Dear Friends in Christ,

The discovery of over 1,200 human remains, including the ones recently discovered at the former Marieval Indian Residential School in Cowessess Saskatchewan, continues to horrify and sadden the collective conscience of our Nation. The church within the Diocese of Rupert’s Land is deeply disturbed and alarmed by the tragedy as well as the role we have played in the horrendous treatment of God’s Indigenous Peoples over the years. We cannot avoid our complicity in the immense loss of these children, especially when we consider the sorrow and grief that their families have carried and still continue to carry to this day. Overwhelming as it feels, God calls us into honest and genuine relationships with those who are hurting and wounded. We are called into reconciliation with all whom our unjust systems hold hostage.

The Anglican Church of Canada remains wholly committed to seeking the truth of damage done to Indigenous people by our complicity. Our national and diocesan archives continue to be open to all Indigenous Nations and people who want to uncover these horror stories for their communities and families. However, we must do a great deal more. We must hear, bless and hold sacred the thousands of oral and written stories experienced by Indigenous people who attended and had Interactions with the Indian residential Schools. It is unfortunate that little attention was given to these truths and testimonials in the past and in some cases in the present moment.

We will do all that we can to aid and facilitate discovery of harms and damages to Indigenous Peoples with the Diocese of Rupert’s Land. We continue to uphold and own the formal apologies made by former Primates Peers in 1993 and by Hiltz in 2019. True repentance involves change and actions. Therefore, we have and still own our mistakes and we have begun to forge true, healthy and Just relationships with our Indigenous brothers and sisters in Christ.

Jesus scolded the disciples, “Let the children come to me, and do not stop them; for it is to such as these that the kingdom of heaven belongs.” Matt. 19.14. May we never again forget these words.

