

# Soundings

FROM THE EPISCOPAL DIOCESE OF MINNESOTA

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The vision of the  
Episcopal Church  
in Minnesota:  
**LISTEN**  
**PROCLAIM**  
**SERVE**  
**CELEBRATE**



## The Rev. John Johnson Enmegahbowh 1820–1902

First ordained Native American priest in the Episcopal Church

June 12, 2002, marks the centennial of the death of the Rev. John Johnson Enmegahbowh, ordained by Bishop Whipple in 1867 as the first Native American priest in the Episcopal Church. In 2000, Enmegahbowh was added on a trial basis to the Episcopal Church calendar; the final vote on this inclusion will take place at General Convention 2003 in Minneapolis. Turn to pages 11-14 for a special section on the life and work of the man whose name means "The one who stands before his people."

Almighty God, you led your pilgrim people of old  
with fire and cloud;  
grant that the ministers of your Church,  
following the example of blessed Enmegahbowh,  
may stand before your holy people,  
leading them with fiery zeal and gentle humility.  
This we ask through Jesus, the Christ,  
who lives and reigns with you in the unity  
of the Holy Spirit, one God now and forever.  
**AMEN.**

— Collect for Enmegahbowh  
Lesser Feasts and Fasts, 2000  
June 12

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### SPECIAL REPORT Diocesan ministry priorities set for next triennium



Congregational development, faith formation, unchurched/seekers are top ministry priorities in diocesan poll. Learn more on page 6.

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# Honoring "The one who stands before his people"

## The life and ministry of the Rev. John Johnson Enmegahbowh

June 12, 2002, marks the centennial of the death of the Rev. John Johnson Enmegahbowh (pronounced En-meh-GAH-boe), the first ordained Native American Episcopal priest. Ordained deacon by Bishop Kemper in 1859 and priest by Bishop Whipple in 1867, Enmegahbowh served the Diocese of Minnesota for over 40 years and died less than a year after the man who had ordained him to the priesthood. It was Enmegahbowh who called the Rev. James Lloyd Breck to Gull Lake, where together they founded St. Columba's Mission in 1852. The mission was later moved to White Earth, where it remains today.

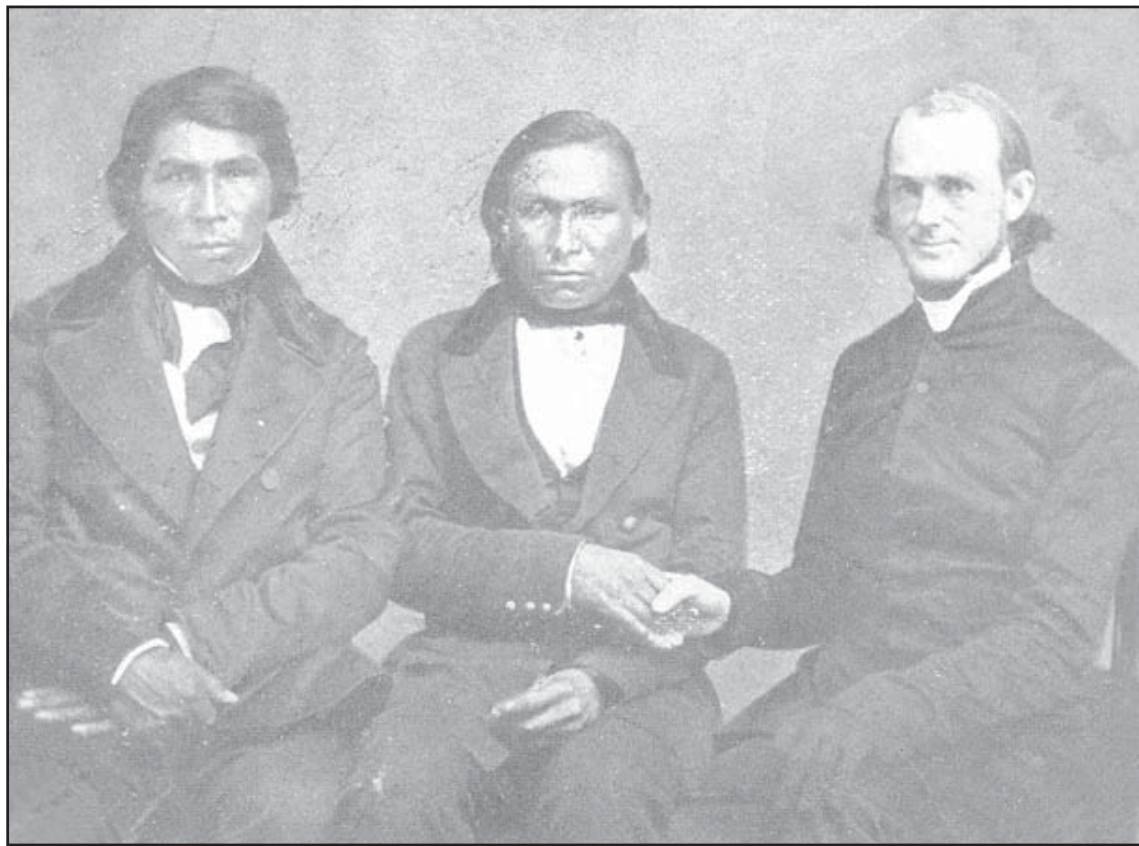
Enmegahbowh, whose name meant "The one who stands before his people," was a close advisor to Bishop Whipple on Episcopal Church relations with Native Americans, and traveled to Washington on more than one occasion in support of his people. He trained a generation of Native American clergy and helped in the development of many Ojibwe texts.

At the 2000 General Convention, Enmegahbowh was among those added on a trial basis to the national church calendar. His feast day is June 12.

"Minnesota, which has treasured and been blessed by the life-giving memory of our ancestor John Johnson Enmegahbowh, gives thanks for his recognition by and for the larger church and offers prayers that he may inspire others as he does us," Bishop Jelinek said after the 2000 vote.

Permanent additions to the Episcopal Church calendar require votes at two successive conventions. The second and final vote for Enmegahbowh will be taken, appropriately, when General Convention meets in Minneapolis in 2003.

On these pages, *SOUNDINGS* examines the life and ministry of this remarkable man and the mission he founded.



Manitowak, Enmegahbowh, and the Rev. James Lloyd Breck in a photograph taken around the year 1865.

## Enmegahbowh: A life of faithful witness

A sermon by the Rev. M. Lucie Thomas (given at St. Paul's Duluth, June 18, 2000)

Today we celebrate the life and ministry of the Rev. John Johnson Enmegahbowh, the first Native American to be ordained an Episcopal priest in the United States, and who served as deacon and priest in this diocese for over 40 years.

Who was the Rev. John Johnson Enmegahbowh?

He was an Indian from Canada who was raised in a Christian Anishinaabe village near Petersburg which was affiliated with the Methodists. He came into the United States as a Methodist missionary serving at Kaposia, near Fort Snelling, also at Ottawa and La Court Orilles in Wisconsin, and at Sandy Lake, Keweenaw, and finally at Fond du Lac — all in the late 1830s and early 1840s.

In 1841 he married an Ojibwe woman, a niece of both Hole-in-the-Day and Strong Arm, who was baptized Charlotte on the day of her wedding.

The Methodists abandoned their mission efforts in Minnesota in the late 1840s, and Enmegahbowh, left alone and continuing on alone for several years, got discouraged. Despite having promised the parents of his wife that he would not make her leave her home, he decided to return home to Canada. They set sail on the ship *John Jacob Astor*, bound for Saulte Ste. Marie from La Points, on Madeleine Island; but as soon as they got onto

the lake, clear of the islands, the ship encountered high winds and eventually had to turn back.

### A voyage to Nineveh

Enmegahbowh reached a turning point in his life on that ship. Here is how he recounts it many years later in a letter to Bishop Whipple:

"The heavens were of ink blackness; there was a great roaring and booming, and the lightning seemed to rend the heavens. The wind increased, and the vessel could not make headway. The Captain ran here and there talking to his sailors . . . I was sure that he would summon his mariners and say to them: "Come, let us cast lots that we may know for whose cause this evil is upon us." If they had cast lots, it would have fallen upon guilty En-me-gah-bowh . . . They would have asked me who had caused the storm, and would have discovered who I was, my occupation and my country. Would I have been bold enough to tell all this? If my faith in God was real, certainly I would have said, "My friends, I have been a missionary, I believe that there is a God in Heaven; that I am the sole cause of this great wind, or I have

sinned against God. I have taken the inclination of my heart, and have run away from my work."

"Here Mr. Jonah came before me and said, 'Ah, my

*Enmegahbowh knew that at his baptism he did not receive a spirit of slavery . . . but that he received a spirit of adoption. And that spirit stayed with him through a lifetime of faithful witness*

friend En-me-gah-bowh, I know you. You are a fugitive. You have sinned and disobeyed God. Instead of going to the city of Nineveh, where God sent you to spread His word to the people, you started to go, and then turned aside. You are now on your way to the city of Tarshish, congenial to your cowardly soul . . .

"My friend . . . your position is precisely like mine. You have run away from your work . . . The Lord has dealt with you as He dealt with me. Have you faith to say as I did, 'Take me up and throw me into the sea?' If so, where is the big fish to swallow you? There is no whale in this lake, no fish big enough for your huge body. Hence, if they cast you in, it

is the end of you . . . Only contrition will save you.

"Farewell! Farewell! May the Great Spirit pardon you and bring you to dry land."

So saying, he departed out of my sight.

"Dear Bishop, I know you will not understand me to say that I saw Jonah with my natural eyesight. Oh, no, I saw him with my imagination. What is your great Milton's fiery lake, what the exquisite scenes of his paradise, save the products of imagination?" (Gilbert H. Doane, *Enmegahbowh of the Chippewas*, pp. 10-11)

### "Who am I?"

Do you remember what Moses said to God when God speaks to him in the burning bush about sending him to Pharaoh to bring the Israelites out of Egypt? "Who am I that I should go to Pharaoh, and bring the Israelites out of Egypt?"

Enmegahbowh writes, "But having exhausted my wicked efforts to leave my heathen people, I returned to live and die with them . . . The more I thought of Jonah's advice, the more I thought of God's willingness to save these people from destruction, and that I might help in the work; although like Moses of old, I asked myself, 'Who am I that I should

go unto the great heathen nation? I am not eloquent, neither heretofore, nor since thou hast shown me of thy love.'" (Doane, pp. 11-12)

And so, just as the encounter with God in the burning bush turned Moses' life around, so the encounter with Jonah on the ship turned Enmegahbowh's life around, and he returned to Gull Lake with Charlotte.

Several years later he met the Rev. Ezekiel Gilbert Gear, chaplain at Fort Snelling, and became an Episcopalian. It was Gear who eventually introduced Enmegahbowh to the Rev. James Lloyd Breck, a missionary newly arrived in Minnesota.

### "Come and teach"

In 1852 it was Enmegahbowh who called James Lloyd Breck to Gull Lake, writing him "Come you, come and teach," and together they founded St. Columba's Mission at Gull Lake. That began a long collaboration between them, and also between Enmegahbowh and Bishop Whipple, a collaboration which lasted over 40 years.

Enmegahbowh was ordained a deacon by Bishop Kemper in 1859, and in 1867 he was ordained to the priesthood by Bishop Whipple at Faribault. This is what Bishop Whipple wrote about his decision to ordain Enmegahbowh as priest:

*Continued on p. 12*

from p. 12

## Called by Bishop Whipple “the most faithful of men in the face of faithless times”

“Enmegahbowh had a good English education, was devout, and well-read in the scriptures and in church history. With the consent of the Standing Committee, I gave him a dispensation for the Greek and Hebrew. My Indian deacon did not miss an answer in his examinations by three of the ablest men in my diocese. I ordained Enmegahbowh to the priesthood in the Cathedral at Faribault.” (*Enmegahbowh's Story*, last page)

Enmegahbowh had long refused to learn Greek and Hebrew, stating that he was being sent to work among the living, not among the dead!

Did you know that St. Paul's, Duluth, has a connection Enmegahbowh? The Rev. J. A. Gilfillan, who was rector there from 1870 to

1872, left St. Paul's to work with Enmegahbowh to found a school to train young Indian men to become priests and deacons, and to assist him in obtaining funds to build many of the Indian mission churches in northern Minnesota. The Diocese of Duluth and St. Paul's Church were very active for many years in supporting mission work in Northern Minnesota.

### A spirit of adoption

Enmegahbowh's name means “The one who stands before his people” and that is what he did, living with the Ojibwe and modeling a deeply Christian life.

Enmegahbowh knew, as Paul wrote to the Romans, that at his baptism he did not receive a spirit of slavery

*Enmegahbowh spoke the truth about earthly things, and that enabled his people to believe what he said about heavenly things*

to fall back into fear, but that he had received a spirit of adoption. And that spirit stayed with him through a lifetime of faithful witness.

He stood for peace, and warned white settlers of the uprising in 1862, for which he became unpopular with many Ojibwe groups for

some time. But notice his consistency, as he also encouraged Chief White Cloud's mission to establish peace between the Ojibwe and the Sioux in 1869.

Enmegahbowh also stood up for his people through his constant reminders to Bishop Whipple of conditions they were living in. An example of one of these letters is one Enmegahbowh

wrote to his bishop about an incident at Sandy Lake where Indians from Mille Lacs, Gull Lake, Leech Lake, and

Pokeguma had assembled to receive government rations:

“The old Sandy Point was covered with wigwams. The first day they received their beautiful well-colored flour

hard with lumps, the pork heavily perfumed. The old chief brought me some of both and said, ‘Is this fit to eat?’ I said, ‘No, it is not fit to eat.’

“But the Indians were hungry and they ate it. About ten o'clock the first gun was fired. You well know, Bishop, that Indians fire a gun when a death occurs. An hour after another gun was fired, then another and another, until it seemed death was at every wigwam. That night, twenty children died, and the next day as many more, and so for five days and five nights, the deaths went on.

“Bishop, when these dear victims strewed along the pathless wilderness shall hear the great trumpet sound and

*continued on opposite page*

## The life and work of Enmegahbowh: A time line

*This time line, with some adaptation, is taken from “Biographic Notes on ENME-GABO (John Johnson)”*

*It was prepared in March 1992 by Carl A. Zapffe of the Historic Heartland Association, Inc.*

*The complete document may be found at <<<http://www.northernmissioner.org/story.html>>>.*

### 1820 (possibly earlier)

Enmegahbowh born as son of the chief of an Ojibwe Band on Rice Lake near Peterborough, Ontario, about a day's journey northeast of Toronto. Sometimes referred to as an Ottawa because this group of Ojibwe “trade Indians” remained behind while the others pressed farther up the Great Lakes in search of furs.

### 1830

Anglican clergyman Armour, impressed by the lad's appearance and attitude, talks parents into letting him join his own family of two young sons for a period of travel. After three months, Enmegahbowh so homesick he flees home.

### 1831-32

Enmegahbowh's grandfather, a medicine man of high rank, prepares and inducts him into the tribal religious organization Mdewiwin.

### 1832

Methodist John Clark, Superintendent of Missionaries, issues call for promising young Indian converts to become missionaries to their own people. Enmegahbowh accompanies a Rev. Evans to the Sault St. Marie. Never sees his family or home again.

### 1833

Evans sends Enmegahbowh west to L'Anse on Keweenaw Peninsula. Enmegahbowh in school for two years.

### 1835-37

Enmegahbowh serves as

interpreter and catechist for Methodist Episcopal missions along the south shore of Lake Superior and in Wisconsin's interior.

### 1837-39

With two other Natives and three young whites, attends Ebenezer Manual Labor Training School near Jacksonville, Illinois.

### 1839

Begins serving as Assistant Missionary at Methodist Episcopal Mission founded among Chief Hole-in-the-Day's Band the previous year by Superintendent Alfred Brunson and Missionary Rollin Brown, at the mouth of Little Elk River just above Little Falls.

### 1840

Flees north with Hole-in-the-Day from Sioux attack; co-founds mission near mouth of Rabbit River.

### 1841

4 July: Marries Biwabikogeshig-equay or Iron Sky Woman (baptized Charlotte in honor of wife of Allan Morrison), niece of Hole-in-the-Day.

7 July: Flees again with Hole-in-the-Day, under renewed threat from Sioux, up the Pine River to what is now Rush Lake, where he becomes founder and preacher of Whitefish Lake Mission. Abandons mission in November 1841.

### 1842-45

Assistant Missionary at Sandy Lake, occasionally

helping missions at Leech, Cass, and Red Lakes.

### 1845

July: Attempts to abandon missionary work and return to Canada. While sailing Lake Superior, twice driven back to port by worst storms in memory. Has visionary experience involving Jonah, which convinces him to return to his missionary post.

September: Leaves Sandy Lake Mission to live with wife's people in their village northwest of Rabbit River. Meets Episcopal priest Ezekiel Gear at Fort Snelling. Decides to join the Episcopal church.

### 1846

Hole-in-the-Day officially adopts Enmegahbowh as his son.

### 1847

Hole-in-the-Day dies. Son Kwiwisens — brother of Enmegahbowh by adoption — takes over as Chief Hole-in-the-Day II.

### 1848

Hole-in-the-Day II — “agitates” Enmegahbowh to get a missionary, a school, and agricultural assistance for his people.

### 1849

Hole-in-the-Day II moves band back to boyhood home on northeast shore of Gull Lake to join the new program of the Government Farm resulting from the Treaty of 1847.

### 1850

Enmegahbowh, along with

several chiefs and principal men from the Rabbit River area, make “illegal” visit to Washington to seek aid in agriculture and education for their people (in his career, Enmegahbowh would meet nine U.S. Presidents). In Rochester, New York, they meet famous singer Jenny Lind, who gives them \$1000.

The Rev. James Lloyd Breck of Wisconsin arrives in St. Paul to establish an Episcopal church. Gear sends message to Enmegahbowh and friends in Washington: “Don't seek missionary; I have one!”

### 1851

Gear introduces Enmegahbowh to Breck; then strongly urges Breck to take advantage of Hole-in-the-Day's interest in Christianity and establish a mission on Gull Lake.

### 1852

New Year's Day: Enmegahbowh sends emergency letter to Breck that Hole-in-the-Day is seriously ill.

February: Breck sets out from St. Paul to see Hole-in-the-Day at Crow Wing. Arrives to find him recovered sufficiently to be moved to unknown location in wilderness.

April: Breck again heads north, meets Enmegahbowh at Crow Wing, continues on to Sugar Bush. Meets Hole-in-the-Day and agrees to return early June and build mission.

June: Breck and Enmegahbowh return to Crow Wing and learn that Hole-in-the-Day is no longer at Gull Lake.

Breck much disgruntled, but erects Chapel of St. John's of the Wilderness, preaches Sunday sermon, then departs secretly with Enmegahbowh for Gull Lake the next morning. Chief Kwiwisensiah (Bad Boy) of Gull Lake grants them a choice strip of land. Enmegahbowh aids Breck in establishing St. Columba's Mission.

### 1856

Breck turns St. Columba's over to the Rev. E. Steele Peake and Enmegahbowh; establishes Keesgah Mission on Onigum Peninsula of Leech Lake.

### 1857

Threat of Indian uprising drives Breck and Peake from Leech and Gull Lakes. Enmegahbowh remains.

### 1859

Enmegahbowh ordained Deacon in the Episcopal church by Missionary Bishop Jackson Kemper.

### 1862

Statewide Indian uprising drives Enmegahbowh from St. Columba's — two of his children subsequently die of exposure. He warns whites at Chippewa Agency, Crow Wing, and Fort Ripley of Hole-in-the-Day's secret plans in collusion with Sioux Chief Little Crow to kill and/or drive all whites out of Minnesota.

### 1862-68

Lives under protection of Fort Ripley and friends at

*continued on opposite page*

shall point to those who caused their death, it will be dreadful!

"My friend, Chief Pakanuhwaush, has just come in. I asked him how many died at the payment at Sandy Lake. He said, 'Over three hundred.'" (Owanah Anderson, *Jamestown Commitment*, p. 46)

Receiving eloquently written letters such as this from Enmegahbowh and armed with this kind of information on what was happening in Ojibwe lands, how could Bishop Whipple *not* have spoken out against corruption and other abuses?

It was his truth-telling, always gentle but always steadfast, that I most notice about Enmegahbowh. He told the truth as he understood it to his fellow Indians. He told the truth as he understood it

to his bishop and to other whites and to people in Washington and even to several U.S. Presidents.

He was at times unpopular because of this, but he managed throughout his life to spread the Good News, to train new clergy, to help found missions.

I think of what Jesus said in today's lesson from the Gospel of John, "Very truly, I tell you, we speak of what we know and testify to what we have seen . . . . If I have told you about earthly things and you do not believe, how can you believe if I tell you about heavenly things?"

Enmegahbowh spoke the truth about earthly things, and that enabled his people to believe what he said about heavenly things. Pure and simple.

Enmegahbowh was a man

of rare natural intellect and profound common sense. In his book, *Lights and Shadows of a Long Episcopate*, Bishop Whipple portrays him as a man of serious temper with a large streak of humanity and wit, who is steadfast in his devotion to God, his people, and his bishop. Whipple called him the most faithful of men in the face of faithless times and events.

For this we honor him today. Amen.

**The Rev. M. Lucie Thomas is associate rector of St. Paul's, Duluth. She prepared a research paper on Enmegahbowh as part of her studies at the Church Divinity School of the Pacific in Berkeley, California, and continues to do extensive research on his life and ministry.**



In 1996 the Diocese of Minnesota commissioned the Rev. Johnson D. Loud, Jr. to create an American icon of Enmegahbowh. Enmegahbowh is pictured in a scene of a northern Minnesota lake at sunset. He carries a pipe, the symbol of Indian spiritual culture. The flame represents the Holy Spirit and Enmegahbowh's zeal for the Gospel. The embroidery on the tippet is in traditional Ojibwe beadwork design. The halo incorporates the Medicine Wheel used by the Dakota. The combined decoration signifies the peaceful relations which Enmegahbowh helped to achieve among the Indians of Minnesota. This icon is available as a print suitable for framing, and also as a note card. Contact the Cathedral Book Shop at St. Mark's Cathedral: 612/870-7800, ext. 19.

Crow Wing because of death threat by Hole-in-the-Day.

### 1867

**20 June:** Enmegahbowh ordained to the priesthood by Bishop Whipple, becoming

the first Native American priest in the Episcopal Church.

### 1868

**4 June:** Ojibwe emigrants leave for new reservation

called White Earth; arrive there 14 June. Enmegahbowh does not dare accompany them because of Hole-in-the-Day's threat.

**27 June:** Hole-in-the-Day assassinated.

**July:** Enmegahbowh gathers family and belongings; heads for White Earth. Soon erects log Church of St. Columba in memory of, and as a replacement for, the beloved one at Gull Lake.

### 1869

Enmegahbowh inspires Waub-anaquort (Chief White Cloud), Nabnoshkung (Isaac H. Tuttle), Mesh'ak-geshig (Horizon), and others, to offer their lives if necessary in making peace with the Sioux. This historic and successful Waub-anaquort peace mission ends the 133 years of Sioux-Ojibwe warfare.

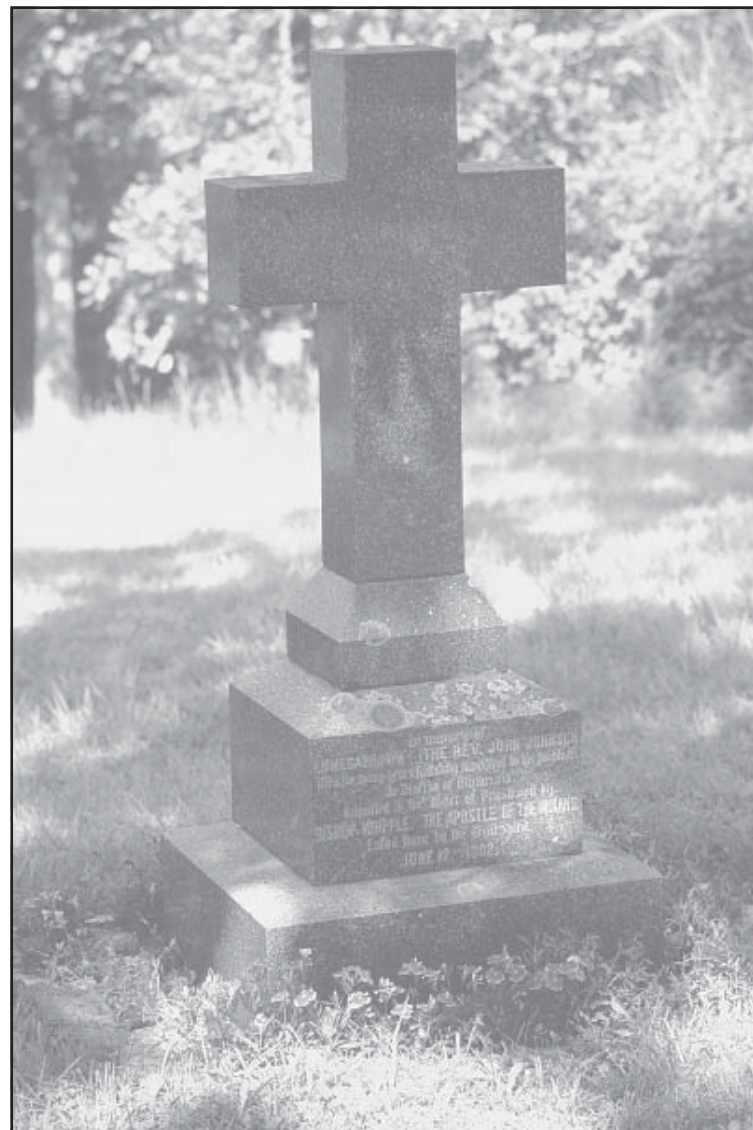
### 1869-1902

Replaces St. Columba's log church with one made of lumber. Church burns down, new one built of stone.

Enmegahbowh's wife Charlotte dies. He marries a woman whose grandson is the Rev. George Smith [a priest in the Diocese of Minnesota].

### 1902

**12 June:** Enmegahbowh dies and is buried at St. Columba's, White Earth.



The grave of Enmegahbowh at St. Columba's, White Earth. The inscription reads, in part: "In memory of Enmegahbowh [The Rev. John Johnson] who for many years faithfully ministered to his people in the Diocese of Minnesota . . . . Called Home by the Great Spirit June 12, 1902."

— Photo: Doug Ohman

## Join the celebrations!

### Annual Enmegahbowh celebration

**Sunday, June 16**  
St. Columba's, White Earth

**10:00 am** Holy Eucharist, celebrated by Bishop Jelinek  
**11:30 am** Feast  
**1:00 pm** PowWow

This year's Enmegahbowh Celebration coincides with the 100th anniversary of the death of the first ordained Native Episcopal priest, as well as the 150th anniversary of the founding of St. Columba's Mission by Enmegahbowh and James Lloyd Breck. All are welcome.

### MCIW Convocation

**June 30-July 2**  
Bishop Whipple Mission, Morton

Join the Minnesota Committee on Indian Work at its annual gathering. Watch for more news on both events.

### RESOURCES

#### Web sites

Visit <<<http://www.northernmissioner.org>>> to see a section on Enmegahbowh.

More biographical information, plus appointed readings and collects, are at: <<<http://satucket.com/lectionary/Enmegahbowh.htm>>>.

For general information on Native American ministry, go to <<<http://www.episcopalchurch.org/congr/Native/Default.htm>>>.

#### Written materials

*The Story of Enmegahbowh.*

Order at <<<http://www.northernmissioner.org>>>.

Contact the Cathedral Book Shop at 612/870-7800 ext 19 or <<[bookshop@st-marks-cathedral.org](mailto:bookshop@st-marks-cathedral.org)>> for these related books:

*Night Flying Woman: An Ojibway Narrative* by Ignatia Broker: New edition illustrated by Steve Premo (Native Voices)

*I Heard the Owl Call My Name* by Mars Craven (Laurel)

# St. Columba's Mission, co-founded by Enmegahbowh, celebrates its sesquicentennial

All Saints' Day of 1852 is usually given as the beginning of the Ojibwe mission — the day the Rev. James Lloyd Breck laid the cornerstone of St. Columba's, Gull Lake, west of present-day Brainerd. Invited by Chief Hole-in-the-Day and Enmegahbowh, Breck had made two earlier visits on foot from St. Paul and put up a "rustic chapel of pine boughs," but St. Columba's was meant to last.

The work flourished — Breck even briefly got federal aid to educate the native people! But in July 1857, Breck and his companions had to flee for their lives. In the previous year "firewater" had arrived, and violence and chaos ensued. (The enigmatic chief Hole-in-the-Day, an uncle of Enmegahbowh's wife, was said to be involved in a plot to destroy the mission.)

Breck would never return, but Enmegahbowh stayed. Made a deacon by Kemper in 1859, he would be priested by Whipple in 1867 so that his people might receive "the Christian's bread."

That same year, a new treaty began to concentrate the Ojibwe on a reservation

west of Bemidji. Removal, begun in 1868, continued for 35 years, even as the land area shrunk. The Episcopal mission moved along with its people, to its present-day location on the White Earth reservation.

The first St. Columba's building at White Earth burned, but its replacement, built of stone in 1881, served for nearly a century. When it was struck by lightning in the summer of 1979, a unifying symbol was lost, for St. Columba's is "mother church" to the three other Episcopal missions on the reservation. The new building, modern in style yet reminiscent of the historic church, was consecrated on June 14, 1981.

Enmegahbowh, who died on June 12, 1902, is buried in the churchyard, and the people of St. Columba's honor him each June during the White Earth Pow-Wow. The congregation reaches out in its community through a substance abuse ministry.

**Historical sketch by Robert Neslund, from the 2001 Bishop Whipple commemorative calendar**



LEFT: The original St. Columba's Mission at Gull Lake.

BELOW: The present St. Columba's building in White Earth

— Photo: Doug Ohman



## The ministry continues: A weekend at Enmegahbowh House

*Enmegahbowh House is an unused rectory building on the White Earth Reservation that has been developed as a small conference and retreat center. Located on White Earth Lake amidst the undeveloped woods on the reservation, it is available for groups, families, or individuals for meetings and conferences, or for retreats for reflection and renewal. One of those such weekends is described below.*

by **Walther M. Liebenow and Judith Duncan-Liebenow**

Even on a blustery March day the roads going up out of the Twin Cities seemed calming. We left on a Friday at about noon to give ourselves as much of the weekend as possible at Enmegahbowh House, on the White Earth Reservation.

The Rev. Juanita Palmerhall and the Diocesan Department of Indian Work have been developing this comfortable, rustic "retreat house" that can sleep 8-10 or provide meeting space for 15-20 people.

We talked ourselves into justifying this extravagance of time in our over-scheduled and often frenetic lives by packing the car full of boxes of books that Margaret Eichhorn, the librarian at St. Mark's Cathedral, has been collecting and packing for the library to be built at St. Columba's this summer. (You can do this too — she always has more boxes!) And because we like Juanita a lot.

We may not have been fully expecting the "spiritual oasis" and "peace for the soul" that the little brochure seems to promise. Our drive up began pleasantly enough, but because the weather was getting sloppy and it was beginning to get dark, we finally just drove straight through. We probably won't do that again. Next time we'll stop for a while for a snack and a little walk.

But it was March. It was getting dark, we were tired, we missed a turn, and wound up being guided for a while by a reservation policeman who discreetly turned off a little way from Enmegahbowh House and let us "find it" ourselves.

We were enfolded immediately, fed soon after, talked of places associated with Enmegahbowh, just talked generally, listened to music, and finally went to bed with books we barely touched before we fell asleep with great

plans for the next day.

In the morning, we awoke, dressed, and walked down the hall to the large room filled with windows facing the lake. The world was white! Fog, perhaps. More probably the breath of God.

There was snow on the ground, somewhere beyond the windows, but we could only see that bit of it close enough to the windows to spotlight birds flying in a wild ballet to breakfast on

*It was magic; it was holy in the very best of ways. . . . that day was one long prayer*

the seeds put out for them.

It was white light. All day. Whites of innumerable shades and hues. Shining. Glowing. Spinning. Being the nacre of the pearl. Perfect peace. In the middle of the afternoon, the white distance that may have been the island in the lake shaped into a grayed white that could have been trees. Then white again.

White air. White Earth.

The day could not have been more blessed. We talked. We laughed. Together

we ate the wonderful food Juanita had masterfully prepared. Walther (whom you may know as the man who never stops moving) took Juanita's dog out the requisite number of times and on one of those times shoveled the walk to the garage, but then came back to watch the white.

It was magic; it was holy in the very best of ways. That day was one long prayer. We can't quite believe it could ever be quite so perfect again, but are planning another trip soon.

Early the next day, Sunday, the man who came to plow the snow said he'd have come on Saturday, but there would have been no point. He was right.

The clarity of every view in every direction was crystalline. We breakfasted lightly, packed, and followed Juanita off to St.

Columba's, where the Blessed Enmegahbowh preached and is buried. Juanita gave a lovely "children's sermon" to us all, and the sun shone warmly through the colored glass.

Afterward, we turned the other direction, drove back to the edge of the reservation, stopped at the gas station/store where Walther found treasures like head cheese and cheap gas, then on to Staples where Judith got to shop briefly for antiques while Walther stopped to get coffee and two pieces of peach pie and then regretted not buying the whole pie — the only regret of the whole trip. Within about four and a half hours, we were home in Minneapolis, wonderfully refreshed. The brochure was right.

**Walther Liebenow and Judith Duncan-Liebenow are members of St. Mark's Cathedral.**

### TO LEARN MORE

Enmegahbowh House is open to religious groups of all faiths, as well as to secular groups. The facility can sleep 8-10 people, and the meeting space can accommodate 15-20.

For dates, rates, additional information on Enmegahbowh House, or to arrange a visit, contact the Rev. Juanita Palmerhall, 38604 296th Ave., Waubun, MN 56589; 218/473-2615.

NOTE: Unless you make special arrangements about meals, you should plan to bring your own food and use the very good kitchen facilities provided. Ask about the options.