L’Église presbytérienne

au Canada

The Presbyterian Church

in Canada

**Worship Planner**

**Healing and Reconciliation Sunday**

**Sunday, May 26th , 2024**

Additional resources about healing and reconciliation, and Indigenous justice may be found on the church’s Social Action Hub webpage at presbyterian.ca/justice/social-action/indigenous-justice/.

**Worship Service in Observance of Healing and Reconciliation Sunday 2024**

Healing and Reconciliation Sunday was designated by the 2006 General Assembly, recognizing the need for healing and relationship building between Indigenous and non-Indigenous people in Canada.

As a church that ran 12 residential schools, we bear a collective responsibility to truth and healing. In the 1980s and 1990s, the truth about abuses children suffered at residential schools began to be heard. Over the next decades, more truth about the pain and harm inflicted at the schools have become part of our common memory, in large part because of the courage of Survivors and intergenerational Survivors who are standing against a legacy of colonial violence and racism, seeking heal from their harmful and deadly impacts.

June 3, 2024 will mark 30 years since the church adopted its 1994 confession, which acknowledges the church’s complicity in a deadly assimilation effort that targeted Indigenous children.

In its report to the 2023 General Assembly, the National Indigenous Ministries Council articulated the need for an apology that reflects the “now greater understanding of the profound harm these institutions [residential schools] caused and continue to cause, to generations of Indigenous people.” As that apology is being prepared, members of the church are invited to engage in collective and group learning about the need for an apology, the legacy of residential schools and intergenerational trauma, the roots of anti-Indigenous racism, our responsibility and commitment to uphold the UN Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples, and what is needed for truth, healing, and justice for Indigenous peoples. This includes in worship, which is central to our faith life and community.

**Suggested Readings**

Zachariah 8:16-17: These are the things that you shall do: Speak the truth to one another, render in your gates judgments that are true and make for peace, do not devise evil in your hearts against one another, and love no false oath; for all these are things that I hate, says the Lord.

Micah 6:8: He has told you, O mortal, what is good; and what does the Lord require of you but to do justice, and to love kindness, and to walk humbly with your God?

Living Faith: 4.3.2: The Holy Spirit is the Spirit of truth. We pray as a church to be guided into truth knowing that such truth may disturb and judge us.

Select sections from 1994 Confession.

Select sections from the 2023 Report of the National Indigenous Ministries Council to General Assembly.

**Hymns**

*\* Words matter. Many hymns, because of when they were written, evoke colonial language, images, or relationships (e.g. God as King; disciples as soldiers) which is not appropriate in the context of a service on truth, healing and reconciliation addressing a legacy of colonial harm by the church toward Indigenous people. As you choose hymns for the day, consider how hymn lyrics, or the lyrics of any music selected, may be heard or understood in this context. The following are some suggested hymns:*

709 - What does the Lord require of you

717 - We cannot own the sunlit sky

730 - O for a world where everyone

381 - Holy Spirit, hear us (excluding vs 5)

339 - Spirit, Spirit of gentleness

445 - Open our eyes, Lord.

**Call to Worship**

Loving God: you call us together

**To worship God as the people of God.**

You call us by name and just as we are: you know each of our needs; you know our experiences; you know what rests in our minds and our hearts, and in your love you call us:

**To worship God as the people of God**

We come together, our heads, our hearts and our hands and feet yearning to be remade and redirected to paths of justice, and in ways of love. Help us, Jesus, to walk in the paths of justice and love that you yourself have walked:

**To worship God as the people of God.**

God invites us to worship as beloved and loving people! Mold us, Holy Spirit:

**To worship God as the people of God.**

**Prayer of Lament for children who did not return from residential schools**

Creator God of love and justice, Comforter of those who mourn,

We turn to you acknowledging the actions of your church, our complicity in running residential schools and taking children from their families. We have asked forgiveness and committed to work for truth, healing and reconciliation. But we recognize that for some, that change came too late.

The names of more of the students who died and never made it home from residential schools are beginning to be known, but we know these lists are incomplete; that there will be more names and that some names may never be publicly known. But you know, Loving and Healing God, their names, and their stories, their hearts and their families.

For those children whose names we do know, those we do not yet know, and for the intergenerational harm, the trauma still present today that grew from their absence, we apologize. We pray for healing for the siblings, family, and friends of those were taken from home but did not return, and for the intergenerational impacts the schools continue to cause today in families and communities.

For where there was joy, and we took it;

laughter and we stifled it

play and we turned it to tears

family and we broke it

dignity, and we stifled it

We repent and renew our commitment to walk a new path. We honour the children lost and hold the memory of their lives in our hearts.

Comforting God, we pray for healing in the communities and families of all who experienced residential schools, and strength for all who pursue healing, truth and reconciliation.

**Prayer of Adoration**

God of Creation – everything you have made sings your praises.

Let our voices join the song and proclaim your goodness, your grace, your justice, and your fulsome peace.

With Jesus as our example, let our words become actions that reflect your will for the thriving of all people, all creation.

May your Spirit of love flow abundantly into every corner of the world.

**Assurance of Pardon**

We confess our brokenness, God. We come before you with all that we are - and all that we fail to be. With all we have done, and all we have failed to do. God of mercy, in you we know we can find healing and wholeness. Amen.

**Prayer for Understanding**

Help us to listen well, O God. Speak to us and help us to hear.

**Sermon**

*After reviewing some of the suggested resources, consider what we are collectively called to do as people who are part of an institution, the church, that has a responsibility to truth, healing and justice seeking with Indigenous peoples.*

Resources:

- Vivian Ketchum’s reflection on Orange Shirt Day, and accompanying study guide

- 1994 Confession Study Guide

- 2023 Report of the National Indigenous Ministries Council to the General Assembly

- The Presbyterian Church in Canada & Residential Schools: A Narrative History

**Invitation to the Offering**

Congregations wishing to, may support the [National Indigenous Ministries](https://presbyterian.ca/donate/donate-to-ministries-with-indigenous-peoples/) of the PCC, the [Indigenous Ministries Fund](https://presbyterian.ca/donate/donate-to-ministries-with-indigenous-peoples/), or the [Honouring the Children Fund](https://presbyterian.ca/donate/donate-honouring-children-fund/).

**Prayer of Dedication**

All that we have comes from you, O God. May these gifts be used as we work for a more peaceful and just world.

**Prayers of Thanksgiving and Intercession**

*When shaping prayerful words for truth, healing, and reconciliation, it is important to remember that prayer was used as a weapon for oppression and assimilation in residential schools. Language used in prayer must reflect understanding of the church’s role in the harms of colonization and treat with the utmost respect, the dignity and integrity of Indigenous culture, ways of knowing, spirituality, and self-determination. For further information, see “Honouring Indigenous Spirituality” beginning at page 224 in the Summary of the Final Report of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission. See also our own commitments to Honouring Indigenous spirituality at: https://presbyterian.ca/2015/01/29/statement-aboriginal-spiritual-practices/*

God of Truth,

Because we are imperfect, so too are the societies, communities and relationships we build.

Selfishness and arrogance in our relationships do not reflect your love, and have too often hurt your creation, and your beloved people therein.

We know that wounds inflicted because of false beliefs about the superiority of people of a particular race, class or gender do not reflect your love for all people, nor your commandment to love you, and to love our neighbours.

We acknowledge that even if we did not directly inflict these wounds, we have inherited wounded relationships, and that diminishing, ignoring, or denying this continues our complicity in a cycle of harm.

We pray for those who are hurt and hurting because of false beliefs about the superiority of a particular race, class, or gender.

God, let equity and justice bring healing.

 We hold in our hearts:

…. those who are sick, or have loved ones that are struggling with physical or mental illness. Let them know they are not alone. Jesus, bring your comfort, justice, and peace.

…people who face violence in their relationships, in their home, office, community or country, and for those who have been displaced by war, unjust economic systems, the climate crisis, and ongoing impacts of colonization around the world.

Spirit, bring your comfort, justice, and peace.

…people who living with housing insecurity: where home is inadequate for the needs of the people it must shelter, is unsafe, unaffordable, or inaccessible. Creator, ring your comfort, justice, and peace.

…people who are struggling with economic insecurity: where there are barriers to education or employment, unfairness in policies or practices, where there is transition, and change. Redeemer, bring your comfort, justice, and peace.

…people at the frontlines, that daily face the evidence of systemic racism and continue to strive for the safety and dignity of people and creation. Holy Fire, bring your comfort, justice, and peace.

God of Transforming Love,

The wounds of racism continue to this day, imbedded in the fabric of our institutions and governments. Let your compassion and wisdom flow through all public policies and practices.

Where power is horded, bring your justice.

Where racism is resisted, bring your courage and strength to acknowledge and address it.

We pray for decision makers and change makers and give thanks for all people who lift up the integrity and dignity of creation and protect human rights.

**The Lord’s Prayer**

**Commissioning and Benediction**

As we go out today, may the Spirit rouse in each of us, minds prepared to be unsettled, hearts that yearn for justice, and bodies that work for peace. Guide and impassion us in love and justice, to walk lightly and humbly and seek truth and reconciliation, healing, and wholeness.

May God’s transforming love flow freely through each of us.

Amen.

**Prayer Partnership**

**MISSION MOMENT: Sunday, May 26**

Aziza, a mother of four from Pakistan, faced numerous challenges, including a physical disability and the tragic loss of her husband in 2019. Left to support her family as a young widow, Aziza and her eldest son worked tirelessly. Her son earned a small income as a shepherd. Despite their best efforts, the devastating floods of 2022 destroyed their home and village, forcing them to seek refuge in her brother-in-law’s house. Aziza struggled to feed her children. In response to the disaster, a local partner, with support from PWS&D and Canadian Foodgrains Bank, began a cash assistance project to ensure families could meet their basic food needs. Aziza used the funds wisely, allocating them for immediate needs like wheat flour and groceries.

**DAILY PRAYERS**

**Sunday, May 26 (Healing & Reconciliation Sunday)** We pray for healing for Indigenous families and communities, both within and outside the church, who are struggling with intergenerational trauma from residential schools and other forms of colonial violence. We ask that God guide our church and congregations in ways that uphold Indigenous rights and reject anti-Indigenous racism.

**Monday, May 27** We pray for our mission partners in Canada and around the world, supported through our gifts to Presbyterians Sharing.

**Tuesday, May 28** We pray for retired ministers and professional church workers, and for those preparing for retirement.

**Wednesday, May 29** We give thanks that the PCC is involved ecumenically within Canada and beyond, and pray for the councils of the church that bring various denominations together for worship, fellowship, ministry and mission: the World Council of Churches, World Communion of Reformed Churches and the Canadian Council of Churches.

**Thursday, May 30** We pray for the students enrolled in theological colleges that are preparing to serve at a rural or remote congregation this summer.

**Friday, May 31** We pray that God may strengthen the hands and hearts of farmers in Afghanistan who are working tirelessly to restore their land and livelihoods after facing repeated droughts.

**JUNE**

**Saturday, June 1** We give thanks to God for the faithful service of the Rev. Mary Fontaine as she completes her year as the first Indigenous Moderator of The Presbyterian Church in Canada.