

***Year in Review***  
***McDougall Stoney Mission Society***  
***November 2017 – November 2018***

1. It has been a devastating year and a half for the people that have thought a great deal of the iconic little white church that was apart of the history of Alberta since the fire. The new board was voted in at the end of November and we all had our own passion and memories of the site. As a new board, we knew that we had our challenges ahead of us but were excited to approach this opportunity with enthusiasm and hard work.



Photo of the McDougall Memorial United Church when the new board was voted in.

2. One of the first tasks for us as a board was our finances. We needed to review and ensure that we were not spending money recklessly. With the church now gone a lot of our revenue that we received from weddings was no longer available. We went out to see what we had at the storage facilities and moved the items elsewhere. Of course, we had to choose the day with the most snowfall of the year. At least it was teambuilding!



Moved the generously donated church pews out of storage.

3. From the day after the Board of Directors were elected, Brenda McQueen started to build the relationship with the Provincial Government knowing that it was the first area where working together on this huge project needed to begin. After lots of discussions and brainstorming we presented two proposals to the Provincial Government liaisons. The proposals worked their way up to the numerous people who needed to sign them and eventually reached the Minister of Tourism and Agriculture. We were very happy to hear the news that these two proposals were accepted. One was with Dave Chalmers of Chalmers Heritage Conservation Ltd to have the church cleaned up and the logs taken down, thereby making the area safe. In addition, the logs were tested to see which ones could be used in the future should the Society decide to restructure the church back to the way it was. The second proposal was to work with Kendra Kolomyja of Lifeways to have an archeological dig and survey of the site completed after it was cleaned up and safe. This is where we needed to start with our hard work so that the site could move forward.
4. Now that there was no church on the site, Brenda McQueen and Mike Geier realized that we need to make this site more than the church alone. So, we came upon the thought that we should try holding numerous events at the site this summer for a variety of people with different interests. Let's keep the site alive through this difficult time and continue to have the love for this beautiful piece of history for Alberta. This led us to make a postcard and brochure for the site with dates of events that will be open to the public at the site this summer. These were used to share with people that we met for advertising purposes.





## 5. **A Pipe Ceremony**

The feelings of this historic day will always be an incredible memory for the rest of Brenda McQueen's life. These were the first goosebumps for her since she started this incredible year and opportunity to help her ancestors' history remain alive as the president of the McDougall Stoney Mission Society. What a true honour to assist one of the Stoney families in raising this tipi on the site to hold the ceremony inside. The Stoney families gave us a blessing ceremony to move forward. This is the first monumental step forward in our journey together. They gave us blessings to move forward with our plans and to start new beginnings to work together like our ancestors did. New friendships for life started to develop on this beautiful day.



Photo of the members of the McDougall Stoney Mission Society at the historic Pipe Ceremony



## 6. Site Clean Up

Several people were involved in the annual site cleanup. The snow was gone, crocuses were blooming, and there was a chance for McDougall Families to re-connect. We also had the outhouses cleaned so visitors would have a more pleasant experience.



A different clean up this year without having to clean the church. This was very difficult for a lot of us.







It was nice to have so many hands out helping the clean up of the site this year.



7. Unfortunately, there was an attempted break-in of the cabin and the pumphouse. After we that we installed new door hardware on the cabin and new glass on the cabin and the pumphouse. Fortunately, we had a few handymen help us out with this task.



The window of the cabin that had a rock thrown through it

## 8. Elders Lunch at the Site

Brenda McQueen felt it was important to include the elders of the Society and the Stoneys for a special lunch. It was important that they were a part of the dismantling of the logs and have the opportunity to be together to see this begin. Dave Chalmers took the time to explain the procedure to them as they walked the site with his workers. They explained how the church was made and shared their knowledge with the elders. A special day of storytelling and bonding that will definitely be another highlight of memories for all who attended. History was in the making once again, and the elders were presented with a special time to come together, like old times.











The elders listen to Dave as he explains the workmanship from 1875.

9. Dave Chalmers is shown beginning his work of dismantling the church and testing the logs. Dave and his crew worked hard and the enthusiasm from all of them to be a part of this history with their expertise was an honour to participate in. They brought such energy and excitement to the site. The days that Brenda McQueen drove out to see the progress were filled with joy and excitement for the future of the site.







The crew is hard at work taking off the cladding.





A photo of the inside of the church. You can see the ring from the bottom of the wood burning stove and the floor that caved in.









The McDougall Memorial United Church plaque found in the church.





The numbering system to label the logs so that they know exactly where they came from as they took the logs down.



The church has all been taken down and now the floor and crawl space need to be cleaned up.





The dirty job of picking up all the charcoal.



The crew get covered in charcoal many days that they worked on the church. Today they take a photo as the clean up is complete.



Kendra Kolomyja beginning her work to provide the society with some drawings of the site.



10. We added a timeline of photos to the construction fence so as visitors who come by the site will see the stages that we have completed since the fire. Also, we added a banner explaining to the public what the Society has been working on with the post-fire analysis.





## McDougall Memorial United Church – Post Fire Analysis

### PART 1

#### Prior to Dismantling the Church

- Chalmers Heritage Conservation Limited believes there is an opportunity to salvage and reuse material from the building.
- Some of the items being considered for salvage are: the logs and foundation, clay chinking, daubing and hardware.
- Site to be cleaned up, original fabric to be analysed.
- Archaeological dig to be conducted around the perimeter of the church.



### PART 2

#### After Dismantling the Church

- All the logs to be removed. The logs will be cored to determine the condition of the center of the log. If the log is salvageable, all charring will be scraped off and each piece thoroughly cleaned.
- Archaeological dig to be conducted within the perimeter of the church.
- We are working with the Province of Alberta to develop a plan to move forward with this Historic site based on the salvage results.

PLEASE KEEP IN TOUCH WITH OUR PROGRESS. Like us on Facebook – McDougall Stoney Mission Society and check out our website [mcdougallstoneymission.com](http://mcdougallstoneymission.com).

11. Brenda McQueen and Mike Geier have held a variety of Events at the site this summer to keep the momentum and interest up. They were all a huge success.



## Art Walk and Bradley Bischoff

An artist sketched this picture with some of the charcoal from the burnt church. This event was a great success as we had Bradley Bischoff singing while people walked around and viewed artwork from artists and enjoyed the beautiful site. It was another bad smoky day due to all the BC wildfires. But the show must go on. It was so amazing to hear the songs and the downhome lyrics wafting across the site. Another “must do again”!



## Botanical Walk and Talk

Another interesting event to learn about the plants at the site and their historical uses by indigenous peoples. Also, we learned how they grow differently on the site due to climatic influences.





## Ask a Historian

We were fortunate to have two historians come to the site to share their stories and memories. Dr. Pannikock – Past President of the Athabasca University and Historian on Western Canada, shared the McDougall story. Then Rick Lightning, an Elder and influencer from the Hobbema (Maskwacis Reserve) and his lovely wife Inez joined us to talk about traditions of the Indigenous Peoples. He gave us a lot of lessons to learn and think about.







## **Calgary Historic Week**

We were honoured to be asked to be a part of the Calgary Historic Week. Sarah Harvey and David Ballard knew that the site would be a great location for conversation about learning from the past to make a better future. They realized that the destruction of the McDougall Church by fire in May 2017 broke the hearts of many. The McDougall Stoney Mission Society is healing, along with the support of their friends from the Province, the Stoney Nakoda, and the local community. It was a wonderful event for people to learn from Dave Chalmers and Brenda McQueen about the work that was going to be taking place on the site during the summer.

## Archeological Dig

Another incredible experience for all to learn about archeology from a well-known person to this particular site. Dr. Margaret Kennedy did two walks and talked about her past dig that she had completed on the lower shelves of the land in 1985. She shared with us her findings and thoughts. Kendra Kolomyja, our current archeologist shared her preliminary findings around the church site, as this had not been investigated before. She found the foundation outline of the original school on the site. Very interesting and was a great opportunity for people to learn from the past.





## **Bison Belong**

Harvey Locke (Ralphine Locke's Son, Founder of the Y2Y Initiative, and currently working on Nature Needs Half - Worldwide initiative), Marieve Marchand (From the Bison Belong group) and Bill Snow ( Stoney Community Facilitator) spoke about the importance and symbolism the Bison have to our mutual pasts and to our futures. We were so fortunate to have these people share with us their vision, the importance to the Indigenous Peoples and to our ecosystem, and their encouragement to keep doing what we are doing this year. They shared their knowledge with such passion that it made it an interesting topic to learn more about so that we can follow the future of the bison in the Canada Parks with more understanding.





## **Bought a Sea Can and had landscape designed on it**

We bought a sea can to store the logs and other items from the burnt church. We were honoured to have some artists come out and add the landscape on it. In the future, artists can come and add animals, buildings, and plants to the landscape as well. This initiative was developed so that we could store the logs the site until a decision for the future of the site is determined. This way we do not have to pay for monthly storage fees or for transportation of the logs into Calgary.



12. As a board we felt that it was important to continue to carry on with the services that have always been held on the second Sunday of June and September. This is a tradition that we would like to see continue even though there is no church on the site. Lots of members have special childhood memories of these two events.

### June Service

The June Service was a great day for the service called “FORWARD TOGETHER”. Tammy Love, Phil Jones and Wayne Holst planned a gathering to share stories, sing songs and talk about the future.







## September Service

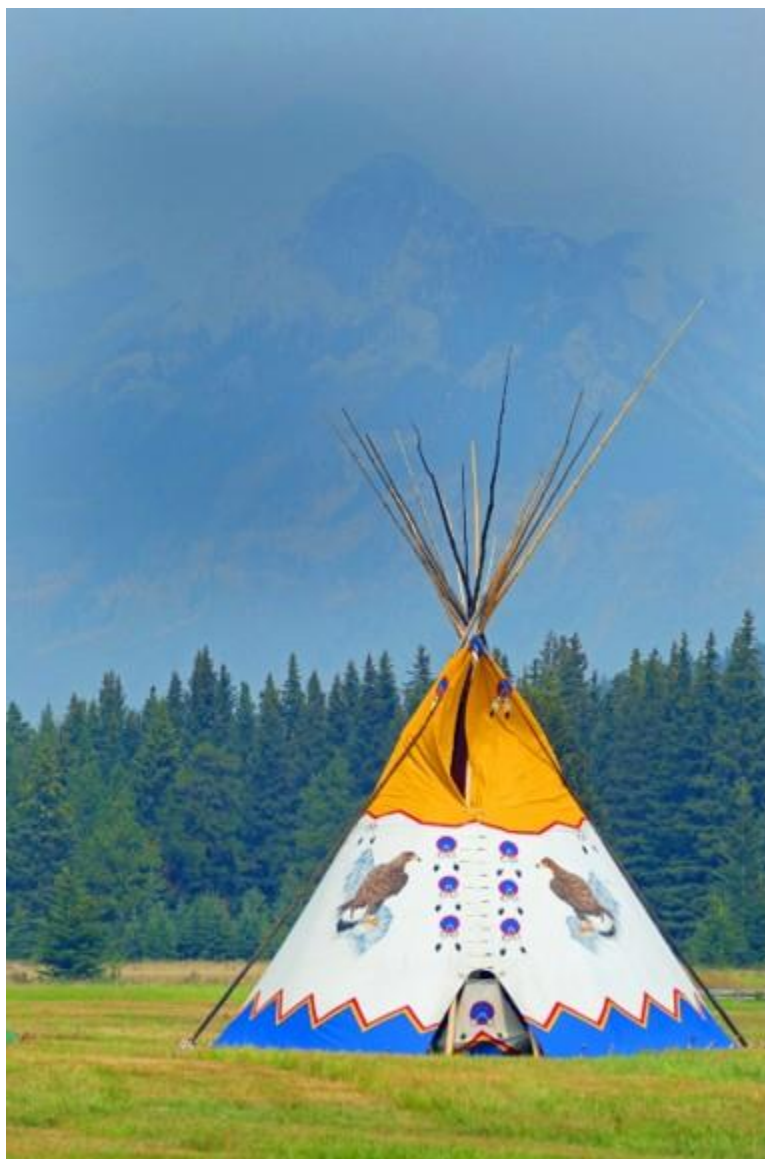
We had an incredible September service at the site with memories of George McDougall and the bison as well as relationships that were present in 1875 between the McDougalls and the Stoneys. This theme was chosen by Brenda McQueen, Mike Geier and Wayne Holst as they had attended the cairn ceremony for George McDougall a couple of weeks prior. It was mentioned numerous times by several people that we have already had a great start and are on a successful path towards reconciliation. It was definitely rewarding to see all of the hard work during the year led to a huge success. The tears in people's eyes were evident with the realization that there will be a future at this site again like George McDougall had set out to create so many years ago.





13. We have been honoured to be invited to several events this year.

Brenda McQueen went to Indian Days in Banff to be a part of a discussion regarding the United Church of Canada and the direction that they could help with in the future. Also, the next day she was invited to a Pipe Ceremony that took place on their sacred land that was a blessing for water.





Brenda McQueen and Mike Geier went to speak at numerous church services to share and promote the future of the site. These United Churches included Cochrane United, Morley United, Central United, along with individual discussions with Knox United and Canmore United ministers.



We were also invited to a rebuilding celebration of a trapper's cabin that had been burned down. Brenda McQueen was presented with a beautiful beaded necklace to thank her for her efforts to date. She was also encouraged to work with the Stoney to help their youth with the various issues they are encountering.



Brenda McQueen and Mike Geier attended several Stoney elder council meetings. We have been working hard to establish an open dialogue so that we can have ongoing communications about the future of the site as well as work together in the future to help each other.

It was an honour that the society was invited to the unveiling of the new George McDougall Cairn in northwest Calgary. Brenda McQueen was asked to speak on behalf of the McDougall family.





We were invited to be a part of the Canada 150 Event which the Chiniki Band was putting on for the 150th Birthday of Canada. Brenda McQueen attended this event and many of her acquaintances she made at the Pipe Ceremony were re-established.



14. We had the cairn out in the parking lot restored. This was generously paid for by the Southern Alberta Pioneers Society. We appreciate that we can support one another and work together.





## 15. News stories

- CBC News (TV and Radio)
- CTV News
- Global TV News
- Cochrane Eagle
- Cochrane Facebook
- Cochrane Now Online
- Rocky Mountain Outlook



A year of learning more about the past, listening to stories that are shared and looking forward to the future for the site.

