Prayers for Indigenous People and Communities

Introduction

*Healing and reconciliation between Indigenous and non-Indigenous peoples demands attention to ongoing issues of injustice, violence, and racism in our cities, towns, and communities. News reports of specific acts of violence or incidents of racism directed against Indigenous people break our hearts; at times, we wonder what we can do.*

*Taking time to reflect on the need for healing in our communities in prayer can be a positive means of taking action and supporting our Indigenous brothers, sisters, and cousins, as well as the many non-Indigenous people in our communities who work for justice and right relationships.*

*These prayers have been developed with an urban context in mind. Communities of faith are free to adapt them for use in local contexts and are encouraged to include local examples where appropriate.*

Prayers for Youth

Great and Holy Mystery, known and unknown,
We thank you for the blessing of this day. We thank you for the blessings of this place: for its great beauty, for the power and the majesty of the land and the waters. And we thank you especially for the people who live here, for our friends, our families, and our neighbours.

Today we wish to lift up our prayers to you for the children and the youth of our city and of our neighbours in First Nation communities.

We dare this day to dream for their futures. We dare to dream that their futures will be wonderful. That they will all be able to lead full lives, that they will have a wide variety of good experiences over the course of their lives and grow up to do things that will amaze us and amaze them.

We pray for our children and youth, knowing, Great One, that at this time many of our youth are hurting. They do not live surrounded by love and compassion. Their needs are great. Many feel alone, uncertain, and even afraid.

We remember how your son, Jesus, came into this world as a baby in a lowly stable. Our Lord was vulnerable and dependent on the love and protection of others. He and his family fled to Egypt in his youth in need of protection in a foreign land, far from home.

And so we think especially today about the many Indigenous children and youth of our community. Many have been our neighbours since the day they were born. Others have come to our community seeking an education that is not yet available at home, in the First Nation communities where they were born and where their families live. They have had to leave parents, grandparents, younger siblings, and other relatives behind. They have come in hope.

These youth have been entrusted to the care of this community. We lament that some have not always felt welcomed or even safe. We grieve that across this country some young Indigenous people have come to cities like ours and have lost their lives, far from home. We grieve with their loved ones and friends.

Holy One, pour out your spirit of wisdom upon us. We are looking for answers. We need your guidance, your courage, and your healing power to help all of us in this community do everything possible to love, to encourage, to nurture, and at all times to look out for the safety and security of the children and young people who live among us.
We pray for our own children, grandchildren, nephews, nieces, and young siblings that all children and youth in our community may grow up in safety and in friendship together, growing in mutual understanding and mutual support as reconciled peoples.

Lead us, heavenly Spirit, to protect the children and youth and keep them safe from harm, in the loving embrace of a community that seeks to love all, as you so deeply love each and every one of us. In Jesus’ loving name we pray. Amen.

**Prayers for Indigenous Neighbours**

Creator, Spirit, Comforter, Advocate,
We greet you this day with thanks for the blessings of our lives and for the blessing of the people of our community.

We pray especially this morning for the original peoples of this land. We think with gratitude about the welcome Indigenous peoples gave to the first visitors who arrived here from afar, from other parts of the world, and settled in this place. We imagine that there must have been misunderstandings and hardship in these early relationships, but we also know from the stories we have been told that working relationships, bonds of friendship and even bonds of kinship and love, grew out of these early encounters.

Our ancestors in this place agreed to share these sacred lands in a covenantal relationship and to live side by side in peace as neighbours, respecting each other as communities of peoples with different customs and traditions, and unique understandings of their relationship with you, but created, as we have been taught, each and every one, in your own image. We see you in each other and learn about you as we encounter each other.

You, Creator God, know the needs of the Indigenous peoples of this place far better than we do. We are aware of the ongoing injustices and adversity, including racism, which our Indigenous brothers, sisters, and cousins experience. The violence faced by some in our own community angers us, saddens us, frustrates us, and leaves us searching for answers.

Lord God, you know that we have a deep love for this place. As your faithful disciples, we long to know what we can do to best show that we love our neighbours as ourselves.

Help us to use our gifts, our knowledge, our skills, our positions in society, and our strength in Christ, as a community of faith, to support our neighbours. Give us humility and the wisdom to know when and how to follow their lead in seeking solutions, and in making positive changes. Open our hearts, our minds, and our spirits to new possibilities when the steps our Indigenous leaders and neighbours wish to take may be uncomfortable or unfamiliar.

Holy Spirit, fill us with the power and the courage to trust in you and to trust in others. Help us to trust in the deep wisdom and traditional knowledges that you have gifted to our Indigenous neighbours. Help us to accept the gift of learning from our neighbours that we may broaden and deepen our understanding of how to live together, to share resources, to put our complementary skills to work together, and most of all to build on our common desire to live in wholeness together as all of your peoples. We thank you for the blessing you have given us to know you better by getting to know our neighbours better in all of their diverse God-given beauty.

We pray for our Indigenous neighbours. We ask that you will help us to let our Indigenous neighbours know that we honour them, we want to live together with them in harmony, and we share their hope for a blessed future together, for growth in mutual understanding and respect, for healing, for justice, and for reconciliation. We pray for all of our relations. Amen.
Prayers for Community

Great God of Compassion, God of Healing, God of Love,
We come before you this morning with our hearts full of love and concern for our city, our community, the neighbourhoods we live in, the streets, the highways, the waters on which we work and recreate, the lands and the woods where we like to explore, find solace, and renew our spirits.

We love our city. We love our community. We look to you, Great Spirit, to help us heal our relationships. We call on you, Holy Mystery, to inspire us, guide us, wake us up if needed, so that we may see the way forward clearly as we seek to bring about right relations between Indigenous and non-Indigenous peoples.

The voices we hear in this place are not all those of love and understanding. Help us to turn away, and to turn others away, from unhealthy and destructive pathways and dialogue. Forgive our failures; forgive us for the times we have been impatient with others, when we have not listened with openness to other points of view, and for our weakness, our tiredness, our feelings of discouragement, and our lack of courage.

In Christ, we know that we are forgiven. That our Lord took our sinfulness, failures, and brokenness upon himself to the cross. And in Jesus, we are a new creation, called to love each other as you love us, and called to act as God’s ambassadors of love and of reconciliation.

We ask you, Beloved, to pour out your Spirit upon us, upon our neighbours, upon our leaders, and upon those who have come to this place with hearts and minds eager to help. We lift up our prayers to you and look to receive your blessing.

We crave winds of change, the warmth of a new day for our community, the celebration of birdsong, the pleasant scent of flowers, the joy and amusement of observing animals at play, and the awe-inspiring wonder of the vast forests and the great waters.

Refresh our own spirits as with rain, awake our imagination as with thunder, pour out your healing medicines on our community, cleanse us as with the smoke of the medicines that are sacred to many Indigenous peoples in Canada: cedar, sage, sweetgrass, and tobacco.

Inspire us and sustain us so that we steadfastly will strive for everything that is true, everything that is honourable, everything that is pure, everything that is pleasing, everything that is commendable, for all things excellent and worthy of praise in your sight. Help us to think on your Word and keep on doing all that we have learned and received from Jesus Christ our Lord and Saviour.

We pray that peace be with our neighbours today, every day and always, and with ourselves and with all those we love. Amen.
Prayers for Those Who Protect and Serve the Public

Great Creator God, God of perfect love and source of every perfect gift, 
You call us to live together in community, for the common good and the common wealth, in communion 
in this time and place and with all the saints who have gone before us. For our life together you have 
created us as a body, the body of Christ, so created that all the members of our community, like all the 
parts of one body, must function together for the good of the whole. 

You call us to live together in unity, that there may be no disension within the body, but that the 
members always may care for one and other and work together. You have so arranged our lives so that 
we know that if one of us suffers, all suffer together, just as if one is honoured, all rejoice together. 
Christ has taught us that you appointed some apostles, some prophets, some teachers, some healers, 
some pastors to equip the saints for the work of ministry, for building up the body of Christ and of 
community. This morning we pray for those of our community who have been called to leadership. 

We pray for all those who seek to build up strong and mutually supportive bonds of community. Many 
have been called to serve us. We pray for our police, for those who serve in the medical profession, for 
teachers, social workers, and volunteers who give their time in agencies and in the streets to work for 
the safety and well-being of others, especially looking out for the most vulnerable among us, the 
children, the young, those who are persecuted or misunderstood because they are different, 
immigrants, and First Peoples of this land. We pray for those who have to deal with the consequences 
of violence, for forensic scientists and coroners, for funeral directors and their staffs, for psychologists and 
other support workers, for spiritual leaders including the ministers and staff of this place. 

We pray for Elders who lead sentencing circles, for lawyers and paralegals, for caseworkers, for those 
who serve in correctional institutions, for mediators and arbitrators, and all those who help others who 
work for and strive for justice, healing, and reconciliation. In silence we pray for the needs of these 
servants of our community as they are known to us. [Silence] 

We express our gratitude and praise to you for sending so many gifted people to work among us. Help 
us to respect their efforts, to encourage them, to criticize constructively when needed but in ways that 
build them up, not tear them down, and to advocate for the support they need to carry out their work 
effectively. Remind us to give praise when praise is due, to honour those who give of themselves and to 
celebrate their accomplishments with thanksgiving. 

We pray that you will guide the work of all those who have been called to help us find answers to the 
challenges we face so that our community may become the kind of wonderful home we so long for, a 
place others can admire and learn from. Thank you for blessing us with wonderful neighbours and for 
calling us to live together in this beautiful place in beautiful ways that bring glory and honour to you who 
have taught us how to love and to love unconditionally, more deeply and more fully than we can ever 
grasp. We give you all praise and thanksgiving and thank you for all our relations in this world and in 
heaven. Amen.
Prayers for Healing

God of Faith, and Faithful God,
Heal us, Heavenly One, heal us. Heal our children, heal our youth, heal our brothers, sisters, and cousins of blood and of community, heal our friends and heal our loved ones. Heal First Nations, heal cities, heal the provinces, heal our nation and the nations of the world.

We pray today for health and well-being. For strength and for perseverance to live the lives to which we have been called. We suffer with those who suffer. We grieve with those who grieve. We feel the anger of those who are angry at injustice. We find it difficult to hope knowing others despair and doubt that their futures and their loved one’s futures will be better.

Pour out your Spirit of healing upon the people of this place. We need you. Send us hope. Help us to pray unceasingly in the power and knowledge that we can do all things through Christ who strengthens us. You have told us not to worry about anything, but in everything, by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving, to make our requests know to you.

Help us to be gentle with one and other in times of trouble. Help us always and unceasingly to put our trust in you. Help us to be not afraid. Help us to walk out from behind our closed doors to serve others as disciples of Christ in the presence and power of your Holy Spirit. Give us confidence and hearts so full of love for justice that we will not cease to work for the good of others, and for healing and for reconciliation between all peoples.

We pray for the courage to be our best selves and to give of our best selves. Help us to heal each other, to be allies to those who most need allies, to work together as Indigenous peoples, as the individuals whose ancestors immigrated to this place many, many years ago, as settlers, as newcomers, and as people who have only just arrived in the great land.

We pray for the safety and security of all who live here. We pray for a future where all will live comforted in the knowledge that they are loved in this place, that their neighbours will look out for them, that all live together in peace, and in joy, and in mutual love and respect.

We pray that all of us as neighbours together will respect and care for the lands, the waters, and the air that sustain us. Indigenous peoples have much to teach us, and to remind us of your teachings, about our sacred relationship to the environment. They have kept alive their traditional teachings about the sacredness of all creation. We remember how you, God, created everything that is in and of this world, and created everything to be good.

We pray that all of us as neighbours together will respect and care for the living creatures among us, who give so much to us: the animals, the birds, the fish, the insects, all that fly, that walk, that crawl, that swim, all those you have created to live and work together as a system, an ecological system. We pray that all of us as neighbours together will respect and care for the world you have gifted to us: the land, the rock, the soil, the resources under the ground, the rivers, the lakes, and the oceans, the waters of which we are made. We know that not only our community of people but the very environment in which we live is in need of healing and in need of our loving care.

Lord, in silence, we pray for those know to us today by name who are especially in need of your healing touch at this time. [Silence]

We pray for the health and well-being of the people and of this place, Holy One. Guide us, Heavenly Spirit, guide us on a new and different path, a path of love, of understanding, of compassion, and of commitment to serving others, loving all those, every one, known to us, and known only to you, all who you love so much. Amen.
Prayers for Reconciliation

God of Grace and God of Transforming Power,
You have taught us that if anyone is in Christ there is a new creation. That everything old has passed away, and everything has become new. You have reconciled us to yourself in Christ and have given us the ministry of reconciliation, not counting our trespasses against us but entrusting the message of reconciliation to us. So we have been made ambassadors for Christ, entreated to be reconciled to you, O Lord, so that in Christ we might become the righteousness of God.

O God, we know that the pursuit of righteousness is the pursuit of justice. We pray for justice in our relationships with others. We pray for reconciliation with all who share this land. We pray at this time for healing, for justice, and for reconciliation between Indigenous and non-Indigenous peoples in Canada.

We have heard much wisdom from our neighbours within the Indigenous community. We have heard with sorrow and with shame the stories of residential school survivors and intergenerational survivors, as the children and grandchildren of survivors are called. We remember what we have been taught: that when we are offering our gifts of worship and praise before the altar, and remember that our siblings have anything against us, that we will leave our gifts before the altar and go, and make it our mission and ministry to first be reconciled to our siblings, whom we are called to love as we love ourselves, and as you love us.

We have received reports and recommendations from learned, gifted individuals who have studied the problems in our relationships and the issues of concern to our Indigenous neighbours. We have received wisdom from the Royal Commission on Aboriginal Peoples and from the Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Canada. We have been given a framework for reconciliation in the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples. The National Inquiry into Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women and Girls has issued an interim report and continues its sacred work.

Source of All Wisdom, Most Holy One, we confess that we are challenged by the amount of change and work these reports and others like them call for. We fear that we do not have the energy, the abilities, the capacity, and the resources to implement their recommendations, especially on a timely basis. We are daunted by the task before us.

Lord of all Power, we pray for reconciliation between Indigenous peoples and all those who live with them together in this place that Indigenous peoples call Turtle Island, in this place we now also call Canada. We know that it is you who call us and are leading us to reconciliation. Help us to remember that we may rely on you to sustain us, that you give us no burden that is too great for us, that we may, at all times, place our burdens upon you and find our load lightened and our Spirits lifted.

We lift all of these prayers, spoken and unspoken, all of the longing of our hearts for healing and for reconciliation up to you, O God, our strength, our rock, and our redeemer and friend.

Remembering all our relations in love. Amen.