

**The Road to Warm Springs**  
The National Consultation on Indigenous Anglican Self-Determination  
Anglican Church of Canada  
Pinawa, Manitoba

September 14-17, 2017

Transcript: Greetings from the Most Rev. Fred Hiltz, Primate

*More information including a video of this welcome at [www.anglican.ca/roadtowarmsprings](http://www.anglican.ca/roadtowarmsprings)*

Creator God, from you every family in heaven and on earth takes its name.  
You have rooted and grounded us in your covenant love,  
and empowered us by your spirit to speak the truth in love,  
and to walk in your ways towards justice and wholeness.  
Mercifully grant that your people journeying together in partnership,  
may be strengthened and guided to help one another,  
to grow into the full stature of Christ,  
who is our light and our life. Amen.

Good morning everyone, I trust you all had a good sleep. I've been asked to just to offer a few opening remarks, I'll speak a little more extensively this afternoon about where I think we've been in the last 20 years. The very first thing I want to do is simply say thank you. Thank you. Thank you for accepting the invitation from Bishop Mark and me to participate in this consultation.

You were chosen. You were chosen to be participants in this consultation, because we know something of your heart for Indigenous Ministries, and we know of something of your own personal commitment to the building of a truly Indigenous Church within the Anglican Church of Canada. We know of something of your own leadership in enabling initiatives in your own local context toward that end, so you were chosen for a good reason to be here.

Thank you right upfront to the co-chairs of the planning team Randall Fairey and Norm Wesley. They and their team who they will introduce more formally later have done an incredible piece of work in bringing this consultation together. Thank you at the very outset for the staff who've provided for the planning team incredible support. Jenny, even though in the last three weeks has been from a hospital bed, Theresa, Shannon, Josie, Michael Thompson, our General Secretary. Thank you to those of you who are here and have been tasked to be facilitators and note takers, I know you were briefed last night. God bless you and the work that is before you.

Thank you too to the staff Anglican Video, where would we be in this long journey without Anglican Video and their diligence and recording so many Sacred Circles and so many gatherings of this kind as we seek to honor the Covenant of 1994. So thank you to Lisa, and Becky and Scott for being here with us yet again. Thank you to all those who have assured us of their prayers. This is a gathering in which we are being upheld in prayer by people all across our church, and not just this church, but in fact all around the Anglican Communion.

The Anglican International Network for Indigenous Peoples just met a church host about 10 days ago and heard something of this gathering, and were very interested, intrigued by what it is that we are endeavoring to do here, and they've assured us of their prayers.

Here we are in this place called Pinawa. This place is sacred. This place where the lake laps the shore through the shore and over rocky ledges. This place where you can walk through the woods and find a bench, and sit and contemplate the beauty and splendor of God's creation. This place where the deer roam so freely. This place where eagles have soared high above Sacred Circles in years past. This place as Richard said earlier this morning, of gathering and conversation. This place of rest and shelter.

This place where in my own experience survivors of the Indian Residential Schools have found some measure of healing. This place where indigenous elders have dreamed dreams, and indigenous young people have seen visions. This place where indigenous peoples have gained a growing confidence in their conviction to build a truly indigenous expression of the church. This place where partnerships with the whole church toward that end have been forged. This place is sacred, so too is this time sacred.

These two and half days set into or out of the very busy lives that everyone in this room has, the busy-ness of our ministries, the carer's concerns we have for loved ones and those for whom we'll pray these days. The busy-ness of our hopes for the church and for the world which so desperately needs a message of reconciliation, a message of healing and peace. This time in which we are gathered, in the presence of the Creator and of the spirit of God known as we read about it in the scriptures, for grace, generosity, wisdom and strength.

The work we are about in these two and a half days is sacred, I truly believe that it is of God, and it is of the Gospel of his son Jesus, and the radical friendship into which he calls us. So as we enter the work, I invite us to do three things. Let us look at one another, let us look at one another eye to eye and heart to heart. Let us try and see in one another the Creator who wills that we live and work together in good ways. Let us listen to one another with minds and hearts that are open to new insights and new directions probably beyond our imagination at this moment.

As we enter our work, let's be keen to learn, let's be keen to learn something more about self-determination. The word is tossed about in the church a lot these days, self-determination. Well what is it? What does it look like? How does it find expression? How is it honored? In this learning we are so blessed to be having among us a great teacher and mentor, and highly respected scholar and dear friend in the Lord, Martin Brokenleg. He will be more formally introduced tomorrow.

As we enter our work, looking at one another, listening to each other, learning together, let us love each other. Let us love one another as Jesus commands, and in that love discern new ways of living together as one church.

Friends, my hope is that in the long line of moments recorded by Ester Wesley in the emerging relationship between indigenous peoples' and the Anglican church of Canada, this gathering will be worth noting. It will be worth noting as a time when the spirit spoke in and through us. My prayer is that they spirit will come among us, hover, rest and lead us gently but firmly, and when it need be, firmly but gently.

I hope we emerge from this gathering with a good sense of just how far we've come since the Covenant of 1994 and the act of General Synod 1995, in accepting the hand of friendship to build a truly indigenous expression of the church, and just how much further we need to go. What will a renewed commitment to that partnership look like coming out of this consultation? That's my question.

Mark and I have titled this gathering The Road to Warm Springs, it's an indigenous translation of the road to Emmaus, that beautiful Easter story recorded in Luke's Gospel the 24th chapter. It's the story that's going to speak to us, it's the basis for our gospel-based discipleship, the story is easily reflected upon in three ways as it unfolds. The Disciples on the road, the Disciples at that inn, and the Disciples on the road again having encountered the risen Lord.

As the risen Lord, drew near to those two Disciples on the road to Emmaus and invited them to share with him what they were talking about. May he draw near to us and invite us into conversations that are deep, and engaging, and holy, and hopeful. As He made himself known in the opening of the scriptures and in the breaking of the bread at that inn, may His same quiet yet glorious presence be known in this place where we lodged for the next two days.

When we leave to return to all of those places from which we've come, may we go having a renewed commitment to a yet fuller implementation of the Covenant, we can build in us and through us, throughout our whole church. May that commitment be marked by a yet deeper charity and a more fulsome clarity with respect to the details to which we much give continuing attention as we seek together to build a truly indigenous expression of the church. It is an honor with Bishop Mark to have invited you here. May the Lord be us. Thank you.