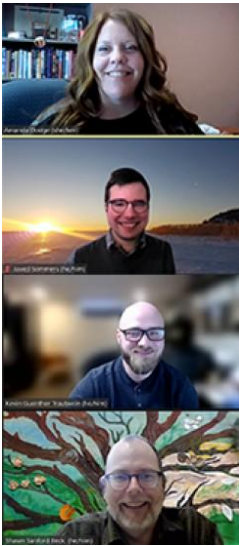


APRIL 2022



KAIROS PRAIRIES NORTH NEWSLETTER



Greetings and Update from the Coordinating Committee

It's been almost a whole year since KAIROS's "Virtual Potluck" when a few of us volunteered to re-establish a coordinating committee in the Prairies North region. Our hope was to support existing networks and encourage new connections in this vast region, but first we needed to get to know each other. We began meeting online, with Shawn and Amanda in Saskatoon, and Javed and Kevin in Edmonton.

We've been reaching out and learning what's happening in the region. In November we held a regional gathering online; about 50 people registered for the meeting. We heard inspiring updates from a number of local groups across the region: there are local groups working on access to housing, ecological justice, decolonization, prophetic witness, and more. We also heard about the challenges of geographic isolation and yet a strong desire for the work of KAIROS to continue and grow in our region.

As a way to help build connection and relationship, we're excited to launch this newsletter. In each issue, we'll be sharing encouraging stories from different local groups. Maybe you'll read something that inspires your own group, maybe you'll learn about a topic, or maybe you'll catch up with old friends. We hope it encourages you to reach out to the local groups with your support, your ideas, your questions, and also with your prayers.

Yours in faith and goodwill,

The Prairies North Coordinating Committee
Kevin Guenther Trautwein (Convener)
Shawn Sanford Beck (Regional Representative)
Javed Sommers (Treasurer)
Amanda Dodge (Secretary)

Regional Highlight: Athabasca, Alberta

In the process of re-booting the KAIROS Prairies North coordinating committee, we reached out last fall to local groups and individuals across the region to find out what folks have been up to. One of the things we quickly discovered was that lots of good work is being done, but not necessarily under the KAIROS “brand”. We realized that this work is KAIROS-influenced, and KAIROS-friendly, and often the people involved have had strong relationships with KAIROS in the past. We want to honour and celebrate that work, and at the same time help to re-weave it into the larger KAIROS tapestry. In this edition of your KPN newsletter, we highlight the work of two faithful activists from the Athabasca area: Cecile Fausak and Bruce Jackson. We hope you are inspired by their submissions!



Remembering the Children (TRC Calls to Action #71-76)

Over 15 years ago, the Lightning family, Lyle Keewatin Richards, the late Don Hepburn, and others in the Red Deer area were aware of a cemetery associated with the Red Deer Indian Industrial School (RDIIS) that ran 1893-1919. With a 2008 report identifying at least 20 graves, 4 wooden grave markers, and the school student register with over 300 names, in hand, conversations began with Elders and leaders from the 10 communities from which the children were taken and United Church representatives (Methodist descendants).

The Remembering the Children Society was formed to hold 4 annual feasts in June of 2010-2013 to honor the children who had died at RDIIS and to set their spirits at rest. A headstone to remember 4 teenagers who died in the 1918 Spanish flu epidemic at RDIIS was placed in the Red Deer City cemetery in 2017. A report is awaited from GPR research done in October 2021. There has been much more educational and memorial work done which is a model of community-based restorative justice work for others uncovering residential school graveyards.

You can [learn the story of the Society's work](#) in a recorded webinar. Dr. Diane Steinhauer, President of Yellowhead Tribal College, was the guest speaker at the Society's 2021 Annual Meeting on the "[Oral Understanding of Treaties](#)". For updates, like the [Society's Facebook page](#).

Submitted by Rev. Cecile Fausak, past Secretary of Remembering the Children Society, Athabasca, AB in Treaty 6 and Métis homelands



Looking Backwards from a Future Date

A firestorm of public dissent followed a provincial government June 2021 announcement rescinding the 1976 Alberta Coal Policy which had suspended coal mining in the upper regions of major watersheds for nearly 40 years. Within the context of heat bubbles, fires and drought during the summer, “environmental melancholia” emerged in the people.

[Doreen Vanderstoop's dystopian novel Watershed](#) won the Alberta Book Publishers Trade Fiction Book of the Year. It is set in 2058 southern Alberta, after the glaciers are melted, and water scarcity and commercial impacts to farming and community are ravaging the land and life. Family farm succession, economic migration, local governance, hearings, reliance on bottled water, pipelines moving water instead of oil, emotional distress and upheaval made the story hard to digest. This book was chosen by the Athabasca “One Book, One Community” program to encourage many people in the community to read it and engage through discussion and events to foster co-operation and action.

This book, the current political climate and climate events were a gift to the [Keepers of the Water](#) (KOW) Society as the resulting discussions were the very concerns and issues that KOW have attempted to draw to citizens' attention for nearly two decades. KOW are “First Nations, Métis, Inuit, environmental groups, concerned citizens, and communities working together for the protection of Water, air, land, and all living things, today and tomorrow, in the Arctic Ocean Drainage Basin”.

Looking backwards from the scenarios in Watershed, the KOW Virtual conference “Water is Life” became a way to focus and engage people around energy, climate, and water. Over 100 people heard a wide range of speakers from across Canada, as well as the Amazon watershed. You can view the [Water is Life Conference](#) - YouTube series; have a listen to Dr. Kevin Timoney (newly released book on oil and brine spills The Hidden Scourge), Winona LaDuke from Standing Rock, Latasha Calf Robe (founder of the Niitsitapi Water Protectors), Dr. John O'Connor (awarded the first Peter Bryce Whistleblower's Award), Maude Barlow, and more. At the same time, there was a well-received in-person photography exhibit “Precious Water” at the historic Athabasca Train Station. [Watch the video.](#)

Can we live into a different future reality? Will communities adapt and find ways to live sustainably? What discussions do you want to have in 2022?

Submitted by Bruce Jackson, DM Treasurer, Keepers of the Water Society, Athabasca, AB.

Upcoming Events



The Court Case of the Creatures: author reading

May 19, 2022

7PM MDT / 7PM CST

Enjoy a lively reading from author and KAIROS-kin Bob Haverluck as he introduces us to his latest book, the Court Case of the Creatures, "a seriously whimsical story of the watery earth's day in court." A delightful compliment to Reconciliation in the Watershed work, KAIROS is honoured to be one of the distributors of this new work of art and storytelling.

[Learn More & Register](#)



Exploring the Spirit of Land Acknowledgements: workshop

May 3 and 5, 2022
7PM MDT / 7PM CST

This online series will invite us to reflect and act on the role and meaning of land acknowledgements in our personal lives as well as in our faith communities. We hope to connect with one another to consider our relationships with place, land, people and spirit, and to learn how to make our land acknowledgements authentic and genuine.

[Learn More & Register](#)

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