# Indigenous Day of Prayer 2024: We Are All Spirit First

*—Co-written by Co-Chairs of the National Indigenous Council, the Rev. Kimberly Roy and Student Minister Wayne Monague*

Props: glow sticks, pictures or figures of a frog, a rock, an eagle, a feather, a leaf, a tree, a spark, spirit, a river or stream

## My Land Acknowledgement (Kimberly Roy)

Marlboro, Alberta, and its surrounding areas are the homeland of the historic Marlboro Métis Settlement, Kelly Lake Métis Settlement, Cree nation Tsuut’ina Nation, Ĩyãħé Nakón mąkóce (Stoney Cree people), [Nêhiyaw-Askiy (Plains Cree people),](https://native-land.ca/maps/territories/plains-cree/) [Michif Piyii (Métis people)](https://native-land.ca/maps/territories/metis/), and Mountain Métis people of Alberta.

We continue to find relics of their inhabitants as we plow the land, search the hills, and paddle along the rivers.

As we discover these relics, we can become connected, if we allow our hearts to connect, with the great people for whom this land is homeland.

The Athabasca and Macleod river watersheds feed our need for water, and fed their needs for water.

The great forests, rivers, creeks, and hills that provide current hunters and fishers with food provided the sustenance for thousands of years of habitation of Indigenous before Europeans set foot on this sacred land.

We have erred in our ability to live peacefully with each other.

We have sinned against our neighbour and our kinfolk in driving Indigenous Peoples from their homeland and disrespecting the treaties **(some not)** made in good faith.

The blood of their ancestors continues to cry out from the land we inhabit.

We must hear their cries; we must allow the sorrow of genocide and broken promises to move our hearts to confession and repentance if we are to learn to live as people who are entrusted by God to steward this land into a place that is honouring and abundant for all.

This land is not ours alone, it is a reflection of all our histories.

The stories of the past and the promises of the future rely on our memory.

We are called to protect and honour this history and work for a future that reflects the kin-dom of Creator.

## From Darkness into the Light

Our friend and teacher Jesus walked many dusty paths around Lake Galilee.
He journeyed with good friends and with those of no account.
He cared for those who were left behind, the scared, and the forgotten.
Jesus taught us about being good stewards of creation,
to be kind to others and ourselves, and that there is a time to take a stand.
When he taught in crowds, people didn’t always know who he was.
He would share that he was the light.

(*Light the candle.*)

That beautiful light shone everywhere Jesus went
and it shines bright everywhere we go.
That glorious light follows you to work, to church, and to the park.
It is a light that supports us and reminds us in good times and in bad
that we are loved, cared for, and always belong.
The stunning light also represents the importance of balance in all of creation: Fire represents man, women are represented by water, and for there to be life there must be both.

May it be so.

## Call to Worship

Leader: Grace and peace be with you, beloved children of God.
**People: And also with you.**
Leader: We gather today in prayer and thanksgiving for National Indigenous Day.
**People: Creator, be with us as we journey forward in a good way.**
Leader: We share scripture and stories that warm and challenge our heart.
**People: Creator, be with us as we listen in a good way.**
Leader: We sing with lightness and praise.
**People: Creator, be with us as we respond in a good way.**

## Passing the Peace

We welcome one another: Peace be with you. And also with you.

## Gathering Prayer

Loving and ever present Creator, we ask in the time together that we have open hearts and minds to hear your Word and be reminded that we are all Spirit first. The grass around us, the feathers of the birds, the eagles, the trees and the rocks and the frog, we are all connected; we are all part of creation. Amen

## Options for Words of Wisdom

Isaiah 43:1‒5, *Inclusive Bible*
A New Creed
Seeds and Sower Matthew 13:1‒9, *First Nations Version*
You Are Light Matthew 5:14‒16, *First Nations Version*
Psalm 91

## Children’s Time (outline)

“This little light of mine.” Sing with me….

Most people can recite the music selection, “This little light of mine,” off by heart. It’s one of those feel-good songs that has actions and is uplifting.

I wonder if you have thought about what your light is?

In the Book of Matthew, chapter 5, we are told not to hide our light and to let it shine. Does anyone know what “our light” means.

I wonder if our light means our love and care for ourselves and the world?
I wonder if it is our smile or our quirky laughter?
I wonder if it is the way we help people or seek justice?
I wonder if it is the spirit inside that reminds us that we are all God’s precious children?

(*If you have glow sticks, hand them out to the children and children at heart.*)

(*Conversation*) Like our sacred light, glow sticks can help guide. The light should be shared but not covered.

Prayer: Creator, we are thankful for your light and for the courage to let our light shine for all the world to see. Amen

## Offering Prayer

Loving Creator, help us to think about others when we come to this time of giving. Some of us only have a dollar or two or an hour or two to share, but others have so much more. Remind us when we have heaps of love, of time, or o special talents to share that we shine the love of God when sharing them widely. Amen

## Prayer of Confession

Let us pray.

Great loving Spirit, you travel with us on so many paths. Some trails are straight and easy to navigate, but others are very difficult, windy, and up steep hills. We confess that sometimes, when things get tough, we haven’t always followed your teachings or done things in a good way. Sometimes we found it too taxing to sit still and listen to our Elders for the wisdom they bring. Other times, Creator, we just did not show up. We ask for forgiveness when we know we could have done better.

## Words of Assurance

On this Indigenous Day of Prayer, we are assured of Creator’s unending love for us all. Our traditional teachings offer us assurance and the promise that we are Spirit first and we will always be part of creation.

## Reflection: “The light in you is the same as the light in me”

Let us dare to linger here for just a moment as we recall the moment in time when we remember Creator saying to us, “I have called you by name; you are mine.”

(*A few moments of silence*)

The light in you is the same as the light in me.

In all Indigenous teachings, we are taught that we are Spirit first. We are first Creator’s sacred spark that is filled with love, compassion, and tenderness. We understand our precious world with caring anticipation that cannot wait to experience this breathtaking planet filled with deep blue skies, luscious green fields, and sparkling water that nourishes us all.

Quiet yourself for a moment and dream with me about you as a sacred tiny spark. Ground your body, mind, and soul, and let the continuous reeling of thoughts leave your mind. Thank those thoughts and allow them to leave. Imagine you are once again that tiny spirit filled with love and courage.

Observe all of creation as Spiritfirst. You notice the beautiful glowing Spirit of each eagle, frog, rock, and tree. You can feel the tenderness and warmth that each of us has to offer. Take a breath; breathe in the air that we share, the air we share with every tiny part of creation.

With an open heart and mind, feel the Spirit of the trickling water as it flows from the smallest of streams to the rushing of long and wide rivers. Let your Spirit soar like an eagle through the air knowing it is cared for as Creator raises you up upon those eagle’s wings.

Open yourself to the strength of each Spirit as it passes by. Know the wisdom it freely shares with you, me, and everyone it bumps into.

Feel free to love, free to experience the joy of life, and humbled to share your strength with others on the journey. Let us hold sacred space for a moment and embrace that warm feeling of peace and knowledge that you and everything around you was Spirit first. We hold everything with tenderness, respect, and care.

Please open your hearts.

Throughout our sacred texts, there are dozens of examples of Creator reminding us of our sacred Spirit and how important we are to all of creation. And Creator said, “I have called you by name; you are mine.”

Our traditional teachings share that everything is alive in Spirit. Have you ever thought of a rock having Spirit? Or maybe a leaf? Have you ever sat under a tree and felt the warmth of its Spirit beneath you? Creator did not just say this to you and me. Creator’s voice was heard by all things, living and still. All things, living and still.

Have you ever wondered when Creator said, “You are mine” that it was not just for those who have lungs and a heart?

Our New Creed reminds us that we are not alone and that Creator is still creating. Does that not point to all of creation being alive and a part of our Spirit? In the seeds and sowers reading in Matthew, we hear about some of the seeds landing on good soil, and they thrived in a flourishing environment. Does this not speak to all of creation having energy and life?

And Creator said, “You are the light that gives light to the world.” We are called as bold disciples to not only share our light but also to send it out into the world to do all things in a good way.

In today’s busy and demanding world, the beauty of our Spirit and the Spiritof others often goes unnoticed—or worse, we close ourselves and no longer seek to experience another’s living Spirit. We have forgotten that we were Spirit first and no one’s Spirit dies or withers away. Sometimes people try to squash our Spiritor take it away, but it is not theirs. We are called to do more.

And Creator said, “People, don’t hide a light….”

Your Spiritis yours to hold and to protect and to share with the world. Your Spirithelps you to knows the world in a way that is beyond us. Creator gave us our Spiritto show honesty, love, courage, humility, and respect and to share our wisdom and truth.

Our way has always been and will always be to seek the Spirit in others and to feed our Spiritgenerously with kindness and compassion so all of creation can flourish. Amen

Let us pray.

## Prayers of the People

Loving and Grace-Filled Creator,
we show much gratitude for the gift of faith and life in this world.
We pray for open hearts and minds, that we may be a part of your transforming love
and true reconciliation.
We pray for your wisdom and guidance,
that we may live as a blessing for all of creation.
Whether we identify as traditional, religious,
or spiritual, may we live with trust, love, honesty, and humility.

**People: Creator, receive our prayers…**

We give thanks today for The United Church of Canada and its leadership. For their dedication to reconciliation and trying to act and do on their faith journey.
Help us to be filled with your Spirit of Compassion.
We pray for all people who suffer in the world, those we know and those we have not yet met.
And may we generously pray for continued relationship building, flourishing ideas, and bold discipleship our wonderful church.

**People: Creator, hear our prayers…**

We give you thanks for the good news in our sacred scriptures and our traditional teachings. May those amazing teachings spread goodness and love to all corners of creation.

**People: Creator, hear our prayers…**

We pray today for those who struggle with illness or disease, whether of health, heart, mind, or relationship. For those who struggle with addiction, relationship breakdown, and to those who sit with our most vulnerable, may your constant love and compassion surround them.

**People: Creator, hear our prayers…**

May your sacred presence come to those who need you most. Bring them peace and reassurance of your unconditional love through friends, family, and the prayers of people in churches and places of worship around the world.

**People: Creator, hear our prayers…**

In this season of renewal, we are called to let our light shine bright and to allow and encourage others to let their light shine even brighter. We are Spirit first, and that Sprit knows to soar like an eagle, up high in the blue sky.

**People: Creator, we ask for the grace to lead a faithful life, to walk with a deep sense of spirituality, to live radical hospitality, and to journey forward in a good way, always.**

We pray all these prayers in the name of the one who taught us to say…

**People: Our Father and Mother, who art in heaven,
hallowed be thy name.
Thy kingdom come,
thy will be done
 on earth as it is in heaven.
Give us this day our daily bread;
and forgive us our trespasses,
as we forgive those
 who trespass against us;
and lead us not into temptation,
ut deliver us from evil.
For thine is the kingdom,
and the power, and the glory,
forever and ever. Amen.**

## Changing the Light

Today’s service has been filled with amazing music,
great wisdom, and Spirit-filled teachings.
As we move from this place to the wide openness of creation,
let us move in a good and humble way.
We are reminded that our friend and teacher Jesus was a magnificent leader.
He led from the heart and Spirit first.
As we move from here today, let us seek to always move from our hearts and from our Spirit first.

## Extinguishing the Light

As we see the flame move from brightness to smoke, allowing our ancestors and Creator to lift up the prayers and wisdom of this day, we are reminded that we cannot always see them, but they surround us every step on the path. Amen

## Blessing

May Creator’s eternal love warm your Spirit like the sun on an autumn day.
May the Spirit guide your path with gentleness and strength.
May we always seek to move in a good way.
May it be so.

## Music Suggestions

“This Little Light of Mine” (African-American)
“Spirit, Spirit of Gentleness,” *Voices United* 375
“All Things Bright and Beautiful,” VU 291
“Psalm 91 (On Eagle’s Wings),” VU 807
“It Only Takes a Spark,” VU 289
“Come In, Come In and Sit Down,” VU 395
“Deep in Our Hearts,” *More Voices* 154
“Called by Earth and Sky,” MV 135
“And When You Call for Me,” MV 96
“I Am a Child of God,” MV 157
“Like a Healing Stream,” MV 144
“Hope Shines as the Solitary Star,” MV 220
“I Am Walking a Path of Peace,” MV 221