

# Social Justice Vestry Motion 2017

## Continuing the Call for Reconciliation

Over the course of many years, Indigenous communities in Canada have engaged the government, the Anglican Church and other Christian denominations in a process geared toward reconciliation. This process has included official apologies from many denominations for their participation in the Indian Residential School system, as well as participation in the work of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Canada (TRC). The final report of the TRC included 94 Calls to Action aimed at addressing the ongoing marginalization of Indigenous peoples in all aspects of Canadian life. Last year, parishes throughout the Diocese of Toronto, passed vestry motions calling for action on two key Calls to Action, resulting in opportunities for ongoing engagement and education on the still-unfinished work of reconciliation in our communities and in our governments.

As part of our efforts to continue to respond to this call, the 2017 social justice vestry motion will once again focus on addressing Calls to Action of the TRC by encouraging parishes to carry out reflection and study within their congregations as well as calling on the government to implement one of the key elements of the TRC's calls. We hope that your parish will join us in undertaking this work by passing the motion below and committing to continue working towards reconciliation at every level of the church and in all parts of the country.

We, the vestry of \_\_\_\_\_ [name of parish] commit ourselves to continue to work to implement the Calls to Action of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Canada. As part of this effort, we call on the Government of Canada to address Call to Action #43: to fully adopt and implement the *United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples* as the framework for reconciliation. In particular, we call on the Government of Canada to immediately develop policies requiring free, prior and informed consent be obtained from Indigenous communities in Canada and abroad with respect to developments affecting their lands and resources, as outlined in Articles 10, 19, and 32 of the *Declaration*.

Additional resources for this motion are currently being developed and will be circulated in November of 2016. Half-day formation sessions to help train those interested in spearheading this effort in their parishes will be held in January 2017. Information will be circulated through the monthly Social Justice and Advocacy Update.



**Diocese of Toronto**  
Anglican Church of Canada

“Indigenous peoples shall not be forcibly removed from their lands or territories. No relocation shall take place without the free, prior, and informed consent of the indigenous peoples concerned and after agreement on just and fair compensation and, where possible, with the option of return”

- *United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples, Article 10*

“States shall consult and cooperate in good faith with the Indigenous peoples concerned through their own representative institutions in order to obtain their free, prior and informed consent before adopting and implementing legislative or administrative measures that may affect them”

- *United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples, Article 19*

“Indigenous peoples have the right to determine and develop priorities and strategies for the development or use of their lands or territories and other resources.”

- *United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples, Article 32, section 1*

“Recognizing Indigenous peoples’ human rights, including the free, prior and informed consent [FPIC] to development on our traditional lands and territories, will lead to greater peace and security for all. FPIC, very simply, is the right to say yea, and the right to say no. It is much more than a process of consultation.”

- *National Chief Perry Bellegarde, Assembly of First Nations, Statement to UN Permanent Forum on Indigenous Issues*

“My heart is heavy with the burden of our many sins against the Indigenous Peoples throughout Turtle Island. For every way in which we insulted their dignity and took their lands, silenced their languages and suppressed their culture, tore apart their families and assaulted their children, I must never weary of saying on behalf of our church, “I am sorry”.

My heart is humbled by the call to honour – in word and action – the UN Declaration of the Rights of Indigenous Peoples.

With many others, my heart yearns for that future in which – in the sight of the Creator – we are walking together in ways that are good and holy, right and just for all.”

- *Primate Fred Hiltz, Anglican Church of Canada  
“Let Our ‘Yes’ be Yes”*