

## **Vestry Report 2018: The Water Project**

*"There is a growing hope in Canadians that there is positive change we will see in our future with First Nations. Hope is a powerful motivator."* This comment from our National Indigenous Bishop Mark MacDonald could be a synopsis of our work with the Water Project. Since 2011, we have slowly questioned, discerned, wondered and hoped our way toward a partnership with Pikangikum Ontario, a partnership that we ultimately hope will lead to the strengthening of relationships between Indigenous and non-Indigenous people across Canada.

Our partnership with the leaders of Pikangikum Ontario, as well as Habitat for Humanity Manitoba, has successfully now led to the completion of Phase 2 of the Pikangikum Water Project, with 10 more homes receiving running water and waste water removal capabilities in their homes. Upgrades have been made to the systems we are using since Phase 1, with water tanks in the homes now holding twice the capacity of water from what was used in 2013. We hope to see a similar number of homes funded in the near future by the federal government in matching our funds.

As the work is taking place, young people from Pikangikum are being trained in new skills in carpentry, plumbing and electricity. These young people, PWRDF reports, are now expressing "interest in being involved in other community programs that the Band Council at this remote Northern Ontario First Nation community might initiate in the future." Two of the trainers for Phase 2 were trainees on Phase 1, which outfitted 10 homes with indoor plumbing in 2013.

By October, we had raised over \$600,000 in total for this work, an astonishing number considering the fact that overhead for this project is so low and our communication work has been done on an almost entirely volunteer basis. Initial word from 2017's Advent Conspiracy campaign is extremely encouraging. We look forward to sharing more concrete numbers in early 2018. We do know that our long-term commitment to Pikangikum, and to other Indigenous communities lacking clean water, is of utmost value and importance and it is making a difference.

In other Pikangikum news, intimately related to the water crisis, over \$60 million in funding has been announced by the federal government to connect Pikangikum to Ontario's power grid. Work on Phase 2 of the Water Project was almost grounded several years ago because the diesel generators currently powering Pikangikum were at maximum capacity. This new funding will be an important support to the people of Pikangikum and all of the partnership work with them.

There were four more youth suicides in Pikangikum this summer, a terrible tragedy for a community that continues to find itself in crisis. Across the Canadian Anglican Church, the crisis in our First Nations' communities has been identified as primarily spiritual. The spiritual response toward which we are working is self-determination in our Anglican Indigenous church. We believe that the leadership that is coming from these communities will be a blessing not only to our Indigenous people, but to our whole church which is also very much discerning how to better respond to the spiritual needs of all people.

### **Subscribe to our newsletter**

We have updated our mode of communication regarding Bishop Mark's Pimatisiwin Nipi (Living Water) Group and our Water Project work. We are using the mailchimp program to more effectively share our updates and materials. This will allow people to subscribe directly to our mailing list from our website and facebook page. It also allows people to option of unsubscribing at any time.

\*\*If you wish to continue to receive updates on this work, you must re-subscribe to our list through mailchimp. If you have difficulty, email me and I can do it for you.  
Use this link: <http://eepurl.com/c74tlf>

In the hope and light of Christ,  
Martha Tatarnic.



5 Children who received clean water in Phase 2



12 000 litre water tank installed in Pikangikum home



New sink and tub in Pikangikum Home



1 of 3 Waste Water Trucks