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Mission Realignment and the Stress of Change, Growth, and Resurrection

Nobody likes change. Good change. Bad change. Necessary, unavoidable change. Nobody likes change.

People have heart attacks going into and coming out of Daylight Saving Time (no need to worry about that in Saskatchewan).

Think of a positive change like quitting smoking or starting a new healthy exercise routine or getting a new job. Whether the change is good or bad, change upsets a routine that gives our life stability.

The resurrection of Jesus, that we celebrate at Easter, was the greatest act of change since the very creation of the universe! God entered the world with the incarnation and closed the circuit of salvation with the resurrection.

The changes that CHAS are discerning is a mixed bag. When our Executive Director, Blake Sittler, resigned to take on the role of Director of Mission at St. Paul's Hospital we

were happy for him and St. Paul's Hospital but nervous about the prospect of hiring a new ED. The choice of a leadership role of this type is both nerve wracking and exciting!



Even before his departure, the board of CHAS had been in discussions with Emmanuel Care and Emmanuel Health about the on-going calls from several areas in our partner organizations to consider streamlining of services or, what we have deemed, mission realignment discernment.

Our board chair, Ethna Martin, sent a letter to our members on February 1 and another communication to the institutional members on

March 18 trying to keep everyone as informed as possible about the changes that are being considered.

Nobody likes change but sometimes change is made easier with the awareness of people of good will that change is necessary. *Please continue to pray for the lonely in our hospitals and special care homes!*



Catholic Health
Association of Saskatchewan

The Compassion of Christ Compels Us

Together in Remembrance, Together in Hope: A Virtual Vigil Marking One Year of COVID in Saskatchewan

The March 11 virtual vigil marking one year of COVID in Saskatchewan was a huge success on many levels. The one-hour event was attended by 600 people between the Zoom event and the YouTube livestream.

The committee drawn together was very broad and included over thirty members including representation from many Christian denominations as well as Muslim, Hindu, Jewish and strong leadership from several First Nations people.

The event was hosted by Karla Combres, Lyndon Linklater and Blake Sittler. Strong technical support was given by Nick Jesson.

The vigil opened with a unique provincial land acknowledgement that recognized the “importance of our relationship with the Cree, Saulteaux, Dene, Nakoda, Dakota, and Lakota people”. The acknowledgement read noted that it is important that we all play a role in kindling “the fragile ember [over our treaty relationship] so that one day it can be a fire around which we can all gather and warm ourselves in peace and respect.” It concluded with words of thanks, “to the many nations

who welcomed us here many generations ago.” Prayers from many faiths followed along with words of welcome from Métis elder, Allan Morin, and Thunderchild Cree Nation elder, Maria Linklater.



The gift of song was offered thanks to the generosity of Wyndham Thiessen, Thomas Yu, Munirih Sparrow and a hand-drum song by Allan Bonaire.

Jim Hopson of the Saskatchewan Roughriders read a poem and our provincial Youth Poet Laureate, Peace Akintade, wrote a special poem for the event called, Table of Hope (full text on next page).

There were also words from frontline healthcare workers, Maj Banatao, a nurse and Dr. Hassan Masri.

Most touching of all, at the end of the event, over 100 people stayed on to visit with each other from all over the province. Some were in small family groups and several were people quarantining on their own who were just happy to have someone to visit with. The vigil in its entirety can still be viewed at the event website:

www.covidvigil.ca



Thomas Yu
Renowned pianist



Peace Akintade
Saskatchewan Youth Poet Laureate



Jim Hopson
Former President & CEO
Saskatchewan Roughriders



Wyndham Thiessen
Musician & Songwriter



Munirih Sparrow
Singer

Table of Hope, by Peace Akintade

A hand placed by the table of hope
Strums in a rhythm.
Soft and serene
When the damage of the world
Rests on our shoulder
And we can no longer
bear the weight of humanity
Let us use the table as an anchor
Raise our weight of gold
And settle into an uneasy chair of doubt
The table of hope holds a cup
And the host
Tells you to whisper
All your negativity into the brim.
And toss the cup into the fire
Watch your words turn to fuel
Use that fuel for motivation
On the table of hope
Find solace in each others stories
The man with one arm
Smiles to the secretary with no job.
The girl that failed her class
Cries with the lady that lost her mom.
On the table of hope
There is no hierarchy
We all wish for happiness
We all wish the world laughed with us
We all wish our shoulders were empty
From all the pain.

And I wonder if the table
Has room for all of us
If it can handle millions of hands
Varied in size and hardness.
But the host pats my back
Lifts my face
And tells me a secret.
If the table of hope ever fills up,
One person will stand
Link arms with another,
And build another table
A table where despair turns into motivation.
A table to rest your head
And whisper all your dreams and future.
The cycle will begin again.
As long as we are reminded
That we all have a seat at the table.



October 2021 Annual Convention

Last year, our annual convention scheduled for Moose Jaw had to be radically altered due to the pandemic. At that time, we were sure our next convention would resume in person.

Unfortunately, we underestimated COVID.

This year, our annual convention will once again be virtual. We will keep the same theme and speakers that we originally scheduled for 2020 but we will schedule them so people can

participate via Zoom. More information on registration and schedule will be available by the summer.

Health 2021 Vision: Seeing Our Mission Clearly *October 2021*

Featuring:

- Sr. Teresita Kambeitz, educator
- Dr. Gordon Self, Covenant Health
- Megan Engel, Harvard University
- Dr. Christopher De Bono, Providence Health Care

CHAS Projects Still on the Go!

Even with all that is going on with our Association over the last few months, there are still a few projects moving forward thanks to some dedicated and scrappy volunteers on committees focused on the mission we carry.

VISITING CAMPAIGN

The committee overseeing the development and promotion of a major visiting campaign aimed at Fall 2021 has agreed on a name and a vision:

*The Gift of Presence:
One Small Visit, One Big Difference*

The COVID pandemic has highlighted in the most difficult manner the isolation and loneliness that residents of our special care homes feel. Yes, the pandemic made their pain more acute and more public, but the sense of being alone and bored and the feeling of having no value has been there for years. These words are hard to read—they are hard to write—but they are harder to live and witness.

The staff of our special care homes have carried a heavy load for over 14 months. They have borne the grief of so many who yearned for a simple visit.

The call to visit those who are alone or set apart is not a call to a chosen few who have special gifts or official badges. It stems from our baptism. It is in our blood, literally in our DNA, to visit and bring love to our neighbours.

Our committee members have met with the bishops of Saskatchewan and look forward to promoting not simply “a campaign” but a renewal of our covenant to live out our faith in the most real and most compassionate way possible.

WITNESS TO MISSION VIDEO

Filming started for the W2M video in early 2021. We have interviews from staff from

Villa Pascal in North Battleford and St. Ann’s in Saskatoon. More interviews will be filmed over the next few months.

A small committee continues to meet to discuss the content of the resource and the expectation is that this video will be used for training and formation in CHAS sites provincially and may be shared with other provincial associations as some interest has been shown.

The original hope was that this video would be the first of a series to be developed over the next several years. The monumental changes taking place are definitely challenging but there is still good reason to hope that if the reaction to the first video is positive that CHAS will produce more videos in the future following the themes of: Dignity, Compassion, Justice, and Community.

Those working in Catholic health–care are working in a field on ground broken by the Grey Nuns over a century ago. These videos are aimed at keeping their values alive!



When Mary Heilman left last year to have “one of the cutest babies ever,” we were pleased to welcome in the very talented Gary Goldsand to cover her maternity. We were happy to hear that he has a new role now as the ethicist for the southern region of Saskatchewan. Congratulations, Gary and welcome back, Mary! And congratulations again to you and Dallas for Aster.