Special Vestry – Sunday, November 8, 2020, 1:00pm

Introduction:

This is intended to provide information on the mural proposal for the Special Vestry on November 8, 2020. For further information, please see the Indigenous Solidarity Working Group's section on The Redeemer's web site:
https://theredeemer.ca/get-involved/indigenous-solidarity- solidarity-working-group/

1) **The proposal for the mural**. This is a comprehensive document that includes a theological rationale for the mural; highlights of the Anglican Church of Canada's commitment to truth and reconciliation concerning the church's role in residential schools and other forms of colonization; introduction to the artist (Joseph Sagaj) who would design and paint the mural; overview of the technical side of the mural; projected cost; timeline;
2) **Concept Brief** which includes where the mural will be mounted and reports from the two consultations with members of The Redeemer and one consultation with members of the Indigenous community in the Toronto area.

A) Motions to be considered at Special Vestry:

M/S/C: 1) THAT this Special Vestry of the Church of The Redeemer approve the submission to the City of Toronto's *Street Art Partnership Programme* for funding in 2021 according the rules set out by the City for the proposal for a mural along the lower west (Avenue Road) wall of the church.

M/S/C: 2) THAT no monies are to be paid from the budget of the church for this project.

M/S/C: 3) THAT all contracts required by the City be approved and signed by the appropriate officers of the Church.

B) Some Frequently Asked Questions About The Proposal:

1. The City of Toronto is accumulating a large deficit due to covid-19. What happens if for budgetary reasons, the City cancels the mural program? **Answer: Then the mural will not happen.**

2. How has the Indigenous community in Toronto been consulted about the mural? **Answer: Joseph Sagaj is Anishnawbe, a member of the Neskantaga First Nation and of the Sturgeon Clan. He would not agree to do this mural if he had any concerns. Earlier in July, the ISWG held a consultation with several Indigenous people in the Greater Toronto Area. None of them expressed concerns about the mural - all of them shared some very creative ideas about what the mural might look like. Other Indigenous people who had been invited and sent their regrets, expressed support for the proposal.**

3. The mural would be mounted on the cement section (parging) of the wall along Avenue Road – about 3 feet high from the sidewalk to below the stone work. Why can't it be higher

so that it might be more visible? **Answer: The Church of The Redeemer is designated a heritage building. Nothing can be painted or mounted on the stone work.**

4. The mural may be graffiti tagged or damaged. The Church proper may also be graffiti tagged because of the presence of the mural. **Answer: The Indigenous Solidarity Working Group cannot offer an absolute guarantee that the mural will not attract graffiti tagging or that because of the presence of the mural, the church proper will not attract tagging. Joseph Sagaj, the artist who will paint the mural (if approved by the parish and if the Committee at City Hall which funds murals, approves the proposal) has said that to the best of his knowledge, murals painted by Indigenous artists in Toronto, have not suffered graffiti tagging. And to the best of our knowledge, there was some tagging on one of the walls a few years ago which was removed. There are cleaning solutions available to remove graffiti tagging. Should one of the panels be damaged, it can be repaired separately or reprinted.**

The proposed budget to the Committee at City Hall which funds murals will include annual care and maintenance for the mural.

5**.** Over the course of time, there will be rain, sleet, snow, mud. The mural will get dirty. Won't this cause damage? **Answer: There will be a protective coating on the mural. It can be washed and cleaned.**

6. What if there is construction on the sidewalk along Avenue Road? **Answer: The City has a responsibility to protect the integrity of the church and this would include the mural. If necessary, it would be possible to remove the panels until the sidewalk construction is completed.**

C) Vision for the Mural:

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. Appropriate action is to share together in honouring creation. 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.

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.
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.

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.

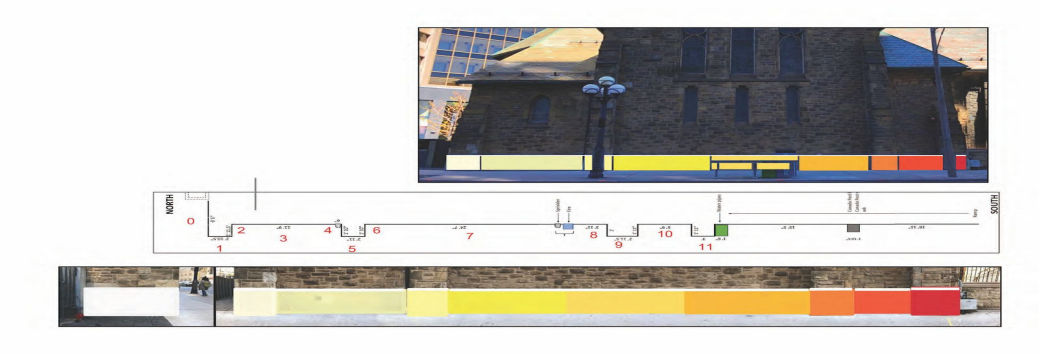
The Uniqueness of the Redeemer:

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.
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. 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.

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.

A mural will make permanently visible the support and respect offered by Redeemer and the Yorkville community.

D) Image of the West Wall:



E) Timeline:

May 23: Consultation with members of Redeemer to brainstorm ideas of what the mural might look like.
June 20: Consultation with members of Redeemer to brainstorm ideas of what the mural might look like.

July 11: Consultation with members of the Indigenous community in the Greater Toronto Area to brainstorm ideas of what the mural might look like.

September 22: Advisory Board approves a Special Vestry for decision about the mural proposal being submitted to StART. Recommendation submitted to Board of Management.
September 30: Information session for members of Redeemer to share their comments and ask questions about the mural.
October 21: Board of Management approves motion to refer to a Special Vestry the decision about the mural proposal being submitted to the StART programme

November 8: Special Vestry
November to December: Prepare Application if Special Vestry approves motion for the mural proposal to be submitted to StART.

January - 2021: Continue to prepare Application if Special Vestry approves motion for the mural proposal to be submitted to StART.
February: Proposal submitted to StART.
March: Decision by StART jury
April – August: Contracts with the artist, Joseph Sagaj and the company that will produce and install the mural.
October: 31: Mural must be completed.

F) Draft Budget:

Joseph Sagaj Fee **$30,000 to $35,000**

Includes materials, sketches, palette experimentation, creation of at least two paintings, drafting & finalizing Artist's Statement and descriptions of the mural, mentoring of Interns, payment of Interns, consultations as necessary

Preparation of the wall, production and installation (after approved by City Heritage Preservation Committee & StART administration), maintenance

$25,000 to $35,000

Payments: City of Toronto 80% to a maximum of $60,000.
Volunteers 10%
Private donation(s) 10%