

The Anglican Church of Canada



L'Église anglicane du Canada

80 Hayden Street, Toronto, Ontario M4Y 3G2
www.anglican.ca • Tel: (416) 924-9192 • Fax: (416) 968-7983

A Pastoral Statement concerning 'a first release of names of children who died at Residential Schools'

September 24, 2019

The wrenching legacy of residential schools is felt not only by those who survived. It lingers in the pain of families whose child died while at school. It lingers in the agony of not knowing why they died or where they are buried. It lingers in the inadequate record-keeping that does not tell the cause of death. It lingers in the neglect to even record the names of almost one-third of those who died.

For a parent the death of a child is an unimaginable pain.

On September 30th a first list of known names will be publicly released by the National Centre for Truth and Reconciliation at a ceremony in Ottawa at the Canadian Museum of History. Releasing these names may bring relief at the public acknowledgement of this family pain but it may also open wounds of grief afresh. While publishing the names may honour the children, the act of doing so is another public reminder for every family of the legacy of residential schools, paid by indigenous people across Canada.

The Anglican Church of Canada stands with the families and communities in sorrow. Sorrow for the preventable deaths of children in our care. Sorrow for every family that unwillingly released their child to a residential school expecting them to be cared for only to be told the child died and for most, no body ever returned.

Living the Marks of Mission

www.anglican.ca/marks

Archbishop Mark Macdonald and I invite all Anglicans to join in prayer and remembrance in this week.

Our hearts weep with all who mourn on this day.

With sorrow,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Linda Nicholls". The script is fluid and cursive, with the first letters of the first and last names being capitalized and prominent.

The Most Rev. Linda Nicholls
Primate
Archbishop

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Mark Macdonald". The script is fluid and cursive, with the first letters of the first and last names being capitalized and prominent.

The Most Rev. Mark Macdonald
National Anglican Indigenous

Link to information and resources from Church Leaders tour 2008:
rememberingthechildren.ca

A Prayer for the Children

God who came into the world as a child, we bring before you in deep grief the children who did not survive Residential Schools. Continue to hold them closely in the safety, comfort and everlasting Love which you desire for all creation. Hear again our cries of sorrow and lament for our participation in a system that allowed these deaths to happen. Forgive us.

Holy Spirit, in the unimaginable pain of this loss, when all words fail, hear and hold our “groans too deep for words”* as we see and honour the anguish of families left without the life, love and laughter each child represents. Be present with us in the myriad of emotions that the release of these names may bring – sadness, anger, relief, confusion, fear. Guard also the hearts and minds of survivors as they are faced again with memories of their own trauma and suffering.

Jesus, who showed us how Love is meant to live in the world, call us again out of denial and into truth, out of despair and into hope. Spur us to action in the places where systems of injustice prevail. Provoke us to speak out against racism, discrimination, climate injustice, and all that stands between us and the good, just, beautiful life you designed for us together. Be our strength when weak, our courage when afraid, our light in dark places.

Hear our prayer, God of all, in the name of your son the Reconciler of all things,

Amen.