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Truth and Reconciliation: Advent Virtues Inform Calls to Action on Health

When the Truth and Reconciliation Commission (TRC) released their report back in 2015, many of their “calls to action” were grouped under categories such as education, child welfare, language and culture and justice. There was also a short section calling directly on those involved in the field of health.

The first calls in the health section are to the various levels of government to “acknowledge that the current state of Aboriginal health in Canada is a direct result of previous Canadian government policies, including residential schools” and to “identify and close the gaps in health outcomes”.

In a 2008 paper, Dr. Mark Lemstra and Dr. Cory Neudorf note that “it is not difficult to find a government agency in Canada reporting that Aboriginal cultural status is associated with poor health”. They cite the Health Canada website that reports “**First Nation peoples are more likely to experience poor health outcomes in essentially every indicator possible**”.

They also point out that it is *not* their genetic code or culture that leads to poor health but their economic status—a *status that is largely shaped by systemically unequal access to education, health and work*.



This insight leads to the next calls for a sustained effort to increase the number of Aboriginal professionals working in the health-care field and to work harder to ensure high retention rates.

Some sites have made modest and important efforts. St. Paul’s Hospital incorporates a Cree Honour Song into their morning reflections and is actively developing more initiatives.

Talia Pfefferle is the Director of First Nations and Metis Relations with First Nations and Metis Health. She says that a majority of the work of their young office—it was only formed in 2015—is directly shaped by the Calls To Action that were offered by the TRC.

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ADVENT VISITING CALENDAR

Advent is a time for visiting: While pregnant with Jesus, Mary visits her cousin, Elizabeth, mother of John the Baptist (Luke 1:39) and the Magi visit the new parents, Mary and Joseph (Matthew 2:1-13).

Every Advent, millions of children look forward to waking up in the morning and opening that little cardboard door to reveal a little chocolate. **That sense of joy and anticipation is holy!** What if we could reignite that childhood joy?

Better yet, what if we could BECOME that Advent joy for someone else?

This Advent Season, consider sitting down on your own or with your family. Make a list as long as you can—not of “who’s naughty and nice”—but of all the people who might appreciate a phone call, an e-mail or a Christmas letter.

We all know someone in a special care home, whether a family member or a neighbour, who we have not seen in a long time. Maybe someone from town is in the hospital; they don’t expect a call or a text, but they might appreciate it.

There are 27 days in Advent this year so try to think of 27 different people. Maybe you can think of only a few. That’s fine. Put them on a weekly rotation. Call them on week one, write them a Christmas letter on week two, Zoom them on week three, drop cookies on their doorstep on week four. Have fun with it!



Protect those you love.
Stay home for the holidays!

If you participate in this campaign, feel free to share any stories you have about creative contacts or ideas that you experienced.

Write me at
blake@chassk.ca

Merry Christmas!

Welcome to CHAS New Board Members!



Anne Jinnouchi is a lawyer with the federal government in the Department of Justice.



Tanya Clarke is the Financial Administrator for the Diocese of Saskatoon.



Allison Nagy is a Care Manager at Mont St. Joseph in Prince Albert.

Virtual Convention and AGM 2020 Online!

If you are just KICKING yourself for missing Atish Ram speak about his experience with COVID and are curious about how the AGM went, please visit the link following. We recorded the whole thing for you: <https://chassk.ca/events-3/annual-convention/>

A Message to All Compassionate Healers

The Compassionate Healers' Masses in Prince Albert, Saskatoon and Regina had a distinctly "pandemic" flavour but all of the bishops did a wonderful job drawing out the call to compassion from the readings and liturgies. The message this year was simple: caring does not make our life easier but it does make it better! Thanks to everyone who came out and a big debt of gratitude to our bishops and pastors who marked this annual blessing!



Update on Memberships

Please note that along with this newsletter, most people will receive their membership invoice. If you have any further questions or concerns, feel free to call Blake at (306) 270-5452 or blake@chassk.ca. Blessings!

Cultural Conversations Key



*Merry Christmas from
all of us at CHAS!*

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“Our main accountability is to promote and implement the calls to action in order to create culturally responsive healthcare”.

“The biggest thing is education,” Pfefferle says. “Educate yourself.”

“You have to be willing and open. The health discrepancies don’t come from our race but from practices and policies implemented by governments in the past”.

The office of First Nations and Metis Health offers workshops, resources and an online forum called “Cultural Conversations” where staff of the SHA can attend monthly to learn about different issues and network.

On March 4, 2019 the Saskatchewan Health Authority (SHA) formalized its commitment to the Calls to Action when they signed an agreement that will serve as a framework for the SHA to move forward reconciliation with First Nations and Métis Peoples.

The agreement commits, among other things, to foster respectful relations with all First Nations and Métis people, acknowledges the pain, loss, and dislocation caused by the residential school system, and commits to being a culturally responsive organization by addressing systemic barriers. It states the importance of making efforts to close the gap in health outcomes between Indigenous and non-Indigenous people.

Finally, it commits to increasing the cultural responsiveness and cultural safety training opportunities for all SHA employees and to increasing the number of First Nations and Métis in their employ.

For more information about the office and the resources that they make available in the province, or if you are staff and would like to speak to Talia about joining one of the weekly Cultural Conversations, just go to:

www.saskatoonhealthregion.ca/locations_services/Services/fnmh

Retirement of Scott Irwin, CEO Emmanuel Care



Scott Irwin has announced his retirement from Emmanuel Care. Scott has been a wonderful leader in the field of Catholic health care for many years and has worked for Emmanuel Care since 2008 as the President & CEO. He has been affiliated with Catholic Health Services in Saskatchewan, Catholic Health Association of Saskatchewan (CHAS), the Catholic Health Alliance of Canada (CHAC) and worked with SCHC, Saskatoon Health Region, and St. Paul’s Hospital since the mid-1980’s. Emmanuel Care (Saskatchewan Catholic Health Corporation) has grown and continues to thrive under his dedicated leadership. The Board of Emmanuel Care, the Member Bishops, and the Saskatchewan Catholic Health Ministry have benefitted significantly during Scott’s tenure. We wish you well in your future endeavours!