



Rockway and First (North Pelham) Pastoral Charge
Sunday June 20, 2021

Father's Day, National Indigenous Persons Day
Fourth Sunday after Pentecost Worship at Home

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Today's service focuses on the Indigenous Persons of Canada. Some of the resources from "A time for Hope" (PCC 2016) a resource that focuses on the many Calls to Action that came out of the Truth and Reconciliation Report. The prayers have been written by Indigenous members of the Presbyterian Church in Canada. In 2017, I had the opportunity to travel as part of the Healing and Reconciliation Tour visiting some of the Indigenous Persons ministry projects are supported through Presbyterians Sharing and the WMS.

Take a moment to quieten yourself, and to prepare for worship, bringing your heart and mind to this time with God. (You may light a candle for your time of worship)

Call to Worship:

Let all who take refuge in the Lord rejoice;

Let them ever sing for joy.

God's protection is over them so that those who love God's name may exult in the Lord.

This is the Lord's Day, let us worship God.

Opening Prayer of Adoration and Confession:

Jesus called us to be open to the gifts of change that surround us.

Great Spirit, we can feel and see the change as the seasons bring their warmth and acceptance.

Lord, help us to be respectful of the spirituality of our Aboriginal brothers and sisters.

Great Spirit, help us to walk together with all your children, to recognize your gifts of creation, and to learn the lessons that creation has for us.

Lord, help us to be more like you; and to remember your son in everything that we say and do.

God, you have sent the Holy Spirit so all humans can call out, "We are children of The Promise."

The promise from you is for abundant life, peaceful living, and being together in a good and compassionate way. God has freed us all so that we might enjoy life, and live together with all nations in peace.

Lord, you have heard the persistent sound of Indigenous people crying. You are angered by the injustice done to them every day! If our hands are stained with injustice God, forgive us, save us, rescue us! Encourage Indigenous people. Encourage our church. Help us find new ways to walk together, in peace, as your children.

And we respond using the words, that He taught us:

Our Father, who art in heaven hallowed be thy name. Thy kingdom come; thy will be done on earth as it is in heaven. Give us this day our daily bread and forgive us our debts, as we forgive our debtors. And lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil. For thine is the kingdom, and the power and the glory, forever. Amen.

Scripture Reading: 1st Kings 21: 1 – 10 (NIV)

Sometime later there was an incident involving a vineyard belonging to Naboth the Jezreelite. The vineyard was in Jezreel, close to the palace of Ahab king of Samaria. Ahab said to Naboth, "Let me have your vineyard to use for a vegetable garden, since it is close to my palace. In exchange I will give you a better vineyard or, if you prefer, I will pay you whatever it is worth."

But Naboth replied, "The LORD forbid that I should give you the inheritance of my ancestors."

So, Ahab went home, sullen and angry because Naboth the Jezreelite had said, “I will not give you the inheritance of my ancestors.” He lay on his bed sulking and refused to eat.

His wife Jezebel came in and asked him, “Why are you so sullen? Why won’t you eat?”

He answered her, “Because I said to Naboth the Jezreelite, ‘Sell me your vineyard; or if you prefer, I will give you another vineyard in its place.’ But he said, ‘I will not give you, my vineyard.’”

Jezebel his wife said, “Is this how you act as king over Israel? Get up and eat! Cheer up. I’ll get you the vineyard of Naboth the Jezreelite.”

So, she wrote letters in Ahab’s name, placed his seal on them, and sent them to the elders and nobles who lived in Naboth’s city with him. In those letters she wrote:

“Proclaim a day of fasting and seat Naboth in a prominent place among the people. But seat two scoundrels opposite him and have them bring charges that he has cursed both God and the king. Then take him out and stone him to death.”

Galatians 3:23 – 29 (NIV)

Before the coming of this faith, we were held in custody under the law, locked up until the faith that was to come would be revealed. So, the law was our guardian until Christ came that we might be justified by faith. Now that this faith has come, we are no longer under a guardian.

So, in Christ Jesus you are all children of God through faith, for all of you who were baptized into Christ have clothed yourselves with Christ. There is neither Jew nor Gentile, neither slave nor free, nor is there male and female, for you are all one in Christ Jesus. If you belong to Christ, then you are Abraham’s seed, and heirs according to the promise.

Reflection: “You are all children of God”

Much has happened over the past few weeks. Through the news we have witnessed many situations the change in political leadership in Israel, the meeting of the G7 leaders (in person), repeated announcements regarding economic roll out and easing of restrictions due to the reduced numbers of CO-VID 19 cases (in Canada) all the while knowing that there are many countries in the world that have not yet even started with a vaccine roll out.

Here in Canada many were left reeling with the news out of Kamloops, of former Kamloops Indian Residential School where 215 graves found (containing the remains of children), the continued Black Lives Matter rallies (with the one-year anniversary of the death of George Floyd), the death of the Muslim family and serious injuries to their 9-year-old now orphaned son in London Ontario. So many difficult situations to take in.

In our own denomination the General Assembly met, virtually and decisions were made that were celebrated by some, and mourned by others. You are welcome to review the various decisions by going to <https://presbyterian.ca/gao/ga2021/>. This is the General Assembly page.

Today is Father’s Day – a day to celebrate our fathers, and those who were like a father to us. Like so much of life, there are those who excel at the role, and those who for whatever reason are challenged by the role – whether it was for lack of a role model in their own life, or the ongoing challenges and examples of father figures around them.

Today is also recognized as National Indigenous Persons Sunday. A day to recognize the Indigenous persons of this land, and as a denomination to celebrate them as a people. As part of this year’s General Assembly, a rare joint statement from the current and former Moderator of the Presbyterian Church in Canada was issued, and is included in the Worship at Home material. The letter was issued as a response to the devastating revelation of 215 unmarked graves on the grounds of the Kamloops Residential School in British Columbia. There is recognition of the

lament and humility of all the children who were lost, those already known of, those who were just found and any more still to be found.

Today I'd like us to think about Galatians 3:23-29. Let's think about it in terms of what it does or doesn't mean; and what it did and didn't do. It doesn't mean we can forget the law.

It doesn't mean that there aren't things we can and should learn from the law. It doesn't mean that there are no differences between Jews and Gentiles. Galatians 3 didn't mean slavery would end. Nor that women would achieve gender equality.

However, Galatians 3 does mean that Paul saw Christ as the great equalizer, that Paul believed that racial and cultural attitudes of superiority had no basis, that societal and class structures creating a dominant class were wrong, and that misogyny and gender-based prejudice are incompatible with the values Jesus taught.

We can think about National Indigenous People's Day in this way. It doesn't mean that Canada has stopped struggling with the legacy from residential schools. It doesn't mean that Canadian laws and attitudes are free of the prejudicial influences of colonialism. It doesn't mean we have forgotten the 1,200 missing and murdered Indigenous women and girls with families who seek and deserve answers.

But the great promise in Galatians 3 is that in Christ we are all beloved of God. Every person reflects the divine image. God knows each of us by name. In Jesus, every person's joys and sorrows, gifts and challenges are God's own. In the Spirit, every person can know God, and share God's loving Spirit.

Likewise, the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples doesn't mean that all human rights are not important. But it does mean that the rights of Indigenous peoples are affirmed; that Indigenous peoples' rights are important to the wellbeing and dignity of all people.

Today we've also heard the story known as Naboth's Vineyard. Ahab and Jezebel were powerful people. They were not content with what they already had and sought to dispose Naboth of his ancestral land, his traditional land. They made Naboth what they considered to be a reasonable offer. When Naboth declined, they killed him and took the land. This story reminds us of the challenges in human relationships. We see abuse of power, corruption and disregard for human life.

Hearing this story on National Indigenous Person's Sunday reminds us that too often treaties and other agreements between Indigenous peoples and non-Indigenous people have not been honoured, and that non-Indigenous people have taken the land. The United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples affirms the land rights of Indigenous peoples. It affirms the right of Indigenous peoples to be involved in decisions about their lands and resources. The message of Naboth's vineyard is that the actions of Ahab and Jezebel are evidence of broken relationships, and a distortion of the kinds of righteous relationships God calls us to – with God and with each other in Jesus Christ.

In the 1970s Indigenous peoples from around the world went to the United Nations to talk about discrimination, abuse, and how attitudes of cultural superiority of non-Indigenous peoples had impacted their lives, culture and spirituality. These messages were consistent with Galatians 3 teaching that difference should not be a barrier to justice and right-relationships. It took twenty years for the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples to be drafted, and then ratified by the United Nations. It is thanks to the courage and persistence of Indigenous sisters and brothers that all people have a Declaration that reminds us in specific and concrete ways that God's love is for all people and that in Jesus, differences between groups of people are

not to be used as weapons or walls. The Declaration provides us with a framework for reconciliation in Canada.

There are people – Indigenous and non-Indigenous – who are living out the spirit of the Declaration. Like Paul said in his letter to the Galatians, the people in the stories you will hear affirm that all people are beloved children of God.

In 2017, I had the opportunity to participate in the first Healing and Reconciliation tour of ministries supported by the Presbyterian Church in Canada. As our group traveled from Winnipeg to Kenora, to Saskatoon, and Mistiwastis, I had the opportunity to hear many stories. Stories filled with sadness, anger, frustration and hope. Many were shared by Residential school survivors. While in Kenora we had the opportunity to visit both locations of the Cecilia Jeffrey Residential School (the first at Shoal Lake, and the second located outside of Kenora). When we arrived at the Kenora location we were told that we could go and walk the area over looking the lake, walk through the long grass beyond the path. Most of us headed out, and then all of a sudden, we were called back. As we came back, gathered as a group we were told that it was considered sacred ground, and while we were walking carefully and respectfully, we were called back because this sacred ground was known to be a burial site. There were no grave markers, no indication of a cemetery. We were told “we know that that there are children’s graves but we don’t know where they are buried. It was from this school that Chanie Wenjack ran away. His story is the focus the late Gord Downie’s (of the Tragically Hip) story, “The Secret Path”.

An Indigenous Elder shared with us her experiences at the Roman Catholic school, also at Kenora. She was sent to this school, when she was three years of age following the death of her mother. Her father felt that it would be best as it would be close to her grandmother, who could keep an eye on things. Her siblings attended the Presbyterian School (Cecilia Jeffrey). She shared her struggles with assimilation, language, change in diet, learning Catholicism to name a few. She spoke of the punishment she received when she ran away. The challenges of going home for summer holidays and learning how to reconnect with her family. At the school the Priest taught them that being Protestant was a bad or evil thing. She went home to her family and struggled to know how to act. She was being taught how to be a Catholic, how would she cope with her Protestant siblings. She said it took many years to overcome this thought process. The last time she ran away from the school, she refused to go back. She found great comfort in being on the land. She struggled in her relationships with people, with substance abuse, she didn’t know how to nurture her own children. It took many years for her to find a peace where she could speak of the experiences that had forever changed her. She was a highly respected Elder to the Indigenous People particularly in the Kenora Fellowship Center and community.

While in Manitoba, we shared a meal and heard stories of the struggles and the hope of the people at the Bird Tail First Nation. I had the opportunity to share my meal with an extended family. I met a woman who had also been diagnosed with Cancer, and who had received treatment in Winnipeg. She and her husband had their grandson living with them, as his mother was unable to care for him. The grandson spoke of the University of Manitoba education program for the First Nations reservation school. It taught him how math and science could help to explain how a tee pee could stand, or how the shape of a canoe worked so well in the waters, how the seven principles of Indigenous teachings were incorporated into all aspects of their lives.

As his grandmother started to share her memories of her experiences at the Birtle Residential School (a Presbyterian school), I fully expected that she would dismiss her grandson – so that he wouldn’t have to hear her stories. She saw the concern on my face and said, it is important that he hears the story because it has shaped the person that he is, and will be. She spoke of children who died, those who were born – and she never knew what happened to those

babies. She and her sister were taken to the school at the same time. When their father attempted to stop the Indian agent from taking his daughters, he was told that he would be jailed and the girls would still be taken. If he was jailed this would affect the rest of the family and they would all suffer. The girls left watching their parents get smaller and smaller as they drove down the lane away from their home.

The NHL playoffs are taking place, with Montreal playing the Las Vegas Golden Nights. We consider hockey to be our Canadian game. People from all cultures play the game, and those who excel may end up playing in the NHL. Can you name a goalie who is an Indigenous person and who plays in the NHL? He is very good and plays for the Montreal Canadiens. In 2014 he won a gold medal with Team Canada in Sochie.

Carey Price grew up in British Columbia and is a member of the Ulkatcho First Nation. His mother is a former chief and his father was a professional hockey player, also a goalie. Price's parents did everything they could to help him grow up to be a good person and to develop his hockey skills. Today Price is not only an excellent hockey player, but also respected as a team leader by hockey managers. He has donated thousands of dollars of hockey equipment to a minor hockey league in British Columbia. He is making a difference by being the best hockey player he can be, by setting a good example for others, and by giving back to help others succeed.

Yvonne Bearbull, is the Executive Director of the Anamiewigummig (Ojibwe for House of Prayer) Kenora Fellowship Centre in Kenora. Yvonne writes: Brokenness between Indigenous and non-Indigenous peoples in Canada is evident in the poor physical and mental health of many Indigenous individuals, like an elder named Mary Louise. She told her story during a time of profound grief following the loss of her husband, which also meant the loss of her home and security. She was 68 years old. With tears streaming down her face, she said quietly over and over, "I miss my husband." Mary Louise talked fondly of her parents and upbringing on the land, and of being on the trap line with her father. She briefly mentioned her time in residential school, tightly closing her eyes as if to shut off the memories. She married a non-Aboriginal man and they owned a home in a rural town. But she often felt discriminated against and isolated from her community; she began drinking to forget her loneliness. She was on and off the street for years due to chronic alcoholism. Sometimes she spent her days with her eldest son, who was also homeless and suffering from alcoholism and mental health issues. He was precious to her as her other children were "taken away" by the Children's Aid Society. She thought about contacting them, but knew she had nothing to offer. Sleeping at the city detox center, she had given up on finding another home and had no desire to return to her community. Mary Louise and others like her keep reliving the nightmares of residential school, lost culture, torn apart families, and systemic racism. The outcomes include poverty, physical and mental illness, addictions and sometimes death – outcomes that affect future generations. Mary Louise is remarkable for surviving, but the hope is for so much more – for thriving in life. We can and we must take steps to restore relationships and wholeness, working for the wellbeing of Indigenous people in Canada

Today we have heard about Indigenous people who are making a difference in communities across Canada. As you celebrate this day, reflect on the messages in these stories. Ask yourself how you will join with people who are different from you to become one in Christ Jesus. How will you remove barriers to justice? How will you form right relationships? We are all called.

Our Offerings:

You are able to make your offering by sending a **cheque or using the PAR** (pre-authorized remittance). For Rockway contact Bonnie Roland (905-685-3985), 213 Rykert Street, St. Catharines, ON L2S 2B5 and for North Pelham contact Janice Aulph (905-892-5244) or mail 602 Metler Rd, Fenwick L0S 1C0 or drop them in the mailbox.

Prayer of Dedication Let us pray:

We praise you Creator God. All blessings come from you. Our hearts and our lives overflow with your love. We offer back a portion of our blessings so that the light of your Word shines brightly. Help us to use these gifts to feed your people, to bring healing and comfort to those who are hurt, to bring nourishment to those who hunger, to bring confidence and wisdom to those who are lost. May these gifts bless others as we have been blessed.

Sung Response: “Our cities cry to you, O God” # 720

Words: Margaret Clarkson © 1987 Hope Publishing Tune: “I heard the voice of Jesus say”

1. Our cities cry to you, O God, from out their pain and strife;
You made us for yourself alone, but we choose alien life.
Our goals are pleasure, gold and power; injustice stalks our earth;
In vain we seek for rest, for joy, for sense of human worth.
2. Yet still you walk our streets, O Christ! We know your presence here
Where humble Christians love and serve in godly grace and fear.
O Word made flesh, be seen in us! May all we say and do
Affirm you God Incarnate still and turn sad hearts to you!
3. Your people are your hands and feet to serve your world today,
Our lives the book our cities read to help them find your way.
Oh pour your sovereign Spirit out on heart and will and brain:
Inspire your church with love and power to ease our cities pain!
4. O healing Saviour, Prince of Peace, salvation’s source and sum,
For you our broken cities cry: Oh come, Lord Jesus, come!
With truth your royal diadem, with righteousness your rod,
Oh come, Lord Jesus, bring to earth the city of our God!

PRAYERS OF THANKSGIVING AND INTERCESSION

(This prayer is written by Binesikwe (Thunderbird Woman) Cathy Lindsay, an Indigenous elder in Kenora Ontario. She supports the work of the Kenora Fellowship Center, one of the Native Ministries supported by the Presbyterian Church in Canada. Ojibway words are translated throughout the prayer. The eagle feather is sacred to many Indigenous peoples. When held by a speaker, it is a symbol of strength and courage. The eagle flies overhead and can see what troubles people and the land. I had the honour of meeting Cathy in 2017.

Booshoo Chi’Manidoo – Welcome Great Spirit – an invitation into prayer

Eagle Feather – means the speaker is not afraid. It gives strength to talk about difficult things.

The eagle flies overhead and can see the problems of the land or sickness

Chi’miigwetch – Ojibway meaning, thank you for listening, also implying that a conversation may end but the dialogue is ongoing.

Anishinnabek – the Ojibway term for all First Nations people

Chi’ Manidoo – the Ojibway word for Great Spirit, who loves us all.

Booshoo Chi’Manidoo. As I hold my eagle feather in hand, I humbly ask with all my heart and spirit that you hear our prayers.

We give thanks for Mother Earth and all her children, otherwise known as “Turtle Island”, that was gifted to all First Nation peoples who were also given the honoured duties to be her caregivers, protectors and defenders for all of life that we hold sacred.

Chi’miigwetch for all waters that surround our Mother Earth and that flow in all her lakes, rivers and streams; and for waters that cleanse us in mind, body and spirit. Chi’miigwetch for the air we

breathe, for fire that warms our hearts, and for the ground we walk upon. May we walk gently upon our Mother Earth with respect.

On behalf of Anishinnabek, our Treaty # 3 territories (lands in Northwestern Ontario and Eastern Manitoba), across our native lands, and worldwide, let all people hear the words of the United Nation Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples, Indigenous law, and the Truth and Reconciliation Commission's Calls to Action. We lift up prayers in great hope that our Anishinaabe peoples may meet on common ground with all churches, faiths, traditions, languages and cultures.

Creator, we ask for healing for all who suffer emotionally, physically, mentally and spiritually – including all ages from birth to our elders. Remove all sickness, abuse, addictions, and all other forces that take from us and leave us weak, homeless, suicidal, missing, and grieving. Lift up all who feel forsaken, freed from burdens in full measure by Chi'Manidoo, who loves us all.

Open our minds, hearts, and spirits to one another in faith, hope and trust that we may learn from each other, encourage each other and empower each other to build together, and pray together. Let us be united. May we continue to serve all who are in need and who call for help. Creator, continue to protect and defend us, to bless us and to grant us peace in mind, body and spirit.

We are grateful for all that you, our Creator, give us and for all that we hold near, dear and sacred unto us. Creator, we thank you for the greatest gift of all, for love. Amen.

CLOSING BLESSING

Go out, bringing into the world the love and justice of our Lord. May you always walk upon the Creator's road. And may the Creator always bless your footsteps until we meet again. Amen.

Sung Response: Go Now in Peace

Go now in peace. Never be afraid. God will go with you each hour of every day.

Go now in faith, steadfast, strong and true. Know He will guide you in all you do.

Go now in love, and show you believe. Reach out to others so all the world can see.

God will be there, watching from above. Go now in peace, in faith, and in love.

Amen. Amen. Amen.

Don Besig & Nancy Price © 1988

**We acknowledge that we meet on the traditional
territory of the Haudensaunee and Anishnaabee**

The Sessions of Rockway and First, North Pelham continue to monitor the situation closely with regards to the resumption of In-Person worship.

At this time worship and activities continue to be suspended at both churches.

Mission Moment – National Indigenous Peoples Day

June 21 is **National Indigenous Peoples Day**. This is a day for all Canadians to recognize and celebrate the unique heritage, diverse cultures and outstanding contributions of First Nations, Inuit and Métis peoples. The Presbyterian Church in Canada acknowledges the responsibility that our church, governments and all Canadians have to continue working for healing and justice with Indigenous people. Presbyterians Sharing supports nine ministries that operate in and with Indigenous communities in Canada. These ministries meet physical and spiritual needs by providing meals, counselling, temporary housing and employment assistance. They also strive to heal hearts through art and music therapy, worship services that incorporate Indigenous beliefs, and more.

June 15, 2021

A Joint Statement from the Current and Former Moderator of The Presbyterian Church in Canada We issue this statement of repentance and commitment to action today, aware of our own responsibility with regard to the sin of colonialism and our operation of residential schools, both of which we recognize today as instruments of a genocide against Indigenous people in what is today called Canada. The devastating revelation of 215 unmarked graves on the grounds of Kamloops Residential School in British Columbia leads the church to a time of listening to learn what is needed to continue its work of reconciliation, and so we have prepared this statement in consultation with the National Indigenous Ministries Council of The Presbyterian Church in Canada. We also offer lament, in humility, for the lives of all the children who were lost; those we already knew, those who were just found, and any more still to be found.

Living Faith reminds us that God is always calling us to seek justice in the world, and that justice is seen when we strive to change customs that oppress and enslave, protect the rights of others and protest anything that destroys human dignity. (8.4.1-3) Justice requires commitment and action. In 2019, The Presbyterian Church in Canada repudiated the Doctrine of Discovery and terra nullius—major components of colonialism, and in 2016 we committed ourselves to The United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples as framework for reconciliation. It is in acknowledging these requirements and calls of our faith that the church commits itself to the work and repentance named here.

The Presbyterian Church in Canada operated eleven residential schools for Indigenous children, with the first opening in the mid 1880s. The names of those schools are: Ahousaht Residential School in British Columbia, Alberni Residential School in British Columbia, Birtle Residential School in Manitoba, Cecilia Jeffrey Residential School in Kenora Ontario, Crowstand Residential School in Saskatchewan, File Hills Residential School in Saskatchewan, Muscowpetung (later known as “Lakesend”) Residential School in Saskatchewan, Portage la Prairie Residential School in Manitoba, Regina Industrial School in Saskatchewan, Round Lake Residential School in Saskatchewan, and Stoney Plain Residential School in Alberta. In 1925 all but two of the schools that were still open were transferred to the United Church of Canada which was established as a result of the Church Union Movement. The two schools the PCC continued to operate after 1925 were Birtle Residential School and Cecilia Jeffrey Residential School. Though the church first offered formal apology and confession to God and to Indigenous peoples in 1994 for our role in running these schools—places from which many students never returned and which caused emotional scars and trauma on generations of Indigenous communities—the harm from these schools and other colonial practices continues today and so too does our need for confessing.

Meaningful apology and the reconciliation that can come of it requires listening to the Indigenous communities and families we have harmed, asking what work is needed for healing and then acting on it. The work that is required will change over time, as circumstances change; as more information is uncovered that may reopen wounds; as the depth of harm of colonialism is understood; as ways are found that the church can be an ally and a voice for justice again. The work required will change too as healing happens.

The listening required is also not a one-time event, but part of a relationship that develops over time. In listening, we have heard that even the children or grandchildren of those who attended Indian Residential Schools are more likely to have serious physical or mental health concerns, more likely to be taken from their homes into foster care, and more likely to attempt suicide than Indigenous children who do not have a parent or grandparent that attended residential school. This is because of intergenerational trauma, that can cause cycles of harm and broken relationships in families if not healed.

Hearing this, we have asked what we could do that would help heal that trauma; reconciliation requires no less. And in conversations with Indigenous members of this community, The Presbyterian Church in Canada, we have heard what is needed today:

We have heard The Presbyterian Church in Canada must work to ensure the grounds of the residential schools we ran—and especially Birtle and Cecilia Jeffrey, which we ran the longest—are searched for any unmarked graves. We must also ensure any search is taken in respectful consultation with the Indigenous communities and families impacted; this would include financial support from the church for those searches. We commit to this work. We have heard that any work to address the legacy of Indian Residential Schools must also address the ongoing inequity faced by today's Indigenous children, and we are asked to seek justice through advocacy for the rights of all Indigenous children. We commit to this work.

We have heard The Presbyterian Church in Canada must confront and address colonialism and systemic racism against Indigenous people in both the church and Canadian society. This systemic racism and colonialism shape the daily lives of Indigenous people in the church and in society in daily acts many take for granted, such as accessing healthcare, access to clean drinking water, equity in education, and equitable treatment in court systems. We have seen how this systemic racism has resulted in incidents like how Joyce Echaquan was treated before her death when she sought access to health care, in significantly higher rates of violent encounters with police, and in significantly higher rates of child apprehension into foster care systems, to name just a few examples. As disciples of Christ, the church is called to work for justice by advocating for an end to these and other similar injustices against Indigenous people. We commit to this work.

We have heard that it is important to support the recommendations recently issued by the Native Women's Association regarding ending the crisis of Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women and Girls as well as continuing to support the Truth and Reconciliation Commission's Calls to Action ii and the Calls for Justice that stem from the Final Report of the National Inquiry into Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women and Girls. We commit to this work.

Because the residential schools operated for almost nine decades, harming generations of communities, true healing and reconciliation will require a lengthy journey over generations and a great deal of work to heal that harm. The discoveries of unmarked graves continues to lead to unspeakable grief and ongoing harm in communities across our country. Reconciliation is a long road that requires acknowledgement of harm, apology for taking part in that harm, concrete steps to redress the harm, and the rebuilding of broken relationships. We are called as disciples of Christ to reconciliation and to justice; this is work the church must do and commits to doing.

The Rev. Dr. Daniel D. Scott
Moderator
2021 General Assembly

The Rev. Amanda Currie
Moderator
2019 General Assembly

1. Native Women's Association of Canada's National Action Plan to Meet the Calls for Justice: <https://www.nwac.ca/wp-content/uploads/2021/06/NWAC-action-plan-FULL-ALL-EDITS.pdf>
2. Truth and Reconciliation Commission Calls to Action: http://trc.ca/assets/pdf/Calls_to_Action_English2.pdf
3. Final Report of the National Inquiry into Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women and Girls: <https://www.mmiwg-ffada.ca/final-report/>
4. The text of the 1994 Confession of The Presbyterian Church in Canada can be downloaded here: <https://presbyterian.ca/healing/>. Information about the Doctrine of Discovery and our repudiation of it can be found here: <https://presbyterian.ca/justice/doctrine-of-discovery/>