



Grace Presbyterian Church
Transforming lives through God's grace

Grace Presbyterian Church

The Rev. Mark Tremblay
Interim Moderator
The Rev. Maren McLean Persaud
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Ad Hoc Committee on Truth, Healing, and Reconciliation Report for the AGM April 24, 2022

Early on the morning of July 1st, 2021, two sets of the front doors at Grace were splattered with red paint as an act of protest and expression of grief regarding the discovery of many unmarked graves at the sites of former residential schools in several locations across Canada.

The red paint has, over the last nine months, elicited many responses and reactions, generated many conversations within Grace and in the community, and it has led us at Grace, on our own path to truth, healing, and reconciliation. On July 8th Grace's Session formed the Ad Hoc Committee on Truth, Healing, and Reconciliation. The mandate for this Committee is *"to implement a short-term plan and develop suggestions for longer term plans to engage Grace's congregation and broader community in relationship-building, education, and social justice towards Truth, Healing, and Reconciliation with our Indigenous neighbours"*.

Several events and initiatives on our path to truth, healing, and reconciliation have occurred over the last several months:

- **Creation of sandwich boards with a QR code** that can be easily scanned with a mobile device by anyone passing by the church. Grace has received and continues to receive thousands of views through this and through a variety of social media stories. Media coverage has been significant.
- **Seven Generations: Stories and Our Lament...** September 26th. A Service of Lament was held on Grace's front steps. Attended by about 100 people, this poignant and memorable service included, along with music and prayer, stories and sharing by Mayor Naheed Nenshi, Tony Snow (Indigenous Lead Hillhurst United church and Indigenous Minister, Chinook Winds Regions of the United Church of Canada), Gloria Snow (Stoney Nakoda Student Minister), and Shirley Shingoose Dufour (a survivor of one of the residential schools operated by The Presbyterian Church in Canada).
- **Kairos Blanket Exercise** ... November 28th. Held at Grace, approximately 35 people, mostly from the community, participated in this interactive and experiential teaching tool that explores the historical and contemporary relationship between Indigenous and non-Indigenous people throughout Canada.
- **Book Study: *These Mountains are our Sacred Spaces: The Story of the Stoney People*** – 4 Wednesday evening sessions: January 12 – February 12, 2022. Over 100 individuals from Grace and from the wider community in Calgary and across Canada participated in this interactive, insightful, and highly informative series, co-led by the Rev. John Snow and Tony Snow.
- **Doctrine of Discovery Lecture** – facilitated by Rev. Mark Tremblay – February 23rd. Rev. John Snow brought a prayer, land acknowledgement, and a smudge. Approximately 24 individuals from Grace and from the community participated via Zoom in this powerful and poignant session.
- **Repatriation of the Manitou Stone to its original location...** The Session of Grace Presbyterian Church at the February 27th Emergent meeting approved a motion to send an unrefereed overture to the Presbytery of Calgary-Macleod to consider to send to the General Assembly of the Presbyterian Church in Canada to support the work being done to repatriate the Manitou Stone to its original location. The Presbytery of Calgary-Macleod did approve to send the unrefereed overture to the General Assembly.
- **Mural Project Team...** as per the Motion approved at the November 21st, 2021 Session, the Mural Project Team (includes four members from the Ad Hoc Committee and one representative from the Facilities Committee) is engaged in a process to work with an Indigenous artist to incorporate the red paint into a mural on Grace's doors. It is hoped that the mural will transform the painfulness of the red paint into a beautiful piece of art that represents healing and reconciliation for all God's people. A call for an expression of interest in developing a proof of concept for this Mural Project was issued to several Indigenous artists. The Mural Project Team has

interviewed and chosen to work with Nathan Meguinis (also known as Buffalo Boy, Travelling Rock, and Kind-Hearted Man), from the Tsuut'ina Nation. Nathan's vision for a mural about truth and reconciliation resonated with the members of the Mural Project team.

More information about Nathan and his artwork can be seen at <https://yycbump.ca/2021-wall-artists/nathan-meguinis/>. He has been an active participant in BUMP (Beltline Urban Murals Project).

Engagement about the Mural Project... Session, the Ad Hoc Committee on Truth, Healing, and Reconciliation, and the Mural Project Team have received several letters expressing concerns about the Mural Project from several perspectives. There has also been very positive feedback from many.

The Ad Hoc Committee is developing a plan and outline for communication and conversation with the congregation and the wider community about plans for a permanent memorial and next steps for the mural. Details will be provided at the AGM on April 24th.

The work of the Ad Hoc Committee on Truth, Healing, and Reconciliation has become more significant and meaningful as the last few months have elapsed. Unmarked graves continue to be discovered. The gatherings in the Vatican at the end of March and Pope Francis' apology to Canada's Indigenous Peoples have placed increasing focus on the importance of our own journey at Grace as we navigate the path to truth, healing, and reconciliation.

2 Corinthians 5: 16-18 (Common English Bible)

¹⁶ So then, from this point on we won't recognize people by human standards. Even though we used to know Christ by human standards, that isn't how we know him now.

¹⁷ So then, if anyone is in Christ, that person is part of the new creation. The old things have gone away, and look, new things have arrived!

¹⁸ All of these new things are from God, who reconciled us to himself through Christ and who gave us the ministry of reconciliation.