



**Evangelical Lutheran
Church in Canada**
In Mission for Others

June 30, 2021

Dear beloved church,

In the past, I have loved celebrating Canada Day. Food, family, friends, fireworks—what more could you ask? The most exciting Canada Day I ever spent was in Ottawa—taking part in events all over the city and ending the day with the celebrations at the Parliament Building.

In the last few years, I confess it has been harder to be quite as enthusiastic in marking the day. The final report of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission and the Inquiry into Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women and Girls has given me pause to reflect on the oppressive colonial systems that Canada put in place that have led to years of oppression and trauma to Indigenous peoples.

This year, with the recent discoveries of unmarked graves at several sites of former residential schools, I am keenly aware of the children who did not return home and of the trauma being experienced by survivors of residential schools and generations affected by intergeneration trauma.

This Canada Day, I will not be wearing my usual red and white. I will be wearing orange to remember that every child matters. I will be reflecting on how we got here as a country and what we need to do to move towards reconciliation.

Here are a few ideas of how you can join me in reflection on July 1:

- Acknowledge the territory where you live. If you do not know it, find out. One place to begin is native-land.ca/.
- Spend some time alone or as a family, doing some land/water-based learning about where you live, in relation to the Indigenous people who lived here before you and live here with you now.
- Look for a vigil taking place in your community.
- Read the letter from ELCIC National and Synod Bishops: *A Renewed Call to Reconciliation*, and reflect on what it calls you to do: elcic.ca/news.cfm?article=600,

- Read the 2015 ELCIC statement *Repudiating the Doctrine of Discovery*: elcic.ca/Documents/documents/DoctrineofDiscoveryMotionFINAL.pdf.
- Spend time in prayer for healing and reconciliation between Indigenous and non-Indigenous peoples in Canada.
- Join me in praying this prayer, *We Dream about the Country We Hope to Become*, from the United Church of Canada website.

*Creating God,
As we mark the anniversary of the Confederation of Canada,
we remember and give thanks
for the people who have been the stewards of this land
since time immemorial,
and commit ourselves to the work of justice, healing, and reconciliation.
Together we dream about the country that we hope to become,
a country where all are free to be their best selves.
Amen.*

Blessings to you this day and all days,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Susan C. Johnson", preceded by a small cross symbol.

Rev. Susan C. Johnson
National Bishop, Evangelical Lutheran Church in Canada