

TRUTH and Reconciliation I think of how what is truth to one person is false to another. In these times of pandemic we find ourselves as a parish and as a community on Salt Spring, and on out into the world, divided on what the truth is about the Covid Virus, or the Covid vaccinations, or even vaccinations altogether. We cannot find a way to come together, to resolve our differing views of reality. Even though we are united in following One who teaches the Way of Truth and Love, we are at odds, each of us convinced our version of reality is the one true one. But is that the Way of Love? Is our way the way to the truest living out of Love for each other? What will we each decide? Are we on the Way that embodies Love as Jesus would have us love? And does our love inform our choices so we choose for the good of the whole community?

TRUTH and Reconciliation... For many generations indigenous people have been living within a society that dismissed the TRUTH that indigenous people experience daily. They have lived and continue to live within a white society that has presumed *white* values, *white* ways of seeing the world, *white* assessments of the worth of non-white peoples are the only reality. Looking back now, I hope we can all see that we've been wrong. I hope we can all see that when white people designated indigenous peoples as less than human, we were horribly, sinfully wrong. When our white ancestors decided indigenous peoples were not sacred to God, nor connected to God in the deepest and holiest of ways, and their spiritual practices were neither sacred nor life-giving ... our ancestors were in complete opposition to God's heart of hearts. They were actually turning toward the dark, turning away from truth, not living the Way of Love.

It's a very hard thing to confront, our white privilege. It is deeply painful to look at how we've been party to the devastation visited upon the first nations of Canada. And it's much easier to brush it off as 'back then, long ago, not us, we would never do that!'. But... is that the Way of Love? When we disregard the outcomes of the residential schools in the realities of Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder, (PTSD)... When we reject how generational trauma guts families, undermines every individual's belief in him or herself, and leads to high rates of suicide, even among children... are we living the Way of Love? Is this how God wants us to love each other?

These past months as more than 1300 unmarked graves of children have been revealed at four residential schools the reality has finally struck home for non-indigenous peoples in Canada. All kinds of people who were not listening or not paying

attention or not believing the thousand, thousand stories of abuse recounted to the Commission on Truth & Reconciliation 13 years ago have been struck into silent horror. For who can doubt the scientific images revealing those small bones? We are finally united in horror at the thought of small children - the same age as our children or grandchildren - dying. Alone. Far from their mummies and daddies. Now we get it. Now we must really begin to search out the Way of Love. Because we know that God has counted every hair on *all* our heads. Because we know the Lamb ransomed for God saints from *every* tribe and language and people and nation.

How do we find The Way? The indigenous elders I have met would say we are to do it with kindness. With good humour. With the intention to be in right relationship with each other. This morning we will pray for one of those elders, because right now this wise woman, Lorna Standingready, who has done so much to help others, is in hospital with Covid, fighting for her life. Lorna would say "Tell each other your stories." She would tell us how important is it to listen to each other with open hearts. To share what's most important in our lives. To see each other with love. To see how precious we all are. Walking the Way of Truth and Love.

When indigenous people speak to a group they often end with these words: "All my relations"

What do they mean? They include the people we meet on the street, the trees dripping with rain, the deer eating my garden, and the very big, very black spider that scared me speechless in the shower this morning - all my relations. They include those who are ignorant and those who are rude and those who are kind and all the ones we don't know yet. All my relations. These words acknowledge what Jesus came to teach us - we are all related, we are all together part of Creation. We are all on the Way, the Path of Truth and Love... together.

All my relations.