

'Calls to Action' from the Truth and Reconciliation Commission (TRC)

Our Parish Response September 2021



Bishop Lydia Mamakwa dedicated our **Sacred Circle** in the west transept at St. Paul's on September 30th 2019, "Orange Shirt Day."

In 2015, the Canadian government released its final report on the history and legacy of Canada's residential school system. From that report came **94 Calls to Action**.

The *Anglican Church of Canada (ACC)* and the **Parish of St. Paul's Anglican Church** are committed to the Calls to Action which are relevant to our Faith Community here in Thunder Bay. It is a spiritual journey and we are called to enter into reconciliation with each other, Indigenous and settler peoples. Jesus calls us to be unified and to be one ~

***"May they be one,
as we are one."***

John 17:11

May we dream and be open to the possibilities of building a better world for all of us. We are trying hard but we still have a lot to do. In 2019, the ACC created

a self-determining Indigenous Church and appointed **Mark MacDonald** as the **National Indigenous Archbishop**.

In September 2021, Archbishop Anne Germond appointed Elder Willard Pine, a direct descendant of Chief Shingwauk, to be the **Indigenous Spiritual Advisor to the Archbishop of Algoma**. In the written words of the Archbishop,

“Already there is a beautiful exchange of story and wisdom taking place and I am looking forward to learning more about the sacred traditions of Indigenous peoples from Elder Willard.”



Archbishop Mark MacDonald (centre, in purple) at his appointment at General Synod 2019.

In 2021, the Diocese of Algoma committed to giving immediate attention to **Calls 71 – 76** within the **94 Calls to Action** from Canada’s *Truth and Reconciliation Commission*. They address missing children and burial information. They call for a *National Residential School Registry* (72), an *online registry of Residential School Cemeteries* (73) and *appropriate commemorations, ceremonies and markers and re-burial in home communities where requested* (74); and all in accordance with Indigenous protocols for honouring the deceased children. The Diocese of Algoma is committed to locating the remains of missing children on the grounds of the former *Shingwauk Residential School*.

The church strongly supports Indigenous rights and is striving to live in the actions of truth and of love. We are striving to follow this biblical imperative:

“Let us love not in word or speech but in truth and action.”
(1 John 3:18)

Here are six of the **94 Calls to Action** that relate specifically to the church. In 2015, the Anglican Church of Canada supported the TRC’s Calls to Action. The ACC has also hired a **Reconciliation Animator** to help with the implementation of the Calls to Action.

❖ **Call To Action 13:**

Acknowledge That Indigenous Rights Include Indigenous Language Rights

We believe that language rights need to be protected and revitalized. At St. Paul’s, we have New Testaments in Cree that are readily available. As well, parts of our

main Sunday worship service are sung and prayed in Cree every week. This includes the Doxology, the Lord's Prayer and the Dismissal. The Cree dialect is used as it is the dialect most familiar to the Indigenous congregation at St. Paul's.

We have weekly greetings in Cree on our live-streams (*YouTube/St. Paul's Media*) and we never translate these greetings into English. We think it is respectful for the greetings to stand on their own.

We have four **Indigenous Diocesan Lay Readers** who are licensed by Archbishop Anne Germond and supported by **Bishop Lydia Mamakwa**. We encourage the Lay Readers to pray, sing, and read scripture in their own language during the service. Before the pandemic, our Indigenous Diocesan Lay Readers held a monthly worship service in Cree. We look forward to re-starting this ministry once the pandemic ends. They also currently preside at services in Cree at *Wequedong Lodge*.

Cree syllabics are used on service bulletins and brochures as well as signs throughout the church including the entrances.

❖ Call To Action 48:

Church Parties To The Residential Schools Settlement And Other Faith Groups To Adopt And Comply With The 'UNITED NATIONS DECLARATION ON THE RIGHTS OF INDIGENOUS PEOPLES' (UNDRIP)

The Declaration was adopted by the United Nations in 2007 and it establishes a universal framework of minimum standards for the survival, dignity and well-being of the Indigenous peoples of the world. **UNDRIP** affirms that Indigenous peoples are equal to all other peoples and that they contribute to the diversity and richness of civilizations and cultures. Previous doctrines that said that some peoples were superior to others were racist, invalid, and false. We must respect and promote Indigenous rights and uphold their right to self-determination.

Reference to **UNDRIP** is included in the preparation of candidates for baptism and confirmation.

June is ***National Indigenous History Month*** and we honoured the 215 children whose remains were recently found on the site of the *Kamloops Indian Residential School*, all the children who did not make it home, and all residential school survivors. We are thankful that September 30 has now been named as the ***"National Day for Truth and Reconciliation"*** as well as ***"Orange Shirt Day."***



June 2021 Labyrinth Prayer Service in honour of the 'Kamloops 215' and their families, and all the children who never made it home from residential schools.

Orange Shirt on the steps of St. Paul's.



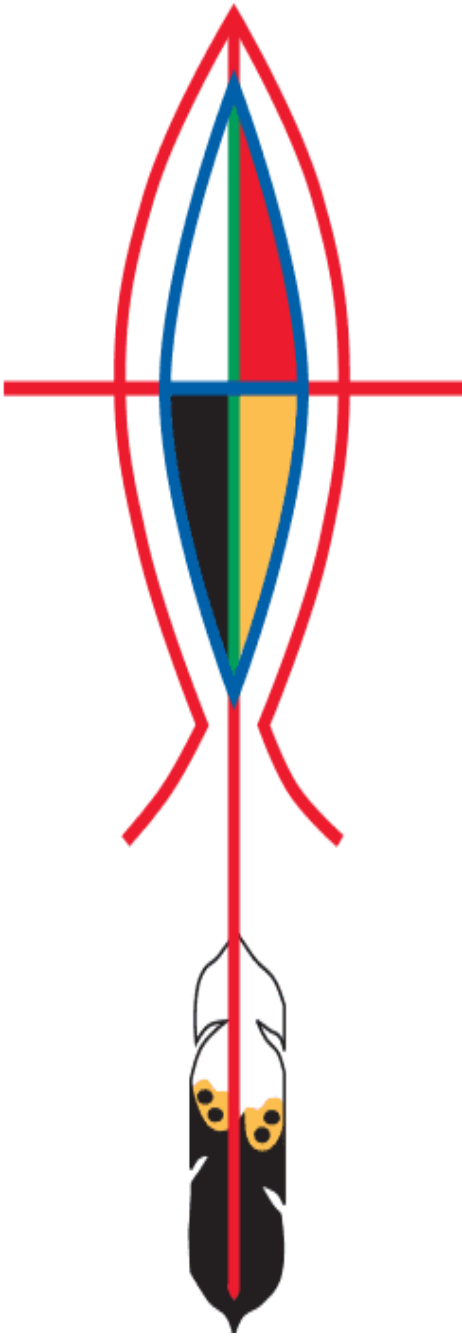
National Indigenous Peoples Day (June 21st of each year) is celebrated on the closest Sunday to

June 21st. At St. Paul's, we honour this day with prayers in Cree, a 'Four Directions' Litany, and with active participation in the service by our Indigenous brothers and sisters. An **Indigenous People's Sunday Service of Prayer** was last held on Sunday, June 20th at 10 am (*YouTube/ St. Paul's Media*). The livestreamed service continues to be available for viewing.



Preaching with the **Eagle Feather** on *Indigenous People's Sunday*.

We begin every Sunday morning service with a slide that states that "*We are worshipping on Robinson-Superior Treaty (1850) Territory, the traditional territory of the Anishnaabeg.*" The slide includes the logo for the **Anglican Council of Indigenous Peoples (ACIP)**. According to the *ACIP*, this logo signifies the following:



The **fish** at the centre of the logo is formed by the overlap of two circles ~ or two traditions ~ coming together, the Aboriginal tradition and the European tradition.

The point where they come together is where Christ is to be found, represented by both the **cross** and the **fish** (which also contains the form of the Greek letters, **Alpha** and **Omega**).

The **cross** is surrounded by the **four colours** of the four peoples of the world. Our vision is of all races coming together.

The **fish** and the **cross** also contain within them the initials of the *Anglican Council of Indigenous Peoples*.

The **eagle** has always been a strong image for Aboriginal peoples. The **eagle feather** attached to the **cross** comes from Isaiah 40:31 — *“But those who wait for the Lord shall renew their strength, they shall mount up with wings like eagles.”* If people can come together, they will fly.

The **green** in the logo represents our Mother Earth, and the **blue** the waters of the oceans that surround the continents.

Blue is also the colour of hope for Aboriginal people. When we are watching for good weather to come, we look for the first signs of blue in the sky.

Green is also the symbol of new growth.

Red is the colour of the Aboriginal peoples.

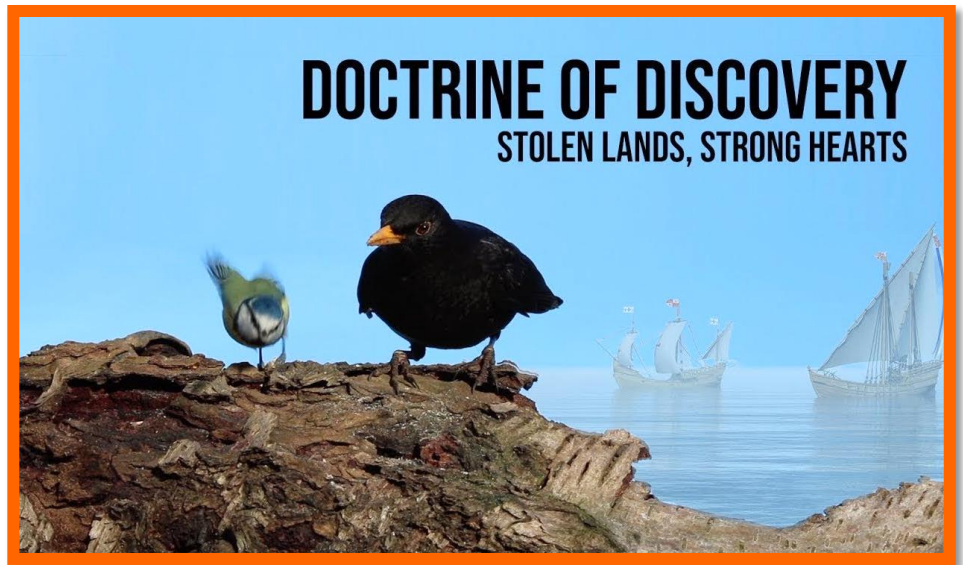
❖ Call To Action 49:

All Faith Groups To Repudiate The ‘Doctrine Of Discovery’ And ‘Terra Nullius’

The ACC rejects the assertion that the European discoverers could take the lands of Indigenous people. Their rationale was that the lands were *“terra nullius”* ~ “empty lands.”

In 2019, the Anglican Church of Canada produced a compelling documentary called *The Doctrine Of Discovery: Stolen Lands, Strong Hearts*. This hour-long film is about the devastating decision, made over 500 years ago, which continues to profoundly impact Indigenous and Settler peoples worldwide.

Pope Alexander VI ruled that the land being discovered by European explorers at the time was “empty” land because its millions of Indigenous inhabitants were deemed “non-human.” This film has been shown twice at St. Paul’s. It is available to be viewed on YouTube at <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=mQwkB1hn5E8>



Experiencing our shared history through the **Blanket Exercise**.



In 2019, participants in our Algoma Diocesan Synod took part in the **Blanket Exercise**, which is an interactive learning experience about the shared history between Indigenous and non-Indigenous people on “*Turtle*

Island.” Participants experienced pre-contact history, and the impact of treaty-making, colonization and reconciliation.

❖ Call To Action 59:

Church Parties To Residential School Settlement To Educate Congregations On Why Apologies Necessary

Archbishop Anne is “making every effort to respect the oral tradition of Indigenous peoples, listening attentively to their stories about children who went to Residential Schools and who died there.” (from the Bishop’s Charge, Diocesan Synod, September 2021)

This is an ongoing priority at St. Paul’s. We want people to learn about the church’s role in colonization and the history of residential schools. At our diocesan synods and at clergy meetings, significant time is given for education and for understanding.

Our Rector at St. Paul's has attended several residential school hearings and has made apologies on behalf of the Anglican Church and their role in residential schools.

❖ Call To Action 60:

*Faith Groups To Develop And Teach Curriculum For All Student Clergy
And Staff Who Work In Indigenous Communities*

The ACC is committed to educating seminary students on the history of the colonial church, Indigenous spirituality, and social justice.

❖ Call To Action 61:

*Church Parties To Residential Schools Settlement To Fund Reconciliation
And Culture Revitalization Projects*

The ACC has a 'Healing Fund' that includes grants that will initiate programs to help heal, educate, and recover language and culture.

St. Paul's receives generous grants from the New England Company that supports the growth of Indigenous ministry in our area. Grants are given to **Bishop Lydia Mamakwa** for the annual "Christmas Jamboree."

At St. Paul's, our west transept has been re-fitted as a **Sacred Circle**. It includes 7 chairs in a circle representing the "7 Grandfather Teachings." These teachings are carved in Cree in a round table in the centre of the circle. The table was made by the students at Dennis Franklin Cromarty High School in Thunder Bay.

We partner with Bishop Lydia Mamakwa for Baptismal and Confirmation preparation and Services. Our Rector is starting regular baptisms of Indigenous children.

In Conclusion ~

Words from the **National Indigenous Archbishop Mark MacDonald ~**

(Posted on his Facebook page, June 1, 2021)

"The Western institutions, including the churches, always tried to convince Indigenous peoples that they the West owned the truth, that it was their own unique possession and that only by becoming exactly like them could Indigenous People be saved. Now, we may say it clearly and for all time:

this lie is dead, even for the institutions that believed and proclaimed it. 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.”

We all pray for the grace to truly hear each other and to understand each other and to walk together in the love of Jesus. May we never stop doing this and may the calls to action give us a framework of healing and reconciliation. There is much work left to be done.



“Let us not grow weary in doing what is right.”
(Galatians 6:9)



Diocesan Lay Reader Jessie McKay holds her Licence from Archbishop Anne Germond.

St. Paul's flag is lowered to half-mast by **Jouni Kraft** in honour of the 'Kamloops 215.'

