



The Lutheran Urban Ministry  
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## March 2019 News from your Ministry Manager

We all have biases and preconceived ideas which prevent a clear understanding of those whose culture, language, colour and spirituality differ from our own. This can happen through messages heard at home while growing up, or having partial or incorrect information, or through never knowing the details of Canadian history - some examples of reasons for not understanding the need for the recommendations of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission – 94 Calls to Action.

On March 11<sup>th</sup> I attended the first of four 7:00 – 9:00 p.m. Monday evenings of Interfaith Dialogue on Truth and Reconciliation at the Congregation Etz Chayim synagogue, sponsored by Westworth United Church supported by a grant from the Winnipeg Foundation. The speakers were Shahina Siddiqui, Executive Director of Islamic Social Services; and Theodore Fontaine, Sagkeeng Elder and survivor of Fort Alexander and Assiniboia Residential Schools. I won't forget their words. The remaining three evenings of dialogue will be held on:

- March 18 – Manitoba Buddhist Temple, 39 Tecumseh St. (speakers Steve Heinrichs, Director, Indigenous Settler Relations at Mennonite Church Canada; and Stan McKay, Cree Elder and former Moderator of the United Church Canada).
- March 25 – Winnipeg Central Mosque. 715 Ellice Ave. (speakers Brian McLeod, Buddhist Lama of the Vajrayana and Theravadin traditions; and Adrian Jacobs, Cayuga Elder and Keeper of the Circle at Sandy Saulteaux Spiritual Centre).
- April 1 – Westworth United Church, 1750 Grosvenor Ave. (speakers Ruth Ashrafi, Judaic Studies Advisor at Gray Academy of Jewish Education and Instructor of Hebrew Bible at the University of Winnipeg; and Chickadee Richard, Anishinabe Elder and co-founder of the Bear Clan).

A few weeks ago I watched the movie *Indian Horse* (2017) with my son and grandson. What a powerful film! It's based on a novel by Richard Wagamese and produced by Clint Eastwood. *"The movie follows the life of Canadian First Nations boy, Saul Indian Horse, as he survives residential school and life amongst the racism of the 1970s. A talented hockey player, Saul must find his own path as he battles stereotypes and alcoholism (imbd.com)"*. When I was growing up I never knew about residential schools or the 60s Scoop.

Many in our Urban community have memories of the sexual, physical and/or emotional abuse, the shame and the loneliness regularly endured in these schools and in many of the foster homes. Self-esteem, personal identity, family life, community life, spiritual and cultural traditions were destroyed in the attempt to "take the Indian out of the child".

*How can we begin the process of reconciliation in Canada?*

- Become familiar with the TRC Calls to Action [http://trc.ca/assets/pdf/Calls\\_to\\_Action\\_English2.pdf](http://trc.ca/assets/pdf/Calls_to_Action_English2.pdf)
- Learn the history of the Treaties, the Indian Act, Residential Schools and the 60s Scoop
- Find the Calls to Action that you can identify with and enter into dialogue

The reconciliation process at the Lutheran Urban Ministry has begun with truly listening to those who have felt that in their lives they had no voice to speak and feel that they are heard. Our weekly co-ed sharing circles, women's sharing circles and bi-weekly men's sharing circles are circles of trust and care. We recognize the Indigenous wisdom that "we are all in relation to each other".

**Please visit our newly designed website!** The website address is the same ([www.theurban.ca](http://www.theurban.ca)). Our new website supports video and will regularly feature short snippets of happenings at the Urban! Check out:

**The Lutheran Urban Ministry Short Documentary Film: *Hope is Never Lost* (12 minutes)** captures the heart and soul of the Urban. View from our website or through YouTube: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=FatPtzT9HhY>

*Thank you* to the meal teams who ensure that no one leaves the Urban hungry, and to all those who donate groceries for our emergency food. Our website calendar shows available dates for meal teams. Please contact me: [rhonda@theurban.ca](mailto:rhonda@theurban.ca) for additional information, or to have your meal team added to the calendar.

Kind regards,  
Rhonda Gorham  
Ministry Manager, Lutheran Urban Ministry

We welcome all because God welcomes all, regardless of age, ability, health, ethnicity, gender identity, language, sexual orientation, life circumstances, marital status, race, or anything else which sometimes divides us. We welcome diversity and uniqueness. Our unity is in Christ, whose grace is freely given to all. All are welcome.