

**Yellowknife United Church**  
An Affirming Ministry and Congregation of  
The United Church of Canada  
**Twenty-third Sunday after Pentecost – October 23, 2016**  
**From Apology Towards Reconciliation**

\* - rise in body or in spirit



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The bulletin this week is sponsored by Rovelyn Guray-Sobrepena in celebration of the birthday of her son Rovenjay, which was yesterday!

## **Gathering**

### **Acknowledging the Territory in Which We Gather**

### **The Candles are Lit**

**Introit** 97 MV Listen, God is Calling  
Listen, God is calling, through the word inviting  
Offering forgiveness, comfort and joy. Listen...

### **Call to Worship**

*(by Rev. Susan Beaver, Grand River United Church)*

### **Opening Prayer**

*(by Rev. Susan Beaver, Grand River United Church*

*This prayer follows the rhythm of smudging.)*

Gracious God, We give you thanks for the life you have given us and all the experiences that shape us. We give you praise you for the love in our lives and the breath in our bodies. We give you thanks for the Son you sent and for the path he made to follow. We give you praise for your wondrous creation and how it sustains us. God of the kin-dom, send your Holy Spirit upon us. We welcome your Spirit into our minds as our thinking; we welcome your Spirit into our senses as perceiving; we welcome your Spirit into our throats as our speaking; we welcome your Spirit into our hearts as our loving; we welcome your Spirit into our bodies as our moving, all so that we may love and serve your world, your church and your people. God of hope, you entrusted us with knowledge of justice; help us as we seek it. You entrusted us with knowledge of injustice against Indigenous peoples in and through the church; help us as we repent of the past and go forward in solidarity and with love. You

entrusted us with knowledge of wounds around us and in our church that need healing; help us as we minister in your name and affirm your goodness and grace in the world. This we pray in and through the name of Jesus the Christ. Amen.

**\*Hymn:** 135 MV Called By Earth and Sky

**Excerpted from a Litany that tells the story of the Apology**

**One:** Elders Edith Memnook, Murray Whetung, Stanley McKay Sr., Dora Benson, Rev. Dr. Johnson Garrioch, and others waited in a tipi near the fire. They were called to be the first to receive the response from the Moderator on behalf of The United Church of Canada.

**All: It is hard to wait and live with uncertainty.**

**Give us strength, hope, and patience now as you did then.**

**One:** Most of the General Council followed the Moderator down the hill and joined the people at the sacred fire. Hundreds of people were now gathered. After the Moderator met with the elders, he came to the sacred fire and the people and spoke the words of the apology:

**All: Long before my people journeyed to this land your peoples were here, and you received from your Elders an understanding of creation and of the Mystery that surrounds us all that was deep, and rich, and to be treasured. We did not hear you when you shared your vision. In our zeal to tell you of the good news of Jesus Christ we were closed to the value of your spirituality. We confused Western ways and culture with the depth and breadth and length and height of the gospel of Christ.**

**We imposed our civilization as a condition of accepting the gospel.**

**We tried to make you be like us and in so doing we helped to destroy the vision that made you what you were. As a result, you, and we, are poorer and the image of the Creator in us is twisted, blurred, and we are not what we are meant by God to be.**

**We ask you to forgive us and to walk together with us in the Spirit of Christ so that our peoples may be blessed and God's creation healed.**

**One:** After hearing the apology, the people danced. One man said he danced as he never had danced before. He hadn't dared to hope that the church would apologize. But the apology and the dance turned the whole church in a new direction on the path of history. As the people danced,

the clouds disappeared, the sky cleared, and the moon shone. It seemed that all of creation and our Creator celebrated this new thing.

**All: All glory is yours, God most Holy.**

**One:** The next morning, the Elders advised the Indigenous people to simply acknowledge the apology. They told the people to take the apology back home for the people to hear and discern what it means to live into the apology, and that we are entering a time that would not be easy.

**All: God of wisdom and grace, continue to walk with us.**

**One:** In 1988, at the 32nd General Council in Victoria, Elder Edith Memnook, a lay commissioner for the recently formed All Native Circle Conference, offered this response to the apology:

*The Apology made to the Native People of Canada by The United Church of Canada in Sudbury in August 1986 has been a very important step forward. It is heartening to see that The United Church of Canada is a forerunner in making this Apology to Native People. The All Native Circle Conference has now acknowledged your Apology. Our people have continued to affirm the teachings of the Native way of life. Our spiritual teachings and values have taught us to uphold the Sacred Fire; to be guardians of Mother Earth, and strive to maintain harmony and peaceful coexistence with all peoples. We only ask of you to respect our Sacred Fire, the Creation, and to live in peaceful coexistence with us. We recognize the hurts and feelings will continue amongst our people, but through partnership and walking hand in hand, the Indian spirit will eventually heal. Through our love, understanding, and sincerity the brotherhood and sisterhood of unity, strength, and respect can be achieved. The Native People of The All Native Circle Conference hope and pray that the Apology is not symbolic but that these are the words of action and sincerity. We appreciate the freedom for culture and religious expression. In the new spirit this Apology has created, let us unite our hearts and minds in the wholeness of life that the Great Spirit has given us.*

**All: Open our hearts and our minds to receive this message given in love and hope.**

**One:** Thirty years later we are still waiting to see what the apology means. What effect has it had? Have relationships changed? How have we acted? What healing remains to be done? The church has taken many steps, but many of us still wonder what the apology really means.

**All: We are not there yet—not all is forgiven or made whole between us. Great Spirit, unite us as we continue to walk towards justice, reconciliation, being family, and living with respect in creation.**

### **Words of Assurance**

God, who hears our every prayer, moves with us in every dance step, and knows our every thought, says to us: *See, I am doing a new thing! Now it springs forth!* (Isaiah 43:19)

Know that you are forgiven. Walk from here healed and free.

## **Listening**

### **The Life and Work of the Community**

#### **Anthem**                      God Weeps

1. *God weeps at love withheld,  
at strength misused,  
at children's innocence abused,  
And till we change the way we love,  
God weeps.*

2. *God bleeds at anger's fist,  
at trust betrayed,  
at women battered and afraid,  
and till we change the way we win,  
God bleeds.*

3. *God cries at hungry mouths,  
at running sores,  
at creatures dying without cause,  
and till we change the way we care,  
God cries.*

4. *God waits, for stones to melt,  
for peace to seed,  
for hearts to hold each other's need,  
and till we understand the Christ,  
God waits.*

### **Learning with Children**

#### **Song** 95 MV How Deep the Peace

**Hebrew Bible:** Joel 2:23–32

**Responsive Psalm:** Psalm 65 p 782 VU

**Christian Bible:** 2 Timothy 4: 6-8, 15-16

**Gospel Reading:** Luke 18: 9-14

**Sermon**                      Running the Marathon Race of Reconciliation  
The Rev. Cecile Fausak

**Responding**

**\*Hymn** This Path We Walk (*see insert*)

**Minute for Mission**

**Special Offering for the Alvin Dixon Fund and/or The Healing Fund**

**Presentation of Our Tithes and Offering** *Doxology* 538 VU

**Prayer: Great Spirit, Show Us the Path**

(by Rev. Maggie McLeod, Executive Minister, Aboriginal Ministries and Indigenous Justice, United Church. This prayer was inspired by the late Mrs. Edith Memnook's 1998 words in acknowledgement of the 1986 Apology)

**\*Hymn** 678 VU For the Healing of the Nations

**\*Sending Forth**

And now may the heart of God be wide open in our living;  
the kindness of God show forth in all our relationships;  
the beauty of God be seen in our countenance;  
and the love of God for all creation  
    be known in our passion for justice and peace,  
this day, this night, and forevermore. Amen.

*Written by Bob Root, Peterborough, Ont. Gathering, Pentecost 2, 2016. page 33. Used with permission.*

**\*Choral Response** 424 VU May the God of Hope Go With Us