



DIocese OF CALEDONIA

200 – 4TH AVENUE WEST, PRINCE RUPERT, BC V8J 1P3

Tel: 250-627-1107

E-mail: admin@caledoniaanglican.ca

KAMLOOPS 215

5 June 2021 ~ Feast of Boniface

My brothers and sisters in Christ:

Last Friday news broke about the unmarked and undocumented graves of 215 children at the Kamloops Residential School. This was heart breaking news. This reminder of the horror of the Residential Schools has exposed deep wounds for many across the Diocese and country.

My heart breaks for the families who lost these children; for the survivors whose wounds have been re-opened; for communities that have been plunged into sorrow and mourning; and for a country that perpetuates systemic racism. My heart is strengthened with the knowledge at these 215 children are at peace in Christ.

We are a church with a complicated past. There will be more graves, some of them possibly at former Anglican schools. Our repentance and need for healing is not over. And my heart breaks with this knowledge. Though, I know that God is far more gracious than we can imagine.

On Monday night at the Candlelight Vigil in Prince Rupert, the allies were asked to speak up in support. We are called to support the hard and long work of reconciliation. Tangible steps are

- A Territorial acknowledgement before our worship services.
- Letting our elected officials know that we expect the government at all levels to fulfill the Calls to Action from the TRC, enact the UNDRIP, ensure every Indigenous community has safe water.
- Hold the Diocese to the same Calls to Action.
- Speaking up about the Murdered and Missing Indigenous Women and Girls. (Hanging a red dress in your yard or stopping at the totem pole in Terrace, for example.) The grief we are hearing is not of the distant past, but in our present.
- Praying for and with families that are struggling with this news.
- And in my family's tradition, bake and cook, and drop meals off, so that those who are hurting can grieve.

The ministry of reconciliation is complex on one level, but simple on another. Societal changes happen when individuals choose to act differently. 215 children were buried without their families knowing or their graves marked. More children across this country were buried this way, and members of the Body of Christ dug those graves. By God's good grace we have opportunities in repentance and reconciliation to be the Church that Christ died for.

Archbishop Mark MacDonald wrote –

“...I once heard someone say that Jesus, who died on the Cross, also died in the Holocaust. If that is true, they will find him among those children. But, we who have seen him die on the Cross and suffer with us, know that this is not the end of the story. He came back to us whole and sound, in a Resurrection body, from the World to Come. A World that he said we could start living in now, through love, through prayer, through the Sacred Circle, and through his Body and Blood. His justice, his truth, his love is walking in us and through us towards that day and we have seen it. It will rise, is rising, with those children and with a truth that could not be hidden.”

As we move through these days of grief and sorrow, please remember to be gentle with yourselves and with each other. Hold each up in prayer and show love in acts of kindness and generous patience. As you are able to, work to make reconciliation a reality in your congregation, community, and country with God as your helper.

Yours in Christ,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "+ David Lehmann". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

The Right Reverend David TJ Lehmann,
Bishop