

Pastoral Reflection – Signs of Healing & Hope Co-Pastor Susanne Guenther Loewen, May 27, 2020



A little over a month ago, we heard some happy news: a baby bison had been born at Wanuskewin Heritage Park. On the surface, this seemed like an ordinary sign of Spring, along with all the other baby animals – and baby humans, too! But this birth was profoundly significant: it's the first bison born at Wanuskewin, the historic Indigenous site, since 1876 – when

Treaty 6 was signed and local bison became extinct.¹ That means that this baby bison represents healing: *the healing of the land* as a local species makes its way back from extinction, *the healing of treaty relationships* and reconciliation as Indigenous heritage is honoured and remembered and restored, *the healing of God*, present and at work in our time and place in life-giving ways.

This is a profoundly hopeful event for all of us who live here, sharing this land. And it's all the more meaningful as we continue to make our way through this pandemic – a time when many of us are hungry for good news of hope and healing. Even though Wanuskewin is closed and we cannot go see this new baby bison for ourselves, to know that she's there – that healing and hopeful things are happening, that reconciliation is moving forward, even now – can have a positive effect on our hearts and minds. She is a tangible, living and breathing sign of God moving among us, and of the Spirit moving us toward truth and peace and right relationship.

I close with two questions:

- What was your reaction to the news of the baby bison's birth?
- What other signs of God's healing and hope have you noticed these days?

¹ <https://thestarphoenix.com/news/local-news/circle-of-life-first-baby-bison-born-on-wanuskewin-land-since-before-1876/> For a video announcement, see: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=FGNCW-9Do0w>