

September 22, 2021

Dear friends in Christ,

I am writing to encourage members of the ELCIC to observe Thursday, September 30 as Orange Shirt Day, National Day for Truth and Reconciliation. I invite you to make this a day of quiet reflection, learning and/or participation in a community event.

For several years, [Orange Shirt Day](#) has been observed on September 30 each year as a way to create meaningful discussion regarding the legacy of residential schools. This year, the Government of Canada designated September 30 as a federal statutory holiday called National Day for Truth and Reconciliation. The purpose of the day is to promote reconciliation and help ensure that the tragic history and ongoing legacy of residential schools is never forgotten.

Some ways to consider observing this day are:

- Wear orange on September 30 as a sign of solidarity, remembering and renewed commitment (www.angeshirtday.org).
- Utilize resources from the [Anglican Church of Canada and Indigenous Ministries](#) that have been specifically developed for 2021, including a video, introduction to the day and prayers.
- Consider the following list of resources that the [Eastern Synod](#) has prepared for learning and reflection.
- Review [A Renewed Call to Reconciliation](#) offered by the Conference of Bishops on June 1, 2021 and consider your next steps on the reconciliation journey.
- Share how you will honour the National Day for Truth and Reconciliation by taking pictures (with permission if others are involved) and posting to social media using the hashtags, #OrangeShirtDay; #EveryChildMatters; #IWearOrangeBecause, #MyELCIC.
- Pray for Indigenous siblings, for right relationships, for your community, and for ourselves as we continue to live into our ministry of reconciliation in Christ's name.

On September 30 the ELCIC National Office will be closed to commemorate the National Day for Truth and Reconciliation. Staff will be wearing orange and gathering for a time of reflection on September 29.

September 30 reminds us that every child matters. It is a day to remember the children who did not return home from residential schools, survivors, families and all who need healing. May God's grace and unconditional love surround you as you pray, reflect, learn and gather.

I invite you to join me in a Prayer of Reconciliation, written by Cari Klaassen. Carolyn (Cari) Klaassen is a long-time member of the ELCIC, a 60's scoop survivor, an Ojibway woman from the Henley Inlet First Nation, and an Indigenous MDiv student at Vancouver School of Theology (VST).

*Creator God, most loving and our protector,
we come today to offer our sorrows, our passions, our grief, our commitments.*

*We thank you Creator God, for the life you bestowed upon us.
We thank you Creator God, for the journey that we have indwelled with your direction.*

We thank you for the creation that you have given us and for the earth and all that is within it. From the land, the oceans, the water ways, the trees, the vegetation; to the animals, birds of the air, animals of the sea, that give life and continue to nourish our lives. We take great pride in what you have given us.

We remember the children that have been found and have been hidden from us for so long. We thank you for each one of their lives, that you protected and cherished them when we didn't know.

We pray for all the families that have lost these little ones and we pray for those who endured the pain, abuse and neglect but survived to tell their story. We thank you for giving them the courage and strength to move on and heal. With you all things are possible.

We pray for the governments, churches, and other institutions that were involved with the Residential Schools and that justice is served and the healing may continue.

Gracious God, protect and surround Indigenous people with your Great Spirit and comfort us in this time.

Our lament is to cry out to you, to cry to you for healing, to take away the pain that burdens Indigenous people. The pain of the horrors that these innocent children endured. The cries that were only heard by their abusers.

Give us the strength and the boldness to rise above and prevail in the work that you have entrusted to us to fulfil.

Most of all, Loving God, we thank you for each one of our lives. You created us in your image. Not one is left alone, not one is forgotten. We thank you that even when we live in a fallen world and evil has been bestowed upon us, we still prevail above all to continue the work you have given each of us.

Give us the courage to say, yes, and to stand up against wrongs that have been done, to stand up against wrongs done to Indigenous people of Canada. That this world is restored to what it was intended by you.

We thank you for the lives that have gone to be with you. We thank you for their leadership and compassion. Their work is done on earth and continues, as they have left for us to continue.

Sovereign of our lives, we pray for leaders in government, in churches, in the world that they make just decisions and reprimand the wrongs that have been done to these children and families. You are a just God and a God of vengeance.

*We thank you, Holy God, as we meet in this sacred space.
In Jesus' mighty name, in all my relations.*

Yours in Christ,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Susan C. Johnson", with a cross symbol to the left.

Rev. Susan C. Johnson

National Bishop, Evangelical Lutheran Church in Canada