't possible
To ground flights and stay home
and stop our habits of consumption

But it was
It always was.

We were just afraid of how much
it was going to hurt
– and it IS hurting and it will hurt
and continue to hurt
But not as much as you have been hurt.

So be still now

Wrap your hills around our absence
Loosen the concrete belt
cinched tight at your waist

Rest.
Breathe.
Recover.
Heal –

And we will do the same.

*Nadine Anne Hura
March 23, 2020*

A note of gratitude from the writer, along with some helpful translations ...

Thank you for the amazing response to this poem! I never expected it to travel so far and wide. Many people have asked who the author is so I wanted to clarify that I wrote this poem on the train home after the announcement of total lockdown was made here in Aotearoa, New Zealand. I felt like I could hear Papatūānuku exhaling in relief as we all began our journeys home. In truth, one month of lockdown is not enough. Even six months would not be enough! We need a total and sustained change of habit, globally and within our own communities. I hope so much we take our time to reflect on the fact that if we can do it to save ourselves for a month, we ought to be able to make similar habit changes for Mother Earth for the long term. The most telling thing for me was how empty our veggie plant aisles were after lockdown was announced – in a crisis, we will turn back to our mother to provide (and of course she will!).

Lots of people have asked for translations...

Papatūānuku – Mother Earth (the addition of the “e” in front signals the words are addressed or spoken directly to her).


Ka turuturu te wai kamo o Rangi ki runga i a koe – means something like, “tears from the eyes of Ranginui drip down on you” (**Ranginui** is our sky father, it is common to refer to rain as the tears of Rangi for his beloved, from whom he was separated at the beginning of time in order that there could be light in the world). Not long after the announcement we were moving to level 3, it poured with rain in Porirua after many months of hot and dry weather. I could feel my garden rejoicing.

Hei aha – This can be translated in many ways, but I meant it like the English “oh well, whatever”

He iti noaiho – “something small”. Because our sacrifice feels enormous but in reality I think it is not sufficient to truly see Papatūānuku recover. However, in Māori, we often talk about the significance of small actions or gestures. We say “ahakoa he iti, he pounamu.” ... Although it is small, it is a treasure.

Thank you so much for the support

~ Nadine



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First Nations Study Group

~ Let's Just Admit It: Canada Has A Racism Problem ~

As a Cree man, the outrage that has followed the police killing of George Floyd in Minneapolis resonates with my experience and my people's demands for justice. Canadians cannot ignore the dangerous parallels that exist in how Canadian police officers interact with people of different ethnicities and how a distressingly high percentage of First Nations men and women end up either injured or dead at the hands of the people we expect to help and protect us.

Last week, a young mother, Chantel Moore, was killed by a local Edmunston, N.B. policeman who was supposed to be making a wellness check on her. She was reported to be holding a knife and in some emotional distress, but how a knock on the door turned into a confrontation in which the officer felt the need to discharge his weapon five times is hard to imagine. A day later came news that Chief Allan Adam was badly beaten and his wife roughed up during a routine traffic stop by RCMP officers in Fort McMurray in March. The pictures of Chief Adam's battered face were disturbing, but it is the officers' voices captured on tape and the speed with which the police escalated the confrontation that should alarm everyone. And Friday night, another First Nations man was shot dead by the Mounties, this time near Miramichi, N.B. The circumstances are always unique, but the resulting escalation and violent confrontation is not.

Until Friday, June 26th, when Commissioner Brenda Lucki finally admitted her police force has a problem, the RCMP had insisted that its officers respond to situations in the same ways, regardless of whether the civilian on the other side is white, Black or First Nation. But the statistics simply don't support this claim. Worse, the sentiment among police and First Nations youth is now rife with contempt and distrust.

Let's spare ourselves another futile debate over whether systemic racism exists in Canada. There have been countless reports over the past 50 years, and the conclusion is always the same: First Nations face systemic racism in every aspect of life and from every institution of Canadian society. This is a fact. It should be clear to everyone by now that Canada's unwillingness to address systemic racism is killing people. It's killing Black people and it's killing First Nations, Inuit and Métis people. We have to move past this unnecessary debate about whether or not systemic racism exists and we have to do it now.

While Prime Minister Justin Trudeau has made considerable efforts toward reconciliation and creating economic opportunities for First Nations, his government remains notably silent on dealing with systemic racism within the justice and corrections systems. Restorative justice delayed is restorative justice denied. It is clear this is not a problem that will heal itself.

Canadians spend so much money on policing despite knowing that it can't solve the pressing social problems facing marginalized communities. In recent days, there have been mounting calls all over the world to "defund the police." My question is this: When our young First Nations, in distress, call for help, are the police the right people to answer?

As a country, our focus must be on peace and justice more than law and order. Some would try to argue that the difference between those two philosophies is minimal, but I believe it is the difference between life and death. Instead of putting more guns and armoured cars in the hands of police forces, let's try funding better schools and after-school sports programs that are proven to successfully reduce drug use and gang violence. Instead of more police officers, let's focus on ones that are better trained, with higher compensation available to retain those with the best records for de-escalating conflict and not harming those they're supposed to be helping.

The memory of Martin Luther King has been evoked many times over the past few weeks. One thing he said has always stood out to me: "The ultimate measure of a man is not where he stands in moments of comfort and convenience, but where he stands at times of challenge and controversy." It is hard to imagine more challenging times than these, yet it is precisely now that we need Mr. Trudeau and his team to finish the job that they started.

Perry Bellegarde is originally from Little Black Bear First Nation in Treaty 4 Territory. He has served as Tribal Council Representative for the Touchwood-File Hills-Qu'Appelle Tribal Council, Chief of the Federation of Saskatchewan Indian Nations and Saskatchewan Regional Chief for the Assembly of First Nations, as well as Chief and Councillor for the Little Black Bear First Nation. He has experience and expertise in leadership at all levels of First Nations governance. In 2014, the Chiefs-in-Assembly first elected Perry as National Chief of the Assembly of First Nations. He was re-elected to the position in July 2018.



June 15, 2020
By Perry Bellegarde
National Chief of the
Assembly of First Nations

Members of our First Nations Study Group met on June 9th with our local MP via Zoom and raised concerns about the government's dragging of feet on issues of water, education, housing, Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women, and the need for clean-up of mercury poisoning in Grassy Narrows First Nation. We have followed up with letters to Sol Mamakwa MPP, Kiiwetinoon, the area of Grassy Narrows First Nation, and to Greg Rickford, the Minister of Indigenous Affairs of Ontario and will advise you of anything we learn about the clean-up of the mercury contamination.

submitted by Ruth Gill, First Nations Study Group

**During this time of physical distancing,
please join West Hill online via Zoom.
Links are provided weekly via email**

Sunday Morning Services/Perspectives at 10:30
Log in anytime after 10:00 for pre-service greetings and conversations



Tuesday Afternoon Wellness Gathering from 2 to 3:30



Thursday Morning Coffee from 10 to 11



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