



The United Church of Canada L'Église Unie du Canada



First Dawn Eastern Edge Regional Council
320 Elizabeth Avenue, St. John's, NL A1B 1T9
Tel: (800) 268-3781 ext. 6141 • Email: info4rc16@united-church.ca

June 22, 2021

To all members of First Dawn Eastern Edge Regional Council:

Blessings, as you continue to deeply serve your church.

On May 27, 2021, the news of the discovery of the remains of 215 people, primarily children, at the site of the former Kamloops Residential School on territory of Tk'emlups te Secwepemc First Nation was devastating to hear. Mistreated and abused students died, and were not provided the respect of a sacred burial. Families were not notified, nor were records of their passing kept. This happened at the hands of systemic discrimination, racism, and oppression.

The United Church of Canada acknowledged the historic harm we have done to help lead to this tragedy. We continue to journey towards fully living out the United Church's 1986 apology to Indigenous Peoples in Canada, and the 1997 apology to Residential School students, families, and survivors. We also continue to join with our Indigenous cousins in following their guidance as we move towards reconciliation. Furthermore, at the call of Indigenous leaders and ministries, and at the recommendations of the 2015 report of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Canada, the searching of grounds of former residential school sites continues. The 215 is only a fraction of the estimated thousands of burial sites across Canada.

At the request of Rev. Murray Pruden, Executive Minister of Indigenous Ministries and Justice, and our Moderator, the Rt. Rev. Dr. Richard Bott, we are asked at this time to be reflective, to mourn with our Indigenous peoples and to pray. They write:

We understand the desire to do "something" that will make this right. But we ask you, right now, to come together as people of the United Church and take the first step of mourning and remembering.

Please join with me, as people of First Dawn Eastern Edge, in pausing, remembering and mourning the loss and hurt of our Indigenous family. Please also continue to pray for our continuing journey towards reconciliation.

Blessings,

Rev. Grant Stuckless
President, First Dawn Eastern Edge Regional Council

