

ST. PHILIP'S MILFORD PRAYER CIRCLE



Prayers for National Indigenous Day of Prayer

Thursday, June 20, 2024

READER: *As we begin this Prayer Circle, we acknowledge that we gather on the unceded territory of the Mississauga people, the traditional territory of the Anishinaabeg, Haudonosaunee, Algonquin and Huron Wendat People. May we honour the Indigenous stewards of this land, and work to grow in right relationship with all Indigenous peoples. We recognize that our Creator God moves us forward together in healing, respect, and unity for future generations.*

READER: We begin with The Gift of Friendship: The Iroquois people have a public thanksgiving ceremony every spring where everyone is invited. The people gathered in order to give thanks for the land which produced the strawberry. They showed their thanksgiving by offering everyone present some of the gift of the strawberry. In the Iroquois tradition, the strawberry is also a symbol of friendship, forgiveness and new life. They are also about newness of life, for they come in the springtime when there is newness all around. We are reminded to focus on new ideas, try new things and believe in new life. They are invited to see that mother earth is ready to give birth and bring new life by producing crops, fruits, plants and vegetables. As we receive the strawberry, we are invited to reflect on the areas of our lives where we are in need of forgiveness and where we need to offer forgiveness. Lastly, we receive the strawberry in order to receive the newness of life the Creator has for us in Jesus.

May peace and friendship enter our hearts, through our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ. The peace of the Lord be with you.

All: And also with you.

(Let us share in the gift of God's friendship with strawberries!)

READER: Our prayers today are provided by the Anglican Church of Canada for the National Indigenous Day of Prayer, which is tomorrow, Friday, June 21. The prayers we've selected are

“For the Healing of the Land: A Celebration for National Aboriginal Day” prepared by the Rupert’s Land Indigenous Council. The are based on “Agape”, from the New Testament, being the fatherly love of God for humans, as well as the human reciprocal love for God.

READER: There are gifts from each of the peoples in the four directions of the world. The winds of the different directions remind us of these gifts.

Let us turn now to the East (face the windows). The east represents the yellow-skinned peoples of the world. This direction symbolizes new life on the earth and reminds us of our connectedness to creation. The sun rises in the east; each day is a gift; life itself is a gift. Help us to be mindful of the new life offered in your Son, we pray.

All: Come, Holy Spirit, come.

READER: We turn to face South (face the back wall). South represents warmth and growth. This direction represents women, the doorway to life. The colour of the south is black, representing the black-skinned peoples of the world. May we be encouraged to walk through the doorway to life and light. Give us your strength and courage to endure, we pray.

All: Come, Holy Spirit, come.

READER: We turn to face West (face the kitchen). West, symbolized by the colour red, represents the gift of rest, the passing of time and of those who have gone before. Aboriginal peoples of the earth are symbolized in this direction. Give us the wisdom and grace to use your gifts of time and leisure well, we pray.

All: Come, Holy Spirit, come.

READER: We turn to face North (face towards the Church). North is symbolized by the colour white, and represents coolness and the white-skinned of the world. A gift of this direction is clarity of vision and a sense of the strength we need to live each day. Help us to see more clearly your role for us, especially in the Stewardship and healing of Mother Earth, we pray.

All: Come, Holy Spirit, come.

READER: We turn to complete the circle and to look:

To God who cleanses our Earth
With snow, wind and rain.
To Jesus Christ who fills us with the wideness of mercy and
Lovingly embraces us all,
And to the Holy Spirit who inspires us.

All: Come, Holy Spirit, come.

READER: Creator God, you call your Church to witness that in Christ we find healing for our selves and for creation. Help us so to witness to your love that we may be found working toward healing and reconciliation. Through Jesus Christ our Lord, who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, One God now and forever

ALL: AMEN

READER: Our Psalm for today is the Psalm of the Woodland

As a tree in the forest becomes tall reaching for the light,

All: May we grow above the shadows of sin, fear and doubt

As it gives shelter and shade to its friends of fur and feather,

All: So may we help those brothers and sisters that are smaller and weaker than ourselves.

The tree sends down roots deep into the soil that it may be nourished by Mother Earth.

All: May we be as firmly grounded by the love of Christ and sustained by his grace.

If a tree falls and decays, it provides nourishment for new plants and gives its place in the sun for others.

All: Our Lord and Savior died to make new life and a new place for us.

When a tree in the forest is cut down, its wood is used for shelter and fuel.

All: Jesus taught that only when life is surrendered, when love is poured out, can we build His Kingdom and reflect the warmth of His spirit.

READER: Our New Testament Reading is from Romans 8: 18-25:

I consider that our present sufferings are not worth comparing with the glory that will be revealed in us. For the creation waits in eager expectation for the children of God to be revealed. For the creation was subjected to frustration, not by its own choice, but by the will of the one who subjected it, in hope that the creation itself will be liberated from its bondage to decay and brought into the freedom and glory of the children of God.

We know that the whole creation has been groaning as in the pains of childbirth right up to the present time. Not only so, but we ourselves, who have the first fruits of the Spirit, groan inwardly as we wait eagerly for our adoption to sonship, the redemption of our bodies. For in this hope we were saved. But hope that is seen is no hope at all. Who hopes for what they already have? But if we hope for what we do not yet have, we wait for it patiently.

This is the word of God.

ALL: Thanks be to God.

READER: Creator and Redeemer, as we approach you in prayer

Make us straight in our paths (pause)
Make us straight in our minds (pause)
Make us straight in our hearts (pause)
Make us straight in our speech (pause)

We pray for your community, the Church, the Body of Christ: (please uphold your specific petitions)

All: Creator, your love is something we must have. We must have it because our spirit feeds upon it. We must have it because without it we become weak and faint. Without love we weaken and our courage fails.

Creator, you declared that love in your Son, Jesus Christ. Help your Church to declare that love in your world. through greater stewardship and respect.

All: Lord in your mercy. Hear our prayer.

For that world we now pray: (specific petitions are named)

READER: Great Spirit, we feel you in the buffalo, the moose, in summer, with the mist on the lakes and the blue water, in the cry of the loon. It is beautiful. You tell us heaven is still more beautiful. Injustice and suffering will be gone. Prejudice, greed, lack of concern for Mother Earth and each other will be gone. We rejoice, and look forward with hope, as you help us to bring about your reign in our community. Those who have worn out their shoes know where to step. Help us to follow the footsteps of Jesus.

All: Lord in your mercy. Hear our prayer.

We remember those who suffer, those in special need: (Specific Petitions are named)

READER: Creator, after the winter and cold and icy winds life again glows from the bosom of Mother Earth. Mother Earth throws off dead stalks and withered limbs and new strong saplings arise. We ask such new life for those who suffer, and that they be sustained by Your Spirit.

All: Lord in your mercy. Hear our prayer.

READER: Creator, the faces of the past are like leaves that settle to the ground. They make the earth rich and thick, so that new fruit will come forth every summer. We give thanks for the wisdom the elders have brought down to us, especially for their teachings about respect for others and care for Mother Earth. We ask that their wisdom may bear fruit in us and the generations to come.

All: Lord in your mercy. Hear our prayer.

READER: Finally, let us give thanks: (Specific Petitions are named)

Creator, you saw the world and declared it good. The beauty of the trees, the softness of the air, the fragrance of the grass speaks to us. The summit of the mountain, the thunder of the sky, the rhythm of the sea speaks to us. The faintness of the stars, the freshness of the morning, the dewdrops on the flower speaks to us. But above all our heart soars for you to speak to us in your Son, Jesus Christ, in whose name we offer these prayers.

All: Amen.

READER: We were created from God's loving heart, and that same love embraces us with forgiveness. God's healing and reconciling love helps us to see our brokenness for what it is, in the same moment that grace and forgiveness are offered to us. Let us welcome the gift of God's love, and confess before God and each other the sins that keep us from true friendship with God and with one another.

READER: Creator and loving God, you have searched us out and known us and all that we are is open to you. We confess that we have sinned:

READER: We have put up walls between ourselves and you, closing our hearts to your gifts.

READER: We have failed to respect and honor the gifts you have given us in creation, Mother Earth and all living things.

READER: We squander the inheritance of generations to come.

READER: We have sinned against each other: we have put up walls between ourselves and our neighbours, giving in to the fear, ignorance and arrogance that make up racism.

READER: We have failed to respect the gifts of all your peoples.

READER: We have failed to respect the gifts of the four directions.

READER: We have used our power to dominate and our weakness to manipulate; we have evaded responsibility and failed to confront evil;

READER: We have trusted false gods and listened to their promises; we have denied dignity to ourselves and to each other;

READER: We have fallen into deep despair. In our despair we have forgotten you, and have gone away from your path.

READER: Forgive us for what we have done when we have hurt others. And forgive those who have hurt us, the ways we have hurt Mother Earth.

READER: Give us your blessing and help. Let us walk in your great love.

ALL: We ask this through the great peace maker, your Son, Jesus. Amen.

READER: We give thanks this day for the wonders and love you have made known to us in creation.

We give thanks for our role as stewards of creation. Make us ever mindful of your presence in each of us.

And now, may the Creator watch over us, may the Spirit guide and lead us.

May Jesus be present in all that we do.

May we be surrounded in God's love, this day and always.

ALL: Amen.

Unite us in the Lord Jesus, who is the way, the truth, and the life, and who has taught us to pray, saying:

**Our Father, who art in heaven,
hallowed be thy name;
thy kingdom come;
thy will be done on earth as it is in heaven.
Give us this day our daily bread; and forgive us our trespasses
as we forgive those who trespass against us;
and lead us not into temptation,
but deliver us from evil.
For thine is the kingdom, the power and the glory, for ever and ever.**

AMEN