

Indigenous Day of Prayer Service: All My Relations June 19, 2022

Land Acknowledgement

We begin this time of worship by acknowledging that we are meeting on the land of the (*insert your local Indigenous nations' name and territory*) people. This land has been inhabited by Indigenous peoples from the beginning. We thank all the generations of Indigenous people who have taken care of this land and been its stewards for thousands of years. We give thanks for the countless ways they have assisted the settler peoples who came to inhabit the land. We also recognize the contributions Métis, Inuit, and other Indigenous peoples have made in shaping and strengthening this region, the provinces, and Canada as a whole. May the Creator hold us gently in this time as all mourn the loss of innocent Indigenous children's lives. Meegwetch. All my relations.

God Welcomes Us in Worship

Announcements

Lighting the Christ Candle

We light this candle. May its light guide us to truth talking and to travelling good paths. May we in turn share the light with those we meet until it spreads to all peoples worldwide.

Hymn

MV 30 It's a Song of Praise to the Maker

Call to Worship

In the presence of Creator, we gather:

People carrying burdens we may not know about looking for comfort; folks needing their spirits refreshed.

We draw together hoping for that touch that will enliven us, longing to be embraced in arms of love and understanding.

Help us to put aside our differences and see the earth as you see it, boundary-free.

You call us all: babies, toddlers on unsteady feet, school-age children with curious minds, teens with questing spirits, full of youthful confidence one moment and like frightened children the next.

We are called, as adults trying to take good paths watching out for the next generations, and those easing into their winter years passing on our teachings.

We are all kin in this meeting place whether we gather in person or through technology, our spirits joining to say meegwetch for all that we have been blessed with.

Thanks be to God for the goodness in our lives. Amen.

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Opening Prayer

All-encompassing God, you who called creation out of chaos. You breathed the sacred word Ruah (breath, Spirit) and life came into being. Your magnificence is a Holy Mystery that we are too human to be able to comprehend. We give thanks for that which is beyond our comprehension. It allows us to dream and imagine. We give all praise and glory to you, Most Holy, for holding us in all the seasons of our days, to love, and to cherish, in this life, and in everlasting life. We are in awe of our covenanted love and journey with you. Amen.

Opening Hymn

MV 1 Let Us Build a House

God's Word, Wisdom for Faith Living, God Inspires Our Ministries

Scriptures

Galatians 3:28

Paraphrase of Psalm 106:1–5:

Praise our Creator! O Meegwetch give thanks to the Maker, for Turtle Island nurtures us; love lives forever in ancestors dancing in the aurora borealis.
Who can truth talk the mighty doings of the Creator or drum all their praises?
Joyful are those who observe justice, who work for right relations at all times.
Remember me, O Great Spirit, when you show honour to your people.
Help us when you lead us into places of protection.
We see the grateful hunting of creatures, generous gathering and abundant harvest and prosperity our kin, that we may dance in the ceremonies of our nation's people, that we may glory in your ancestry.
All my relations.

Hymn

"We Must Learn to Walk Together" by Lisa Waites

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Sermon

Paul, in his letter to churches in southern Galatia, states in Galatians 3:28: "There is no longer Jew or Greek, there is no longer slave or free, there is no longer male and female; for all of you are one in Christ Jesus." This wonderful proclamation of inclusivity needs to be heard. This statement rings true for us here, today. In these times of racial awareness and acknowledgement of discrimination, it is time for us to focus on our common humanity and

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look for ways we can love our neighbours instead of fearing them, or talking about **us** and **them**. We need to honour the deaths of children in residential schools. As someone who has handled racism—yes, even from church people—it is our responsibility to teach our children and grandchildren and our Sunday school children that we are all one, united in our love and faithfulness as followers of the teachings of Christ. Very likely one of the phrases I use most often is that we are all our Creator's beloved children.

Indigenous peoples have a saying, All My Relations. The Indigenous contribution to the church is honoured by the Mohawk phrase "Akwe Nia'Tetewá:neren"—all my relations—on the crest. The four colours of the Medicine Wheel, yellow, red, black, and white, and the Mohawk words have been incorporated in the United Church crest since 2012. Indigenous spirituality, leadership, and participation are vital to the church's life.

What this says to me is that we are all united. It goes further than Paul's teaching and evangelism. Paul was speaking about people. All my relations include all living things: people, creatures in the water, those that fly in the air, everything that creeps and crawls and slithers on the ground. We all have a place in God's great creation. I was taught it is like creation is a giant spider's web. If you pluck at one thread, the vibrations are felt throughout the whole web. It's like the ripples that spread out when a pebble is thrown into or skipped in water.

So how we work toward justice and reconciliation? Like the paraphrase of Psalm 106 says, "Joyful are those who observe justice, who work for right relations at all times." Acknowledge the land you are meeting on. Recognize the Treaty if you are in Treaty territory. Recognize not all lands are Treaty land but are unceded Indigenous land.

And let us educate ourselves about culture, racism, and reconciliation. We can read Indigenous authors, including books for our children and grandchildren. Or a book such as *Me and White Supremacy* by Layla Saad, and invite Indigenous people to be part of the group. Support local Indigenous communities by attending a powwow to embrace the power of our cultural dances and the splendour of our regalia. Celebrate Indigenous artists: their writing, music, and artwork. Donate to local Indigenous organizations such as healing and friendship centres. We can also support urban Indigenous people through Indigenous community centres and programs. Did you know, for example, that Ottawa is home to the largest population of Inuit people outside of the Arctic?

Consider donating to our United Church of Canada's Healing Fund, which directly supports projects led by Indigenous church members and others in their communities. The Healing Fund promotes healing initiatives for survivors of the residential school system and initiatives that address ongoing intergenerational impacts. Indigenous communities can apply for a grant of up to \$15,000 toward programs centred on cultural, healing, and language projects. The Healing Programs Working Group, made up of representatives from diverse Indigenous communities across the country, determines the fund's criteria and evaluates applications.

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So, today on Indigenous Day of Prayer, let us give thanks for the Indigenous people of our communities and their profound contributions to our common life together. Let us all, individually and collectively, seek out ways to work for reconciliation and justice. Let us be the beloved children of God, and love our neighbours—yes, all of them. Worldwide, people represent the colours of the medicine wheel, shades and combinations of yellow, red, black, and white, and also brown. We are all Creator's beloved children. Thanks be to God.

Hymn

VU 606 In Christ There Is No East or West

We Present Our Offerings

We return some of the abundance of our lives to share with others who need a caring touch. Here is the work of our hands, and here is the love of our hearts. Accept them and use them, through Christ our Lord. Amen.

Doxology

VU 538 For the Gift of Creation

Prayers of Thanksgiving and Concern

Tender and loving Creator, we are all part of the delicate web of life. When one thread is plucked, the ripples are widely felt, stronger closer to the epicentre, still felt toward the outer reaches. May the uncertainties and concerns we hold close to our hearts be gentled by the love we have of you, and the support of each other.

You know the longing of our hearts for a just society for all of your beloved children. When we are cut, we bleed the same colour. When we donate blood, it provides the same life-giving sustaining gift with no knowledge of race; it does not exist in that little clear bag. We don't understand the conflicts and hatred rampant, which aren't new; have they always existed? We pray for people living in troubled places, for refugees needing homes and relocation, for people without safe drinking water.

Rabboni Jesus, may your teachings lead us all to speak the same language of loving you, ourselves, and our neighbours. Gentle people's harsh feelings and opinions. Restore our gratitude and refresh our faith. Grant us dreams of unity and harmony. May your light and love encircle and envelope us all as we rest in the promise of your goodness. Living Spirit, we are all relations in your family. We give thanks for our blessings. Amen.

The Lord's Prayer

(Pray The Lord's Prayer according to your tradition.)

Our Creator, 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 trespasses, as we forgive those who trespass against us, and lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil. For thine is the kingdom and the power, and the glory, for ever and ever. Amen.

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Closing Hymn

VU 232 Joyful, Joyful, We Adore You

Commissioning

VU 298 When You Walk from Here

Benediction

May we travel our lands in gentle ways,
caring for creation as in turn she cares for us.
May your light and love encircle and envelop us all,
as we rest in the promise of your abundance.
Go in peace, with wisdom and gratitude.
All my relations. Meegwetch. Amen.

Hymn Suggestions

VU 229 God of the Sparrow
VU 232 Joyful, Joyful, We Adore You
VU 265 Creating God, Your Fingers Trace
VU 291 All Things Bright and Beautiful
VU 296 This Is God's Wondrous World
VU 297 All Praise to You
MV 27 Creator God You Gave Us Life
MV 39 Mother Earth, Our Mother Breathing
MV 41 O Beautiful Gaia
MV 53 God Who Spread the Boundless Prairie
MV 135 Called by Earth and Sky

The Rev. Nancy Best writes from Ottawa, Ontario, Canada, and has Mohawk heritage. Nancy is ordained clergy in The United Church of Canada and is a member of the National Indigenous Spiritual Gathering Planning Team. She is interested in the work of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Canada and social justice issues. Nancy has travelled to Palestine and Israel with The United Church of Canada to observe conditions firsthand. Nancy's writings have been published in several places.

The Rev. Dr. Lisa Waites is a singer-songwriter, liturgist, and worship leader in The United Church of Canada. Lisa discovered her Métis ancestry as an adult and has been on a journey of discovering her heritage and culture for the past decade. Elders from the Miywasin Centre invited Lisa to write and share this hymn during their public Truth and Reconciliation conference in Medicine Hat, AB.

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