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westhill



Winter 2022

## Report From Your Board Chair

### **Listenology/Joe Manafó:**

Last summer we had some sad departures of long-time members who were disappointed in the course that we were following and the direction we might be headed in. As a result of this and after several congregational meetings, it was decided to strike a team with the sole focus of doing a comprehensive review that would enable us to set out a strategic action plan. The Planning Guidance Team (PGT) was formed under the lead of Jean Skillman working with Anita DesRosiers, Deb Ellis and myself. The PGT has submitted a report for the Annual General Meeting. The key recommendation from the PGT was that we hire a consultant/facilitator and work through some fundamental questions with widespread input. On the recommendation of Deb Ellis, who does this type of work professionally, we considered at least 3 providers of this type of service and ultimately chose Joe Manafó and his company, Listenology. There had been prior board approval and a budget set to do this type of exercise. Since engaging with Joe, we have had 7 separate sessions that included 3 congregational meetings, 2 committee meetings and 2 board meetings.

Joe's report to the board occurred on January 18 and was shared with the congregation on Sunday, January 30, with Joe presenting. His recommendations focus on 3 areas: Refreshed Focus, Refreshed Leadership and Refreshed Messaging. In each area, we will state priorities, success markers, implementation suggestions, and feedback and assessment. The board received Joe's report and approved his action plan and also the funding, which will come in at around \$12,000. His work with us will extend over the next year. A component of his program will be individual leadership coaching for our key leaders. Of course, there are many details and moving parts in this program, which will be shared in our newsletter, eBlasts, and during our gatherings.

### **Welcome to Rev. Cindy Bourgeois:**

After forming a search committee to seek a supply minister for West Hill, Anita DesRosiers and her group worked hard in selecting a minister. With the help from the Shining Waters Region, the committee came to the decision that Rev. Cindy would be a very good fit for our congregation. She attended several of our Sunday gatherings incognito and assumed her leadership position at the start of the year.

Cindy received her Master of Divinity status from Victoria College (U of T) in 2010. Her ministerial experience in the United Church includes Stratford United Church and Wesley United Church in Regina. Cindy is proud to be the first trans woman ordained as a minister in any mainline church. We look forward to her 6 months as our minister. Please join us for our **Covenanting Service Feb 6th**. At that time, we will welcome many guests including officials from the Shining Waters Region, the UCC and many of Cindy's colleagues, friends and supporters. Please attend by whatever method works best for you. We are hoping to have the allowable limits of in-person attendees as well as a large Zoom virtual group.

### **Annual General Meeting:**

Our Annual General Meeting will occur on **Sunday February 13th**. At that time, we celebrate the year that has passed, thank our minister(s) and staff, thank our board and volunteers, and approve a budget and the board of directors for 2022. Available to everyone affiliated with WHUC will be the Annual Report with a summary from all the committees and groups that make up our community. We will encourage folks to have the report electronically but will happily mail the AGM reports those who request it.

Travelling our journey together  
May love abound  
Mike Lawrie

# First Nations Study Group

## Call to Action #92 Truth and Reconciliation Commission's Report

The TRC's call to action #92 is directed at Canada's corporate sector and its leadership "to adopt the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples as a reconciliation framework and to apply its principles, norms, and standards to corporate policy and core operational activities involving Indigenous peoples and their lands and resources."

More specifically, Call to Action #92 emphasizes the need for:

**Meaningful consultation, respectful relationships and obtaining free, prior and informed consent.**

An Excerpt from the Toronto Star of September 30, 2021, tells us of ongoing problems being faced by First Nations in this regard:

Court slams OLG for breaching revenue-share agreement with First Nations

**Ontario Court rules against Ontario Lottery and Gaming after it allowed private operators to keep all non-gambling revenue and failed to inform First Nations partners.**

For the third time in two-and-a-half years a judge has slapped down the Ontario government and the OLG for failing to honour a revenue sharing agreement it made 13 years ago with a consortium of 132 Ontario First Nations, and the Ontario Court of Appeal ruling could cost the government possibly tens of millions of dollars.

The case begins with a 2008 revenue sharing agreement between the Ontario Lottery and Gaming Corporation and the Ontario First Nations Limited Partnership (OFNLP). In that agreement, the province is required to give 1.7 percent of three types of revenue streams to the OFNLP – gambling revenue from sources like lotteries and casino gaming, plus two types of non-gambling revenue such as hotel stays and food and beverage.



Steve Williams, Former Chief of Six Nations of Grand River Territory, and member of the Board of Directors of the Ontario First Nations Limited Partnership

However, while privatizing the operations of casinos in the province, the OLG unilaterally agreed to allow private operators to keep all non-gambling revenue and did not inform its First Nations partners about the changes, conduct one judge on a three-judge arbitration panel in 2019 called "breathtaking in the age of reconciliation."

The September 1, 2021 ruling by the Court of Appeal upholds an earlier Superior Court ruling that the provincial government and the OLG breached the terms of that landmark revenue-sharing agreement, even though the OLG no longer receives cash from the two non-gambling revenue streams.

Written decisions from both the Appeal Court and the Ontario Superior Court of Justice, which heard the government's first appeal from the arbitration ruling, paint a picture of a troubled relationship between the OLG and its First Nation partners. The rulings cite internal OLG emails acknowledging this would be a "hot button issue" as well as communications about the changes with at least one government department but not with the OFNLP.

The 2008 deal was struck to settle a \$2-billion claim over an earlier agreement that entitled the First Nations to a share of revenue from the Casino Rama complex, which is located on the reserve lands of The Chippewas of Rama First Nation, near Orillia.

After years of negotiation that included high-level government officials and solemn ceremonies in accordance with First Nations tradition, the province and the OFNLP agreed to a 25-year deal.

The deal requires the OLG to share a portion of: gambling revenue; the value of goods and services provided to customers on a complimentary basis; and non-gambling revenue such as hotel stays and food and beverages.

The OLG announced plans to privatize casino operations in 2012 and the first new deal with a private player was implemented in 2016. According to court rulings in the case, the OLG did not inform the OFNLP that it agreed to forego the two non-gambling revenue streams as part of that process.



Tony Bitonti, of OLG

In a 2017 press release announcing the arbitration proceedings, OFNLP vice-president Linda Commandant called it “shocking” that politicians were publicly affirming the province’s commitment to revenue-sharing with First Nations groups, “while at the same time Ontario and OLG officials were dealing with third parties behind closed doors to give away the First Nations’ 1.7 percent share.”



The OLG also declined to comment on the details of the case, but spokesperson Tony Bitonti said the crown corporation “values its long-standing relationship” with the OFNLP. He added that the OLG is “fortunate to have a board member” appointed from a slate of nominees put forth by the First Nations partnership.

Yet, Court of Appeal Justice Mahmud Jamal noted that one of the reasons the First Nations partnership was kept in the dark was because they did not in fact have a representative on the OLG’s board of directors until 2015.

The 2008 agreement guaranteed the OFNLP a seat on the lottery corporation’s board, but the “province and OLG failed to seat a representative” until after the First Nations group launched a separate arbitration on that matter.

The rulings state that the crown corporation was aware that its decision to exclude the two revenue streams could lead to less revenue for the OFNLP, yet it did not disclose this.

“At the meeting with OFNLP’s board of directors in December 2015, the chairman of OLG’s board of directors stated that it was ‘time to enter an era of respect’ between OLG and First Nations,” the ruling stated, adding, “But he failed to tell OFNLP’s board about the plan to stop sharing [the two revenue streams] with First Nations.”

Around that time, the OLG told the provincial Ministry of Finance about its plan to stop sharing the two revenue streams with the First Nations partnership. But the ruling states “no one within the Ontario government ever told” the Ministry of Indigenous Relations and Reconciliation, which was responsible for administering the agreement at the time.

The OFNLP only found out about the OLG’s decision in June 2016, through a footnote in an audited revenue statement. The court rulings do not specify the amount of damages in the case. In the 2017 press release, the OFNLP estimated it could be “significantly in excess of \$100 million.”

OLG’s Bitonti noted that, “In the last couple of years, OLG’s payments to OFNLP were (approximately) \$150 million annually,” which is based on 1.7 percent of the prior fiscal years gross gambling revenues.

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



IN THE SPIRIT

Yoga Studio & Wine Lounge



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)

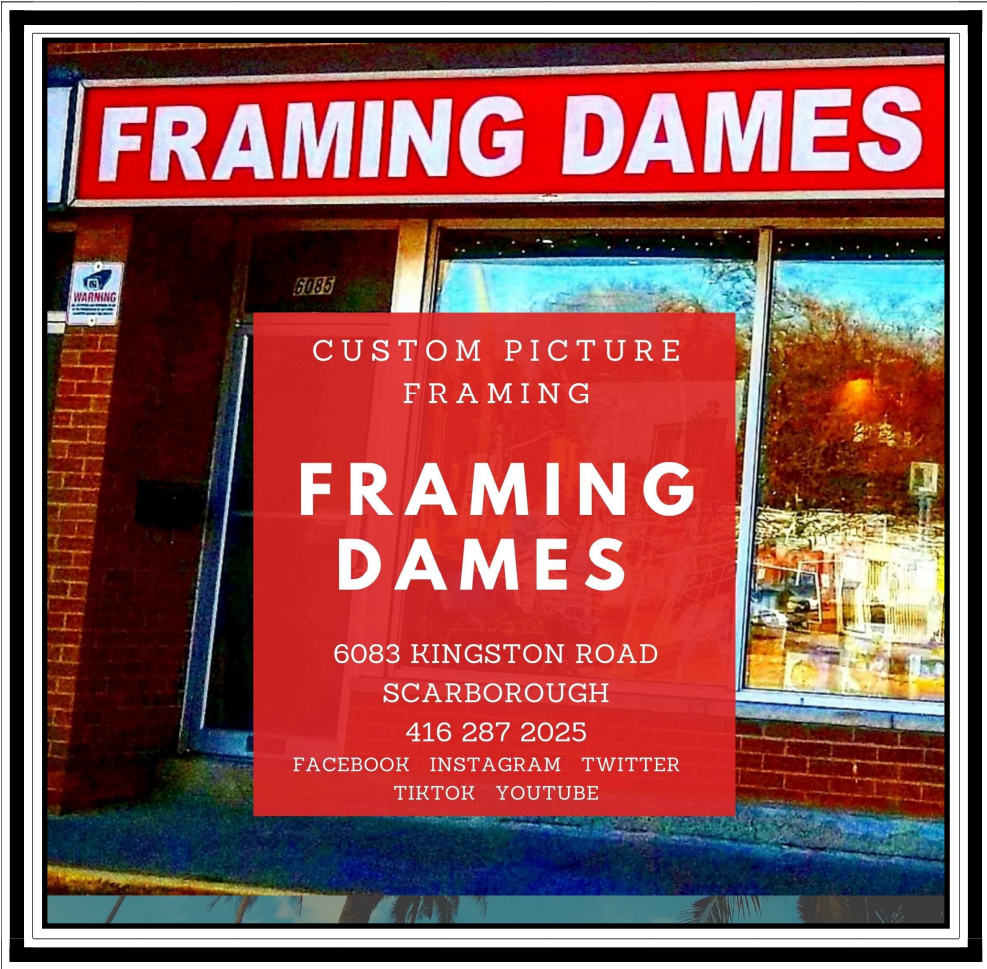
# A Warm WHU Welcome to Cindy Bourgeois

Cindy was born and raised in Winnipeg. She loved reading, math, sports, and animals. After graduating from the University of Manitoba she worked as a computer programmer in a cube farm (think of the comic strip Dilbert). After a few years, she started a business teaching computer programming to children, making video games like Pacman and SuperMario Bros. Shortly after moving to Toronto, she transitioned, forcing her to leave the company. She thought of becoming a teacher, but a friend suggested Ministry. She went to Emmanuel College and was the first transgender person ordained to Ministry in the United Church of Canada. She has worked at Bathurst United in Toronto, Central United in Stratford, and Wesley United in Regina.



Cindy recently ended a six-year tenure on the board of Affirm United/S’affirmer Ensemble (AUSE) as Secretary and Co-Chair. She is committed to social justice for all oppressed people and helped move the AUSE Council toward a commitment to justice beyond LGBTQ issues. Cindy has spoken nationally and internationally on the place of transfemininity in the Christian tradition. She is currently writing a book with the working title: “Spooky Action at a Distance of Time: In Search of Transfeminine Ancestry.”

Cindy lives in Mimico where she enjoys spending time with family and friends and walking by the lake.



Greetings!

For those of you whose main connection to West Hill United is this publication, I have been lucky enough to serve as your supply minister over the past month. I arrived on your doorstep at a strange time, although after two years of a pandemic I suppose it is hardly surprising that we met during another lockdown. Hopefully, this will be the last lockdown and we are coming to the end of this deadly ordeal. Goodness knows what lies in the future but we live in hope.

It is also a strange time here at West Hill United. It is definitely a time of change. After selling the building to the Boys & Girls Club and adjusting to gathering over Zoom during the pandemic, the community at West Hill United has embarked on a re-visioning project, if you will, with Joe Manafó of Listenology.

I arrive on your doorstep at a liminal time. What I mean by a liminal time is that it is an in-between time. There was a before time – before we sold the building, before the pandemic – and there will be a future time as the pandemic wanes and we understand how to be a community without the grounding of the building. We are not where we were, but we have not arrived at who we will be. We are betwixt and between, neither here nor there. We are in a liminal space; a threshold space.

The concept of liminality was developed by anthropologist Victor Turner in his studies of rites of passage. For example, a child may have a rite of passage before entering adulthood. The child would enter into a rite of passage as a child, but in the end leave as an adult. During that rite of passage the individual is transformed from a child into an adult.

Liminal spaces are transformative spaces. A child is transformed into an adult. They become something new. They are still the same person, but they have been transformed. And we are in a liminal space right now. The combination of the pandemic and selling our building has created a liminal space in which we are being transformed. In the coming months and years we will be transformed into a new community. We will never be a finished product, as change is always part of life, but we will be transformed. The old community is not ending, but a new community is being born. Much like a child passing through a rite of passage, we are being transformed into something else, something new and that's a good thing.

I am confident that if we stay committed to our values of being 'Grounded in Life, Guided by Love, and Growing in Wisdom,' this transformative time will lead to incredible adventures. I look forward to walking with you on this journey.

Cindy Bourgeois



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# 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 Gathering/Perspective(s) ~10:30



## Tuesday Morning Labyrinth Walk (Okay, this NOT Zoom. It's in-person in the WHU parking lot ~ 10:00 )



## Tuesday Afternoon Wellness Group ~ 2 to 3


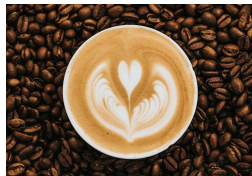


## Wednesday Book Study ~ Indigenous Canada Online Course (University of Alberta). It's Free! ~ 2 to 3:30 continuing on February 9, 16, 23 and wrapping up on March 2nd.

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



## Thursday Morning Coffee ~10 to 11



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# Outreach News

## Soup's On in February in Support of Second Harvest



This February, the Outreach Committee is running its third annual Soup's On Campaign to raise funds to support food security in our community.

Second Harvest has a dual mission: Environmental Protection and Hunger Relief. It is the largest food rescue organization in Canada. Donations from Second Harvest support our local food banks. Freshly prepared food donations from restaurants, caterers, etc. provide hot lunches through the Scarborough Centre for Healthy Communities to those in our community who need assistance.

Please make out your cheque donations to West Hill United Church, ensuring to write Second Harvest on the memo line. Cheques can be mailed or dropped into the WHU mailbox by the entrance door at the church.

*submitted by Barb Russell*

*Thank you for your generous support!*

*Outreach Committee (Gill C., June D., Donna L., Marilyn L., Vilma R., Barb R., Ingrid S.)*



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**West Hill United Board of 2021**

Board Chair: Mike Lawrie

Property Chair: Gary Megson

Ministry and Personnel Chair: Anita DesRosiers

**Communication and Marketing Chair: Vacant**

Education and Growth: Deb Ellis

Friendship and Hospitality: Barb Russell

Community Care: Babette Oliviera

**Celebrating the Spirit: Vacant**

Finance Chair & Treasurer: John McKechnie

**Secretary: Vacant**

Strategic Planning: Deb Ellis:

Members at Large: Jean Skillman (governance review), Emily Trivers,  
Donna Hall, Peter Thomas, George Oliver,

Regional Representatives: Annemarie Leepel and Louise Lawrie

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

Supply Minister: Cindy Bourgeois

## **West Hill United**

*A warm place to find yourself*

62 Orchard Park Drive, West Hill, ON M1E 3T7  
[www.westhill.net](http://www.westhill.net) 416-282-8566 [westhill@westhill.net](mailto:westhill@westhill.net)

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