

ISWG MURAL VISION

August 6, 2020

The Indigenous Solidarity Working Group hereby presents a vision of a Reconciliation Mural for the lower west wall of the Redeemer. We humbly request permission and support to pursue this vision to its fruition.

A Theological Reflection

There are three aspects of our Christian tradition that are particularly relevant as we consider the project for a mural on our west-facing wall by an Indigenous artist:

- A belief that God's creation is good
- A belief that we are called to seek reconciliation
- A belief that we have a mission to share our good news

Many cultures have creation stories, and ours is one that includes our Creator God, and the oft-repeated phrase in Genesis 1 that as God created, God judged that creation was 'good'. Indigenous people of this land have their creation stories too. We share a belief in the sacredness of creation. In fact, the settlers have much to learn from our Indigenous sisters and brothers and their respect for and care for the land and the creatures of the earth. Appropriate action is to share together in honouring creation, and as current concerns about our environment, climate change and degradation of the land are more prominent and urgent, highlighting together creation in the proposed mural is most appropriate.

Jesus lived a ministry of healing, and through the cross and resurrection offered forgiveness, healing and restoration to all humankind. Paul, in 2 Corinthians put this in terms of reconciliation. *"All this is from God, who reconciled us to himself through Christ, and has given us the ministry of reconciliation; ¹⁹ that is, ... entrusting the message of reconciliation to us."*

Lastly, we are called by scripture to tell our stories of faith, to share the good news with others. God in early times chose the people of Israel to be a light to the nations. Jesus and Paul urged their followers to go out into the world to be not just disciples, but also apostles, not just followers, but storytellers, truth-tellers. We have often interpreted this obligation in terms of domination and colonialism. In the past decades, we have had to reexamine our approach, apologize for our disastrous policies and actions, as Primate Michael Peers did in 1993 for the tragic involvement in the residential schools. Now our task is to tell our story in different ways, but even more important to listen to the stories of others, to engage in respectful listening, to seek out common ground, to reconcile and to rejoice together.

So this proposed mural is a way to honour and celebrate creation, a way to move toward reconciliation, and a creative way to tell our shared stories in a prominent public space through this art form.

Obligations under the Calls to Action of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission and the formal Declarations of the Anglican Church of Canada and of this parish.

The Truth and Reconciliation Commission (TRC) highlights the path to reconciliation and calls all residents of this land, and in particular, the faith communities to do their part in moving towards reconciliation. Acknowledging our need for healing and for reconciliation leads us to partner with each other in expressing in many ways, including art, this desire, this determination, this path.

The Redeemer has worked hard to spread the good news of the Journey to Reconciliation since 2013. It is time to announce to the world our commitment to uphold and act upon several of the TRC's Calls to Action such as numbers 59, 46, 48 and 49 which are attached in Appendix One.

The Redeemer has been actively respecting Call to Action 59, and now needs to work towards the fulfillment of the rest of Numbers 46, 48 and 49. See Appendix One.

The national Anglican Church of Canada has made great strides in implementing many portions of the Calls to Action, particularly numbers 59, 46 i), ii) & iv), 48 ii) & iii), as well as 49. The Doctrine of Discovery was repudiated by General Synod in July 2010 and again in March 2016, along with a commitment to honour the *United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples* which the TRC stated is the framework for reconciliation. See links in Appendix One.

The Apologies offered by our Primates Archbishop Michael Peers in August 1993 and Archbishop Fred Hiltz in July 2019 require action to bring those apologies alive in the life of a parish or Diocese: to become meaningful in real and practical actions.

Parishes such as Redeemer need to be seen to support the newly created Indigenous church approved at General Synod 2019, by "engaging in ongoing public dialogue and actions" to support and encourage Indigenous spiritual and economic growth. See the links in Appendix One.

In 2016 parishes throughout the Diocese of Toronto, at the request of the Diocese, passed vestry motions calling for action on two key Calls to Action, resulting in opportunities for ongoing engagement and education on the still-unfinished work of reconciliation in our communities and in our governments.

We, the vestry of the Church of the Redeemer, **commit ourselves to work to implement the Calls to Action of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Canada.** As part of this effort, we call on the Governments of Canada and Ontario to address the recommendations which the Commission's final report directs toward them. In particular, we affirm the Government of Canada's commitment to establishing a public inquiry into the issue of missing and murdered Indigenous women and girls and will continue to advocate for ongoing action on this issue. We also call on the Government of Ontario, in consultation with Aboriginal peoples, residential school survivors, and the churches, to develop an age-appropriate, mandatory curriculum on residential schools and the contributions of Aboriginal peoples to Canada for all grade levels.

The 2017 social justice Vestry Motion focussed on addressing Calls to Action of the TRC by encouraging parishes to carry out reflection and study within their congregations as well as calling on the government to implement one of the key elements of the TRC's calls.

We, the vestry of the Church of the Redeemer, **commit ourselves to continue to work to implement the Calls to Action of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Canada.** As part of this effort, we call on the Government of Canada to address Call to Action #43: to fully adopt and implement the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples as the framework for reconciliation. In particular, we call on the Government of Canada to immediately develop policies requiring free, prior and informed consent be obtained from Indigenous communities in Canada and abroad with respect to developments affecting their lands and resources, as outlined in Articles 10, 19, and 32 of the Declaration.

The Uniqueness of the Redeemer

Redeemer is located in a unique neighbourhood. It arrived shortly after the establishment of the Village of Yorkville on the outskirts of the City of Toronto.

The land was lush with trees and streams and close to the traditional Indigenous path from the waterfront to the French River and Lake Superior. Having a dedicated, clear Indigenous presence on this land we stand on would raise interest in the historical presence of those here before us by recognizing the land was inhabited long before the 1850s.

To reflect the intentional respect offered by our neighbours including the ROM, the Lillian Massey Building and the Gardiner Museum, a visual attraction will add to the artistic essence of “the Village”. As a visible sign and symbol of Redeemer’s commitment to reconciliation, the mural will be a celebration of the urban Indigenous community.

Art on the exterior wall of a former oppressor & collaborator in perpetuating many kinds of violence at Indian Residential Schools across Canada will cause people to pause and reflect. It will dramatically show that we offer hope and respect to those Indigenous who live on this land. Indigenous images on a church is in itself an act of Reconciliation, which would be positively supported by Toronto’s indigenous Community, according to individuals and to representatives of some of the Indigenous organizations consulted by Pamela Thomson, especially those who participated in a Zoom Circle in July, 2020.

The mural can act as a bridge between our communities, and a point of departure for the next part of Redeemer’s journey into truth through education and reconciliation through action.

Redeemer has stood here as a symbol of Christ’s love for 150 years. We are an outgoing congregation committed to outreach to those in need of food, clothes, loving companionship, stimulation of the inner self to grow and heal. Many of our Common Table guests are Indigenous. A colourful, joyful celebration of creation will uplift and enliven those who pass by - - both downtrodden, tourist, wealthy shopper or harried business people including hundreds of civil servants.

A mural will make permanently visible the support and respect offered by Redeemer and the Yorkville community. Redeemer has been dedicated since 2013 to the education of our community and has continuously offered support for Missing & Murdered Indigenous Women & Girls, Indian Residential School Survivors, the implementation of UNDRIP and for Toronto Council Fire Cultural Centre.

Part of our Sesquicentennial Celebrations could be to celebrate those who were on this land in the millennia before contact & before the creation of Yorkville Village. We might want to celebrate that this land continues to nourish those who enter the Redeemer and to uphold the church building in its strength.

The Art and The Process

We originally consulted with Phil Coté III [MFA, Artist, Activist, Historian and Ancestral Knowledge Keeper. Moose Deer Point First Nation: Shawnee, Lakota, Potawatomi, and Ojibway] who shared his expertise. He assured us that he has consulted within the Indigenous community which is supportive of such a mural. A mural about Creation can easily focus on the communities' similarities. We all came from the Creator: our stories are the same - - Genesis 1:1-2. Anishnaabe spiritual Elders are speaking of the beginning of the Eighth Fire wherein the Indigenous and Settler communities will come together to build the eighth fire of Justice and Harmony.

Pursuant to a recommendation from our ISWG Counsellor Michael Cheena and from Toronto Council Fire we have approached Joseph Sagaj, a major artist. Information about him is in Appendix One.

Joseph Sagaj is Ojibwe, Sturgeon Clan from the remote community of Neskantaga, approximately 300 km north of Thunder Bay, Ontario. He graduated in Fine Arts at the Ontario College of Art & Design in 1985 and has had numerous private and public commissions which include logo designs, murals, and illustrations.

In 2017, Joseph completed seven paintings of "Seven Stages of Life and The Seven Grandfather Teachings" for the Ministry of the Attorney General, Aboriginal Justice Division, which are prominently displayed in their office. Joseph currently lives and works in Toronto. His murals can be seen at the Ontario Federation of Indigenous Friendship Centres building, 219 Front St E, between Princess & Berkeley, and Miziwe Biik building, 167 Gerrard St E, at the corner of Pembroke opposite Allan Gardens.

Joseph speaks of *Reconcili-action*: we will be celebrating and announcing our thankfulness for being able to share this land at Avenue & Bloor. The general concept is to celebrate Creation, including creation myths.

We have met with Joseph, as have some of the senior lay leaders. He is available to discuss the project as we may wish.

He assures us that no piece of Indigenous art has ever been damaged by graffiti or acts of disrespect in this city.

As a first step, we have worked out a process that will respect the historicity of the church building.

We have held 2 creative charrettes with parishioners in May and June. Andrew and Esther Wesley participated in June and had planned to facilitate the Indigenous Circle in July, but faulty tech or wifi prevented that.

The charrette has become a technique for consulting with all stakeholders on a particular project which could include a design or art project like a mural. These were brainstorming sessions to assist Joseph with his visioning. In July, we offered a Circle on Zoom for Indigenous members of the local community. A full report is appended to the Concept Drawings prepared by member Dawn Lee and Aylin Doyle from Blue Rhino Design.

Joseph's process includes consulting with his community & his Elders. He will go on his own private quest so the mural will reflect the spirituality of himself, his community and our community. He spoke of the form as being like a ribbon, a belt, a scarf. He spoke of the land as the heart of this place; the heart being created from the strawberry which needs water and represents Woman. Over the summer, Joseph will refine his ideas and prepare an Artist's Statement and sketches. He very much appreciates the thoughtful ideas presented at the 3 charrettes.

The Mural would probably be created from two original paintings about three feet by seven feet.

The original art can be used for other celebratory projects such as postcards, and perhaps a book for gifting to schools and our youth.

Production and Installation Processes

Joseph Sagaj designs and paints, with youth interns, 2 paintings reflecting Indigenous and Christian concepts of CREATION by an agreed-upon set date. Each will be approximately 3 feet by 7 feet.

We have consulted the East Toronto Historical Committee, which opined that painting on the cement parking was not appropriate. Should Vestry approve the Mural Project in the fall, ISWG and the Property Committee will request a meeting with the Toronto Preservation Board.

The site will likely be prepared by attaching aluminum frames 1.5 - 2 inches deep by 3 feet high by 3 feet long (or shorter as required by the configuration of the wall, particularly at the north and south ends).

The painting will be scanned into 3-foot widths (or shorter as required by the configuration of the wall) onto heavyweight adhesive vinyl which will be attached to aluminum panels, coated with weather-resistant coating and inserted into the aluminum frames already attached to the wall. The material is similar to that on buses. Its coating is meant to repel salt, slush and some markers. This process was used at the Woodbine Subway and can easily be inspected.

We would like to position closed brochure holders at each end of the wall and by the church entrances containing information about the mural. We are considering explanatory panels on the pillar sides, perhaps with QR codes.

Estimated Costs

The City grant provides a maximum of \$70,000 for the artist, materials, scanning, printing and installation. We feel we can work within those parameters. Please see Appendix One.

At this point in time, we hope to obtain non-binding estimates from suppliers of material and of installation.

There will be minimal maintenance of the panels: cleaning the protective cover 2 or 3 times a year. Should a panel be damaged, the cost of repair or replacement would be borne by Redeemer and any partners we recruit during the application process such as the BIA, the Residents' Association, and any businesses not members of the BIA.

The Application process

Should the Vestry approve continuing with the Application to the City, letters of support are required with the grant application.

We hope:

- a) the Chairs of the Management and Advisory Boards will write a letter to the Diocesan and Area Bishops to support Redeemer's request for letters of support, and also confirming the Boards' support of the Application.
- b) the Incumbent will confirm the decision of Vestry and his support, as well as that of the Bishops, in the Application.
- c) those who have contacts will approach the BIA, the Residents Association, the local politicians, and our neighbours, or offer help to find someone with contact information.
- d) Redeemer has approved or will approve the City's Anti-Harassment/Discrimination Policy. This Declaration is a condition of the City's grant.
- e) for legal assistance from some of the parish's lawyers. There are contracts required at several levels. Some are dictated by the city's StART programme, others will be between the artist and his interns and with the parish.

Please consult Appendix Two for the current Project Timeline.

Respectfully Submitted,

Stephen Allen on behalf of the Indigenous Solidarity Working Group

APPENDIX ONE TO ISWG MURAL PROPOSAL

Calls to Action from TRC 2015

59. We call upon church parties to the Settlement Agreement to develop ongoing education strategies to ensure that their respective congregations learn about their church's role in colonization, the history and legacy of residential schools, and why apologies to former residential school students, their families, and communities were necessary.

46. We call upon the parties to the Indian Residential Schools Settlement Agreement to develop and sign a Covenant of Reconciliation that would identify principles for working collaboratively to advance reconciliation in Canadian society and that would include, but not be limited to:

- i. Reaffirmation of the parties' commitment to reconciliation.
- ii. Repudiation of concepts used to justify European sovereignty over Indigenous lands and peoples, such as the Doctrine of Discovery and terra nullius, and the reformation of laws, governance structures, and policies within their respective institutions that continue to rely on such concepts.
- iii. Full adoption and implementation of the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples as the framework for reconciliation.
- iv. Support for the renewal or establishment of Treaty relationships based on principles of mutual recognition, mutual respect, and shared responsibility for maintaining those relationships into the future.

48. We call upon the church parties to the Settlement Agreement and all other faith groups and interfaith social justice groups in Canada who have not already done so, to formally adopt and comply with the principles, norms, and standards of the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples as a framework for reconciliation. This would include, but not be limited to, the following commitments:

- i. Ensuring that their institutions, policies, programs, and practices comply with the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples.
- ii. Respecting Indigenous peoples' right to self-determination in spiritual matters, including the right to practise, develop, and teach their own spiritual and religious traditions, customs, and ceremonies, consistent with Article 12:1 of the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples.
- iii. Engaging in ongoing public dialogue and actions to support the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples.

49. We call upon all religious denominations and faith groups who have not already done so to repudiate concepts used to justify European sovereignty over Indigenous lands and peoples, such as the Doctrine of Discovery and terra nullius.

The Doctrine of Discovery Motion 2010

At the 39th General Synod of the Anglican Church of Canada, the Synod voted to repudiate — or deny the validity — of The Doctrine of Discovery. The motion (A086) also requested that each Diocese and the larger Church:

- be made aware of the doctrine and its effects
- review ways that its systems still manifest the effects of the doctrine
- reflect upon its history and encourage all Anglicans to seek a greater understanding of Indigenous Peoples
- support Indigenous efforts to assert their sovereignty and have their inherent rights respected
- put pressure on Her Majesty, Queen Elizabeth II to publicly repudiate the claimed validity of the doctrine

Church outlines steps to implement the UN Indigenous rights declaration

<https://www.anglicannews.org/news/2016/03/canada-church-outlines-steps-to-implement-un-indigenous-rights-declaration.aspx>

Links to Apologies

<https://www.anglican.ca/tr/apology/english/>

<https://www.anglican.ca/news/an-apology-for-spiritual-harm/30024511/>

Joseph Sagaj

<http://muskratmagazine.com/joseph-sagaj/>

<http://nationtalk.ca/story/a-visual-history-of-dr-oronhyatekha>

<https://graffitiluxandmurals.com/tag/joseph-sagaj/>

<https://www.senecacollege.ca/news-and-events/media-releases/seneca-terrazzo-medallion-named-project-of-the-year-by-industry-association.html>

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=n_BNBKr4WKI

The Eighth Fire

<https://www.spiritofthe8thfire.com/the-prophecy.html>

<https://aboriginalresources.weebly.com/8th-fire.html>

POTENTIAL GRANT

Toronto City Council adopted the Toronto Public Art Strategy 2020-2030: Creativity and Community Everywhere to champion public art in city-building. By implementing this strategy, the City intends to make Toronto a global leader in public art.

The strategy seeks to extend the benefits of public art city-wide and build on public art's ability to advance broader city-building priorities such as equity and inclusion, environmental resilience, and reconciliation with Indigenous communities.

The City of Toronto's vision for public art is to promote new and innovative approaches to its creation, to tell stories that build and connect artists and communities to place, and to have artworks in every neighbourhood. Twenty-one actions are recommended in the strategy to advance public art across Toronto and heighten the impact of the City's public art programs for residents and visitors. The Year of Public Art in 2021 will be the first major new programming initiative related to the strategy.

The City currently delivers three major public art programs: the City of Toronto Public Art and Monuments Collection, the Percent for Public Art Program and StreetARToronto. Together, these programs have had a major impact on the city's urban fabric, assembling a collection of public art that, in the number of works alone, is of international significance. This new strategy builds on these strong foundations to enhance their collective impact.

I have recently consulted with the very supportive head of the StART programme. 2021 has been declared The Year of Public Art. The grants programmes will continue and might be expanded.

(<https://www.toronto.ca/explore-enjoy/history-art-culture/public-art/year-of-public-art/>)

The application period will open in November and likely close in February. (The 2020 late closing had to do with internal issues.) We are also assessing the availability of other grants from potential funders such as the Ontario Arts Council and the many foundations supporting visual arts.

The 10% of the budget for "cash or in-kind" can include donated professional time, space, promotional materials, space, a community facilitator, among other things.

5% of the budget for maintenance can include pledges or undertakings.

As to the Interns required to be engaged, they can have community skills such as for canvassing or presenting the proposal, setting up and hosting workshops, working with neighbourhood potential partners, daily set-up & take-down during the painting and installation processes, taking part in some quality education or training. Honoraria for them can be built into the budget.

StreetARToronto (StART)

[Information Session presentation](#)

https://www.toronto.ca/wp-content/uploads/2020/01/96ba-TS_StART_2020_Information_Session.pdf

Note pages 6, 8, 9, 11 to 14

On May 23rd, we held our first charette facilitated by Aylin Doyle of Rhino Design. The simple task of the participants was to envisage what could happen on that west wall. Mr. Sagaj was present to listen and to answer questions.

Unhappily, many invitees from Indigenous organizations did not respond, and those who did from Council Fire youth did not attend. Our own ISWG counsellor, Michael Cheena has no access to wifi or data. I suspect he is not alone in that community.

We were anticipating The Rev. Canon Andrew Wesley as a participant. He enthusiastically reviewed the material but was unable to get access to the meeting despite several tries.

The small breakout groups came up with a great variety of ideas as to images, themes, symbols, stories told by the buildings around us, sizes of images, textures, patterns. and division of images. We all were pleased with the process, and plan to repeat it soon.

We were thrilled with Joseph's observations throughout the day and he looks forward to more consultations.

StART Partnership Grant Parameters

StART Partnership Program provides support and up to \$60,000 in funding for large-scale projects that support the program's mission to revitalize and engage communities through mural, street and graffiti art. StART values projects that are aligned with broader neighbourhood revitalization efforts and target areas of graffiti vandalism and is interested in partnering on projects that:

- are innovative in terms of design, delivery, and message
- are valuable to the community, reflect neighbourhood identities and are site-specific in design
- demonstrate a strong community engagement component
- foster expanded partnerships within the arts community
- provide mentorship or training opportunities for youth or emerging artists

- **StART Partnership Program Objectives**

- Enhance Toronto's streets and public spaces. Celebrate the City of Toronto Motto Diversity Our Strength, and foster a greater sense of belonging among all
- Engage and vitalize Toronto communities through physical enhancements and related events
- Showcase local artists and mentor emerging talent
- Counteract graffiti vandalism
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- **Eligibility Requirements** Individual artists, artist collectives, cultural producers and not-for-profit or charitable organizations operating in the City of Toronto may apply. All projects and related activities must be located in Toronto. Written authorization from the property owner is required at the time of application
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- **Evaluation & Timelines** Proposals will be reviewed by a Selection Committee including external art jurors and StART subject matter experts, and assessed on the following criteria: Achieves StART's overall objectives and priorities including strong local support and evidence of connecting with a neighbourhood's improvement strategy (30%) Ability to illustrate how the project reflects, chronicles, or supports the distinct character of the community and overall artistic quality (25%) Organizational background (history of community work and experience with street art projects) (15%) Mentorship (how will the project serve as a meaningful pathway for youth and emerging artists?) (10%) Ability to leverage in-kind, private or public support (10%) Technical Feasibility (visibility of the site, strong maintenance plan, project coordination, and workplan) (10%)

ISWG MURAL PROJECT TIMELINE

April to July: Attended Boards and Creation Matters @ Redeemer

- : Held two charrettes with parishioners May 23rd & June 20th
- : Held a charrette with representatives of Toronto's Indigenous community
- : Proposal and Concept Drawings placed on the web site

SUMMER: Host at least one Parish Discussion group in August

- : Post FAQs on Redeemer website
- : Continue to engage with Indigenous organizations such as the Native Cultural Centre of Toronto (NCCT), Council Fire, the Association for Native Development in the Performing and Visual Arts (ANDPVA), Mississauga of the Credit FN, Elders

Prepare for Vestry: Offer pre-vestry Zoom meetings based on FAQ feedback

- : Ensure an agenda item to approve the Declaration of Compliance with the Anti Harassment/Discrimination Legislation & City Policy
- : Final proposal with renderings, quotes, artist's statement
- : Budget

POST VESTRY: Request a meeting with Community Council's Heritage committee and then the Preservation Board

- : Approach Councillor Mike Layton for assistance & support at the Toronto Preservation Board
- : Seek letters of support and financial pledges for maintenance
 - from the BIA
 - from Yorkville Residents' Association
 - from Hyatt, Louis Vuitton, Club Monaco, Renaissance Plaza etc
- : Seek letters of support
 - from Bishops Asbil, Robertson & Archbishop MacDonald
 - from Layton, Caroline Bennett, MPP Suze Morrison
 - From the ROM and Indigenous organizations
- : Ask for written support from Layton, Caroline Bennett, Suze Morrison

MPP

OCTOBER to DECEMBER: Get Application drafted, with assistance from Redeemerites Marion Lynn, Anne Kyes and Diane Meredith and then vetted by StART advisor Catherine Campbell

- : Draft Contracts with Joseph, suppliers, printers, installers

DECEMBER to FEBRUARY: Complete and submit Application

2021: MARCH: Decision by StART Partnership programme jury

- : Contracts with Joseph, Interns, scanner, printer, and installer with time limits

APRIL: review all documents, Timelines, Tasks

OCTOBER 31: Mural completed OR earlier to meld with Sesquicentennial celebrations