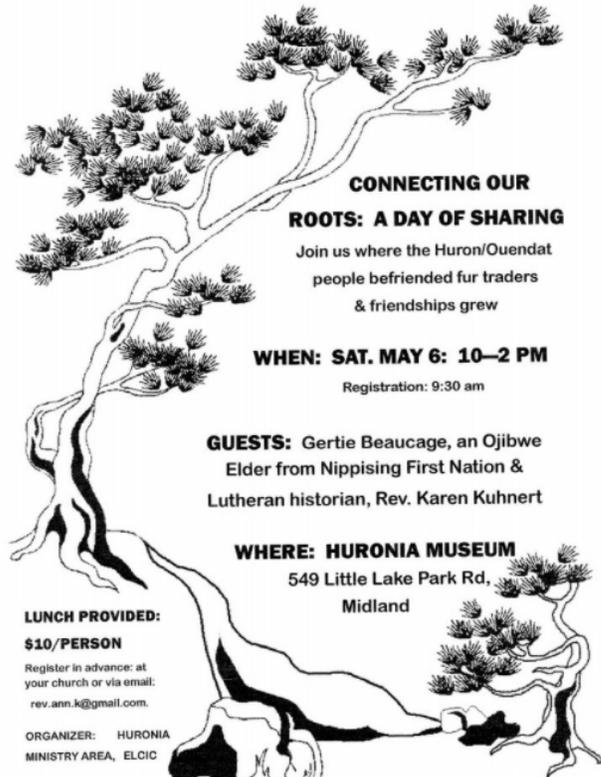


Connecting Our Roots: A Day of Sharing

On Saturday, May 6, the Huronia Ministry Area of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in Canada (ELCIC) sponsored a day of sharing at the Huronia Museum, 549 Little Lake Park Rd. in Midland, Ontario.

More than forty people attended to hear Gertie Beaucage, an Ojibwe Elder from Nippising First Nation and a member of the Bear Clan, share insight, history and beliefs. The Churches who hosted the event were Westside Lutheran Church, Barrie, St. David's Anglican Lutheran Church, Orillia and St. Mark's Anglican Lutheran Church.



CONNECTING OUR ROOTS: A DAY OF SHARING
Join us where the Huron/Ojibwe people befriended fur traders & friendships grew

WHEN: SAT. MAY 6: 10–2 PM
Registration: 9:30 am

GUESTS: Gertie Beaucage, an Ojibwe Elder from Nippising First Nation & Lutheran historian, Rev. Karen Kuhnert

WHERE: HURONIA MUSEUM
549 Little Lake Park Rd,
Midland

LUNCH PROVIDED:
\$10/PERSON
Register in advance: at your church or via email:
rev.ann.k@gmail.com.

ORGANIZER: HURONIA MINISTRY AREA, ELCIC

After our Ministry Area Dean Ann Krueger offered the gift of tobacco to the day's presenters, the morning began with Gertie lighting sage and wafting the herb scent and smoke through the air. This was done gently to cleanse the room and the people that were there. We learned just some of the history and trials that indigenous people have had to endure. She shared knowledge of the four sacred

medicines: tobacco, sweetgrass, sage and cedar. Cedar, which is always green, whether in summer or winter, connects to the Creator's promise that our Spirit will last forever. At the end of our journey, our Spirit moves on, but our bodies remain. This reminded me of what the Christian faith declares at someone's funeral: "from dust you were formed and to dust you shall return". Someone asked why the eagle is so prominent in Indigenous beliefs. The eagle, she said, was the first animal to step forward to the Creator on behalf of humankind because the eagle's love for humankind was great. This reminded me of Jesus Christ, whose love for humankind was so



great that He sacrificed himself on the cross for us.

It touched me when Gertie shared her knowledge of the four gifts the Creator gave to every person: Kindness, Honesty, Generosity and Strength of Belief or Faith. Indigenous Peoples brought this understanding to the Treaties process. Unfortunately these gifts were not reflected on the part of Settlers, Treaty promises have been broken. It is up to parents to teach these gifts to their children. It is up to all of us to teach Treaty awareness as well.

In our time together we learned that indigenous peoples were sometimes confined to reserves regulated by Indian Agents. In some places you could only leave the reserve if the Agent granted a day pass, a "pink slip." If you were caught by the police out past the time on your slip you were jailed. Gertie said that the "Truth and Reconciliation" process to recovery of relationship is not instant, it will take time. It is up to each and every one of us to bring about much needed changes.

I appreciated when Gertie said that the sickness of today is poverty of the mind and spirit. Whatever we choose to fill our minds with, that's what we will sow and reap. Someone asked about rampant suicide within the younger generation. In her view, our western culture, television ads, cell phones, etc. invaded Indian life and sent the wrong message to the young people who wanted what the other young people had. We can all see in our cultures, Indigenous and Non-Indigenous, the drive to consume and experience beyond our own communities, we are not easily content. Our own National Bishop Susan has talked to Lutherans about "scarcity and abundance" thinking.

Gertie ended her presentation with saying that it is up to us to bring about change and that every person we meet is a gift from the Creator. Such a good thing to remember makes one look at someone differently, doesn't it?



After lunch we listened to a presentation given by Karen Kuhnert, a Lutheran pastor who is Archivist (Story-keeper) of the Eastern Synod of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in Canada including all the congregations.

Karen explained that Lutherans have been in relationship with the Six Nations since 1613, and with the Inuit since 1619. Lutherans were originally settled



among, and then alongside, the Indigenous Nations of Canada as refugees and we should remember that we were welcomed and cared for when we were vulnerable. Karen talked about Canada as one nation on a land mass of Nations. Some First Nations in Canada have even maintained their traditional First Nations passports and can use them to travel internationally. She pointed out that our section of Canada between the Great Lakes

(Huronian) was like “a Costco” of abundance fought over by the French and British Crowns as well as many First Nations, all who have their own version of history. Settlers were taught and over time believed what was written in the English and French text books, but Indigenous peoples have preserved the history by talking and passing down their personal experiences from generation to generation.

Karen emphasized that there is still a lot of learning to be done and the importance of listening to each other's stories. And, with that in mind, said that she would like to hear about our stories and anyone with something to share should contact her. Girtie had shared that she learned by going to the homes of elders, helping with chores, sharing resources and talking. Karen encouraged us to get to know our neighbouring First Nations in the same way. Each one of us has a story; all we have to do is to listen and share.



Karen encouraged us to get to know our neighbouring First Nations in the same way. Each one of us has a story; all we have to do is to listen and share.

It was a blessing to us to be sent on our way with a “Travelling Song” encouraged by the rattle and drum and the voices ofDrum Group.

Submitted by:

Rosemary Hagedorn,

St. Mark’s Anglican Lutheran Church, Midland, Ontario.