

An August 19th message from our Archdeacon Nancy:

So, last week was a very full week here in the north. On Thursday morning, I got called away to a funeral in the next community south (Eastmain). At 369km away, I was the nearest priest, and so was called to come and serve the family and community. That 369km drive includes not one but two separate 100km drives on gravel roads to go from the Billy Diamond Highway into the community itself. It is such an honour to be invited into these sacred chapters in peoples' lives. The funeral itself was a very large funeral for a former police officer in Eastmain. Although I lead the service in English, all the hymns were in Cree. Again, I was reminded that the Eeyou Istchee navigate grief quite differently than we do, and are much more open about their tears and grief. This experience once again exposed me to many differences that one navigates in the north, like no funeral home, which means the funeral really does need to take place in rather short order. Also, there was no hearse, so the casket was transported from the church to the cemetery via pickup truck. And, once again, part of the funeral ritual includes the men of the family and the wider community taking their turn with a shovel helping to fill the grave before the community leaves the gravesite. The funeral was followed by a feast complete with Canada goose and all the fixings! I arrived home Saturday in time to do the baptismal prep in Wemindji for the baptism the following morning. This little fellow is only 5 weeks old, a teeny tiny beautiful boy. It was such an honour to welcome him into the household of God as Christ's own forever, to encourage the family in their love and care for him, and in the importance of their raising him to be the kind of man who will be both a faithful follower of Jesus and live out his traditional values as a good Cree man. The baptism was followed by a feast - again with Canada goose, dumplings and "all the fixings."

I can't believe I am just days away from making the long drive home. It has been an honour to be able to come and serve the people of Wemindji. I am so looking forward to being home with you all and sharing more about my time with this faithful community. See you next week!

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