

Welcome / Announcements / Land Acknowledgement **Dennis**

Welcome to this place. We acknowledge with gratitude the ləkʷəŋən and the WSÁNEĆ – Esquimalt and Songhees nations – on whose traditional territory we gather for worship. For many thousands of years, they have sought to walk gently on this land. We seek a new relationship with the Original Peoples of this land – one based in honour and respect.

□ Come, now is the time to worship

Call to Worship

We are called to worship God as the people of God.

God calls us by name and knows what rests in our minds and our hearts.

We come yearning to be transformed and redirected to paths of justice and in ways of love so that in truth we can turn again to our Creator

God invites us to join as beloved and loving people, worshiping God as the people of God.

□ Lord, whose love

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Gathering Prayer / Words of Hope

God of Creation – everything you have made sings your praises. Let our voices join the song and proclaim your goodness, your grace, your justice, and your fulsome peace. With Jesus as our example, let our words become actions that reflect your will for the thriving of all people, all creation. May your Spirit of love flow abundantly into every corner of the world.

As we gather to worship and renew our commitment to discipleship, we seek to begin again with you, O God, and with one another so we come now to confess our sins...

We confess that we have failed to comfort those in pain, ignored the needs of others, and not sought peace or worked for justice as fully as we could. We confess the sins of the church in running residential schools that separated children from their families. We confess that in our cultural arrogance where there was laughter, we stifled it – where families lived warmly together, we broke them up – and where there was dignity, we stole it.

We repent of our sins and pray for the strength to walk a new good way with you and one another. **Amen**

Creator God we confess our brokenness. We come before you with all that we are and all that we fail to be. With all we have done and all we have failed to do. God of mercy, in you we know we can find healing and wholeness. Thanks be to God.

□ *We lay our broken world in sorrow at your feet* 202

Prayer for Understanding Kathy

Open our hearts and minds, O God, by the inspiration of your Holy Spirit, that as the Scriptures are read and your Word is proclaimed, we may hear what you are saying to the church today. Amen

Scripture **James 5:13-20** (NT 231)

Are any among you suffering? They should pray. Are any cheerful? They should sing songs of praise. Are any among you sick? They should call for the elders of the church and have them pray over them, anointing them with oil in the name of the Lord. The prayer of faith will save the sick, and the Lord will raise them up, and anyone who has committed sins will be forgiven. Therefore confess your sins to one another and pray for one another, so that you may be healed. The prayer of the righteous is powerful and effective. Elijah was a human like us, and he prayed fervently that it might not rain, and for three years and six months it did not rain on the earth. Then he prayed again, and the heaven gave rain, and the earth yielded its harvest.

My brothers and sisters, if anyone among you wanders from the truth and is brought back by another, you should know that whoever brings back a sinner from wandering will save the sinner's soul from death and will cover a multitude of sins.

Matthew 18:1-22 (NT 19)

At that time the disciples came to Jesus and asked, *"Who is the greatest in the kingdom of heaven?"*

He called a child, whom he put among them, and said, *"Truly I tell you, unless you change and become like children, you will never enter the kingdom of heaven. Whoever becomes humble like this child is the greatest in the kingdom of heaven. Whoever welcomes one such child in my name welcomes me."*

"If any of you cause one of these little ones who believe in me to sin, it would be better for you if a great millstone were fastened around your neck and you were drowned in the depth of the sea. Woe to the world because of things that cause sin! Such things are bound to come, but woe to the one through whom they come!"

"If your hand or your foot causes you to sin, cut it off and throw it away; it is better for you to enter life maimed or lame than to have two hands or two feet and to be thrown into the eternal fire. And if your eye causes you to sin, tear it out and throw it away; it is

better for you to enter life with one eye than to have two eyes and to be thrown into the hell of fire.

“Take care that you do not despise one of these little ones, for I tell you, in heaven their angels continually see the face of my Father in heaven. What do you think? If a shepherd has a hundred sheep and one of them has gone astray, does he not leave the ninety-nine on the mountains and go in search of the one that went astray? And if he finds it, truly I tell you, he rejoices over it more than over the ninety-nine that never went astray. So it is not the will of your Father in heaven that one of these little ones should be lost.

“If your brother or sister sins against you, go and point out the fault when the two of you are alone. If you are listened to, you have regained that one. But if you are not listened to, take one or two others along with you, so that every word may be confirmed by the evidence of two or three witnesses. If that person refuses to listen to them, tell it to the church, and if the offender refuses to listen even to the church, let such a one be to you as a gentile and a tax collector. Truly I tell you, whatever you bind on earth will be bound in heaven, and whatever you loose on earth will be loosed in heaven. Again, truly I tell you, if two of you agree on earth about anything you ask, it will be done for you by my Father in heaven. For where two or three are gathered in my name, I am there among them.”

Then Peter came and said to him, *“Lord, if my brother or sister sins against me, how often should I forgive? As many as seven times?”*

Jesus said to him, *“Not seven times, but, I tell you, seventy-seven times.”*

Listen to what the Spirit is saying to God’s people.

Message

□ Christ be our light / Longing for light

Offering and Prayer

We come sharing what we have with gratitude for the opportunity to give from the abundance with which we have been blessed.

□ Praise God from whom all blessings flow

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All that we have comes from you, O God. Use our lives and the gifts we offer to build a more peaceful and just world that reflects the principles of your reign, and the Good News of peace, healing and reconciliation Christ taught. Amen

The 2024 Apology of The Presbyterian Church in Canada for its Complicity in Colonization and the Residential School System

Introduction

We, The Presbyterian Church in Canada, humbly offer this apology to the generations of Indigenous people and communities harmed by the residential schools and day schools we operated.

We originally made a Confession in 1994 for our role in operating residential schools and colonization, but we have realized the inadequacy of that Confession. We apologize for our slowness and the apathy of our response. We are deeply sorry.

We acknowledge the families whose children were taken to schools without telling their families where the children were being taken and who never returned, who remain lost today. We acknowledge with grief the many unmarked graves that have been found and will be found, including at schools that we ran. We remember the children who never made it home.

We apologize for the impact of the genocide of colonization, forced assimilation and racism to which we actively contributed.

Many Survivors and intergenerational Survivors have shared very personal and traumatic experiences in the context of Truth and Reconciliation Commission hearings and within the congregations, committees and governing bodies of the church. We acknowledge the strength and courage of Survivors for sharing your experiences in the schools and the heavy burdens you, your families and communities still bear. We acknowledge the pain and difficulty of sharing and reliving the truth of your lived experience.

We acknowledge that the church's apology itself, as well as the presence of church representatives making the apology, may be triggering, evoking trauma for some by surfacing memories of devastating experiences in residential schools.

Apology

We acknowledge that Indigenous children suffered at residential schools. The Presbyterian Church in Canada ran Ahousaht Residential School in British Columbia, Alberni Residential School in British Columbia, Birtle Residential School in Manitoba, Cecilia Jeffrey Residential School in Shoal Lake, Ontario, Cecilia Jeffrey Residential School in Kenora, Ontario, Crowstand Residential School in Saskatchewan, File Hills Residential School in Saskatchewan, Muscowpetung (later known as "Lakesend") Residential School in Saskatchewan, Portage la Prairie Residential School in Manitoba, Regina Industrial School in Saskatchewan, Round Lake Residential School in Saskatchewan and Stoney Plain Residential School in Alberta.

We apologize for taking children from their homes, parents, grandparents and communities.

We apologize for traumatizing parents and communities and taking away their rights to protect their children.

We honour and respect the languages of the land and apologize for punishing Indigenous students for speaking their traditional languages.

We apologize for attempting to eliminate Indigenous identity and cultural and spiritual traditions.

We apologize for the abuse Indigenous children suffered, including physical, sexual, psychological, emotional and spiritual abuses.

We apologize for the weaponization of food that happened in the schools and for non-consensual experiments with food, nutrition and medical procedures that were conducted on children.

We apologize for the lost lives, for children who died while at residential schools – from disease, neglect, suicide, attempts to run away and from violence by teachers, staff and volunteers.

We apologize that the schools created an isolated and unsafe environment where violence was condoned, and students learned violence. We regret, and are deeply sorry, that we provided conditions where students could abuse other students.

We acknowledge and apologize for the resulting loss of bloodlines, of ancestors and of people who would not grow to become Elders, the huge loss of culture and future for nations this meant.

We apologize that when children died their parents were not always informed, they were not always returned to their communities and their burial sites were sometimes unmarked or the markers were not maintained, and the record of names was not kept.

We apologize for the church's attitude of white superiority, for its assimilating policies and practices, for the racism of treating Indigenous people as less than human and for the ongoing intergenerational effects of our complicity with colonization and the schools that continue to negatively impact families and communities.

We acknowledge that this systemic racism continues to impact Indigenous people, including through insecure housing; poverty; forced dependence on social assistance; experiencing lateral and domestic violence, in particular toward

Indigenous women, girls and 2SLGBTQ people as named in the final report of the National Inquiry into Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women and Girls. We acknowledge this has led to hopelessness, mental health crises and the tragedy of suicide, barriers to completing education and to accessing health care. We acknowledge this has led to the breakdown of family bonds that results in children taken into foster care, gang involvement, exploitation, addictions and incarceration.

We are sorry for how long it has taken for The Presbyterian Church in Canada to begin to understand the depth of harm we have caused, and we still have much to learn.

For our complicity in colonization and the residential school system, we are deeply, deeply sorry.

We therefore offer five fundamental commitments:

We will continue to listen and learn from Indigenous people, leaders, Elders and Knowledge Keepers, welcoming and engaging voices from both within and beyond The Presbyterian Church in Canada.

We will continue the work of reconciliation, responding to the Truth and Reconciliation Commission's 94 Calls to Action and the work of reparation that we have begun.

We will respect traditional Indigenous spiritual practices.

We will listen to and tell the truth about the past.

We will work to support Indigenous led healing and wellness initiatives and be in solidarity with Indigenous people and communities.

A Moment of Silence

Pastoral Prayers / Womanist Lord's Prayer

Holy One, you created us in your image and set us in the world to live in peace with you and with one another. We pray for those who are hurt and hurting because of false beliefs about the superiority of a particular race, class, or gender – let your truth and justice bring healing.

Comforting God, we pray for healing in the communities and families of all who experienced residential schools. Hold in your loving care and bless with strength and courage those who pursue healing, truth and reconciliation – let your grace and power bring new life.

We pray for strength and healing for all Survivors and intergenerational Survivors of residential schools. And we pray for healing for the siblings, family, and friends of those were taken from home but did not return, and for the intergenerational impacts the schools continue to cause today in families and communities.

God of transforming love, the wounds of racism continue to this day, imbedded in the fabric of our institutions and governments. Let your compassion and wisdom flow through all public policies and practices. Where power is hoarded, bring your equity and justice. Where racism is resisted, bring your courage and strength to acknowledge and address it. We pray that our communities, churches and country will be places where there is justice and where people advocate for dignity of all creation.

We pray ...for people whose bodies, minds and souls are in pain and those struggling with physical or mental illness

...for people who experience violence in their relationships, in their home, workplace, community or country, and for those who have been displaced by war, unjust economic systems, the climate crisis, and ongoing impacts of colonization around the world

...for people living with housing insecurity – where home is inadequate for the needs of the people it must shelter, is unsafe, unaffordable, or inaccessible

...for people who are struggling with economic insecurity, barriers to education or employment, unfairness in policies or practices

...for people at the frontlines of social support systems who daily face the evidence of systemic racism and continue to strive for the safety and dignity of people and creation.

We join our voices to pray this version of the Lord's Prayer together as Jesus taught...
Our Mother (or Father/Parent/Source) who is in heaven and within us, we call upon your names. Your wisdom come. Your will be done, in all the spaces in which you dwell. Give us each day sustenance and perseverance. Remind us of our limits as we give grace to the limits of others. Separate us from the temptation of empire but deliver us into community. For you are the dwelling place within us, the empowerment around us, and the celebration among us, now and forever. Amen

□ We cannot own the sunlit sky

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Blessing

May we go into God's good creation praying that the Spirit will open our minds to receive truth – unlock our hearts to seek peace – and strengthen our bodies to work for justice. May the Spirit guide us in ways of love and justice, to walk lightly and humbly and seek truth, reconciliation, healing, and wholeness. And may the Blessing of Creator, Christ and Spirit embrace us all.

