

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

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Transcript: Ministry Moment from Canon Dr. Murray Still,  
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*More information including a video of this Ministry Moment at*  
[www.anglican.ca/roadtowarmsprings](http://www.anglican.ca/roadtowarmsprings)

Thank you everyone. It has been mentioned earlier, we did make invitation to the elders from Rupert's Land and haven't heard personally from them, but they were going to try to make it up at some point today. We're gonna watch for them. Hopefully, they'll show shortly. In the mean time, I was asked if I could just give some snapshots around what's happening with the diocese of Rupert's Land and take it from there.

Sometime back, a number of our folks, indigenous people from our diocese attended the sacred gathering, Sacred Circle in Minaki Lodge, where the apology was given. It was at that gathering, I think Barbara was with us. I think, she can correct me if I'm wrong, but I believe it was there that we were encouraged to go home and to talk about what we had experienced and to share that information with our diocese when we got back. Which, is what I encourage everyone here to do when they return home. This is what we did, we went home, and we began by hosting our own sacred gathering, and I think we've had—I've lost count, but I think there's about eight of them now. We've had them, most of our gatherings have been held at St. Peter's Dynevor, which is one of oldest churches of the diocese. It's the sacred grounds for Peguis and his people. We've hosted sacred circles there and also the urban area.

We have been trying to take all the things that we've been learning at the national gatherings, and take them back home. The last sacred gathering that we hosted at St. Peter Dynevor had the theme of homecoming. We were honoring our survivors from Residential Schools, and welcoming them essentially back home to an environment of healing, and welcoming, and support. That gathering produced a video, and we've been sharing that.

Also, the other things that came out of our time, was the creation of some structures that we have been using. The Rupert's Land Indigenous Circle, was created. I think it was first started the Aboriginal Circle and then it turned into the Indigenous Circle. Trying to get terminology more accurate I guess. Out of that gathering, we met a number of times, but that body was met

and purposed to be an advisory body for the bishop of the Diocese of Rupert's Land, on indigenous issues.

Mostly we were responding to that, and we did what we could by way of projects there. We formed Rupert's Land Witchedowen Incorporated, where I served as the mission developer from 2006 to 2009. Within the time of Witchedowen, we engaged in visiting the hospitals. We had started sharing circles at the Riverview Health Centre. We trained 12 people in restorative justice measures. We created a diploma in spiritual and pastoral care from the University of Winnipeg faculty of theology. We established a Day of Reconciliation, and we constructed a monument. One of our elders, Nelson James, raised this issue nationally when the survivors were looking at ways that they could honor the survivors of the schools, so we constructed a monument. It was built there on the grounds of the Canadian Museum for Human Rights.

If you're this close to Winnipeg, I'd encouraged you to go and visit that site. The monument is just on the entrance to the museum itself. Each year we gather there and we remember the survivors. It's the same time in the spring, I think, each year.

We also have been a part of the Sisters in Spirit movement, and Barbara Shoomski been very heavily involved in that. I don't think we did a march this year. We used to have a Mother's Day walk from downtown Winnipeg trough to the Forks. Every year up until, I think, last year. We didn't host it this year, but we raised awareness on missing and murdered indigenous women and children in the country, but specifically in Winnipeg. So, the Sisters in Spirit movement is still in effect, and of course we're still doing what we can for support there.

We also have, I'm not sure if it still exists, but we did have a sewing circle, and it operated out of St. Mathew's Anglican Church. That was created to allow folks a way to be creative and to do some teaching and counseling at the same time, and some visiting with those who had some need. So, all of those things were ongoing since the last, and came basically out of what we engaged in at this level at the national church.

Most recently we took a measure, as members of the Indigenous circle, to resign. So, all of us resigned off of that post because, we did not want to be advisory anymore. We wanted to, instead, decide what kind of structure indigenous people want for the diocese of Rupert's Land. So, we're currently engaged in tours across the diocese, if you will, to meet with indigenous peoples.

Our first consultation happened in Sioux Lookout. At Sioux Lookout we met with the chief of Lac Seul, which is near there, and members of the community, of the Anglican community in Sioux lookout.

We learned a few things from the consultation, which is what we want to do, we want to find out what the issues they're facing, of course Residential Schools, alcohol drug abuse issues, crisis; these kinds of things are being raised. Also, it's interesting, just from the snapshot what the folk there were looking at is that, we have a nice church here, not a lot of people attend that church service on Sunday morning, but it's a beautiful church.

They were saying to us, "Isn't it interesting that when our people come for a Sunday service, the Cree hymn books are at the back." So, when they see there's a Cree person, or an indigenous person coming in, they go and get the books and they put them in the pews. Then, at the end of the service, they take all the books out, put them at the back, and leave the English ones in there. So, the suggestion says, "Why don't you just leave them in the pews? Leave them there all the time, then if you come in and see that book there, you can participate and see that you're welcome there. The other suggestion that came to us was, "Why not a hide hanging or two on the pulpit, or something like that? Something that would be reflective of something of the indigenous culture?" Then someone else suggested, "Why couldn't we have a reading in a different language?" All good suggestions that their own community hadn't been really thinking about until we hosted this consultation.

That's a piece of what we were after, so we'll repeat that in the communities of Kenora and in other places around the diocese.

I'm not gonna go too deeply into some of the other things of the diocese indigenous ministry because, Vincent Solomon is our indigenous urban mission developer now, and he's doing a very very fine job. We have the Epiphany Anglican Church, it was in the former St. Barnabas Anglican Church. I think I heard earlier today about some of the buildings that are empty in some of our places, and here's a case of a building that was empty. St. Barnabas was not being used as a church anymore, so it was a mission centre for the St. Francis Parish Mission. We inquired, and they gracefully, gratefully gave us that building, and that's where Vincent's been able to establish his mission. So, if you're in Winnipeg Sunday night, 7:00, pop in. They'd love to have you there. It's a warm welcome, I can guarantee you that.

Other things that have been going on that you should be aware of at our synod, I think Vincent had mentioned in his talk, that we had have a number of resolutions that came to our diocese. One of them was that we declare the month of June an Indigenous Awareness Month. We all know that the Indigenous Day of Prayer is June 25 or whatever in there, and of course we did do a service.

Our service was at our Heritage Church, which is across from Polo Park in Winnipeg. It was built in 1853, so it's built ahead of Confederation. Inside there we did an evening prayer service, and we had singing, and drumming, and sweet grass, so we incorporated all of that within the worship. It's another thing that I would like to encourage, is to bring those kinds of things into the building, into the church, and to teach about what they are, and help people to understand their use in worship and that kind of thing and move forward in that good way. We did that on the Indigenous Day of Prayer, in the two churches that I serve, they're not indigenous. I serve St. James Anglican, and St. Stephen and St. Bead which is an Anglican and a Lutheran parish.

For our month—this is our second year of doing that—we had an evening where you had "Ask an Elder", so we had a couple of elders come out. We had a good turnout of people, and if you had a question concerning indigenous ministry, ask an elder, and see what you can learn. We had representatives coming in from the Truth and Reconciliation Commission to give an update on the Calls to Action. We had two documentaries, one which was excellent, on a community in Saskatchewan where, I believe it was a Mennonite community, if I remember right in

Saskatchewan that's been working with the first nations who moved off the reserve, then came back to reclaim their land, finding that somebody was already on that land. So they worked with that community, and it's a really good documentary on reconciliation, what it looks like in action. I highly recommend that. We looked at two documentaries in that manner. We held a blanket exercise, not in the church, but in the St. James area. We hosted singer, songwriter, entertainer Ray St. Germane to raise some funds for the indigenous mission. For Vincent and his ministry.

We are gearing up for the Treaty Commissioner to come and visit us next year. We'll have probably an elder in residence next year.

Also, we took time this past month to focus on the 60s Scoop, which is not, we don't hear a lot about the 60s Scoop these days, but the 60s Scoops are the children of the survivors, who in the 60's were adopted out to non-indigenous homes all around North America. They did not get a chance to learn their identity, and that was a big loss for them. Some of them were not treated well in those homes, so their experience also, is a very difficult one. So, we had some teaching on the 60s Scoop, and one of the survivors of that was able to give us his message.

Another resolution that we pursued from Synod was B22, and there's about four indigenous people, and four non-indigenous, somewhere in there. I can't remember the exact number. We're looking at the change to our diocese of structure. As we're doing here at the national level. We want to take a look and see what we can do to revisit the structure of our Diocesan Synod, and how it functions and how it works.

our own bishop said, one time I was talking to him about structure. He was talking about a cultural clash that he's been witnessing even when he goes to general synod, of the way the indigenous and non-indigenous ways of meeting and, meeting in business are done. Now, all we're really doing at this point is gathering information, and doing some research that we can then take and deliver to our Diocesan Synod for possible action on that resolution.

Finally, the City of Winnipeg has taken this whole year, and declared it a Year of Reconciliation. The Mayor of the City of Winnipeg has been bringing all kinds of groups together. There are about 90 agencies in Winnipeg that deal with indigenous people and health issues, and street issues, those kinds of things. So, the City of Winnipeg created an accord. They called it the "Urban Indigenous Accord", and all the signatories were invited to the Forks to sign that. Our two churches, and a few others, were part of the faith groups that signed the Urban Indigenous Accord. Now that puts us in direct link with each other. Those 90 agencies and the City of Winnipeg, and we're all going to get together again as some point very shortly, to begin discussing how the indigenous peoples in the City of Winnipeg can continue to work toward reconciliation.

We've been working in partnership, we're going to be doing a panel in October, next month, at St. Stephen and St. Bead. We're going to invite a number of indigenous people onto the panel that are, hopefully, well enough known. One of them is a young man, I forget how old he is now, but he meets at the Bell Tower. We call it "Meet you at the Bell Tower". It's a project that began in Winnipeg on Selkirk Avenue. He's been meeting there every Friday night. Young and old. Indigenous and non-indigenous. He's working at reconciliation, and so he's become quite well

known in Winnipeg. So, he'll be one of the people, or one of his representatives, to come together for a panel discussion.

The question we want to ask is, "Who speaks for the indigenous community?" This has been an issue, in our area there's been an author by the name of Joseph Boyden, and he's written a number of books. A very good writer, and very good novels. But, his indigenous identity has been questioned by some people, and so because of that, we wanted to find out: Well okay, who does speak for the indigenous community. So, we've got a number of people that'll come together for us and try to answer that question, and see how that goes.

Essentially, when we're done our consultations in Rupert's Land, we're gonna go next, hopefully to Kenora, Winnipeg, Peguis, and possibly Portage La Prairie. All parts that include our diocese. Another reason we're doing that, is the former parts of the diocese of Keewatin are now in Rupert's Land in the southern portion. This makes the consultation even more important for us. We will try to take what we learn from all those consultations, and then begin to see; well, what kind of structure do we really want in Rupert's Land for our indigenous community?

The elder's circle does meet—it never—there's no real structure, it's just elders who come together and talk about things once in a while. So, we do have an elder's circle and they do get together with the bishop even occasionally. After the consultations are done, we will have a better sense, I hope anyway, of where we are going to be headed and the kinds of things that we can do. This resolution on the changing of the synod structure, will be watching what happens at the national level, so we'll see if there's anything that can inform us at that level, to make some changes. But, essentially that's where we sit in the diocese of Rupert's Land. It's been a pleasure to bring you a little bit of the story of what we've been up to the last little while in the diocese.