

## A Message from Deacon Elizabeth

***“On Canada Day this year I will be mindful that, however people observe it, I understand that we are a country in mourning, and it is the desire of many to be co-creators of a reconciling country in which we can take pride.” - E Short***

As you listen to the tragedy of the discovery of hundreds, on its way to becoming thousands of unmarked children's graves you may be struggling with how to respond. You may be feeling that it is too difficult to deal with and would rather have someone else deal with it. You may feel that this is not your problem, or you may be defensive as some of the building blocks of our country are exposed for what they are. Or you may feel an urgency to “do something about it” or “fix” it. All along, however well intentioned, both ignoring the situation and running in to fix it have perpetuated a dire situation. We believe we are being called to listen, and to listen, and to listen again, with humility and humbleness of heart. To listen until we can begin to feel true empathy. To listen until we are able to clear our minds of past assumptions. To listen until we are at the point to be guided by those it has most affected.

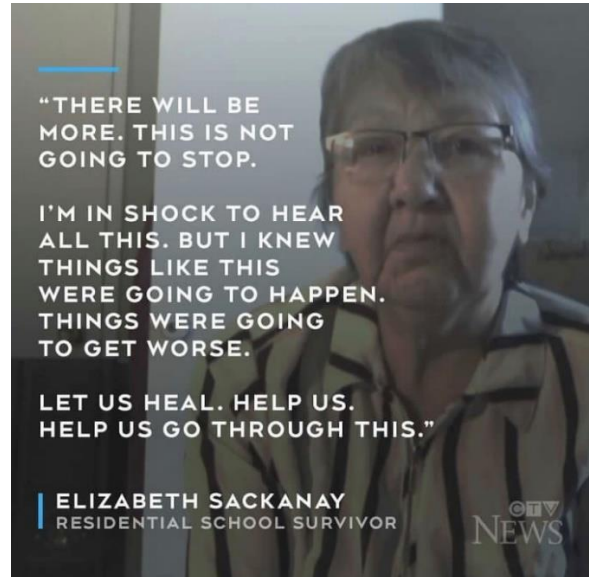
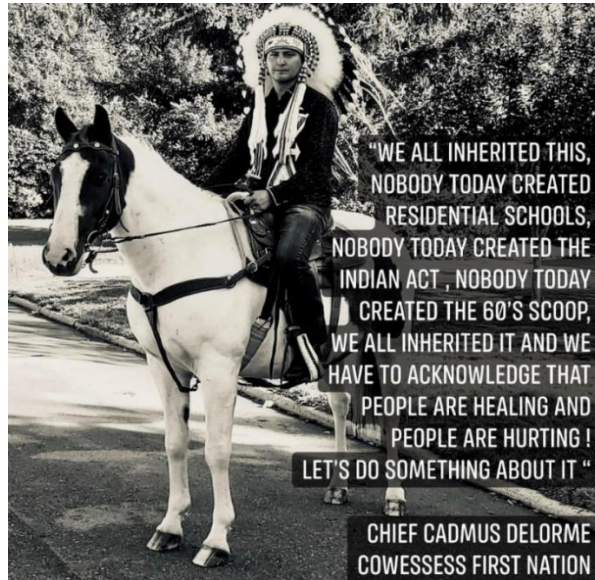
There are free courses available online at The University of Calgary and Edmonton. You can make a donation to the Anglican Church of Canada Healing Fund (details at above website). In the months ahead it is my hope to be part of developing opportunities for listening and learning in our parish. We are a country in mourning. There is strength in coming together in our grief.

Recently I am being constantly drawn to Archbishop Mark MacDonald's description of the Indigenous Sacred Circle and I have a vision of us, in a circle, with the Gospel at the centre, where with patience and hope we seek to discern God's will for us. Here is what he said in the most recent Anglican Journal in response to the Pandemic:



THE PANDEMIC HAS revealed the deep challenges Anglican Indigenous communities face, but it has also revealed a trajectory of hope. A common way of discipleship, respecting local elders and traditions, is emerging in a communion of self-determining Indigenous churches within the Anglican Church of Canada. This is called the Sacred Circle. When the gospel is put in the centre of the local Sacred Circle, Jesus, the living Word of God, becomes living and real in circles of discipleship, circles of leadership providing pastoral care and support in remote communities, and prophetic pastoral care in prisons, hospitals, and on the streets. We are blazing trails of new leadership development in ordination, lifelong learning and support for local pastoral teams, and opportunities for access to the same kind of benefits and supports that clergy with stipends receive in other parts of the church. Out of pain arises hope, and a new day. -The Most Rev. Mark MacDonald, National Indigenous Archbishop, Anglican Church of Canada.

While I understand that listening is not nor should be comforting or comfortable and absolutely requires that we hear the despair and anger and frustration and gut-wrenching grief of the First Nations People of Canada, I have personally been struck to my core by the simple honesty and grace that has come from some of the Indigenous leaders. Rather than comforting, it is convicting me. I will leave you with some wise words and I pray that we can *listen*, we can *hear*, we can *heal*.



**Blessings,  
Elizabeth**