



Anglican Church of Canada

News from General Synod

An open letter to all Anglicans from the Primate's Commission on Discovery, Reconciliation, and Justice

Dear Friends

We write to you as brothers and sisters in Christ, as relatives in the Anglican Church of Canada. We are members of the Primate's Commission on Discovery, Reconciliation, and Justice. We are First Nations, Inuit, Métis, settler and newcomers. We come from all across the country and have had the privilege of becoming community across our differences by gathering together. In striving to be community, we have shared the incredible pain of Indigenous communities—the reality of intergenerational trauma, and injustice so much deeper than what is expressed in newspaper headlines. We have felt the challenge of living genuine repentance experienced by settler and newcomer Anglicans who are striving to live out solidarity. We have witnessed the hope and challenge presented by the [Truth and Reconciliation Commission \(TRC\) Calls to Action](#) and our church's commitment to adopt and comply with [United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples \(UN Declaration\)](#). What we hold deeply, and in common, is our belief that God's dream for our church, and for our country, is reconciliation.

And so we write you—church to church, people to people—asking that we join together in a common movement to foster and contribute to reconciliation. Reconciliation is daily individual spiritual practice and communal conversion, the transformation of the whole church. We know that many of you are on this path, but we hope to link our efforts to yours, so that we as a whole church might embrace the promise of reconciliation, walking together with other

churches, and with others of faith and conscience in persistence and in hope.

In our experience, four directions come to mind to strengthen and deepen this common vocation towards reconciliation—pray, learn, build relationship, and act.

Pray

We ask that in your daily and weekly prayers you lift up the experience of Indigenous communities across the country that continue to struggle with the injustices imposed upon them through residential schools and the broader process of colonization. We ask that in worship in non-Indigenous communities, you include traditional territorial acknowledgements and create space for Indigenous voices, teachings, and ceremonies. We invite you to periodically reflect on our [church's apology](#) and the repudiation of the Doctrine of Discovery, as well as our commitments to the TRC Calls to Action and the UN Declaration, in services of lament, repentance, hope and commitment.

Learn

Many of us have been educated in a society that perpetuates racism and so there is a time of unlearning required before right learning is possible. We invite you to commit to that process of unlearning, and then of learning, through talking circles, bible studies, book clubs, and film viewings that open you to Indigenous voices and world views. Participate in processes like the [KAIROS Blanket Exercise](#) and PWRDF Mapping Exercise to unlearn and relearn the history of Canada. Study the 94 Calls to Action of the TRC and commit to read the TRC Summary report, as well as the critical volume, *The Survivors Speak*. Learn about your own congregation's history, including related to land, or that of your family or community: what relationship existed between Indigenous and non-Indigenous peoples in your family, church or community? In learning, there is a particular urgency to support Elders who are teaching youth language and culture.

Building Relationships

We fear that we still don't know each other well enough in this church of ours. We hope for better relationships—of depth and honesty between Indigenous and non-Indigenous Anglicans. Beyond making personal friendships, we invite churches to get to know each other. We urge non-Indigenous and Indigenous

church communities to consider collaborative events and activities, reaching out pastorally to support one another or prophetically to engage in worship and action together. We know distance sometimes gets in the way, but we hope that even churches in urban settings, who are far from Indigenous communities, will build relationships, such as with and thru local friendship centres, and by seeking to partner.

Act

The courage of residential school survivors and the clarity of the TRC Commissioners have given 94 answers to the question—“what can we do?” We ask you to make a 3-year commitment as a congregation to lift up, through education and advocacy, one of the 94 Calls to Action. Or to join in solidarity with a local Indigenous rights struggle in your community. The KAIROS [*Winds of Change*](#) campaign, with its current focus on Education for Reconciliation (i.e., calling for TRC 62i for mandatory public school curriculum on treaties, residential schools and contributions of Indigenous peoples to Canada), represents another option to join in action.

One important place of action is our church itself. We encourage you to support Indigenous self-determination in our church as witness to our commitment to the UN Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples. This means respecting the ways the Creator gave Indigenous peoples to make decision for themselves and their communities. It is our call to not only do justice in the world but to strive to live justice as a church community. We need to live together as good relatives.

We want to know about your ministry in common commitment to reconciliation. Please feel free to be in touch with those of us who are close to you to share your challenges, successes and hopes. If we can be of assistance, we will strive to do so.

We know that the Christ feels our lament, knows our repentance, embodies our justice, and goes before us in genuine hope of resurrected, reconciled community. As the Body of Christ, let us live together in truth and strive towards the reconciliation that is the Creator’s deepest desire for each one of us.

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