

Immanuel United Church

Sept 26th, 2021

Commemorating the National Day for Truth and Reconciliation on Sept 30th

Welcome

Call to Worship – by Alf Dumont, “Prayer of the Heart”

From across the valley
comes the beat of the drum,
it calls to my heart.

**May it ever remind us
that our heart beats to the rhythm
of Mother Earth.**

May it ever remind me
that I am part of every living thing
and every living thing is part of me.

**May it ever remind us
of our humble place on this earth
and earth’s place in us.**

Hymn: VU 701 *Shall We Gather at the River*

Orange Shirt Day Presentation by Phyllis Webstad
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=E3vUqr01kAk&t=5s>

Orange Shirt Day Prayers by Richard Bott, the moderator of The United Church
<https://youtu.be/o2rfb9bNW9U>

A Litany of Healing - Incorporating an Ojibwe prayer for healing

Grandparent God, look at our brokenness—
we know that in all creation
only the human family has strayed from the Sacred Way.
We know that we are the ones who are divided
and we are the ones who must come back together
to walk in the Sacred Way.

As we reflect on the history of the relationship
between the church and Indigenous peoples,
we pray for openness.

In our learning and in our growing, may there be healing.

As we open ourselves to the stories
of Indigenous peoples hurt and wounded
by residential school and other experiences,
we pray for compassionate listening.

In the telling and in the hearing, may there be healing.

As we feel the pain of individuals and communities
and recognize our impoverishment of spirit
through our failure to honour the gifts of different cultures,
we pray for a hunger for new ways
of walking the earth together.

**In our recognition of the need for forgiveness
and for change, may there be healing.**

As we work together to embody
the spirit of reconciliation and healing,
we pray for expectant anticipation that our life together
in the church will be enriched and deepened.

In the giving and in the receiving, may there be healing.

As we move forward as the people of God,
lifting up and supporting our sisters and brothers
of all tribes and races, we pray for God's richest blessings.

In the honouring and in the sharing, may there be healing.

Grandparent, Sacred One,
teach us love, compassion, and honour
that we may heal the earth and heal each other. **Amen.**

Scripture: Exodus 2:5-14

The daughter of Pharaoh came down to bathe at the river, while her attendants walked beside the river. She saw the basket among the reeds and sent her maid to bring it. When she opened it, she saw the child. He was crying, and she took pity on him. 'This must be one of the Hebrews' children,' she said. Then his sister said to Pharaoh's daughter, 'Shall I go and get you a nurse from the Hebrew women to nurse the child for you?' Pharaoh's daughter said to her, 'Yes.' So the girl went and called the child's mother. Pharaoh's daughter said to her, 'Take this child and nurse it for me, and I will give you your wages.' So the woman took the child and nursed it. When the child grew up, she brought him to Pharaoh's

daughter, and she took him as her son. She named him Moses, 'because', she said, 'I drew him out of the water.'

One day, after Moses had grown up, he went out to his people and saw their forced labour. He saw an Egyptian beating a Hebrew, one of his kinsfolk. He looked this way and that, and seeing no one he killed the Egyptian and hid him in the sand. When he went out the next day, he saw two Hebrews fighting; and he said to the one who was in the wrong, 'Why do you strike your fellow Hebrew?' He answered, 'Who made you a ruler and judge over us? Do you mean to kill me as you killed the Egyptian?' Then Moses was afraid and thought, 'Surely the thing is known.'

Reflection by Stan McKay

The classic setting for a racist environment is where some people have power and others are marginalized. The people with power see their power as a sign of superiority, including racial superiority. They feel threatened by the marginalized people because they are concerned about maintaining the security of their privileged position. Thus, we find the Egyptians destroying all the male infants of the Israelites. It is a program of genocide. The people called "the children of Israel," on the other hand, seem to be leaderless. There is no record of rebellion by them, even at the time of the slaughter of their children, in spite of the earlier act of resistance from the midwives Shiprah and Puah. They see themselves as powerless. Likely, they also see themselves as inferior. They have learned dependence.

The unique aspect of Moses' story is that, while he is destined for privilege, he is fed and learns love from his "real" mother and from his "own" family. Thus, his formative years are as an Israelite, something his adoptive mother, the daughter of Pharaoh, does not appreciate when she later brings him into the palace, and he is raised as a prince with access to riches and power. This attempt to transplant him into the ruling class never succeeds. Moses will never be an Egyptian because he has been nurtured by family who are not Egyptian. The day of Moses' identity crisis arrives when he recognizes the pain of "his people." They are being cruelly ill-treated as slaves. He reacts with anger and violently declares, by his action, that he is not an Egyptian. Similarly, this has been the experience of people both before and after Moses. It certainly is an experience that has been described to me by children who were removed from Native families and placed with "wealthy," non-Aboriginal families. Like Moses, they may have lived as "adopted" persons for 10 to 15 years, with all of their physical needs met. They may have been separated from their roots for most of their lives and living, it

would seem, as persons of privilege. Yet, suddenly, they cry out: "I am not an Egyptian! I am not an oppressor! I am rooted in the history of the oppressed!" This happens to many Native people in Canada, even to those who have not been taken from their homes. There is an angry recognition of the racism being practiced on them, and often violence ensues because of their frustration. At times, this may include abuse of alcohol and drugs. Canadian jails and prisons are filled with people like Moses. But, unlike Moses, we, in our present context, cannot disappear into the wilderness as a place of retreat where we might heal ourselves and strategize about our eventual liberation.

Guided Meditation:

Thinking About Home by Sarah Chandler (Quaker Aboriginal Affairs Committee)

<https://quakerservice.ca/wp-content/uploads/2011/10/QAAC-kit-Thinking-About-Home-copy.pdf>

Hymn: VU 670 *Precious Lord*

Great Planner God, who has created and still runs the universe
in sturdy harmony and perfect order,
Great River God, whose path often takes meandering curves and slow flows
with the same pace of the gentle winds,
Be with us as we journey together.
Be in our soul.
We know your presence in our lives, in both places:
in balance and order
and in those moments that require patience and outside-the-box creativity in the midst
of uncertainty. We call you Understanding Healer.
Let your light shine in all,
caring for a world broken and paused.
Lead us into community and communion,
where we can live side by side in the beauty of your earth,
where we can share meal around the table filled with warmth and the certainty of
safety.

God of possibilities, we fear illness that changes our world.
It is difficult to gather, to feel your presence among us.
Everything has changed and we call out to you.
In our prayers, we hope to keep all those who are struggling with Covid-19 disease.

In this moment, we hold Lorna Standingready, one of the Elders on the National Indigenous Elders Council, and a women of many stories and a gentle, strong spirit, who entered hospital with breathing difficulties related to COVID-19, and is now slowly breathing on her own. May healing and wholeness come to Lorna and all who need them.

We also pray for all who are caregivers in the life of their mother, father, spouse, child, grandchild, friend, client, patient.

We pray for their own well-being and peace, their soul and wholness filled quickly with your love even after they might feel their energy is drained by challenges and heartbrokenness.

Hear the mourning of those who grieve.

Inspire us in our love for one another.

Great Planner God,

Great River God,

We pray for this national day to commemorate Truth and Reconciliation when all Canadians and residents are called to reflect on settler privileges and systemic racial injustice, and to remember the Indigenous ancestors who lived on this land for thousands of years; the thriving cultures of the past and today, the horror of residential schools, the children being taken away from home, that led to spiritual, economical, physical, social genocide and ongoing impact of intergenerational trauma. May we not forget. Let us plan the solid path towards reconciliation and the resurgence of the thriving Indigenous cultures and people. Let us steadily flow with the winds of movement just like great rivers do gently and vigourously.

God, revealed in light and shadows,
joys and sorrow,
righteous anger and healing from trauma,
in all places where love heals
be with us all.

In the depth of the night, our fears appear real.

Our loneliness shakes those who are alone.

Give us faith to care for one another.

Blessed are you, the essence of our being.

In faith, we go with you into the unknown;

we trust and we will follow. Amen.

The Prayer of Jesus (paraphrased by Heather Macdonald)

**Our Father who mends earth and heaven
with a Mother's passion,
Holy and blessed be your name.
May your will be done through us.
Give us this day the strength and humility
needed for action.
Forgive us our insensitivity,
and help us ask to be forgiven.
Save us from detours and despair,
and lead us not into the temptation of privilege.
For your glory in human community
alive with equity and truth.
Now and forever. Amen.**

Hymn: VU 639 *One More Step Along the World I Go*

Commissioning and Blessing:

The world has become a global village.
All people long for unity, peace and harmony.
We are called to respond.
Go forth that all may be one.