

From: [Farmer, Karen \(Police\)](#)
To: [Web E-mail - Development Appeals Board](#)
Cc: ["Rev. Kevin McGee"](#); [Earl, Jodi \(Police\)](#)
Subject: request to share information re: appeal no. 25-2023-211 Ave O South
Date: Wednesday, September 27, 2023 3:13:43 PM
Attachments: [image002.png](#)
[St Mary Church - CFMH inspection report 2023.pdf](#)

Hello,

I have been requested to share information regarding the need for a tall fence for security related to the inhabitants of St. Mary's Church manse and the church grounds. Please note the attached, recent Saskatoon Police Service Crime Free Multi-Housing security assessment report. During the appeal I would like to briefly address points specific to the fence and, the current environment around the property.

Thank you,

Karen Farmer

c.c., Sgt. Jodi Earl, Father Kevin McGee

Karen Farmer | Coordinator | Crime Free Multihousing | Saskatoon Police Service

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Saskatoon Police Crime Free Multi-Housing Security assessment of the exterior of St Mary's Church, 211 Ave O S Aug. 29, 2023

Security Strengths:

Saskatoon Police Crime Free Multi-Housing staff appreciate the efforts St. Mary Church staff and congregants are making to try to find a positive transformation of their sacred property and immediate community. This report offers some potential initiatives to address problems related to recent changes in the area, specifically the crisis of homelessness, acute poverty, and intravenous drug addiction.

CFMH staff assessed the area around the church property on Aug. 17th and 28th, 2023. We noted that a newly installed fence around the church and church residence has succeeded to significantly reduce the vandalism, graffiti and discarded needles immediately beside the church and within the building's alcoves. CFMH supports the installation of this fence as it marks your property as your own, offers clear sightlines for surveillance, and makes it harder for illegal trespassing and activity.



A Saskatoon Fire Inspector has noted illegal efforts to camp in the well-used corridor that's been created by the new fences on your private property. CFMH would be in support of repositioning the fence so pedestrians had to walk around on the street rather than cut through your private property to access Ave O S.

CFMH also noted the many efforts the Church maintenance man makes to keep the church property free of garbage, litter, graffiti and used needles. Please continue with these important efforts, particularly removing gang tags, as your maintenance acts as a reminder of St. Mary's purpose and ownership.

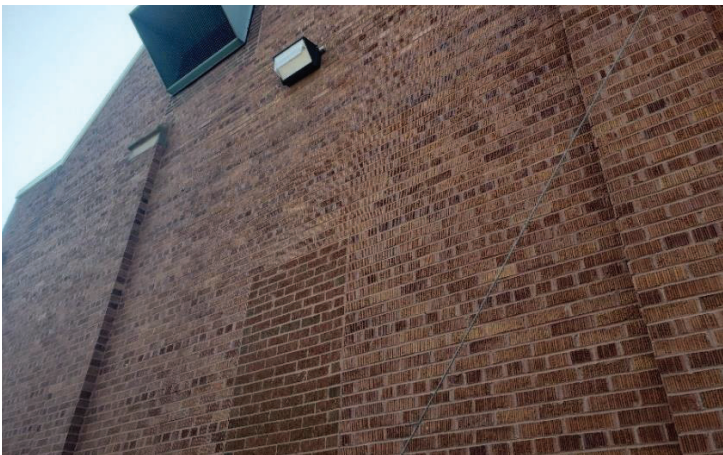




Thankfully there have not been attempts (that we are aware of) to break into the main church doors. If ever there are efforts towards this, CFMH recommends installing full-length interlocking metal astragals. (See photo.) CFMH can recommend local companies that install these effective security devices for approximately \$300-\$600/door.

It is good to see tamper proof lighting around your property. Please ensure that the lights remain on from dusk to dawn. Lighting should be bright, consistent (no dark spots) and, make it easy to see a person's features from 25' away during nighttime. Lighting is a tool that can deter criminal behaviour and, help identify when people if a crime occurs.

Ensure the parking area behind the residence is always well-lit. CFMH recommends an additional security camera facing the parking area as there have been incidents of vandalism and theft from vehicles.



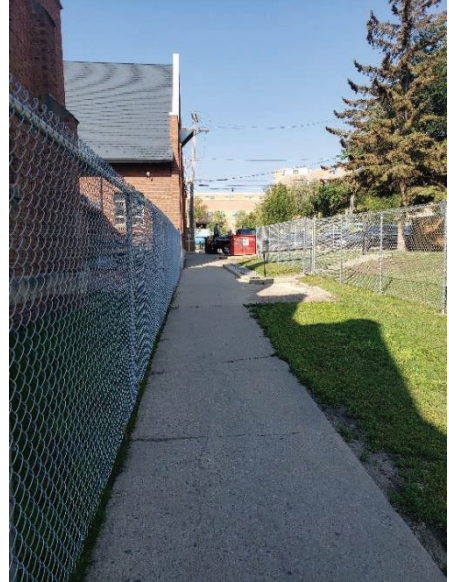
CFMH noted only one **security camera**. We strongly encourage you to consider adding more cameras around your property. (Many Saskatoon security companies offer free quotes and consultations, including options for how to monitor or retrieve images.)

Saskatoon Police are increasingly noting that the Court system requires video or photo proof to determine guilt or innocence. Please ensure that any cameras offer high definition colour images. Cameras can (sometimes) act as a deterrent as well.

Signage: Please consider adding clearer no loitering signs on the front step area of the church. CFMH understands that you do not want to 'fortify' this area and are a welcoming church community. However, signage could direct people to not behave in ways that currently disturb or distress your congregation.



CFMH noted that the corridor between the north side of the church and the church residence is frequently used. It was good to see this area free of garbage and litter. As discussed while on site, the sunny strip of grass could be an ideal location for dwarf fruit trees. These trees, which flower in spring and offer healthy food in summer, could add a positive feeling to this beleaguered area. There is a water spigot nearby to help water the trees until they get established. Dwarf trees, if trimmed well, would not block sightlines or offer branches to scale the nearby fence. (It's a good idea to check the maximum height and width of the trees prior to purchasing.) Please



ensure that any new trees do not create a place to hide, obscure visibility from Ave O S or the parking lot, or create a space where people could set up a make-shift shelter.

There are several plant nurseries in Saskatoon. Here below are some fruit trees that are sold, (for between \$99 - \$250 each) at Dutch Growers. <https://www.dutchgrowers.com/plants-pots/trees-shrubs/fruit-trees/>



Apricot Debbie's Gold 5gal
\$199.99
Make a choice
This product is not available for online purchase. Feel free to give us a call at (306) 249-1222 to confirm our inventory!
Add to wishlist
Description



Cherry Evans TF
\$199.99
This product is not available for online purchase. Feel free to give us a call at (306) 249-1222 to confirm our inventory!
Add to wishlist
Description



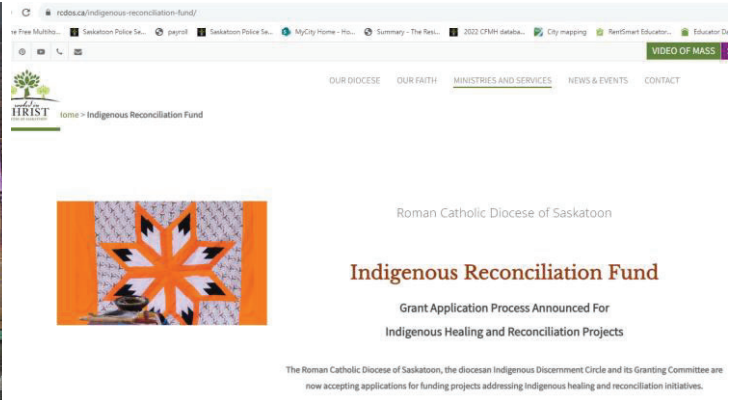
Plum Muckle
\$249.99
This product is not available for online purchase. Feel free to give us a call at (306) 249-1222 to confirm our inventory!
Add to wishlist
Description



You may also consider adding a row of edible raspberries along the west exterior wall of the church hall. The church owns 3' of this space and it is currently a spot where people recline after being intoxicated. There frequently is garbage and tent encampments in this area. Raspberries have prickles and could discourage this activity.

Connecting with the Indigenous community:

Father Kevin McGee discussed aspirations to add an art mural to the north and west sides of the church hall walls that highlights Indigenous connections to Catholic mythology and beliefs. This could be an effective way to connect with the people who currently congregate in that area. Replacing offensive and gang graffiti on our church walls with art establishes that the building is respected by many. Please note an example below which mirrors Father McGee's ideas (I believe.) Perhaps funding for this project could come from the Saskatoon Indigenous Reconciliation Fund? <https://rcdos.ca/indigenous-reconciliation-fund/>



CFMH also noted efforts to connect with Indigenous peoples on the Church website.

- Sunday 1:00 pm – Our Lady of Guadalupe Parish – *Indigenous, First Nations, Métis and non-Indigenous parish celebrates at St. Mary Church.*

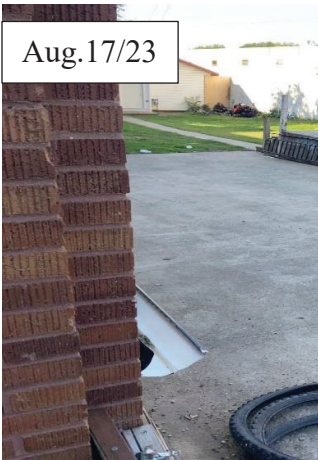
This relevant community service may perhaps not be known to the local population who can't access the internet or cell phones. Please consider adding more signage advertising this relevant community service, or informing nearby service providers of it. (Further personal invitations may also need to be extended.)

A Memorial wall or Monument?:

There is a concrete pad on the northwest wall of the church hall. This is currently being used as place to gather, sleep, rest, vandalize and inject drugs etc. This area and church wall have the potential to be transformed into a memorial site for those who have died of drug overdoses or involvement with the street. Please see examples below from other Canadian cities. This memorial could offer a valuable way to recognize the humanity of those who have died, offer a form of healing, and also encourage respectful behaviour on and around the church grounds.

Partnership with nearby STC Health Centre, Prairie Harm Reduction, the Westside Community Clinic, Rexall Drug Store, as well as, Pleasant Hill Dental (whose property this area is) could possibly assist. These agencies would have an awareness of the tragic deaths and/or perhaps could work to help create and maintain a meaningful memorial.

Although different philosophies and practices about drug use exist, all agencies on your block seem united in caring for and supporting others in extreme need.



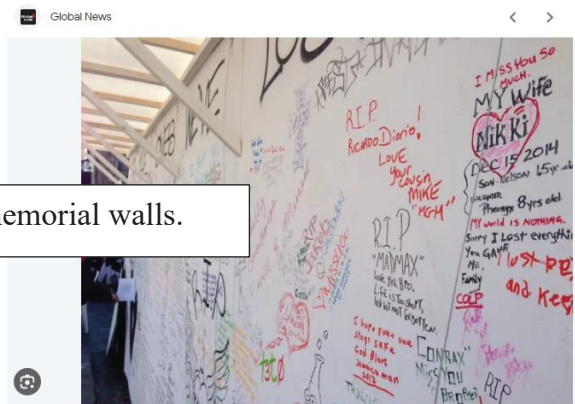
Aug. 17/23



Photo taken Aug. 28/23, same location

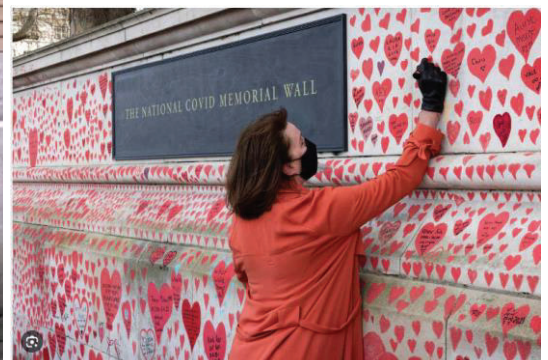


Memorial wall for victims of the fentanyl crisis erected on the 00 block of East Hastings Street | Georgia Straight Vancouver's source for arts, culture, and events



Memorial wall for overdose victims erected on DTES - BC | Globalnews.ca

Four examples of memorial walls.



U.S. Life Expectancy Fell by 1.5 Years in 2020 Due to COVID

Need for at least two large metal Yellow Needle disposal boxes:

CFMH strongly recommends adding and securing two large yellow needle boxes in the area behind the church hall and the back alley by Prairie Harm Reduction/the Tribal Council's Health Centre. Currently there are hundreds of discarded needles regularly picked up by Saskatoon Fire staff, St. Mary Church staff, dentist Dr E Kutsogiannis and many others. Unfortunately, drug users have been seen to pick up discarded dirty needles and reuse them! It is essential that contaminated needles can be easily and safely disposed of 24 hours/day.

Please contact the Saskatoon Tribal Council Health Centre and/or Saskatchewan Public Health, Street Health Program – Disease Control, Population and Public Health Services, 101 – 310 Idylwyld Dr N, tel: 306 655 4642 to enquire about this.

Also, please note this service offered by the Street Health Program:

“Kits are available to safely deal with improperly discarded used needles which can be potentially harmful. The Saskatchewan Health Authority’s Street Health Program offers a Landlord Kit for a cost of \$20 each. The kit contains; tongs, disposable nitrile gloves, two 1 litre yellow sharps (needle disposal) containers, as well as instruction on how to safely pick up and dispose of discarded needles found in the community. Kits can be picked up at # 101 – 310 Idylwyld Dr. North. Please call (306) 655-4642 to order and arrange for pickup.”

Contacts for Partnership and nearby potential Support:

Since 1910, St. Mary’s Church has been on the 200 block of 20th St W. MUCH has changed in the past 113 years. Your church now sits on a block where agencies and businesses have a strong commitment to serving the residents of Pleasant Hill. As you know, many relevant services are offered daily to the people who loiter around your church. CFMH echoes a recent suggestion of Councillor Hilary Gough, that solutions for conflicting use of the 200 block of 20th St W need to be found by consulting with all agencies and businesses on that block. Here below is a bit of additional information for your consideration.

Saskatoon Tribal Council (STC) Health Centre tel: (306) 956-0345 This agency could be a good partner to assist with the social challenges in this area. Their staff offer these programs and services:

1. **Urban Wellness Workers:** Provide access to detox and treatment services, the outpatient treatment program, crisis and ongoing counselling, and cultural support.
2. **Client Navigator:** Client-centered case management, which provides access to services such as navigation through the health system, financial assistance, legal aid, adequate housing, job placement, or education.
3. **Registered Nurse:** Conducts nursing assessments, educates, counsels, tests, and provides treatment and referrals to clients and families regarding sexually transmitted and blood-borne infection prevention, treatment, and ongoing care.
4. **IRS Support Workers:** Provide emotional support for individuals, families, and groups. Provide referrals to community resources such as elders, healers, and addiction supports. Provide outreach education and awareness of the history and impacts of the residential schools and cultural support.
5. **Peer Mentor:** Peers provide information, support, and assistance in navigating services. The Peer Mentor acts in a supportive role to assist in linking and engaging individuals into care, re-engaging them into care, and helping them to maintain care.
6. **Harm Reduction Supply Exchange Program:**
 - Clean injection and inhalation equipment
 - Drop off for used injection and inhalation equipment
 - Naloxone Kit Distribution
 - Safe sex supplies

Prairie Harm Reduction-Kayla DeMong, Executive Director admin@prairiehr.ca This agency does a lot more than only ensure people don’t die using drugs. They offer housing for youth at risk and families, educational services and support. Prairie Harm also offers free Naloxone kits and instructions on how to use that antidote. This service could minimize the chance of overdoses happening on church grounds. Please contact Ms. DeMong to discuss solutions and Naloxone training tel: 306 242 5005.

Pleasant Hill Dental: Dr. E Kutsogiannis, (who also goes by Dr. K.), has a strong commitment to serving the area and providing good health care. Dr. K shares your struggles with the damage, garbage, trespassing and anti-social behaviour that occurs in front and behind her business.

CFMH is particularly concerned about the semi-private space between her dental building and your church hall. We strongly recommend adding a fence to limit traffic to this area. Dr. K is hesitant to invest in

this fence as, “She didn’t create the concerns in the area.” While this is true, that narrow space is frequently misused as a drug injection, squatting and garbage pit. Please give her a call in mid-September to discuss potential ways you can support each other. Her number is: 306 978 3384.

Saskatoon Community Clinic- a Co-op medical centre that is committed to equitable access to healthcare. They could be a good partner to discuss how to deal with the crisis occurring in your area.

Protective Services: Please continue to call on us for help

Saskatoon Fire inspectors – Contact Saskatoon Fire for property maintenance and safety concerns, including tent encampments. Tent encampments are illegal due to the fire risk and unsafe living situations. Dawn Piche is a Fire Inspector, Dawn.Piche@saskatoon.ca who works in your area. Also, you can email: fireinspections@saskatoon.ca tel: 306 975 2589

Saskatoon Police Community Mobilization Unit- Saskatoon Police Staff Sargent Mike Horvath would be happy to speak with Father McGee regarding concerns in the area. He organized a meeting last year with all of the stakeholders. Please give the S/Sgt a call and he could possibly stop by for a discussion and take one of the Community Mobilization Unit members with him. Mike’s contact information is: 306-975-8247. Michael.Horvath@Police.Saskatoon.Sk.CA

CFMH also discussed coordinating a drug awareness education and/or training on how to de-escalate conflict for your congregation. If this interests you, we could possibly assist with coordinating a ½ hour presentation by an knowledgeable officer.

Also, please feel free to attend our upcoming De-escalation Training which focuses on dealing peacefully with people in crisis and those who are potentially violent. See below:

FREE: De-escalate Conflict and Keep Safer at Work: Nov. 22, 8:45AM- 12pm, Saskatoon Police Station Community Room. The Police’s experienced (and entertaining) Crisis Negotiator shares practical and psychological tips to cope with a challenging person/event. To learn more and register: <https://www.eventbrite.ca/e/568331985267?aff=oddtcreator>

Potential repurpose of St. Mary’s Church Hall?

As CFMH reviewed the security of your property, we spoke with a parishioner who discussed how the large hall attached to your church was once a more profitable location for community events and rentals. As you well know, and as is widely publicized, there is currently a crisis of homelessness in Saskatoon. A very quick bit of research found these former churches and church halls that were converted into low-cost housing and a shelter.

<https://churchofscotland.org.uk/news-and-events/news/2019/articles/edinburgh-kirk-building-converted-into-care-shelter>

<https://kitchener.ctvnews.ca/st-mark-s-lutheran-church-transforms-into-affordable-housing-in-kitchener-1.6506266>

<https://www.cbc.ca/news/canada/kitchener-waterloo/church-affordable-homes-unit-kitchener-waterloo-region-1.6519669>

Perhaps with significant government funding, (i.e., for renovations, to purchase beds, hire addiction counsellors, 24-hour security and experienced social workers etc.) the large, mostly empty hall could be transformed into a (temporary) shelter and place of healing. As this recent article (below) attests, the need is urgent and, the

population in the greatest need already congregate close by and access food and health services within walking distance.

- <https://www.cbc.ca/news/canada/saskatoon/tribal-council-backs-call-board-police-commissioners-stabilization-beds-1.6945448>

Final comment:

Thank you for all your community building efforts. We support further dialogue among all those effected in your neighbourhood.

Karen Farmer and Noe Hernandez CFMH

tel: 306 975 8385 email: CFMH@police.saskatoon.sk.ca

Aug. 30, 2023

