



## Sacred Heart CHURCH OF THE FIRST PEOPLES

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August 5, 2021

Dear Father,

Many of you recall that Sacred Heart Church of the First Peoples sustained substantial damage in a fire on August 30, 2020. Thanks be to God, no one was hurt. However, there was major damage to the sanctuary and roof, and the whole building was gutted to remove the wet plaster.

Insurance will cover the cost to replace everything damaged by the fire. The parish has discerned that this is the opportune time to upgrade the heating system, replace the steep front stairs, repair foundation cracks, and improve the worship and gathering space. This will necessitate raising funds in addition to insurance coverage.

We are appealing to parishes and interested individuals to contribute to our campaign to raise \$2 million. This will provide the Archdiocese and the Indigenous Catholic community with a sound and beautiful building, in which through worship and fellowship we shall deepen our relationship to God and one another for decades to come.

Sacred Heart Church was designated as a national Indigenous parish in 1991. Now, the First Nations, Metis, and Inuit population of the Edmonton area exceeds 85,000 people. Indigenous people are migrating to urban centres across Canada. Many of them have a Catholic background, so we need to be well situated to foster new relationships with them and the Catholic community, other churches, and the general population.

As Catholic pastors, we promote reconciliation at all times, but especially in this moment we yearn to reverse the historic harms that occurred between the Church and the First Peoples of this land. By contributing to our campaign, you are demonstrating solidarity with Indigenous Catholics and commitment to a new beginning full of hope.

Enclosed is an overview of our parish and the restoration project. We would be pleased to meet your parishioners and parish councils to explain the rebuild and the aspects of it their donations will support. The true Church is the people not the building, of course, but this campaign offers us a unique and privileged opportunity to restore relationships between settlers to Canada and its First Peoples by renewing an edifice to serve as a house of prayer for all peoples.

We express to you in advance our deep gratitude for your prayerful consideration financially to support our campaign. For more information, please see the attached brochure, or contact Sacred Heart Church of the First People at 780-422-3052.

Respectfully yours in Christ,

✠Richard W. Smith  
Archbishop of Edmonton

Fr. Susai Jesu, omi  
Pastor