

**Pikangikum Water Project
Annual Report for the Year of 2018**

As you know, we count as blessed those who have persevered. You have heard of Job's perseverance and have seen what the Lord finally brought about. The Lord is full of compassion and mercy. — James 5:11

When we started our work, the response to our desire to be involved in seeking clean water solutions in Indigenous communities was, "That's really important, but we can't do that. That is the government's job." But the government was not doing that job. Every time that our network of communities has met around our shared desire to participate in this Water Project, Bishop Mark MacDonald has led us in Gospel-based discipleship. Again and again, our reflections together remind us that it is our relationship with God and the law of compassion which has the highest authority in our lives. Our trust in the guiding of God's Spirit has allowed us, over the course of the last six years, to find our way into this work, to develop a relationship with the leadership of Pikangikum, Ontario, and to work toward the concrete goal of clean running water in Pikangikum homes.

Our work has, to date, allowed 24 homes to receive clean water. With up to ten people per home, this is a difference in the lives of upwards of 240 of Pikangikum's most vulnerable people. The plan in 2018, spring-summer, is for Phase 3 of this work to retrofit ten more homes with running water, and these homes are now being funded from the federal government's willingness to match some of the funds we had previously raised. To our group, this feels nothing short of miraculous: our perseverance in this work, despite this work being the responsibility of the government, has in some small measure led the way for the government to now respond.

Looking back on 2018 and forward to what God has in store for this work, we offer in this annual report three sections: 1) Where have we been? 2) Where are we now? 3) Where are we going?

1. Where have we been?

The following timeline offers a visual break-down of our work with Pikangikum

PIMATISIWIN NIPI

Living Water

WHAT CAN WE DO?

FALL 2011

Seeing the systemic failure to respond to the living condition in indigenous communities, violation of human rights and the alarmingly high rate of Youth Suicide, the question being asked was, What can we do? Bishop Mark MacDonald establishes Pimatisiwin Nipi around four pillars of Advocacy, Partnership, Education & Strategic Giving.

WINTER 2012

ADVENT CONSPIRACY

- The Primate's World Relief and Development Fund, PWRDF, joins the group
- Pilot Project: Five churches commit to raise funds through Advent Conspiracy for Water for Indigenous communities in need. Approximately \$18,000 is raised that first Advent.

2013

PHASE 1

- Churches and community groups across Canada begin to commit to the project.
- Because of these commitments, PWRDF contributes \$100,000 to Phase I of the Pikangikum Water Project.
- The networks of Pimatisiwin Nipi now must raise the \$100,000 committed.
- Phase 1 of the Pikangikum Water Project begins with implementing partner Frontier Foundations to install clean running water and waste water removal systems in 10 Pikangikum homes.
- Across Canada, people choose to give differently by joining the Advent Conspiracy and giving the gift of water to their loved ones.
- We reach our \$100,000 target through the generosity of Advent Conspiracy!

2014

CONTINUED

- There is continued support through the year for the Water Project.
- November 2014 the power grid of Pikangikum reaches its capacity, bringing our work on the Water Project to a temporary halt.

2016

PHASE 2

- PWRDF enters a partnership with Habitat for Humanity Manitoba for the next ten homes in Pikangikum.
- The community has identified the most vulnerable people so that they will be the ones to receive these new water systems.
- In the 12 priorities identified by Pikangikum for Pikangikum, Water was the second priority. The first priority was to get a new school. That new school opened and held its first Christmas Concert to a packed house.

2017

TRAINING

- Phase 2 is completed, 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.
- Five young people from Pikangikum are being trained in carpentry, plumbing and electricity skills. 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."
- Work to connect Pikangikum to the Ontario power grid begins.

2018

MATCH FUNDS

- Federal government agrees to "match funds" for water in Pikangikum.
- Connection to the power grid is completed and Pikangikum is energized.

2019

MOVING FORWARD

- Pikangikum Council is planning for another 15 homes to receive water.
- Money continues to be given from all across Canada to this work in Pikangikum and to other communities in need.

2. Where are we now?

To date, \$525,000 has been raised and spent on Phases 1 and 2 of this work. Between the completion of Phase 2 and November 2018, donations totalling \$334,000 have been received by PWRDF towards Pikangikum (this number does not include donations from Advent Conspiracy 2018). As phase 3 proceeds with government funding and Band Council implementation (as described above), conversations around Phase 4 are very preliminary. PWRDF has indicated its support of a Phase 4 Water Project in Pikangikum although they would like to explore whether there are some new technologies or new methodologies that might expand the impact and effectiveness of our work. An implementing partner also has to be determined. Our total fundraising since the beginning of our work is near \$900,000. What an incredible thing to celebrate and for which to give thanks!

3. Where are we going?

PWRDF is involved in a number of projects across Canada with Indigenous ministries, including language reclamation, suicide prevention, midwifery, and strengthening relationships with ACIP (Anglican Council of Indigenous Persons). We would like to strengthen the communication between us and PWRDF so that we can be part of sharing in the stories of truth and reconciliation happening across our country and through our church.

Pimatisiwin Nipi, the network of congregations and community groups across Canada who have come together to initiate and support the Water Project, continues to meet and provide direction. We feel a strong sense of responsibility to see the work through with Pikangikum as far as we possibly can. We have always said that this is a pilot project and that we see our work eventually expanding into other communities. But approximately 400 houses still need water in Pikangikum, and our work feels far from over. Passion for, and commitment to this relationship and work with Pikangikum is growing every year, and donations, interest, and compassion from faithful people all across our country continues to pour in.

At the same time, we understand with PWRDF that there are other important aspects of our work that we might build upon going forward. Advocacy has been a big part of getting the federal government involved in water in Pikangikum, and ultimately it is our hope and expectation that lasting and widespread change in terms of addressing water in Indigenous communities will need to come from the federal government. We have also been heartened by the way in which the Water Project has enabled youth leadership training in Pikangikum, and how those skills have been transferrable into aiding other Indigenous communities too. It could also make a lot of sense to invest some of our funds in studying better and newer engineering possibilities for clean water in the community. 2019 will see us enter into conversations about how some of these other priorities might build upon and expand our work with Pikangikum.