



A Prayer as the country reflects on the verdict in the Tina Fontaine murder trial

God who cares for the homeless and the ignored,
We confess that as a nation and as people we failed Tina Fontaine.

We failed her that as a 15 year-old she was living in a hotel in the care of the government.
Our failures during her life caused her to be in this situation.
Our failure to protect her led to her death.

We failed Tina Fontaine and we fail others like her when we agree that it is sufficient for
children and young people to be “housed”, rather than seeking a home where they can belong.

We failed Tina Fontaine and we fail others like her when we allow saving money to be more
important than providing safe, nurturing environments for at-risk children and youth.

We failed Tina Fontaine and we fail others like her when say “it is the government’s fault” or “it
is the social worker’s fault” or “it is the school’s fault”, instead of accepting our responsibility to
be communities that raise children and young people.

God, your Son blessed children. We confess that we have not been a blessing in the lives of all
children. We confess that as adults we have not sought to protect and advocate for all children
and young people. We have not accepted our calling to raise the next generation in a healthy and
caring environment.

God, who saw the child Ishmael crying, teach us to love children as you love children. Break our
hearts of stone and give us soft hearts; that we may become protectors and nurturers of
Indigenous children and young people, and of all children and young people.

Nudge us into involving ourselves in the lives of children, rather than complaining about their
parents behind the parents’ backs. Guide us to learn the names and interests of young people we
regularly come in contact with, rather than bad-mouthing nameless youth. Cause us to speak up
for children and youth of all cultural and economic backgrounds. Teach us to open our hearts to
difficult children and young people, and not only to the cute and the quiet. Call us to prayer for
the children and young people we meet and those we know of only through the media. Change
us, our communities, and our nation that we would become known as “a people who care about
kids.”

These things we pray in the name of Jesus Christ, who lived among us as a child and young
person. Amen.

—*The Rev. Peter Bush, moderator of the 2017 General Assembly*