



CHRIST CHURCH, DARTMOUTH

An inclusive church welcoming everyone

61 Dundas Street, Dartmouth, NS
www.christchurchdartmouth.com

June 2, 2021

“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?” -Miach 6:8

“Education is what got us here, and education is what will get us out.” -Justice Murray Sinclair

Dear Friends in Christ,

The news over the weekend has been heart-wrenching as we have learned from the Tk'emlúps te Secwépemc Nation about the discovery of at least 215 remains of indigenous people at the Kamloops Residential School grounds. For the indigenous community in Canada and others, this is not news. Such a discovery yet again confirms the Truth and Reconciliation Commission's statements in 2015 that the Canadian Government committed “cultural genocide” by forcing 150,000 Indigenous children to attend residential schools.

As we are well aware, our church is also guilty of our past sins and actions. In 1993, at the *National Native Convocation* in Minaki, Ontario, our then Primate Archbishop Michael Peers offered these words, which are a part of his [apology to indigenous peoples](#):

I accept and I confess before God and you, our failures in the residential schools. We failed you. We failed ourselves. We failed God. I am sorry, more than I can say, that we were part of a system which took you and your children from home and family. I am sorry, more than I can say, that we tried to remake you in our image, taking from you your language and the signs of your identity. I am sorry, more than I can say, that in our schools so many were abused physically, sexually, culturally and emotionally. On behalf of the Anglican Church of Canada, I present our apology.¹

At the July of 2019 General Synod, which I attended, Archbishop Fred Hiltz then Primate continued our commitment to reconciliation, offering [“An Apology for Spiritual Harm”](#) in part saying:

¹ <https://www.anglican.ca/tr/apology/english/>

Today, I offer this apology for our cultural and spiritual arrogance toward all Indigenous Peoples – First Nations, Inuit and Métis – and the harm we inflicted on you....I confess our sin in failing to acknowledge that as First Peoples living here for thousands of years, you had a spiritual relationship with the Creator and with the Land. We did not care enough to learn how your spirituality has always infused your governance, social structures and family life....I confess our sin in demonizing Indigenous spiritualities, and in belittling the traditional teachings of your Grandmothers and Grandfathers preserved and passed on through the elders....I confess the sin of our arrogance in dismissing Indigenous Spiritualities and disciplines as incompatible with the Gospel of Jesus, and insisting that there is no place for them in Christian Worship....I confess our sin in robbing your children and youth of the opportunity to know their spiritual ancestry and the great wealth of its wisdom and guidance for living in a good way with the Creator, the land and all peoples..²

At our General Synod in 2019, *Resolution Number A050-R1 to Canon XXII (National Indigenous Ministry)* was passed, establishing a self-determining and governing Indigenous Church. These apologies and changes to the structure of our church are steps towards a more justice society for all. I believe we must remember that this recent discovery is not “our history,” for the story of our relations with indigenous peoples unfolds every day. Be it through the [Truth and Reconciliation Commission](#), the [Commission on the National Inquiry into Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women and Girls](#), and our understanding of the [Doctrine of Discovery](#), we are constantly learning and seeking justice as part of the reconciliation process. And as recent events make evident, the story continues with the Mi'kmaq First Nation fishery dispute between Sipekne'katik First Nation, a Mi'kmaq First Nation, the Federal Government, and commercial fishers.

In the [Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Canada: Calls to Action Report](#), recommendations 71-76 address *Missing Children and Burial Information*. I encourage you to review these calls in light of recent statements in the media and from Tk'emlúps te Secwépemc Nation. In part, it reads:

“we call upon all chief coroners and provincial vital statistics agencies that have not provided to the Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Canada their records of deaths of Aboriginal Children in the care of residential school authorities to make these documents available...we call upon the federal government to work with churches, Aboriginal communities, and former residential school students to establish and maintain an online registry of residential school cemeteries, including, where possible, plot maps showing the location of deceased residential school children.”

As a people committed to the Gospel of Christ, and amid the committed journey of dialogue and reconciliation, we need to encourage those in authority to address the calls 71-76 and provide support for agencies and their work. As we know, the [Shubenacadie Residential School](#) in Nova Scotia operated from 1929 to 1967, and similar investigations on these grounds are occurring. It

² <https://www.anglican.ca/news/an-apology-for-spiritual-harm/30024511/>

has also been reported in the [media](#) that a Statement from *Crown-Indigenous Relations and Northern Affairs Canada* that

\$27.2 million has been allocated to the “important work of communities in locating, memorializing and commemorating those children who died while at Indian Residential Schools” across Canada...The dark legacy of Indian Residential Schools has caused and continues to cause such harm and pain – the Government has made significant investments to provide health and healing supports to Survivors, their families and communities as determined by them to address their needs.”

I pray that such support for ongoing work will be made indeed take place. I encourage us as a parish community to consider what we are called to do concerning our journey towards reconciliation.

Finally, if you need support or wish to reach out, please speak with Rev. Bonnie or me as we are here to listen, pray, and comfort.

Please see the following links and resources below:

- [Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Canada: Calls to Action](#)
- [Anglican Healing Fund](#)
- [Indigenous Peoples and the Anglican Church in Canada: Timeline of an Evolving Relationship](#)
- [Reconciliation Toolkit](#)
- [Indigenous Ministries](#)
- [Indigenous Ministries: A History of Our Work](#)
- [A Charter for Racial Justice in the Anglican Church of Canada](#)
- [Our Story of Self Determination](#)
- [Kairos: Indigenous Rights](#)



The Rev. Dr. Kyle Wagner
Rector, Christ Church, Dartmouth
Diocese of Nova Scotia and PEI
Anglican Church of Canada