

## Pimatziwin Nipi – Annual Report 2021

---

“Anchored in God’s faithfulness, we have sought to respond to an URGENT need in Indigenous communities. Systemic brutalities built into Indigenous life have meant that basic needs, like access to clean water, are not being met. It is this reality which has motivated our response.”

*” – Archbishop Mark MacDonald, Indigenous Anglican Church of Canada*

---

2021 marked the ten year anniversary of Pimatziwin Nipi. We came together a decade ago, not because of an idea, but because of a question. *“What can we do?”* A network developed with Archbishop Mark MacDonald as our leader simply because people across Canada were aware of the systemic injustice and cruelty that sees so many Indigenous communities across Canada without access to clean water, and we believed that there must be something that we could do in response.

The uncovering of unmarked graves on the sites of former residential schools across Canada in 2021 has furthered the bringing to light of truths that Canadians have been reluctant to see about the cost of Canada’s treatment of Indigenous peoples and the need for truth and reconciliation going forward. This is not just part of Canada’s past, it is a truth at the centre of Canada’s present. We hear from Indigenous leaders that they are hearing of youth suicides and overdoses on a daily basis. The resources that they would normally bring in to help communities cope, including pastoral care, can’t be brought in because of COVID. *“The reality is that we’re overcome by grief and difficulty,”* says Archbishop Mark.

Since 2013, Pimatisiwin Nipi (Living Waters) Group has partnered with the Northern Ontario community of Pikangikum, Ontario and with The Primate’s World Relief and Development Fund to install safe drinking water and indoor plumbing in the homes that need it the most.

In 2021, our work expanded to begin the **Mishamikoweesh Water Partnership**.

### Snapshot of Mishamikoweesh:

- Bishop Lydia Mamakwa is the only paid clergy person in her diocese. She lives in Kingfisher Lake.
- Many clergy in the diocese don’t speak English. Many children went into hiding when the RCMP came to take children to residential schools.
- Unique area and a lot of needs with regards to water.
- 25 First Nations within its jurisdiction.

-Area on Northern Ontario that is roughly the border of Ontario and Manitoba, all the way to James Bay. Our focus would be in Northern Ontario because the area in Northern Manitoba has access to other sources of funding currently.

- Mishamikweesh means Big Beaver House. There is a rock formation that looks like a Beaver House. William Winter, spiritual leader, had this vision many decades ago for this area to have their own bishop, diocese, seminary, and churches, run by Indigenous leadership. This seemed incredible at the time in the 1930s and 1940s. And so when this new diocese came about, it was named after William Winter's vision.

Across Mishamikoweesh, water safety is a critical need. We see this as an important next chapter in extending the work we began a decade ago.



Mishamikoweesh leadership identify clean water as central to their vision of a good life for their people. In response, our work will:

- partner with PWRDF and Mishamikoweesh leadership to develop Indigenous-led, high impact water projects across these Northern communities.
- each project will be oriented toward the goal of Indigenous communities being able to access fresh and safe drinking water, prioritizing their connection to the abundance of the land.

We await tallies from PWRDF (which tend to come in from the early months of the new year) regarding the money this new Partnership has been able to raise in our Advent 2021 fundraising campaign. This work with Mishamikoweesh is just beginning, and we look forward with hope and faith for how we can build this partnership for many years to come and in ways that will bring concrete and lasting change.