

Together in Spirit

Leader: Grace and peace to you from God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ

All: Grace and peace be also with you.

As the plant is brought to the sacred space:

Leader: We gather in the name of God who brings forth life from the earth, abundance for all to share.

All: We gather in the name of the One who asks us to walk gently upon the earth, caring for all our sisters and brothers, sharing with all its bounty.

A pitcher of water, a basin and a towel are brought in:

Leader: We gather in the name of God who brings us forth from the waters of birth and washes us in a river of life.

All: We gather in the name of the One who asks us to wash one another's feet and tend one another's wounds.

A candle is brought in:

Leader: We gather in the name of God who gives us the dawn, radiant sun to brighten our day.

All: We gather in the name of the One whose light even death cannot extinguish, in whose light we are asked to journey together.

A native drum is brought in:

Leader: We gather in the name of God whose Spirit broods over the water and blows upon the face of the earth.

All: We gather in the name of the One in whom the Spirit breathed, in whose Spirit we are asked to love one another as He loved us.

Leader: Holy God, we are all Your children. Each one of us has worth. None of us go unnamed by You. Yet all too often we forget that – about ourselves and about our sisters. Help us to recall whose children we are. Help us to honour one another in what we say and what we do. Help us to hold fast to one another that none may walk alone. In the name of the One who calls us by name, Jesus Christ, our Lord.

All: Amen

Reader: A reading from the holy gospel according to John 8:1-10. The Word of the Lord!

All: Praise to you, Lord Jesus Christ.

MC: In the spirit of “turning weapons into ploughshares,” take a stone, the weapon in the Gospel story. Befriend this gift of creation. You will notice that it bears the name of a woman on it. Over the past 20 years, approximately 500 Aboriginal women have gone missing in communities across Canada. Yet government, the media and Canadian society continue to remain silent.

These were poor women, many from the Vancouver area, but also from Winnipeg, Regina, Edmonton, Kenora, Thunder Bay, Fredericton and so many other communities, large and small, across this country. Most were young, involved in the sex trade. They struggled with drugs and alcohol. Some suffered from the effects of Fetal Alcohol Syndrome, and many were victims of childhood sexual abuse. Every one of them grew up in a foster home. In other words, their lives bore all the markings of violence.

But these women also had families, hopes and dreams. They left behind grieving communities – grandmothers, mothers, fathers, sisters, brothers and, sadly, young children of their own. These young women belonged somewhere and were loved.

Now take a few minutes to pray for your sister in spirit, to pray that deep wrongs may be righted, to give her honour and respect.

After a brief time of silence:

MC: We will build a memorial cairn: Place your stone in the shell found on your table. Select one person from your table to come forward to the sacred space to place your stones in memory of the women who are missing or who are known to have died. As we sing:

Hymn:

Left Side: God, Your Son Jesus knew the violence of this world and bore on His body the marks of others’ hatred.

Right Side: Forgive us for the times we have ignored the violence done to others and seen it only as a footnote in the daily news.

Left Side: Forgive us for the times we have accepted the violence done to others and called it the consequence of their life style.

Right Side: Forgive us for the times we have contributed to the violence done to others by our attitudes, prejudice or lack of compassion.

Left Side: Forgive us, Lord, and may Your mercy help us to change.

All: We ask this in the name of Jesus, both victim and victor. Amen!

Leader: God loves us. God forgives us. God empowers us to begin life anew.

All: Amen

Hymn

Leader: Comfort those who mourn or do not yet know if mourning is possible.

All: God of compassion, hear our prayer.

Leader: Give courage to those who live without knowing where their daughters, or sisters, or mothers, or aunts, or cousins or friends are.

All: God of mercy, hear our prayer.

Leader: Strengthen those who work to solve these crimes.

All: God of justice, hear our prayer.

Leader: Enable us to continue to honour those who are missing or have died by our actions on their behalf.

All: God of us all, hear our prayer.

Leader: Gathering all our prayers into one, let us pray as Jesus taught us...

All: Our Father...

All: God our Creator, You entrust the earth to our care. You trust us to care for one another. You empower us with Your life-giving Spirit. Give us the anger of grief, the courage of compassion, and the fire of justice that we may walk with our sisters until none are missing and this journey is done. Amen

Leader: Let us go in peace to love and serve the Lord.

All: Thanks be to God.

Hymn

Appreciation to the liturgical resourced of the Anglican council of Indigenous Peoples.