

A NEW AGAPE
WORSHIP
RESOURCES

RESOURCES FOR WORSHIP AND REFLECTION

A NEW AGAPE



THE RESOURCE BINDER

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SOME THOUGHTS BEFORE YOU LOOK AT THE RESOURCES THEMSELVES...

For too long, European-Canadians have assumed cultural and religious superiority over the people of the First Nations, and have overlooked, even denigrated, their gifts. The Anglican Indigenous Covenant holds up a vision of self-determination for Indigenous Anglicans within our Church, and invites into partnership all of us followers of Christ who would help this vision unfold. The first step in partnership is to welcome and value the gifts Indigenous peoples offer.

Those of us who are privileged, who have benefited from the systems of dominance and subjection set in place by our forebears, cannot work towards justice in this relationship without recognizing the costs of our privilege. We need to take the risk to invite in those we may not know very well, and make room for them. By sharing their presence and gifts with us, the ones we call guests may actually remind us that we are hosts only to a part of one dwelling place in God's much larger mansion. Within God's house we are actually guests, and it is our hospitality to the Spirit that opens us to each other, in sacred relationship.

As Christians, our work for justice and reconciliation is grounded in Scripture and in our common worship life. We need to pray constantly for God's healing touch in our lives and in the broken relationships between Indigenous and newcomer peoples. And we need to reflect on the gift of reconciliation we have from God through Jesus Christ. The pages that follow offer some suggestions for prayer and reflection, either in groups or in private prayer.

The Four Directions

One of the spiritual gifts of the Indigenous peoples of Turtle Island (North America) is the medicine wheel, where the circle, or wheel, holds four distinct sets of teachings, or medicines, that nurture growth and health: spiritual, emotional, physical, and mental. The teachings come from diligent Indigenous study of the cycles of nature: the seasons, the night sky, the rising and setting sun, and the patterns of the winds. East, South, West, and North make up the points on the compass, and the symbolic points on the medicine wheel. Movement always begins in the East, the direction of the rising sun, running around to the South, West, and finally the North. The circle is completed by returning to the East. Each of the four points in the circle corresponds to a direction and the peoples who come from that direction, and also to a stage of life and its teachings. Each direction has a symbolic colour, and is represented by a sacred plant, used ritually as medicine in prayer. Prayers are offered in four directions to honour the balance and diversity of gifts given by the Creator through each direction. The key to both individual and community healing is balancing and integrating these distinctive elements symbolized by the four directions. With a bit of imagination one can see how the goals of A New Agape relate to the directions and their gifts. We have organized the worship suggestions that follow to complement and honour this relationship.



In all your worship and workshop planning, please keep in mind the following principles and suggestions drawn from the vision of A New Agape:

IN THE BEGINNING...

- Learning, listening, and sharing take time. Make sure that you allow adequate time to prepare for events and to run them.
- Pay attention to the physical space of the event, that it is welcoming and conducive to the gathering's intentions. Remember the sacredness of the gift of hospitality.
- Pay attention to community-building, both in planning and in the events themselves. Learning, listening, sharing, and common prayer best take place in a context that is safe and welcoming for all.
- A sharing circle that honours the sacred humanity and gifts of each person present, and allows everyone a chance to express their feelings and points of view can allow participants to risk opening new doors of insight, awareness, and friendship.
- Learning, listening, and sharing mean making space for all people in your community, including visitors. Where possible, avoid the tokenism of only inviting one Indigenous speaker or leader. Instead, invite communities and partners. Both Indigenous and non-Indigenous people should be involved in planning and leadership, and in sharing stories and spiritual and cultural gifts. Non-Indigenous communities need to be careful not to appropriate the gifts of First Nations peoples as their own, but rather to invite Indigenous people to share those gifts with them.
- Lift and celebrate the gifts of local resources in your area.

STORIES MOVE US TOWARD RIGHT RELATIONSHIP

- Consider including storytelling as a focus in worship and group reflection. Scripture contains the sacred stories that bind us together in our faith. The gifts of our lives as we open in hospitality to one another are also sacred stories.

- Storytelling is a time of imaginative remembering for listeners and tellers alike. Take time for testimonies and stories from Indigenous people. Listen to their witness – voices of pain, struggles for justice, testimonies of healing. Trust in God's story of love, and allow yourselves to take risks in your own storytelling and listening. Honour the presence of these partners by listening deeply. Really listening means inviting the teller into your own heart, thereby drawing deeper into your own story, and into God's story.
- Consider praying in solidarity with other Indigenous communities by including the voices (from video or print resources) of Aboriginal people from across Canada.
- Tend to the pastoral needs of listeners and tellers.

LOOKING AT OURSELVES WITHIN GOD'S GIFT OF HEALING AND RECONCILIATION

- Allow time to reflect on the testimonies, Scripture readings, or other words spoken. Allow silence, and questions.
- Healing of relationships happens when stories are shared, and when the meanings of those stories and testimonies for all are explored. One particularly important time of listening happened in 1993, when the Primate, on behalf of the Anglican Church of Canada, listened for several days to the witness of residential school survivors. Absorbing and reflecting on that experience of listening, and on the stories themselves, Archbishop Michael Peers offered the words of the Church's Apology (See A 18–19).
- Allow for time to absorb the voices you have heard, to reflect on their meaning for the different participants. Take time to look within, to analyze and reflect on the relationships between dominant-culture people and Indigenous people. Do not be afraid to name sin and to discern the needs for healing in your midst.



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- Who are the healers among you? Who in your community has the gifts to lead a community through a journey of repentance toward new life? Welcome those gifts.

MOVING OUT WITH GOOD NEWS

- Find ways to recognize, name, and celebrate the gifts of new life in your midst. Where you see those shoots of renewed awareness, hope, and vision, nurture them with prayer, music, dance, laughter, and celebration.
- Make concrete plans for action, to begin the circle again. Embrace what has been completed and recall the gifts of your time together. This will strengthen you to move on to new risks, and allow new voices to emerge, new relationships to deepen.
- Consider dedicating an offering to a local Aboriginal healing initiative, either one that you know, or through the Anglican Church of Canada's Healing Fund.

Further resources for worship in the vision of A New Agape can be found at: <http://www.anglican.ca/acip/dayofprayer.html>. But remember that the most precious resources are those within your own communities, in the Indigenous communities near you, and in the people who have been gathered for this time. Finally: share your resources by contributing reflections or written resources from your community, to the growing of this educational binder.

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You can also add your story to the discussion board on the New Agape website:

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GOAL ONE: SELF-DETERMINATION

GIFTS OF THE EAST:

Beginnings. The colour of the East is yellow, for the rising sun, new life, spring, birth and infancy, and beginnings of all kinds. Its sacred plant is tobacco, which in traditional practice is offered each sunrise to the Creator in thanksgiving for allowing us to see another new day.

HYMN SUGGESTIONS:

“Many and Great, O God, are Your Works” (*Common Praise* #407); “Now There is No Male or Female” (*Common Praise* #36)

READ:

Isaiah 43: 1-13 and

- *The Anglican Indigenous Covenant* in section A; and/or
- Goal One: “Self-determination” in Section A; and/or
- Story #9: “Making a Place for First Nations Voices” in the **Stories** section B

HEAR:

a story from a person or community that tells of a hopeful new beginning.

REFLECT:

on the gift of new beginnings, a gift from God the Creator whose love is at the heart of all Covenants.

WONDER:

what it means for people of different cultures and races each to know themselves and each other as creatures of a loving God, to claim their own creation as a gift of God.

PRAYER:

The Anglican Indigenous Covenant Collect
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 way 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.

INVITATION TO COMMITMENT TO THE VISION OF NEW AGAPE:

One: The Covenant invites Indigenous and non-Indigenous communities into a new partnership in faith, hope, and love, under the guidance of God’s Spirit. Will you commit to support self-determination of Indigenous people in all aspects of their lives, to walk in true partnership on the path of God’s healing?

All: We will, with God’s help.

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GOAL TWO: JUSTICE

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GIFTS OF THE SOUTH:

The colour of the South is either red or black, depending upon local practice. In either case, it symbolizes the growth and creative time of summer and youth, when things come into full bloom: bodies, fruits, the heart. Because of the rapid pace of growth, it is also a time of struggle. Its sacred plant is cedar, which in traditional practice is used for protection and good health and spiritual communication when burned.

HYMN SUGGESTIONS:

“Praise the One Who Breaks the Darkness” (*Common Praise* #397); “Will You Come and Follow Me” (The Summons) (*Common Praise* #430); “Let Streams of Living Justice” (*Common Praise* #575)

READ:

Luke 4:14-30 and

- Goal Two: “Justice” and/or
- Story #19, “All Aboard the Blanket Train” in the **Stories** section

HEAR:

a story of faith from a person or community that tells of the struggle for justice.

REFLECT:

on the gifts that we experience in the struggle for growth in relationship and in community, and in the difficult and joyous work for justice.

WONDER:

what risks did Jesus take in his proclamation at Nazareth? How was the proclamation good news? Why was it received as threatening? As gift?

PRAYER:

Gracious God, your Word spoken through the Prophets became the voice that proclaimed your justice and healing in Nazareth; through Jesus you invited all creation into your reconciling love.

As you freed his followers from their fear of the risks of discipleship, so move within us in your love with the strength, the compassion and courage to give of ourselves to the ministry of reconciliation entrusted to us through Jesus Christ, your Son.

Amen.

INVITATION TO COMMITMENT:

One: In Christ the captive is freed, the blind made to see, the suffering healed, and the poor receive good news. The whole creation yearns for us, the children of God, to be revealed in our care for each other and for all of creation. Will you join the struggle against the social, racial, economic, and land injustices that affect the lives of Indigenous people and harm the earth?

All: We will, with God’s help.



GOAL THREE: HEALING

GIFTS OF THE WEST:

The colour of the West is either the red of the setting sun or the black of darkness, depending upon local practice. In either case, it symbolizes the period of middle age and parenthood, a time of maturation and all the lessons from introspection and responsibility that come with this time. Its sacred plant is sage, used traditionally to cleanse and make ready any area prior to an event.

HYMN SUGGESTIONS:

“O Healing River” (*Common Praise* #578);
“We Cannot Measure How You Heal” (*Common Praise* #292); “Wind Upon the Waters” (*Common Praise* #408)

READ:

John 20: 24-29 and

- *The Primate’s Apology* found in section A; and/or
- Goal Three: Healing; and/or
- Story #8: “A Major Step in the Direction of Healing” in the **Stories** section.

HEAR:

a story of faith from a person or community that has experienced healing.

REFLECT:

on what gifts need to be embraced in order for healing to take root and grow in persons and communities; on what needs to be given up in order for this to happen.

WONDER:

when we speak of the healing of relationships between Indigenous and newcomer peoples, what are the needs that non-Indigenous people have for healing? That Indigenous people have for healing? In the Gospel reading, what is Thomas’ need?

PRAYER:

*A Prayer of Lamentation –
Litany of the Dispossessed*

One: We found the land unoccupied
...except for them.
All: **And they grew poor**
One: while we grew wealthy.
All: **They became powerless**
One: while we grew powerful.
All: **They were pushed aside**
One: while we thanked God for land.
All: **They filled our jails**
One: while we thanked God for freedom.
All: **They despaired**
One: while we grew wealthy. Then the Lord replied: Woe to those who pile up stolen goods, and make themselves wealthy by extortion.
All: **How long must this go on?**
One: Woe to them who build a city with bloodshed and establish a town by crime.
All: **How long must this go on?**
One: Woe to them who give drink to their neighbours, pouring it from the wineskin until they are drunk so that they can gaze on their nakedness.
All: **How long must this go on?**
One: The Lord is in the holy temple
All: **Let all the earth be silent before God.**

(Canadian Ecumenical Jubilee Initiative
Year III Educational Resource: *Restoring
Right Relations*)

INVITATION TO COMMITMENT:

One: Where racism and oppression are at work in society, all are affected, the privileged and the injured. We are all in need of healing. As you live out this good news of salvation, will you work to recognize your own needs for healing, will you seek out and serve Christ in all persons, loving your neighbour as yourself?

All: **We will, with God’s help.**



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GOAL FOUR: HISTORICAL REPARATION

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GIFTS OF THE NORTH:

The colour of the North is white, for winter, elders, and the beauty of the blanket of snow that covers the land. This is the direction of completion, where the mind's accumulated knowledge blossoms into wisdom, when lessons learned move into commitment to action. Its sacred plant is sweetgrass, traditionally used to smudge ourselves daily – to cleanse the mind of negative thoughts, and to use the senses to the best of our ability to benefit the community.

HYMN SUGGESTIONS:

“When God Restored Our Common Life” (*Common Praise* #583); “Lord, Whose Love in Humble Service” (*Common Praise* #385); “Once to Every Man and Nation” (Once, to All and Every Nation) (*Common Praise* #587)

READ:

2 Corinthians 5:14-21 and

- Goal Four: “Historical Reparation”; and/or
- Story #13: “How We Find Healing in Shared Remembrances” in the **Stories** section

HEAR:

a story from a person or community that reflects wisdom born from an honest coming to terms with their history.

REFLECT:

on what it means to open our eyes to see the beginnings of a new creation in our midst.

WONDER:

what is our ministry of reconciliation right now, in this place, this time, this community?

PRAYER:

Loving God, Creator of all, maker and redeemer of history, you hold the pains and joys of our past, our present, our future; you open us to the gifts of time and the possibilities of new beginnings, and offer us the confidence to face our sin and loss with hope.

Breathe in us the grace to trust in your loving forgiveness, that we may face our histories with courage, guide us by your Holy Spirit in our walk of repentance, as we turn to embrace the new life you have given to us, through Jesus Christ, your Son.

Amen.

INVITATION TO COMMITMENT:

One: When one group has used power to control, hurt, and dominate others, the circle of right relationship is broken, and evil is given room to grow through time. Will you resist the powers of evil that weaken, distort, and destroy just relationship with Indigenous people? Will you turn in repentance and keep the circle strong, with a vision towards the generations that will come after you?

All: We will, with God's help.



GOAL FIVE: WALKING IN PARTNERSHIP: A NEW AGAPE

THE GIFTS OF PARTNERSHIP:

For non-Indigenous people using this binder, the gift of partnership is what this whole thing is about. It is our part in the circle. The vision of *A New Agape* begins in, and is animated through and through by, the affirmation of self-determination for Indigenous people. This is a sacred gift to the Church from Anglican Indigenous people: *the gift of themselves* within the circle of creation, within the circle of the Church, following the vision of how Indigenous Anglicans themselves desire to answer God's call to new life in Christ. We've come full circle from exploring the meaning of self-determination, justice, healing, and coming to terms with history by listening to the experiences and wisdom of Indigenous people, now to look back at what it means for the rest of us to be partners in this vision and work.

As the Covenant invites non-Indigenous people to walk in partnership with this vision, so too *A New Agape* begins with and is animated by the invitation to partnership. As we've traveled through the circle of the four other goal areas of *A New Agape*, we've learned some of what that partnership means: to move over, to make room for Indigenous voices to be heard, to not be in control, to see ourselves as guests, to honour Indigenous hospitality and gift-sharing with respect and humility. Partnership is about all of these things, and much more. It includes the hard work of solidarity, of identifying and naming injustices against Indigenous people in church and society. It includes listening with openness and vulnerability to the experiences of Indigenous people's suffering at the hands of racist institutions and persons, residential schools, dislocation through loss of culture, lands, and language, the present-day struggles and the legacies of past sins. All of this can be risky business.

Partnership has a lot to do with receiving. We learn through our openness to listening to Indigenous people, making room for their gifts to be shared. Many Indigenous Anglicans have spoken over recent years about the pain they experience in not having their gifts welcomed in the church. We may receive gifts of new knowledge and insight as we learn more about particular justice issues or about the history of Indigenous people, learning about Canada from a perspective not usually our own. But receiving such gifts isn't like unwrapping a present, something that can sit on the mantelpiece of our home and be admired. The receiving we're talking about is the receiving of true hospitality: welcoming *persons* into our midst, honouring the gifts of the persons. And with this new step of deep hospitality, the shape, size, and configuration of the house itself changes if it is truly to be a home to all. This kind of receiving of each other means that we can't simply "be church" in the same old way anymore.

Because all of this is about righting an unjust relationship, partnership involves creating or enlarging an opening within ourselves and our communities for those hurt by the injustice to name rightness in the relationship, to say what healing and reconciliation may look like. To us is the work of uncovering our own histories and identities as Canadians, as Christians, from within our relationship with Indigenous people. To us is the call to face the cultural and societal realities of racism that have formed all of us, Indigenous and non-Indigenous. To us in the dominant culture is the job of learning something of who we are, and what our history means, from the perspective of those who have experienced cultural, social, and religious domination. That can be uncomfortable. It can be painful.

But we have the grace within the gift of

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reconciliation and new life to be able to take the risks of vulnerability that come with partnership: to make room, to move off the centre-stage in order to allow other voices to surface and be heard, to be open to challenging long-held dominant-culture versions of history, of what it means to be church.

Finally, we have the gift and promise, within the embrace of the love of God, that once we, in partnership get off centre-stage we might, together as Indigenous and non-Indigenous people, change the stage itself: from a place where a few voices hog the microphone on top of one podium, to a place where the people gather in a circle – a circle of persons gifted by God with the sacred gift of life, gathered in mutual respect, humility, openness, and hospitality to one another.

HYMN SUGGESTIONS:

“Miren Qué Bueno, Qué Bueno Es” (*Common Praise* #473); “One Bread, One Body” (*Common Praise* #73); “Sister, Let Me Be Your Servant” (*Common Praise* #500)

READ:

Ephesians 4: 1-16 and

- Story #12:
“Connecting Across Cultures and Parishes” in the **Stories** section

RE-READ:

The Anglican Indigenous Covenant in section A.

HEAR:

words of witness from one who has lived in partnership with Indigenous people; testimony from an Indigenous person or community that reflects what partnership has meant to them.

REFLECT:

on the invitation to partnership that is made through the Anglican Indigenous Covenant.

WONDER:

what gifts have we received as partners? what risks are we being called to make as partners? what gifts do we bring as partners?

PRAYER:

The Anglican Indigenous Covenant Collect
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 way 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.

