



August 31, 2021

STAR Catholic School Division presents donation to Sacred Heart Church of the First Peoples

Leduc — On August 23, on behalf of STAR Catholic School Division, Board Chair Michelle Lamer presented Father Susai Jesu and assistant pastor Father Mark Blom of Sacred Heart Church of the First Peoples with a donation cheque in the amount of \$4,200.

“We are humbled by the generosity of STAR Catholic’s students and staff,” says Fr. Blom. “Young people are easily moved and generous in helping others who have suffered major losses; we thank the students and the staff who guided them to understand the value of helping to rebuild Sacred Heart Church of the First Peoples.”



The donation will aid the parish in rebuilding their 108-year-old church after a fire damaged the building last year. Along with making the necessary repairs, the parish has taken the opportunity to undergo other improvements to the church, including building a more easily climbable staircase and installing a new heating system. As the church is a First Nations, Métis, and Inuit national parish — the first of its kind in Canada — its sanctuary will also be redesigned to include a symbolic tipi.

“The tipi in the sanctuary will declare to all who enter the church that this is an Indigenous Catholic church,” Fr. Blom explains. “We will strive to be a parish community that expresses the mystery of Christ and His church through Indigenous language, symbols, and rites.”

Donations were collected at schools across the Division until the end of last school year through a variety of fundraising activities, many of which were centered around National Indigenous Peoples Day. These included collecting loonies for orange ribbons, Bannock hot lunches and freezie sales, and a Plinko Challenge. Many schools plan to collect donations into the current school year, including by selling t-shirts for Orange Shirt Day.

“Sacred Heart Church of the First Peoples is a beautiful and welcoming church that provides many important services to the surrounding community and has a long history of serving and supporting Edmonton’s Indigenous population,” says Chair Lamer. “STAR Catholic School Division is honoured to be able to assist in the church’s rebuilding efforts so they may continue their wonderful work for years to come.”

Based in central Alberta, Saint Thomas Aquinas Roman (STAR) Catholic School Division represents 12 schools that serve the communities of Beaumont, Drayton Valley, Lacombe, Leduc, Ponoka, and Wetaskiwin. The STAR Catholic Schools team of teachers and support staff are committed to giving more than 4000 students across our division every opportunity to achieve their potential in a caring, safe and Christ-centred environment.

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For more information, contact:
Caitlin Kehoe
Manager of Communications
STAR Catholic Schools
(780) 986-2500
caitlin.kehoe@starcatholic.ab.ca