



## BRITISH COLUMBIA SYNOD

Evangelical Lutheran Church in Canada  
80 East 10th Avenue  
New Westminster, B.C. V3L 4R5

*A Call to Prayer A Call to Action A Call to Reconciliation*

July 12, 2013

To the Congregations and Rostered Ministers of the BC Synod – ELCIC

Dear Friends,

Almost 30 years ago, the general public began to hear about the disturbing conditions and actions related to the Indian Residential Schools in this country. While our Lutheran church was not directly involved in operating residential schools, as members of the Canadian public we nonetheless are complicit in the systems that led to such actions.

Beginning in 1986 with an apology from the United Church of Canada, all of the church bodies and other organizations involved in the operation of the Indian Residential Schools issued apologies to the Indigenous Peoples of Canada. In 2008, Prime Minister Harper, with national Indigenous leaders present, rose in the House of Commons and apologized unreservedly on behalf of all the peoples of Canada.

In a recent letter to the congregations of the Anglican Diocese of New Westminster, Bishop Michael Ingham wrote the following: “When we first heard the stories of the Residential Schools, many of us reacted with shame and guilt that our beloved church could have been a party to such abuses. Our Indigenous brothers and sisters deserve and need more from us than shame and guilt. They need to know that we can face the truth about ourselves. They need to know that we can move beyond old attitudes and assumptions. They need to know that we are prepared to walk with them in friendship and partnership.”

From September 18 to 21, the Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Canada will hold a National Event in Vancouver. Then, on Sunday, Sept 22<sup>nd</sup>, a **Walk for Reconciliation** will take place, beginning at 10 am at the Vancouver Art Gallery and concluding at BC Place with a celebrative program of prominent speakers and musicians. It is especially important that we, as brothers and sisters in Christ, be visible participants in this walk. Representatives of many National Church bodies (Anglican, United, and the Anglican National Indigenous Bishop, among others) will be taking part in this event.

**I urge each congregation and ministry in our Synod – especially those in the lower mainland – to participate in the Sunday morning Walk for Reconciliation on September 22nd.** You may want to consider changing your worship service time for that Sunday. Perhaps you could join another Lutheran or Anglican congregation that is

close to downtown Vancouver. At the very least, I encourage you to arrange for a number of congregational members to attend the Walk for Reconciliation on behalf of your congregation. How significant it would be if several carloads of people from each congregation travelled from across the lower mainland to participate in this event!

I know that a number of Anglican parishes are planning services for Saturday evening or early Sunday and, as partners in our Full Communion agreement, we would be more than welcome to attend any of these services. Contact your local Anglican parish and see what you can do together in Christ on this occasion. Christ Church Cathedral, in the heart of downtown, is planning a special worship service at 8:00 am, at which all will be welcome.

The Walk for Reconciliation is one more step along the journey of establishing renewed relationships between Indigenous and non-Indigenous Canadians. I invite and encourage each of you to pray, prepare, and learn during this National Event of September 18 to 21. Please attend whatever part of the Truth Commission you are able. Then, on September 22<sup>nd</sup>, join tens of thousands of other Canadians of good will – Indigenous and non-Indigenous, of all faiths and none – in walking together towards renewed relationships for us all.

For additional information regarding the Truth and Reconciliation Commission's events on September 18 to 21, visit <[www.trc.ca](http://www.trc.ca)>. KAIROS also has information and resources on its website <[www.kairoscanada.org/tre](http://www.kairoscanada.org/tre)>.

May God's spirit move among us as we seek reconciliation and renewed relationships.

Peace be with you all,

+Bishop Greg Mohr