

The Anglican Church of Canada



L'Église anglicane du Canada

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Stand with Standing Rock—A Call for Prayer from the Office of the National Indigenous Anglican Bishop and the Primate of the Anglican Church of Canada

Water is sacred and one of the four primal elements that sustain life on Mother Earth. We have not respected water and consequently many lakes, streams, rivers and creeks are polluted. It is an element on the verge of scarcity. We must protect water.

There is a pipeline approved for construction in the United States and while many will say, it's a U. S. problem, it is also a Canadian problem. The same has happened here and will continue to happen. Oil has become a more precious commodity than water. This pipeline, "Dakota Access," being built by Energy Transfer Partners, will threaten water for the Standing Rock Sioux as it will cross (underground) the Missouri River. It will also upset burial grounds. Three agencies of the U.S. government are questioning the approval of the pipeline. While not crossing the reservation, it is close, approximately ten miles from the reservation.

For several weeks people from all over North America have been congregating at the Camp of the Sacred Stone near Cannonball, North Dakota. There are people from the other Sioux nations of the Dakotas and Montana, and Minnesota; Ojibwes from Minnesota; various nations from Oklahoma; Alaska, New York and Canada. They are gathered on Sacred land and are respectful of that sacredness.

"The place where pipeline will cross on the Cannonball is the place where the Mandan came into the world after the great flood, it is also a place where the Mandan had their Okipa, or Sundance. Later this is where Wisesprit and Tatanka Ohitika held sundances. There are numerous old Mandan, Cheyenne, and Arikara villages located in this area and burial sites. This is also where the sacred medicine rock [is located], which tells the future."—LaDonna Bravebull Allard (Lakota, Dakota)

They have come to peacefully protest even though they have been accused of having weapons and pipe bombs. They did have a pipe that was being passed around but it was a sacred pipe that has been part of the Sioux ceremony and culture for years. News reports say that the water supply and toilet facilities to the camp have been shut off. And, there are threats of calling out the National Guard. Yet, not one shot

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has been fired. The Chief of the Standing Rock Sioux has been arrested along with others. The U.S. supports the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples (UNDRIP) but cannot enforce it, it is a moral issue. Even though much of what has been done for Dakota Access is in violation of the UNDRIP, there is only hope that the moral issue can be raised and heard.

The Anglican Church of Canada, through the work of our Primate, the Most. Rev. Fred Hiltz, takes the UNDRIP seriously and is committed to live into the Articles of the Declaration. Also, the Truth and Reconciliation Commission's Report, the 94 Calls to Action, references the UNDRIP in many of the Actions. Action step 48 calls upon the church to "formally adopt and comply with the principles, norms and standards of the UNDRIP as a framework for reconciliation. The Primate has also commissioned a "Council of Elders and Youth to monitor our church's honouring in word and action our church's commitment "to formally adopt and comply with the principles, norms and standards of the UN Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples". Another important principle of UNDRIP is "free, prior and informed consent prior to the approval of any project affecting their lands or territories and other resources, particularly in connection with the development, utilization or exploitation of mineral, water or other resources" (Article 32). It is also important to point out that Article 16 speaks to Indigenous Nations that have been separated by political borders: "Indigenous peoples, in particular those divided by international borders, have the right to maintain and develop contacts, relations and cooperation, including activities for spiritual, cultural, political, economic and social purposes, with own members as well as other peoples across the borders." Many nations have been separated by imposed borders: Blackfoot/Blackfeet, Mohawk, Ojibwe, Sioux, Cree and others. We need to be good relatives and support our brothers and sisters at Standing Rock.

The Office of the National Indigenous Anglican Bishop and the Anglican Church of Canada stand with Standing Rock. We are all related, not only by our blood but also by the blood of Christ. Standing Rock has long been an Episcopal community. Standing Rock Reservation was home of the eminent Deloria Family—Philip, an Episcopal clergyman, served many years on South Dakota side of Standing Rock Reservation—his son, the Venerable Vine V. Deloria, was born there; Philip's grandson, the famed Vine Deloria Jr, gave his tribal identification as Standing Rock Sioux (though he was born on Pine Ridge Reservation).

We call the Church to pray for Standing Rock, for Good Minds to prevail and for peaceful settlement. We also call the Church to pray for water, that is taken for granted in many of our communities but good water is getting scarce in our communities. We call upon the Church to pray for our governments, both

Indigenous and Settler, that they may work together to protect our fragile Mother Earth. Flowing waters are the arteries of our Creator, precious and life giving. Without water, there is no life here on Mother Earth. Pray that our Creator, God, will help us to live in balance and harmony with each other and with Earth, Fire, Air and Water.

“The dangers imposed by the greed of big oil on the people who live along the Missouri river is astounding. When this proposed pipeline breaks, as the vast majority of pipelines do, over half of the drinking water in South Dakota will be affected... It must be stopped. The people of the four bands of Cheyenne River stand with our sister nation in this fight as we are calling on all the Oceti Sakowin or Seven Council Fires to do so with our allies, both native and non native in opposing this pipeline.”—Joye Braun (Cheyenne River)



The Right Rev. Mark MacDonald
National Indigenous Anglican Bishop
The Anglican Church of Canada



The Most Rev. Fred Hiltz
Archbishop and Primate
The Anglican Church of Canada

Note: Dr. Owanah Anderson, Choctaw Elder and long time mentor of Mark MacDonald and Ginny Doctor contributed to the preparation of this statement.