

Genesis 1:31 – “God saw everything that he had made, and indeed, it was very good.”

CANADIAN CHRISTIAN MEDITATION COMMUNITY
12th Biennial NATIONAL CONFERENCE 2026



Transforming Together in Peace

Reconnecting humanity and the living earth

Friday, 24 July 2026 4:00 PM (EDT) to
Sunday, 26 July 2026 1:30 PM (EDT)

Victoria College at University of Toronto
91 Charles St West, Toronto, Ontario

Keynote speaker: Tom Mustill

Featured Speakers:

Chief R. Stacey Laforme

Laurence Freeman, OSB



Presented by

The World Community for Christian Meditation

www.wccm-canada.ca

Table of Contents

- 03 Message From Canadian PM Mark Carney**
- 04 Message from WCCM Director Fr. Laurence Freeman(OSB)**
- 05 Message from the National Coordinator André Choquet**
- 06 Weekend Conference Agenda**
- 09 Biographies of Keynote & Featured Speakers**
- 11 Workshop Leaders - Biographies and Overview**
- 13 Biographies of Eucharistic Presiders**
- 14 Friday, July 24th, Prayers & Meditation**
- 15 Saturday, July 25th Prayers & Meditation**
- 16 Sunday, July 26th Prayers & Meditation**
- 17 My Personal Reflections**
- 21 Thank You to our volunteers & Sponsor**
- 22 Common Ground by Chief Stacey Laforme**

Letter From Canadian Prime Minister Mark Carney



PRIME MINISTER • PREMIER MINISTRE

I would like to convey my warmest greetings to everyone attending the 2026 Canadian Christian Meditation Community National Conference Retreat.

This event brings together participants from 100 meditative groups from across Canada. I am certain that the many activities planned for this year's convention will stimulate a great deal of meaningful exchange and that delegates will make the most of this opportunity to gather in contemplative meditation.



I would like to thank the organizers for planning this event. You can take pride in your commitment to fostering spirituality.

I wish you all a wonderful retreat.

The Right Honourable Mark Carney, P.C., O.C., M.P.
Prime Minister of Canada

Ottawa
2026

Message from WCCM Director Fr. Laurence Freeman (OSB)

Dear Friends

Our coming together is more than a conference. It is a strengthening of the global contemplative movement which is helping to shape the world of the new order. It is about people, not just words and policies. People are changed as they meditate, and they change the world by living in it.

Ekklesia is the scriptural word that we now translate as 'church'. Originally, though, this did not mean a building, institution or ideology, but people in fellowship and a unity built from diversity.

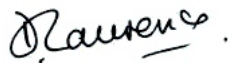
This is true of our *community* of meditators and our *communion* with contemplatives everywhere in the world. The world is in crisis, and our challenge is how we *communicate* the wisdom of contemplation through the practice of meditation.

I am especially looking forward to participating and hearing Tom Mustill again. His book 'How to Speak Whale' is delightful and opens new understanding about the animal world. I have collaborated with him before and was strongly impressed not just by the seriousness of his love for the natural world but by the sheer joy he shows in his love of creation. Saving our planet needs this contemplative wonder and joy.

It also needs ancient wisdom. And so I am delighted that Chief Stacey Laforme is with us. He will pass on her own connection with the wisdom tradition of the Mississauga of the Credit peoples. Without this indigenous wisdom rooted in nature, all our scientific knowledge and technology will fall short.

The multitude of the wise is the safety of the world, and a wise leader supports the people (*Wis 6:24*)

We come together confident in the human capacity to change and to love the world back from the brink. We do this not as heroes but as contemplatives who experience the joy of communion with each other and the world.



Laurence Freeman OSB
Director WCCM

Message from CCMC National Coordinator André Choquet



A warm welcome to all participants from across Canada to the 12th biennial National Conference of the Canadian Christian Meditation Community. It is my honour to be your host and moderator over the next two days.

“It is only with the heart that one can see rightly; what is essential is invisible to the eye.” These words from Antoine de Saint-Exupéry, written in 1943, were remarkably prescient. Humanity stands at a crossroads, with powerful technological and consumerist forces pulling our attention away from what is essential. And what is essential is our connection to the Sacred, to the Divine. When we feel separate from God — or when we do not “know” God — we are inclined to fill the void with more: more wealth, prestige, consumption or excitement.

This conference invites us to a different way. A simple, free, and “letting go” way. Meditators have come to appreciate how their twice-daily sessions — when we let go of attachments and simply remain in the presence of God — become a powerful counterforce against alienation, addiction, and violence.

Christians should find it easy to integrate meditation into their faith because it has been part of our tradition since Jesus. But even for non-Christians, including atheists, meditation still “works.” It allows a deeper connection with the Divine, within their own understanding.

Over time, a growing awareness of our true nature makes us appreciate the divinity in our neighbours. And eventually, it awakens in us a reverence for the presence of God in the natural world around us.

My hope is that this conference becomes a new beginning for our Canadian and global community — the start of a journey toward integrating this ancient tradition of meditation into new spheres of society, in a spirit of love, empathy, and reconciliation.

Welcome, and thank you for being part of this shared path.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'André Choquet'. The signature is fluid and cursive, with a long horizontal stroke at the end.

André Choquet

CONFERENCE AGENDA

Friday, July 24th, 2026

4:00 - 6:00 PM	Check-in and Registration	Foyer
5:00 - 6:00 PM	Meet & Greet / Book Sale	Foyer
6:00 - 7:15 PM	Dinner (buffet)	Foyer & Chapel
7:15 - 7:30 PM	Welcome by André Choquet CCMC National Coordinator	Chapel
7:30 - 8:30 PM	Workshop 1 Can a spiritual practice enhance resilience? L.Hébert -Saindon	Chapel
8:30 - 9:00 PM	Evening Prayer & Meditation	Chapel

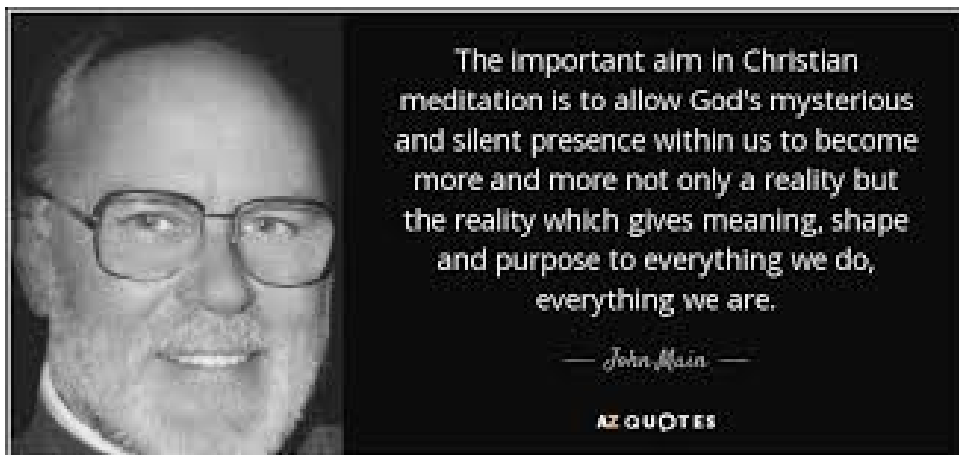


Image Source: Public domain

Psalm 24:1 “ The earth is the Lord’s and everything in it, the world, and all who live in it”

Saturday, July 25th, 2026

7:30 -8:00 AM	Silent Meditation (Live-in only)	Chapel
8:00 -8:45 AM	Breakfast (Live-in only)	Burwash Hall
9:00 - 10:00 AM	Session #1 Fr. Laurence Freeman Talk (Remote)	Chapel
10:00 - 10:30 AM	Coffee Break / Book Sale	Foyer
10:30 AM - 12:15 PM	Session #2 Tom Mustill Talk & Meditation (Remote)	Chapel
12:15- 1:30 PM	Lunch / Book Sale	Foyer & Chapel
1:30 -3:00 PM	Session #3 Stacey Laforme (In-Person)	Chapel
3:15- 4:00 PM	Qigong/Tai Chi Andrea Siqueira	The Quad field outside
4:00 - 4:30 PM	Meditation (outside, weather permitting)	The Quad field outside or Chapel
5:00 - 6:00 PM	CCMC Annual General Meeting	Chapel
6:00 - 8:00 PM	Cocktail, food, networking, singing	Foyer

Genesis 2:15 “The Lord God took the man and put him in the garden of Eden to till it and keep it.”

Sunday, July 26th, 2026

7:30 -8:00 AM	Silent Meditation (Live-in Only)	Chapel
8:00 -8:45 AM	Breakfast (Live-in only)	Burwash Hall
9:00 - 10:15 AM	Workshop #2 Empathetic Communication: Bringing Us Closer to God—even in Conflict Sandra VanderVaart	Chapel
10:15 - 10:30 AM	Coffee Break	Foyer
10:30 AM - 12:00 PM	Closing Ecumenical Worship Closing Speech by National Coordinator André Choquet	Chapel
12:00 - 12:15 PM	Group Photo	Chapel
12:15 -1:15 PM	Light Lunch and Goodbyes	Foyer & Chapel

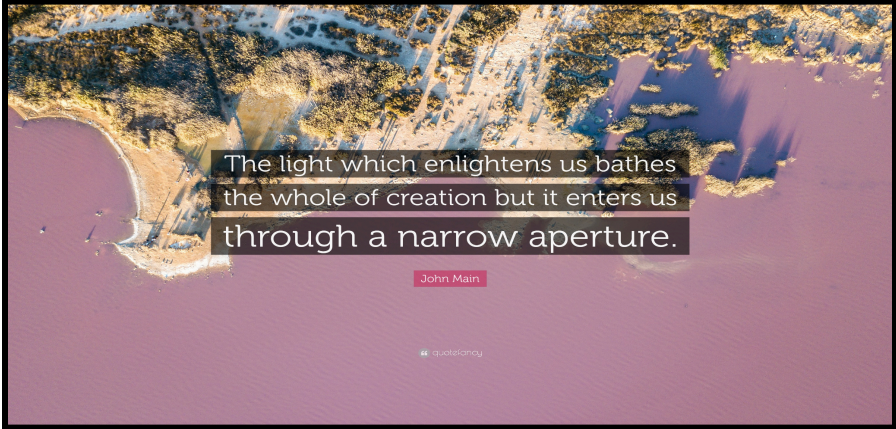


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Biography of Speakers



Tom Mustill (Keynote Speaker)

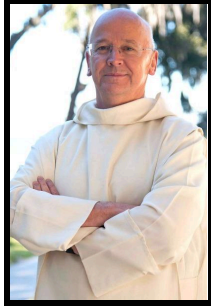
Producer | Director | Author

Tom loves surfing and any excuse to get into the sea. He lives far from it in London, with his wife Annie, his two daughters, and the inhabitants of his small but surprisingly deep pond. His work with David Attenborough, Greta Thunberg, Stephen Fry and conservation and science heroes across the globe has won over 30 international awards, including two Webbys, a Wildscreen Panda, two Jackson Wild Awards and been nominated for a Primetime Emmy.



Chief R. Stacey Laforme is the former Chief of the

Mississaugas of the Credit First Nation, a respected storyteller, poet, and advocate for leadership, reconciliation, and environmental stewardship. Elected to Council in 1999, he served his community for more than twenty years, guiding important advancements in governance and cultural preservation. His leadership raised national awareness through his role in the Pan Am/Parapan Am Games, where the MCFN became the first official Host First Nation. An Honorary Senior Fellow at Massey College, recipient of the King Charles III Coronation Medal, and author of *Living in the Tall Grass*, LaForme continues to inspire understanding and unity across Canada.



Fr. Laurence Freeman (OSB), *Director of The World*

Community for Christian Meditation, Bonnevaux. With Irish and English roots, Laurence Freeman was educated by the Benedictines and studied English Literature at New College, Oxford University. Before entering monastic life, he worked with the United Nations in New York, in Banking and Journalism. He is Director of The World Community for Christian Meditation (WCCM), a global, inclusive contemplative community. Fr. Laurence Freeman is a monk of the Benedictine Congregation of Monte Oliveto Maggiore. He is the director and spiritual guide of the World Community for Christian Meditation. John Main was his teacher, and Fr. Laurence assisted him in establishing the foundations of the Community. Fr. Laurence is the author of several books on Christian Meditation. He travels extensively, giving presentations and leading Christian Meditation Retreats.



Photo credit: Fr. Laurence Freeman - The Easter Tree in Bonnevaux

Workshop Leaders - Biographies and Overview



Louise Hébert-Saindon is the President of Méditation Chrétienne du Québec et des Régions Francophones du Canada (MCQRF). She has degrees in Arts and Nursing as well as a diploma in administration and a Master's in Theology. She is a former director of Youville Clinic and nursing professor (Université de St-Boniface).

Louise has also delivered many talks at conferences. She led the 2025 MCQRF 3-day retreat on the topic of resilience. She is deeply interested in developmental psychology (Maslow, Erikson, and Bowlby) throughout the life span, including factors that promote or hinder spiritual growth and resilience (Cyrulnik). A major factor is the ultimate level of transcendence through meaning and purpose (Frankl). Her focus is on the resilience of the human spirit and the importance of maintaining physical, mental and spiritual health. She believes that faith and spirituality are cornerstones for overcoming challenges that inevitably arise throughout our lives.

Can a spiritual practice enhance resilience?

Friday, July 24, 7:30-8:30 PM

Using a holistic approach, her workshop will focus on how to build resilience and overcome barriers to the regular practice of meditation. Just as regular exercise strengthens muscles and cardio, regular meditation functions as an anchor when challenges seem overwhelming. Whether inner turmoil requires transformation or external events demand change, deep spiritual practice abides. Thus, resilience is strengthened through a regular spiritual practice during good times and difficult times in our lives.



Sandra VanderVaart is a researcher and business leader at Clarivate, holding both a PhD in Pharmacy and an MBA. Her volunteer work spans healthcare advocacy with CIHR and ICES to food sustainability leadership at Karma Co-op. A long-time meditation practitioner and facilitator, Sandra has spent years sitting with a deceptively simple question: why is it so hard to carry the loving peace of meditation into ordinary life?

Empathetic Communication: Bringing Us Closer to God—even in Conflict
Sunday, July 26, 9:00-10:15 AM

Sandra's workshop draws on the foundations of Marshall Rosenberg's Nonviolent Communication (NVC), offering concrete tools for translating the love and presence we access in silence into the way we actually listen and speak to ourselves and one another. The result is a practical take on an ancient idea: "prayer without ceasing" not as a spiritual abstraction, but as something we can practice in every conversation.

Participants are encouraged to bring a pen and paper to participate in the workshop.

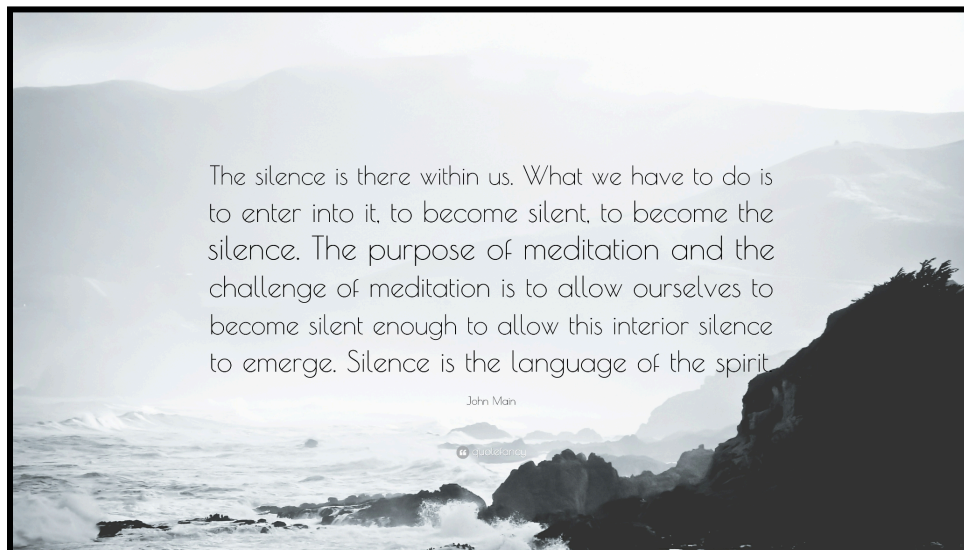


Image Source: Public domain

Biographies of Eucharistic Presiders



Rev. Julie Meakin

Rev. Julie is the priest at Holy Family Anglican Church in Brampton, Ontario. She entered the ministry after 22 years as a high school teacher.

Julie is grateful to her mother, Rev. Glenda Meakin, who introduced her to Christian Meditation about 25 years ago. Julie leads a weekly meditation group on Zoom. She is keen to share the gift of meditation with people of all ages.



The Rev. Marilyn Metcalfe

Rev. Marilyn Metcalfe, ODT, is a Deacon in the Anglican Diocese of Toronto, involved with Prayer and Healing Ministry, and Pastoral and Spiritual Care in the Ajax Parish of St. George. Marilyn is a WCCM Oblate, Meditation Facilitator, and Spiritual Director. She is an experienced Veriditas Labyrinth Facilitator and enjoys gardening, teaching and sharing the spiritual journey with seekers. She is married with two grown-up children and six grandchildren who bring joy, light and love to her life.

Friday, July 24th, 2026
Evening Prayers & Meditation @ 8:30-9 PM



Leader: O God, come to my assistance

ALL: O Lord, make haste to help us.

Glory be to the Father and to the Son and to the Holy Spirit, as it was in the beginning, is now, and ever shall be, world without end. Amen.

Silence (1 minute)

Chant: Ubi caritas et amor, ubi caritas, ibi est Deus.

Silence (1 minute)

Eph 3:14-19

With this in mind, I kneel in prayer to the Father from whom every family in heaven and on earth takes its name, that out of the treasures of his glory, he may grant you strength and power through his Spirit in your inner being, so that through faith Christ may grow in your hearts. With deep roots and firm foundations, may you be strong to grasp, with all God's people, what is the height, the length, the depth, and the breadth of the love of Christ. And to know it, though it is beyond knowledge. And so may you come to fullness of being, the fullness of God Himself.

Silence (1 minute)

Opening Prayer R: Heavenly Father, open our hearts to the silent presence of the Spirit of your Son. Lead us into that mysterious silence where your love is revealed to all who call. Maranatha. Come, Lord Jesus.

Meditation (20 mins)

Magnificat (Chant) My soul glorifies the Lord, my spirit rejoices in God, my Saviour. He looks on his servant in her lowliness; henceforth, all ages will call me blessed. The Almighty works marvels for me. Holy his name! His mercy is from age to age, on those who fear him. He puts forth his arm in strength and scatters the proud-hearted. He casts the mighty from their thrones and raises the lowly. He fills the starving with good things, sends the rich away empty. He protects Israel, his servant, remembering his mercy, the mercy promised to our ancestors, to Abraham and his children forever.

Pause/Silence (1 minute) L: May the Divine assistance remain always with us. ALL: And with our absent brothers and sisters. Amen.

Saturday July 25th, 2026
Morning & Afternoon  Prayers & Meditation

Morning Prayer & Meditation @ 7:30-8:00 AM

Leader: O God, come to my assistance

ALL: O Lord, make haste to help us.

Glory be to the Father and to the Son and to the Holy Spirit, as it was in the beginning, is now, and ever shall be, world without end. Amen.

Fr. John Main Opening Prayer: Heavenly Father, open my heart to the silent presence of the Spirit of Your Son; lead me into this mysterious silence where Your love is revealed to all who call, Maranatha, Come Lord Jesus.

Silence (20 minutes)

Lord's Prayer to end the Meditation.

Afternoon Prayers & Meditation @ 4:00-4:30 PM (Outdoors, weather permitting)

Leader: O God, come to my assistance

ALL: O Lord, make haste to help us.

Glory be to the Father and to the Son and to the Holy Spirit, as it was in the beginning, is now, and ever shall be, world without end. Amen.

Silence (1 minute)

Chant: Ubi caritas et amor, ubi caritas, ibi est Deus.

Silence (1 minute)

The root of prayer is interior Silence, Thomas Keating

Fr. Laurence Freeman - Meditatio Talk Series 2021, Attention and Love

“If you are truly attentive to someone, you are loving them. A key quote... is Jesus’ teaching, ‘Love one another, as I have loved you (Jn 13:34) – pay attention to one another as I pay attention to you. So the contemplative response to the crisis that we are passing through globally is a very important component, I think, of our coming through this crisis in a healthy way and being able to rebuild a better world with more healthy attitudes and more healthy ways of treating the environment, of understanding social justice and human rights and the care of the young, and the meaning of education, the meaning of health, the meaning of democracy.

These are all things that make us human. And these aren't in a separate category from the rest of our spiritual life, because they are what make us human. And it is these qualities of freedom, of respect for others, of tolerance of other points of view, and of commitment to justice in all its forms, just as we see in the life of Jesus, it is these that make us fully alive. And we glorify God by becoming fully alive. ‘The glory of God is the human being fully alive,’ says St Irenaeus of Lyon. ‘The glory of God is the human being fully alive.’ And the fullness of life is lived in our families, in our societies, in our churches, in our institutions, and of course, in the depths of our own spirit in community.

And so I hope that this time of retreat will be the beginning of a deepening of our reflection on the meaning of a contemplative response to the crisis, the opportunities that we face in this crisis, and that we can each of us bring to our communities the fruit of this gift of meditation, and the fruit of our community into contact with the needs of our world. ~

Silence (1 minute)

Opening Prayer R: Heavenly Father, open our hearts to the silent presence of the Spirit of your Son. Lead us into that mysterious silence where your love is revealed to all who call. Maranatha. Come, Lord Jesus.

Meditation (20 mins)

Lord’s Prayer to end the Meditation.

Sunday July 26th, 2026 🕊️
Morning Prayers & Meditation

Morning Prayer & Meditation @ 7:30-8:00 AM

Leader: O God, come to my assistance

ALL: O Lord, make haste to help us.

Glory be to the Father and to the Son and to the Holy Spirit, as it was in the beginning, is now, and ever shall be, world without end. Amen.

Fr. John Main Opening Prayer: Heavenly Father, open my heart to the silent presence of the Spirit of Your Son; lead me into this mysterious silence where Your love is revealed to all who call, Maranatha, Come Lord Jesus.

Silence (20 minutes)

Lord's Prayer to end the Meditation.



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THANK YOU to our Volunteers, Sponsor & Donors 

It takes many people to organize a hybrid National Conference. We would like to thank the following individuals for their invaluable efforts and their time

- ❖ **Conference Idea and Concept**
André Choquet, Fr. Laurence Freeman
- ❖ **Overall NC 26 Planning Team**
André Choquet, Andrea Siqueira, Lise Babin, Sandra VanderVaart, Mona Agia, Gordon Davies & Martin Malina
- ❖ **Ecumenical Worship & Music Planning Team**
Julie Meakin, Marilyn Metcalfe, Andrea Siqueira, Melissa Siqueira
- ❖ **Booklet Design and Organizing (Cover image from free domain)**
Andrea Siqueira, André Choquet
- ❖ **Zoom Moderators**
Leonardo Correa, Lise Babin, Andrea Siqueira
- ❖ **Budget, Registration & Finance**
Lise Babin, André Choquet, Sandra VanderVaart
- ❖ **Book Sale Table**
Marilyn Metcalfe + volunteers
- ❖ **Audio & Visual Team from Victoria College**
- ❖ **Social Media Promotion**
Paola Di Pietro, Luis Zunino, André Choquet, Andrea Siqueira & Lise Babin
- ❖ **All speakers and workshop leaders**

National promotional efforts provided by:

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Thank you for your presence & God Bless! 

COMMON GROUND

BY CHIEF STACEY LAFORME

No one thing can define us
For we are complex creatures
Dreamed in the mind of the Creator
We laugh when we should cry
We cry when we should laugh
We joke when in pain
We smile because tears
Could consume us
We love unconditionally and totally
We understand that families should
come first
Yet family is not defined solely by blood
We are quick to anger
Yet no one forgives faster
We are loyal, and we are strong
When we commit, we are unwavering
We have survived much, but do not
mistake
Adaptation for resignation
You will always see us, for we will
always be here
Standing for what we believe in
Standing beside each other
Doing what is right for our children,
our future

We remember our obligation
To our Mother the Earth
And we remember our place upon her
We are a proud people
And honorable people
We do not always do right
For we are human
And prone to the follies of humanity
Yet we strive to be better
To make each other better
To make the world
A better place for the children
I know the creator smiles upon us,
No matter where we are, or what we do
For the love of a child is unconditional
No matter where life takes you
Walk proud.

*Chief R. Stacey Laforme – Beneath the
Surface Poems & Other Stories 2025*



Photo: Andrea Siqueira, Kananaskis Village Viewpoint

