

Service of Lament
Medicine Hat College Interfaith Centre
Wednesday, September 25, 2013

Welcome, Introductory Comments

Call to Worship

One: Tonight we gather as people in need of healing.

All: We gather as people burdened by a heartbreaking history.

One: True faith is grounded in Love; true unity is grounded in justice and mercy.

All: We gather as people burdened by a heartbreaking history.

One: Our ancestors did not always express their faith with Love. Our country has not always acted justly or mercifully. There is much for us to grieve in how we have related to one another.

All: We gather as people burdened by a heartbreaking history.

One: We journey toward truth and reconciliation, rejecting the racism of previous generations.

All: We gather as people burdened by a heartbreaking history.

One: Creator God, look upon us with mercy, for we are a deeply wounded people. Give us the strength to look at our history truthfully, even when it causes us to feel ashamed or afraid. Help us feel safe enough to bring our suffering to you, for Love alone is strong enough to carry it from and for us.

Hymn: Don't Be Afraid © John L. Bell and Graham Maule, 1995. All rights reserved. Used by permission.

**Don't be afraid. My love is stronger,
My love is stronger than your fear.
Don't be afraid. My love is stronger and
I have promised, promised to be always near.**

Statement of Purpose

Responsive Prayer

One: Creator God, cleanse our hearts from sin and brokenness as we seek your holy way. Purify our minds and let them be guided by your Word. Give sight to our eyes, so that we may see others as you have seen them. Open our ears, so that we may listen for your voice. Make us one, to worship in spirit in truth and help us to love you with all our strength.

***All: We belong to you, O God. Our world belongs to you.
Hear us as we call on you. As we humble ourselves, would you heal our land?***

One: Creator God, we pray for reconciliation between those who were the first peoples of this land and those who came after. We live this those who lost their heritage and their language and their land. Our history is broken. We do not know how to redeem our history. We cannot

make it right. But you are the history maker, you are the redeemer, and you long to see us reconciled. We long to see your kingdom of peace and justice established in our hearts.

**All: We belong to you, O God. Our world belongs to you.
Hear us as we call on you. As we humble ourselves, would you heal our land?**

One: Creator God, we celebrate what you will do. We celebrate the power of your resurrection working in us to offer hope and healing and refuge. We celebrate your love and, as it is offered to us, may we offer it freely to others. We celebrate the holy trinity, and pray for that same unity-in-diversity to bring us together as we long for your kingdom of peace and justice to be established in our communities. Meegwetch Che Manido (Thank you, Great Spirit).

**All: We belong to you, O God. Our world belongs to you.
Hear us as we call on you. As we humble ourselves, would you heal our land?**

*The preceding prayer was adapted from Christian Reformed Church material, which can be found at www.crcna.org/site

Hymn: Spirit, Open My Heart © Ruth Duck & Arthur Clyde, 1994. All rights reserved, used by permission.

*Chorus: Spirit, open my heart to the joy and pain of living,
As you love may I love, in receiving and in giving,
Spirit, open my heart.*

*Verse 1: God, replace my stony heart with a heart that's kind and tender.
All my coldness and fear to your grace I now surrender.*

*Verse 2: Write your love upon my heart as my law, my goal, my story.
In each thought, word, and deed, may my living bring you glory.*

*Verse 3: May I weep with those who weep, share the joy of sister, brother.
In the welcome of Christ, may we welcome one another.*

Lament Psalm 31 – written by Anne Weems

Prayer of Lament – written by Rev. Maggie McLeod, daughter of a File Hills School Survivor.

Scripture Readings Lamentations 5:1-5, 13-15
Micah 6:6-8
Matthew 5:21-26

Hymn: Sisters, Let Us Walk Together © Judith Snowdon, 2004. All rights reserved, used by permission.

**Sisters let us walk together, sharing sadness, loss and grief,
We will move through pain to wholeness, brokenness transformed to peace.**

**Brothers let us work together, seeking justice, healing shame,
Filled with hope, embued with courage, ev'ry violence we will name.**

**People let us love together, joining spirits, linking hands,
We are God's unique creation, clothed with dignity we'll stand.**

Reflection – Risking Truth and Reconciliation
“Reconciliation” a poem by Rebeka Tabobondung

Reading of Apology Documents

Elder's Song – Audio Recording in St. Peter's Catholic Church at Nadleh Whut'en First Nation. The singer-songwriter is a respected Elder named George who teaches the Dakelh language.

Writing Reconciliation – a time of prayerful reflection and participation as we begin to process what we have heard and seen this evening.

This is the Sound of One Voice – Audio Recording by the “Wailin’ Jennys”.

Remembering the Children Prayer – handout, read in unison
Moment of Silence

Hymn: In God There Is a Refuge adapted from the work of Keri K. Wehlander and Linnea Good, © 2005.
All rights reserved, used by permission.

**In God there is a refuge, in God we find our peace.
When all we know is chaos may our trust in you increase.
In you there is a silence, in you our minds are clear.
When all we hear is discord may your quiet draw us near.**

**In God there is a vision, in God we learn to dream.
When all we see is desert may you be our living stream.
In you there is a future, in you we find our way.
When hope has shed its brightness may you show us a new day.**

Commissioning and Benediction

One: God of the medicine wheel, God of both justice and mercy, we are thankful for our time together in this place tonight, even though we have heard and expressed words filled with pain and sadness. We have expressed our sorrow and our regret for the brokenness of the past. We have remembered the children taken, and the families left behind. And now, as we conclude our service of lament and prepare to leave this place, we ask you for strength, for the journey toward right relations is long, and we may grow weary from time to time. Teach us afresh the “Seven Grandfathers” of truth, courage, wisdom, honesty, love, respect and humility. O God, help us as you send us out to live and share your abundant love by acting justly, loving mercy, and walking humbly in the paths that lead to righteousness and healing for us all.

**All: We return now to the circle of Life, knowing
That the love of Creator God is with us,
The compassion of Jesus inspires us, and
The hope of the Holy Spirit comforts us.
May we journey forward together,
Risking truth and reconciliation
For the healing of old wounds and
The making of a better history together.**

Amen. – the unison portion of the Commissioning and Benediction statement was adapted from a prayer by Lee Claus, Francis Sandy Theological Centre, 2008. Used with the kind permission of The United Church of Canada.

Please stay for light refreshments following the service.

Further Resources

Archibald, Jo-ann. *Indigenous Storywork: Educating the Heart, Mind, Body and Spirit*. Vancouver, BC: The University of British Columbia Press, 2008.

Cardinal, Tantoo. *Our Story: Aboriginal Voices On Canada's Past*. Toronto, ON: Random House of Canada Ltd., 2005.

Fontaine, Theodore. *Broken Circle: the dark legacy of Indian Residential Schools*. Victoria, BC: Heritage House Publishing, 2010.

Fournier, Suzanne and Ernie Crey. *Stolen from our Embrace: The Abduction of First Nation Children and the Restoration of Aboriginal Communities*. Vancouver, BC: Douglas & McIntyre, 1997.

Haig-Brown, Celia. *Resistance and Renewal: Surviving the Indian Residential School*. Vancouver, BC: Arsenal Pulp Press, 2006.

King, Thomas. *A Short History of Indians in Canada*. Toronto, ON: HarperCollins, 2006.

Milloy, John S. *A National Crime – The Canadian Government and the Residential School System, 1879-1986*. Winnipeg, MB: University of Manitoba Press, 1999.

Weems, Anne. *Psalms of Lament*. Louisville, KY: Westminster John Knox Press, 1995.

www.ccc-cce.ca/english/justice/racism.htm Canadian Ecumenical Anti-Racism Network

www.presbyterian.ca/resources.online.254 The Healing and Reconciliation Liturgical Kit.

www.trc.ca Truth and Reconciliation Website.

www.wherearethechildren.ca Website on the effects of Indian Residential Schools.