

## Celebrating Indigenous Spirituality and Strength

Sunday - June 18, 2023

Ephesians 2:14-22

**Prayer:** God of wisdom, challenge and grace. We thank you for the wisdom of Shane Goldie, whose words we will read as our reflection time today. May Shane's words touch our hearts and open us to your radical message of transformation. Amen.

Someone once asked me if my sermons were mailed to me by the National Church. They imagined a group of writers hunkered down in Toronto getting together to produce a little sermon and then emailing it out to all the ministers to be shared in local churches.

I explained that no, that is not how it works. Rather each preacher has their own voice and their own take on the scripture passages and so it is part of the work of the preacher to research, write and offer their own sermon each week. There are piles of resources out there to help with this work but no my sermons did not arrive in my inbox.

But this one did.

And so as we prepare this week, to acknowledge the Indigenous Day of Prayer - June 21 the National Church has offered up resource material written by a young Indigenous man, Shane Goldie. As we do not often hear Indigenous voices in this space it seemed appropriate to hear Shane's offering.

He has titled his offering "The Sacred Drum: Celebrating Indigenous Spirituality and Strength"

Shane Goldie, writes: Dear friends, today we gather to celebrate the Indigenous Day of Prayer, a day of great significance for Indigenous Peoples across the country. This day is a reminder of the deep spiritual traditions that have been passed down through generations, and the importance of honouring and respecting them.

One of the most important symbols of Indigenous spirituality is the Sacred Drum. The drum has been used in Indigenous ceremonies and rituals for centuries, and its sound is believed to connect us to the Creator, to our ancestors, and to the natural world. The drum is a powerful tool for prayer and meditation. Its rhythmic beat creates a sacred space, a space in which we can connect with the spiritual world and seek guidance and strength. The drum reminds us of the importance of unity, of coming together as a community to honour our traditions and our shared history. But the drum is not just a symbol of Indigenous spirituality. It is also a symbol of resilience and resistance.

Throughout history, Indigenous Peoples have faced great challenges and adversity, including the forced removal of children from families, the loss of land and resources, and the suppression of languages and cultures. Through it all, the drum has remained a constant source of strength and hope. As we celebrate the Indigenous Day of Prayer, let us honour the Sacred Drum and all that it represents. Let us remember the resilience and strength of Indigenous peoples, and their deep connection to the land and to the spiritual world. Let us commit ourselves to working towards reconciliation and healing, and to creating a future where the drum can continue to be honoured for generations to come. May the sound of the Sacred Drum fill our hearts with hope and our spirits with strength. And may we all walk together in a spirit of unity, respect, and love.

As we reflect on the meaning of the Sacred Drum, let us also remember the importance of listening. The drum teaches us to listen to the rhythms of the natural world, to the voices of our ancestors, and to the whispers of the Creator. It reminds us that listening is an essential part of prayer and of building relationships.

In Ephesians 2:14–22, we learn of Christ’s mission to break down the walls that divide us, creating a new humanity in which all people are united in peace and love. As followers of Christ, we are called to emulate this spirit of unity, seeking to build bridges of understanding and reconciliation between Indigenous and non-Indigenous peoples. The Sacred Drum, with its power to unite and connect, is a symbol of the kind of unity that Christ seeks to bring about in the world. Just as the drum brings people together in a shared experience of prayer and celebration, **Christ's love breaks down the barriers of race, ethnicity, and culture that separate us from one another.** As we reflect on the meaning of the Sacred Drum and Christ's message of unity, we are reminded of the importance of breaking down the walls of division that exist in our society. For too long, Indigenous peoples have been marginalized and oppressed, their voices silenced and their rights ignored. It is time for us to listen, to learn, and to take action towards reconciliation and healing. In this mission, we can draw inspiration from the drum and the way it brings people together. By seeking to understand the traditions and cultures of Indigenous peoples, we can begin to build bridges of understanding and respect. By acknowledging the harm that has been done and working towards restitution, we can begin to break down the walls of division that have separated us for too long. Through Christ's message of love and unity, we can create a new humanity, one in which all people are valued and respected, and in which the Sacred Drum can continue to be heard, as a symbol of the power of unity, healing, and hope.

Listening also plays a crucial role in reconciliation. As we work towards reconciliation with Indigenous peoples, we must be willing to listen to their stories, their perspectives, and their experiences. We must be willing to acknowledge the harm that has been done and to work towards healing and reconciliation. At the same time, we must also be willing to listen to the land, to the animals, and to the natural world. Indigenous Peoples have always recognized the interconnectedness of all things and the importance of living in harmony with the natural world. As we continue to face environmental challenges, we must learn to listen to the wisdom of Indigenous Peoples and to work towards a more sustainable and respectful relationship with the land. In conclusion, let us celebrate the Indigenous Day of Prayer with a deep sense of gratitude and humility. Let us honour the Sacred Drum and all that it represents, and let us commit ourselves to listening to the voices of Indigenous Peoples, to the land, and to the Creator.

May we journey together in a spirit of reconciliation, healing, and love. May we go forth from this day with a renewed commitment to building bridges of understanding and reconciliation, to listening to the voices of Indigenous Peoples, and to working towards a future of peace and love for all.

Amen.

Rev Debra Berg