**Call to Prayer for the 215 Children**

Dear friends,

Like you, I was shocked to learn of the discovery of the remains of 215 Indigenous children in a mass grave on the grounds of the Kamloops Residential School.  Like you, trying to find the words to say have been difficult.  Perhaps instead of speaking at this time, we should be open to listening to the voices of our Indigenous sisters and brothers and relatives to hear the Voice of the Creator in the midst of this darkness.

Archbishop +Mark MacDonald, our National Indigenous Anglican Archbishop, has offered us opportunities to listen and to pray.  Below you will see opportunities to join in online worship as we grieve.  I highlight his prayer and plea to the whole Church when he said: “*Today, we seek healing and truth, Indigenous and non-Indigenous from God, who offers Forgiveness, Justice, and Truth in the Gospel, saying that it was for this, exactly for this, that Jesus was anointed.”*

I also want to call the Diocese to a time of Prayer and would like you all to include the following prayer written by Rev Dr. Paul Jennings in your liturgies this coming Sunday June 6 as a conclusion to the Prayers of the People:

**And let us take a moment now, to pause and give voice to our shame and our sorrow for the 215 children whose graves have been discovered at the Kamloops Residential School.**

**‘A voice was heard in Ramah,**

**wailing and loud lamentation,**

**Rachel weeping for her children;**

**she refused to be consoled, because they are no more.’**

**Let us open our ears to the voice of lamentation**

**in Kamloops, in Kitamaat, Old Crow, Fort McKay,**

**Grassy Narrows, Chisasibi, Eskasoni, in hundreds of communities across this country; the voice of mothers, fathers, grandmothers and grandfathers, generation after generation, wailing for their children who were taken from them.**

**Let us open our ears to the sobs of those children,**

**torn from the comfort and protection of their families,**

**estranged from their culture and their sense of their own identity, left with a pain that they often carried their whole lives.**

**Let us hold in our hearts those who were abused.**

**And let us remember those who never came home,**

**whose lives were stolen from them by disease and neglect,**

**particularly the 215 children whose graves have now been discovered. As we have so shamefully failed them in this life,**

**may they find honour and healing as the first in your Kingdom.**

**We pray for our nation, at this reminder of stories still untold,**

**pain still unshared, responsibility still not taken.**

**Teach us the lesson of your cross: that it is only in opening ourselves to the pain of others, in sharing their burdens in love, that we may find healing together.**

***We conclude with the Collect for the Holy Innocents:***

**Almighty God, our heavenly Father, whose children suffered at the hands of Herod, receive, we pray, all innocent victims**

**into the arms of your mercy. By your great might frustrate all evil designs and establish your reign of justice, love, and peace; through Jesus Christ our Lord, who is alive and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and for ever.  Amen.**

* *Written by Rev. Dr. Paul Jennings*

In the meantime, our National Church has resources to learn more about Indigenous Ministries which “supports the Indigenous Peoples of Canada (First Nations, Inuit, and Métis) spiritually, socially, economically and politically. We recognize that the purity of the land base provides for all our needs. As active participants in the life of the church, we strive for reconciliation with the Anglican Communion and work towards Indigenous self-determination.”  You can visit their website <https://www.anglican.ca/im/> to learn more.

In Christ’s Love,

+Sam: Eastern Newfoundland & Labrador