



RECONCILIATORY WORK IN THE DIOCESE OF ISLANDS AND INLETS

Probably no other “direction” of our diocesan vision has been more central to our work over the last number of years than “Reconciliation and Beyond,” which recommits us “to an ongoing shared journey with First Nations and people of all nations and cultures, especially those who feel hurt or abandoned by the church.”

Reconciliation, according to the Truth and Reconciliation Commission (TRC) “is about establishing and maintaining a mutually respectful relationship between Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal peoples in this country. In order for that to happen, there has to be awareness of the past, acknowledgement of the harm that has been inflicted, atonement for the causes, and action to change behaviour.” ([Honouring the Truth, Reconciling for the Future](#), TRC Executive Summary, p. 7)

Reconciliation is an ongoing process that is deeply related to our baptismal covenant and the unique role the church played in the history of colonization in our country, including in residential schools. In the 1980’s and early 1990’s there was a rising awareness of harms of residential schools and a group of concerned Anglicans of our diocese formed ‘[Aboriginal Neighbours](#)’ which worked to organize and equip the conversations and work related to reconciliation. It was joined by local members from the Victoria Presbytery of the United Church of Canada and the Vancouver Island Religious Society of Friends (Quakers). Aboriginal Neighbours has been an ongoing source of opportunity and support for the work of reconciling since 1996.

Reparations

On November 23, 2005, the Government of Canada announced a [Residential Schools Settlement Agreement](#) with residential school survivors had been reached in principle. In September 2007 the Anglican Church of Canada was ordered to pay \$15,687,188 (split among thirty diocese, the General Synod and the Missionary Society) for its part in running some of the schools. Read more about this [here](#) and [here](#).

From 1929-1974 our diocese ran one of the largest residential schools in the country – [St. Michael’s Indian Residential School](#). The known names of the children who died while at the school were released in 2019 and can be found [here](#). The building was demolished with a ceremony on February 18, 2015, with Bishop Logan in attendance.

Our Apologies

Bishop Logan brought with him to the decommissioning event a banner with the formal [apology](#) of Primate Michael Peers (given in 1993) written on it. Bishop Logan also offered his own apology in the ceremony prior to the demolition saying, "I'm so sorry we failed you, we failed ourselves and we failed the Creator." He spoke about participating in this decommissioning [here](#).

An apology specifically for the spiritual harm caused in Residential schools was offered by Primate Fred Hiltz in July of 2019 and can be read [here](#).

The Sacred Journey Began

Bishop Logan's [Sacred Journey walk](#) (2016,2017) was a powerful symbolic act of repentance and re-entry that included walking the length of Vancouver Island, meeting with First Nation leaders from Alert Bay to Victoria along the way and asking permission for us to be on their territory – contrasting the way the church initially entered these lands. Most leaders welcomed us, some denied us entry. This walk was the first step of a journey we continue today.

In 2017 we entered a [year of reconciliation](#) and began, in earnest, to identify and implement reconciliatory initiatives at the parish, regional and diocesan levels.

Some Steps We Are Taking

The [Vision Fund](#) was established in 2016 to support initiatives and projects that further our work of living into our vision of being a renewed people with renewed hearts and renewed spirits. Between 2016-2020 we awarded \$161,000 towards these efforts, some of which include:

- The [Coalition to Preserve Truth](#) in the Supreme Court of Canada case to protect the testimonies given through the TRC
- The development of a [Longhouse tent](#) at the Vancouver Island Regional Correctional Centre
- The Kwakwaka'wakw Contextualized Church which builds on the long tradition of engaging Christian practice in Kwak'wala.
- Ongoing contributions to the [revitalization of Indigenous Languages](#)
- Surrounded by Cedar Child and Family Services youth development program.
- Support of and participation in the Victoria Orange Shirt Day initiative

In 2018-2019, our diocesan vision implementation team for Reconciliation and Beyond hosted seven 94 Calls to Action workshops across the diocese. Participants in the workshops learned about the Calls to Action and had the opportunity to learn together about their own engagement with the work of reconciliation in light of these calls.

One of the calls (45-i) is to "Repudiate concepts used to justify European sovereignty over Indigenous lands and peoples such as the Doctrine of Discovery and terra nullius." In response to this call the Anglican Church of Canada produced [a film](#) that explores the theological connections of this doctrine. Many parishes set up screenings of this film.



Following Synod 2018, the bishop invited Indigenous elders and leaders from across the diocese to sit on an Indigenous council. That group of 8-10 has been meeting (mainly virtually) since 2019. As a space to gather and reflect the group is forming relationships with one another and is joined regular by Indigenous Archbishop Mark MacDonald.

While some of the work of reconciliation can be documented here, much of it is the unquantifiable work of repentance, relationship and renewal. The shifting awareness and acceptance of the past and engagement in relationship, and the resulting changed behavior in many of our members are the fruits of this work, and it continues.

As a next step on this journey we are committed to addressing the interrelated white supremacy that exists, and have created a [section on the website](#) to resource people and parishes in this work. We continue to learn, and as we know better, we do better. It isn't sufficient to passively condemn racism while benefitting from the structures that sustain it. We must learn to become anti-racist and actively work to dismantle white supremacy. The new resource "[Challenging Racist 'British Columbia'](#)" does a good job at demonstrating the historical context we operate within.

In the weeks following the discovery of the unmarked graves at the former residential school in Kamloops (June 2021) Bishop Anna was in conversation with Chief Councillor Don Svanvik of the 'N̓amgis First Nation and visited 'Yalis (Alert Bay) where she attended a ceremony for survivors of residential schools.

The work of reconciliation is generational, and we are just beginning. As we continue to heal from the past, and work to create a faithful future we pray for wisdom, grace, and gratitude.

