

The Diocese of Rupert's Land

The Right Reverend Donald D. Phillips

Bishop of Rupert's Land

July 9, 2015

Dear Church leaders and communicators,

Many of you are probably aware of the plight of Shoal Lake #40 First Nation and its water supply as well as access to main roads. Shoal Lake 40 First Nation is an Ojibwa or Ontario Saulteaux First Nation located in the Eastman Region of Manitoba and the Kenora District of Ontario. The on-reserve population was 266 in 2011. The first Nation is a member of the Grand Council of Treaty 3. In spite of the fact that the entire population of Winnipeg receives its drinking water from Shoal Lake, and the fact that both the City of Winnipeg and Province of Manitoba have committed to their share of the costs to build the needed road and bridge, the federal government failed, at the strategic (and very public) moment to commit to its share for building the needed road link. Particularly in light of all of the recent rhetoric around “healing and reconciliation” with the First Nations of this land, this response is unthinkable and once again confirms the lack of integrity in working in partnership with First Nations.

Many of us live in Winnipeg, all of us live in the same region of Canada as Shoal Lake #40. Politically, it is easy for the federal government to “forget” about the plight of these 266 persons. It is up to us to make sure that doesn’t happen! Archdeacons Geoff Woodcroft and Simon Blaikie have put together a good “package” offering us two ways to respond. (See below)

I am asking that you make this as public as possible in your congregations and other networks and impress upon people the importance of their getting involved and taking action to register their concern. Thanks for helping to mobilize the members of our Church to act on behalf of those who need our support. At the closing ceremony for the TRC being held in Winnipeg, Elder Stan McKay, in reflecting on what First Nations really need to move forward, said, “We don’t need help. What we need is ‘relatives’!”, - meaning people who are concerned for the welfare of indigenous Canadians because they feel connected to them in the way that First Nations believe is true for the whole human family.

Yours in Christ,

+Donald

Donald Phillips
Diocese of Rupert’s Land

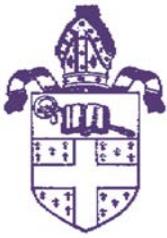
Message from Geoff Woodcroft and Simon Blaikie

Many of our Anglican folk are asking “What can we do to help?”

<http://www.sl40.ca/>

<https://www.facebook.com/MuseumofCanadianHumanRightsViolations>

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TAKE ACTION:

<https://fundrazr.com/campaigns/810jw4/ab/a4wYBf>

<https://secure.canadians.org/ea-action/action?ea.client.id=1899&ea.campaign.id=38201>

1. Send an email using the form below. Please be sure to add your own comments.
2. Call your federal representative, tell them how you feel about Shoal Lake 40's forced isolation and the Harper government's unwillingness to commit \$10 million to help pay for Freedom Road.

TO: Prime Minister Harper

CC: Greg Rickford, Minister of Natural Resources

Greg Selinger, Premier of Manitoba

Brian Bowman, Mayor of Winnipeg

Thomas Mulcair, NDP Party Leader

Elizabeth May, Green Party Leader

Justin Trudeau, Liberal Party Leader

Steve Bell produced the following action at the beginning of July:

<http://stevebell.com/2015/07/road-to-reconciliation-shoal-lake-40-first-nation/> and many of you have already jumped on-board. We hope you are able to share this with a wider group, especially in MB to make awareness of the situation a priority for our time and place.

Simon and I are now asking you to share with your particular constituencies and deaneries, this: to share on Church signs, posters or cards, "We support the Road to Reconciliation with our brothers and sisters of Shoal Lake." Take a picture, if you can, and facebook it, tweet it, send it to us, to the RLN, and even Bishop Don.

Thanks for considering this request.

Geoff (and for Simon)

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