

The Anglican Church of Canada



L'Église anglicane du Canada

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June 2, 2021

Every Child Matters

Last week the Chief of the Tk'emlúps te Secwépemc First Nation revealed news of the discovery of the bodies of 215 children at the site of an unmarked burial ground at a former residential school near Kamloops, B.C. The identities of the children are unknown at this time. The grief of families and communities unleashed by this news is heartwrenching and profound.

There have long been stories told in Indigenous communities of children who disappeared or never returned home from residential school and whose parents were never told what had happened or given the opportunity to receive their bodies for community ceremony. Whether the deaths were due to illnesses, abuse or neglect, the lack of dignity offered to these children by an anonymous burial far from their family or community is tragic and unacceptable.

We grieve with all whose children never came home.

The Anglican Church of Canada shares in the painful legacy of residential schools. We remain committed to the long, hard road of reconciliation including apologies made for our part in residential schools (1993) and for the devastating spiritual harm caused (2019) and ongoing work towards reconciliation and support for healing for personal and intergenerational trauma.

We know there are sites at Anglican residential schools where some graves are unmarked or where records are incomplete. We are committed to working with Indigenous communities to assist to recover whatever information is available and to join in advocating for ground searches of those burial sites.

At the heart of our faith is the life of Jesus who said, *'Let the little children come to me; do not stop them; for it is to such as these that the kingdom of God belongs. Truly I tell you, whoever does not receive the kingdom of God as a little child will never enter*

it.' And he took them up in his arms, laid his hands on them, and blessed them. (Mark 10" 14b-16) The neglect of the dignity of children, whom Jesus welcomed and protected, calls for repentance in action.

We, as Anglicans, commit to working with Indigenous communities, leaders and elders to heal this legacy and honour the lives of the children who never went home.

A handwritten signature in black ink, reading "Linda Nicholls". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style with a large initial 'L'.

The Most Rev. Linda Nicholls
Archbishop and Primate