

National Day of Remembrance for Indian Boarding Schools

September 30 is the National Day of Remembrance for Indian Boarding Schools. As a Church, we are committed to understanding our role in the tragic and sinful history of Indian boarding schools so that we can journey toward healing together. You are encouraged to wear an orange shirt and/or raise an orange flag and post a photo on social media.

Discuss:

- Thoughts? Reactions?
- How do we: Learn more. Do more. ?

Actions?

- You are encouraged to wear an orange shirt and/or raise an orange flag and post a photo on social media on September 30. Use hashtags #ELCA #TruthAndHealing #DayOfRemembrance
- **Prayer Service for Children of Indian Boarding Schools**
  - Use this guide to lead a prayer service to remember and honor the sacred lives of children who were taken to Indian boarding schools.
- We are all invited to join any of the many Zoom gatherings that are part of the **ELCA Truth and Healing Movement** - an initiative "intended to organize Lutherans for truth-seeking and truth-telling about Lutheran involvement in Indian boarding schools in the United States and their impact on Native peoples."
  - Go to elca.org/TruthandHealing and scroll down to see any upcoming events
- **Learn More:**
  - https://www.elca.org/Our-Work/Congregations-and-Synods/Ministries-of-Diverse-Cultures-and-Communities/Indigenous-Ministries-and-Tribal-Relations
  - elca.org/IndianBoardingSchools
  - https://boardingschoolhealing.org/?fbclid=IwY2xjawE79YlleHRuA2FlbQIxMAABHfBRzObPN4Ev3SNqz2bZ3599IwrVaKqRIaa2KqoYjOnQ2MJ6kPwTiaM_ug_aem_S8Mk9LcNtTv7lnZEUIHWJA
  - elca.org/Our-Work/Congregations-and-Synods/Ethnic-Specific-and-Multicultural-Ministries/Indigenous-Ministries-and-Tribal-Relations/Indian-Boarding-Schools/Truth-Initiative

Prayer: A Prayer Service for Children of Indian Boarding Schools

(adapted from A Prayer Service for Children of Indian Boarding Schools [ELCA Indigenous Ministries and Tribal Relations])

Prepare: Consider having a candle to light, a bowl of water, paper and writing tools, any images/items for the altar that tell the story of the children.

Opening Prayer

Today we remember the innocent children who were torn from their families, taken to boarding schools and abused by their caregivers, and who died so far away from their communities. Hear our prayer for the innocent sacred lives of all Indigenous children who survived, who have been found and who remain lost. Move our hearts by your mercy as we acknowledge and repent all the suffering that our churches caused. Guide and restore us to act justly and to love mercy and to walk humbly; through Jesus Christ, our Lord, who lives and reigns with you in the unity of the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever.
Amen.

Scripture Reading: Jeremiah 31:15-17

The Lord proclaims:
A voice is heard in Ramah,
weeping and wailing.
It's Rachel crying for her children;
she refuses to be consoled,
because her children are no more.

The Lord proclaims:
Keep your voice from crying
and your eyes from weeping,
because your endurance will be rewarded,
declares the Lord.
They will return from the land of their enemy!

There's hope for your future,
declares the Lord.
Your children will return home!

Song “Many and Great, O God” (ELW 837)
Text: Joseph R. Renville, 1779-1846; para. Philip Frazier, 1892-1964, alt.
Music: Dakota tune; arr. Songs of the People, 1986

https://www.youtube.com/watch?app=desktop&v=1DoqAlKwl-w

Poem

Echoes of the Forgotten
By Dr. Kelly Sherman-Conroy (Oglala Lakota)

In the hallowed heart of ancestral land, a chilling discovery, hard to understand. Children of our kin, silenced by past years, in forgotten graves, echo of untold fears.

Torn from loving arms, under the church’s guise, in boarding school halls, where their spirit dies. A mother’s heartache, a father’s stifled cry, for the stolen laughter and the dreams that lie.

Yet undying is the love, deep within our hearts, stronger than the sorrow, mending broken parts. Their spirits whisper in the wind, hum in the river’s flow. In each dawn their presence in soft glow.

Churches of stone, bearers of the cross, in your halls of learning, what was the cost? Justice demands answers for the lives you took, for every innocent smile, in your history book.

We seek not revenge but the healing truth, to honor our children, to reclaim their youth. To remember their names, their unspoken tales. Against the winds of injustice, our love prevails.

Around sacred fires, their stories we weave, in the silent night, their loss we grieve. Though the church may falter and its authority wane, our love for our children will forever remain.

With peace as our compass, justice our quest, we'll forge a future where no child is oppressed. From the depths of despair, hope will arise, for love is the legacy that never dies.

Time of Silence and Reflection

Prayer of Lament
(A sung response is used throughout the prayer, derived from the first phrase of the second stanza of "Many and Great, O God" [ELW 837]).

O God of all Creation, our tears flow freely,
Weeping for the pain our children have experienced.
Singing: **Grant unto us communion with you, O star-abiding One.**

We weep for the sacred children whose bodies have been found,
For the many children who remain lost,
For those who survived and have carried the trauma through generations,
And for the reopened wounds that we are forced to endure.

Together we grieve.
Hear our cries of deep sorrow, O Lord:
Singing: **Grant unto us communion with you, O star-abiding One.**

We weep for the families and communities who lost a child
And carried through the generations a broken heart.
Our tears flow like rivers that never stop, mourning the pain of the survivors.

Together we grieve.
Hear our cries of deep sorrow, O Lord:
Singing: **Grant unto us communion with you, O star-abiding One.**

Just as Jesus wept, we weep and pray:
O God of love, come to us during this time of pain.
Comfort all who grieve, and weep with those full of sorrow.
Hear the stories of remembrance, carried by generations,
and transform our grief into determination
and our tears into action so that your creation hears their stories.
Amen.