

August 7, 2021:

Anglicans from around the Edmonton diocese, including a couple of dozen Cursillistas, travelled to Frog Lake First Nation in northeastern Alberta in August.

The trip by coach and car was organized by Sherwood Park resident Fred Matthews, who is of Mohawk-Scottish heritage and who pastors the faith community in Frog Lake. The day included a visit to the interpretive trail at the national historic site commemorating the loss of life on both sides in 1885 and the ensuing years. This was followed by a warm welcome at the Frog Lake pow wow, a dramatic explosion of colorful regalia, dancing and drumbeats.

The Council and Elders of Frog Lake approached the Diocesan office in Edmonton some time ago to see if anything could be done about their dilapidated Anglican church building and lack of pastoral care. Former Bishop Jane Alexander visited the community with an apology for the state of affairs, and asked Fred Matthews to take on worship and pastoral leadership for the community. He now sees up to 300 people at his online services.

The community's Bible, written in Cree syllabics and removed when the last minister left, was found in care of a parishioner in the diocese. Bishop Jane returned the Bible to Chief Greg Desjarlais, and it now sits in the Chief and Council's meeting rooms at Frog Lake.

All of this continues work that goes back to at least 1993, when Michael Peers, then head of the Anglican Church in Canada, gave a deep and heartfelt apology to the National Native Convocation for the residential schools program.