

Faith United Milton 2021 Summer worship series: INDIGENOUS SPIRITUALITY

Theme: Simple parallels between indigenous spirituality on Turtle Island and Canadian Christianity.
Prepared by: the Faith United Milton Worship Team, June 2021 as emailed worship experiences during July and August 2021. www.faithunitedmilton.org.

PREAMBLE:

Our Faith United 2021 summer worship series attempts to give a basic knowledge of some of the belief structure of the indigenous peoples who have inhabited Turtle Island (what we now call North America) for thousands of years. This belief system ultimately ensured Indigenous peoples and their communities maintained a deeply interconnected relationship of respect and balance with nature, animals, and human life. It also involved a deep relationship with the Great Spirit. Maintaining a positive relationship between these components was, and is, integral to their traditional world view.

Prior to the arrival of Europeans in North America, Indigenous Nations had their own complex system of spiritual beliefs, the breadth and depth of which the Europeans colonizers did not fully comprehend or appreciate. Indigenous Peoples' spirituality was rooted in their connection to nature, the earth, and one another. The imposition of Christian beliefs by the colonizers deeply affected Indigenous communities and their belief systems. The Truth and Reconciliation Commission Final Report recognized this in stating: "The impacts of this trauma have been felt across many generations (TRC, 2015)."

And yet, there is much overlap with the basic truths of Jesus teachings and indigenous spirituality.

1) July 4: Indigenous Spirituality

OPENING PRAYER:

Let us give thanks to our Creator
for the Creator is always with us.
God is with us in the call of a loon
and in the flight of an eagle.
Our Creator is with us in the changing of the seasons.
God is with us when we gather together
and when we are alone.
Our Creator is with us in our giftedness
and in our search for new understandings of ourselves,
new visions of our communities.
Let us give thanks to God, our Creator.

—A prayer from *The Dancing Sun* (United Church of Canada/Anglican Church of Canada), alt., for Aboriginal Sunday <https://united-church.ca/worship-special-days/indigenous-day-prayer>

OPENING HYMN:

Called By Earth and Sky

Performed by our Faith musicians

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=2p6eYgSWBc8>

SCRIPTURE:

Job 12: 7-10

“But ask the animals, and they will teach you,
or the birds in the sky, and they will tell you;
or speak to the earth, and it will teach you,
or let the fish in the sea inform you.

Which of all these does not know
that the hand of the Lord has done this?
In his hand is the life of every creature
and the breath of all mankind.

Matthew 6: 25-30

“Therefore I tell you, do not worry about your life, what you will eat or drink; or about your body, what you will wear. Is not life more than food, and the body more than clothes? Look at the birds of the air; they do not sow or reap or store away in barns, and yet your heavenly Father feeds them. Are you not much more valuable than they? Can any one of you by worrying add a single hour to your life?

“And why do you worry about clothes? See how the flowers of the field grow. They do not labor or spin. Yet I tell you that not even Solomon in all his splendor was dressed like one of these. If that is how God clothes the grass of the field, which is here today and tomorrow is thrown into the fire, will he not much more clothe you—you of little faith?

REFLECTION: INDIGENOUS SPIRITUALITY

Reverend Laverne Jacobs, an Ojibwe Anglican priest, was interviewed by Paul McKenna in 1993 concerning indigenous spirituality for the Canadian Roman Catholic *Scarboro Missions* magazine. The reflection below includes excerpts from that conversation.

Please note that while the terms “Indian” and “Native” are no longer common references to indigenous peoples, those terms are included here as part of Rev. Jacobs’ original commentary.

<https://www.scarboromissions.ca/interfaith-article-aboriginal-spirituality>

“On a moral or ethical level there are some remarkable similarities between [Christianity and Indigenous Spirituality]. The notion of relationship is central to both the teachings of Christ and the traditional Native teachings. Accordingly, both religions share common values: respect for others, unconditional love, service, generosity, humility and forgiveness.

Jesus used examples from nature to demonstrate how we are to live given our dependence on nature. But the major conflicts or differences between the two religions are related not so much to ethical teachings but rather to the cultures or traditions out of which each religion emerges. For example, the cultural form of Christianity that the missionaries brought to Canada from western

Europe in the 17th century was in sharp contrast to the cultural values they encountered here among the Indians.

The word "relationship" is key to understanding the Native worldview and Native spirituality; or to be more specific, the word "interrelationship." Indian people have a deep sense that all facets of creation are interrelated, are in harmony with one another. This sense of relationship extends to the land, the earth, the birds, the animals, to our sisters and brothers and to the Creator.

Connected to this sense of interrelationship is a deep sense of respect for all parts of creation. We honour all that the Creator has made. Our sense of respect for creation is related to other key Native values: stewardship (care) for the environment, the importance of community, the notion of generosity and sharing, respect for the teaching of our elders, and humility. Native people have a profound sense of respect for the Creator. God is very real for the Native person. Generally speaking, Native people relate to their Creator in a way that is very personal, very open, very natural. Their relationship to God is thus more emotional than intellectual.

In the aboriginal scheme of things, we humans don't stand outside nature. We are nature, i.e. we are part of nature, not apart from nature. And you can find some of these same values in the teachings of Christ, many of his teachings came from nature. He instructed his disciples how to live given their dependence on nature.

Native people as a whole are fairly content to just be. I guess you could say that they have a kind of contemplative nature about them, and non-Native people seem to have a great deal of difficulty with this. Non-native people can't seem to feel good about themselves unless they're doing something. They have to have an agenda... It seems to be very difficult for them to sit idle and just be... One's value, it seems, is wrapped up in what one has accomplished, in what can be materially measured.

In the western Christian tradition, God, it seems to me, is perceived largely as a father figure who is all powerful. And the whole issue of morality is very much tied up with the western Christian concept of God. In the Native tradition, God is neither male nor female. God is God.

In western Christian thought, a lot of words and definitions and creeds are used to describe or define the reality of God. Native people feel less compelled to define God. God is seen as more of a mystery, the source of all life.

In my perception there are two fundamental qualities that characterize aboriginal spirituality: first, the interrelationship of all parts of creation, and second, an approach to God that is very genuine, very open and very personal. Both traditions believe in the omnipotence of God who is the source of all life."

LISTEN: Our Awakening / Gathering Song

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ybMbw6EaSU4>

"Our Awakening" by Sons of Membertou is a Mi'kmaq song frequently used as a Gathering Song. It was originally released on a CD titled "The People of the Dawn".

CLOSING PRAYER:

May the Warm Winds of Heaven
Blow softly upon your house.

May the Great Spirit
Bless all who enter there.

May your Mocassins

Make happy tracks

in many snows,

and may the Rainbow

Always touch your shoulder.

[Cherokee Prayer Blessing]

2) July 11: The Seven Grandfather Teachings**OPENING PRAYER:**

Today we send Prayers to the four directions:

To the East: Prayers for wisdom each day as the Sun rises on Mother Earth

To the South: Prayers for renewal that God has provided to grow and learn so that we do not cause further harm or ignore the cry of all living creatures

To the West: Prayers for the sacred water of life to preserve life through its purity

To the North: For the wind to carry these prayers, for those willing to help each other.

Be well and May Every Day be Earth Day.

OPENING HYMN: Give Thanks

Performed by our Faith musicians

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=jM8okn-vlQE>

SCRIPTURE:**Exodus 20: 1-21**

And God spoke all these words:

“I am the Lord your God, who brought you out of Egypt, out of the land of slavery.

“You shall have no other gods before me.

“You shall not make for yourself an image in the form of anything in heaven above or on the earth beneath or in the waters below. You shall not bow down to them or worship them; for I, the Lord your God, am a jealous God, punishing the children for the sin of the parents to the third and fourth generation of those who hate me, but showing love to a thousand generations of those who love me and keep my commandments.

“You shall not misuse the name of the Lord your God, for the Lord will not hold anyone guiltless who misuses his name.

“Remember the Sabbath day by keeping it holy. Six days you shall labor and do all your work, but the seventh day is a sabbath to the Lord your God. On it you shall not do any work, neither you, nor your son or daughter, nor your male or female servant, nor your animals, nor any foreigner residing in your towns. For in six days the Lord made the heavens and the

earth, the sea, and all that is in them, but he rested on the seventh day. Therefore the Lord blessed the Sabbath day and made it holy.

“Honor your father and your mother, so that you may live long in the land the Lord your God is giving you.

“You shall not murder.

“You shall not commit adultery.

“You shall not steal.

“You shall not give false testimony against your neighbor.

“You shall not covet your neighbor’s house. You shall not covet your neighbor’s wife, or his male or female servant, his ox or donkey, or anything that belongs to your neighbor.”

When the people saw the thunder and lightning and heard the trumpet and saw the mountain in smoke, they trembled with fear. They stayed at a distance and said to Moses, “Speak to us yourself and we will listen. But do not have God speak to us or we will die.”

Moses said to the people, “Do not be afraid. God has come to test you, so that the fear of God will be with you to keep you from sinning.”

The people remained at a distance, while Moses approached the thick darkness where God was.

Galatians 5: 22–25 (NIV)

The fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, forbearance, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness and self-control. Against such things there is no law. Those who belong to Christ Jesus have crucified the flesh with its passions and desires. Since we live by the Spirit, let us keep in step with the Spirit.

REFLECTION: The Seven Grandfather Teachings

These scriptures listing the Ten Commandments from Exodus, and Paul’s letter to the Galatians listing nine fruits of the “spirit”, describe the framework around which Christianity is built and the evidence of the life of Christ within us. The fruits of the spirit represent what we are and hopefully what we do, and describe basic Christian values. These laws and fruits of the spirit are very similar in intention to the teachings of indigenous spirituality.

The SEVEN GRANDFATHER TEACHINGS are common to many of the First Nations peoples on Turtle Island (North America). These teachings share some of the traditional values of indigenous people and encourage us all to love and respect one another. The story goes...

The Creator gave the seven grandfathers, who were very powerful spirits, the responsibility to watch over the people. The grandfathers saw that the people were living a hard life. They sent their helper six different times to find a person who could be taught how to live in a good way with all of creation. Finally, the Seven Grandfathers’ helper found a baby boy, who because he was just born was pure enough to receive the teachings and bring these teachings back to the people. The Grandfathers were happy with the choice made by the helper. The baby boy is a symbol to people that it is important to start early when educating our young people and that they are already beginning to learn at a very young age. Babies are still very connected to the spirit world and understand this connection, which can be lost when people become adults.

While the boy was traveling with the helper, they were visited seven times by spirits who told them about the gifts. Here is what they said:

1. To cherish knowledge is to know WISDOM
2. To know LOVE is to know peace
3. To honor all of creation is to have RESPECT
4. BRAVERY is to face the foe with integrity
5. HONESTY in facing a situation is to be brave
6. HUMILITY is to know yourself as a sacred part of creation
7. TRUTH is to know all of these things

Before departing from the Seven Grandfathers, they told the young boy:

“Each of these teachings must be used with the rest. You cannot have Wisdom without Love, Respect, Bravery, Honesty, Humility, and Truth. You cannot be Honest if you are only using one of the other teachings. To leave out one teaching would be embracing the opposite of what the teaching means.”

The Seven Grandfathers each instructed the child with a principle. It was then up to the child to forget them, or to put them to use. Each one of us represents the child. We must faithfully apply the teachings of our Seven Grandfathers to our own lives. We must place our trust in the Creator. We must also never forget to be sincere in our actions, character, and words.

Authentic indigenous spirituality is shared, not taught, and is rooted in the joys and suffering of distinct peoples, their lands and all their relations. It is fundamentally about respect and integrity of personhood.

LISTEN: Nearer My God To Thee

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=iw3DLY3WZOk>

Sung in Inuktitut, the language of the Inuit people of northern Canada

CLOSING PRAYER:

God send you from here in the power of love.

God keep you filled with the Holy Spirit.

God build in you the reign of Christ.

Written by Robin Wardlaw, Toronto, Ont.

From the Gathering, Pentecost 1 2021. Used with permission

3) July 18: Grandfather teaching #1 = LOVE

OPENING PRAYER:

Loving God,

you live in us through the Spirit.

We feel the holy breeze on our hearts,
as surely as the trees feel the gentle wind
on their leaves.

Thank you for always being with us,
for giving us the courage and strength
to let the Spirit into our lives,
to let it fill our spiritual sails and carry us forward,
so that we may be winds of change
in a becalmed world.

Through your love, O God, this is possible. Amen.

*Written by Dianne Young, St. Martin's U.C., Saskatoon, Sask.
From the Gathering, Pentecost 1 2021. Used with permission.*

OPENING HYMN: Welcome Jesus

Performed by our Faith musicians

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=xqMZl_-b8fw

SCRIPTURE:

Colossians 3:12–14 (NIV)

Therefore, as God's chosen people, holy and dearly loved, clothe yourselves with compassion, kindness, humility, gentleness and patience. Bear with each other and forgive one another if any of you has a grievance against someone. Forgive as the Lord forgave you. And over all these virtues put on love, which binds them all together in perfect unity.

1 Corinthians 13: 1–13 (NIV)

If I speak in the tongues of men or of angels, but do not have love, I am only a resounding gong or a clanging cymbal. If I have the gift of prophecy and can fathom all mysteries and all knowledge, and if I have a faith that can move mountains, but do not have love, I am nothing. If I give all I possess to the poor and give over my body to hardship that I may boast, but do not have love, I gain nothing.

Love is patient, love is kind. It does not envy, it does not boast, it is not proud. It does not dishonour others, it is not self-seeking, it is not easily angered, it keeps no record of wrongs. Love does not delight in evil but rejoices with the truth. It always protects, always trusts, always hopes, always perseveres.

Love never fails. But where there are prophecies, they will cease; where there are tongues, they will be stilled; where there is knowledge, it will pass away. For we know in part and we prophesy in part, but when completeness comes, what is in part disappears. When I was a child, I talked like a child, I thought like a child, I reasoned like a child. When I became a man, I put the ways of childhood behind me. For now we see only a reflection as in a mirror; then we shall see face to face. Now I know in part; then I shall know fully, even as I am fully known.

And now these three remain: faith, hope and love. But the greatest of these is love.

REFLECTION: Grandfather teaching #1 = LOVE

Love is the gift from the Eagle.

In indigenous art, the eagle is believed to be the creature with the closest relationship with the Creator. Soaring to great heights, the eagle can travel between the physical and the spiritual world, and is said to be a messenger to the Creator. Unlike the raven's ability to send messages down, the eagle sends messages and prayers up to the Creator. If an Eagle was seen during a Prayer session it was a sign of having a prayer accepted. If a prayer needed immediate attention from the Creator, an eagle feather would be held up towards the sky. Although every part of the eagle has separate and significant meanings, the eagle as a whole signifies focus, strength, peace, leadership, and ultimate prestige.

The Grandfathers teach that love is a force that is undeniable. With love all things are possible. It is everyone's right to have and experience it. In terms of the Medicine Wheel, love is the hub. It is symbolic of fire and the Creator. To know love is to know the Creator, therefore it's expected one's first love is for that of the Creator or Great Spirit. Creator is the parent of all children.

The love given to the Great Spirit is expressed through self-love; if you can't love yourself, how can you love anyone else? The Great Spirit chose the eagle to represent love because the eagle soars the highest of all creatures in bringing pure vision to the seeker. Although love is the supplier of the greatest and most powerful medicine, it can also be the most elusive of the teachings as it depends on a world that acknowledges the importance of spirituality.

Knowing love is to know peace. Our love must be unconditional. When people are weak, that is when they need love the most. Love is a strong affection for another. This can form between friends and family. Love is an attachment based upon devotion, admiration, tenderness, and kindness for all things around you. For one to love and accept themselves is to live at peace with the Creator and in harmony with all of creation. Love knows no bounds. We must accept it sincerely and give it freely.

LISTEN: Ojibwa Prayer

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=vEBvo8Y4ZIY>

CLOSING PRAYER:

May the stars carry your sadness away
May the flowers fill your heart with beauty
May hope forever wipe away your tears
And above all may silence make you strong
~Chief Dan George

4) July 25: Grandfather teaching #2 = RESPECT

OPENING PRAYER:

May grace wash over you as you worship.

May peace be experienced in all we sing, pray, and reflect on.

May joy fill you so that you are enlightened by God's delight.

May love radiate from every cell, conveying the amazing truth of God's goodness.

In hope and gratitude, let us worship.

OPENING HYMN: Spirit of Gentleness

Performed by our Faith musicians

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=WBgxBQCLusQ>

SCRIPTURE:

1 Peter 5:5 ESV

Likewise, you who are younger be subject to the elders. Clothe yourselves, all of you with humility toward one another, for "God opposes the proud but gives grace to the humble."

1 Corinthians 12:14-26 (NIV)

Even so the body is not made up of one part but of many.

Now if the foot should say, "Because I am not a hand, I do not belong to the body," it would not for that reason stop being part of the body. And if the ear should say, "Because I am not an eye, I do not belong to the body," it would not for that reason stop being part of the body. If the whole body were an eye, where would the sense of hearing be? If the whole body were an ear, where would the sense of smell be? But in fact God has placed the parts in the body, every one of them, just as he wanted them to be. If they were all one part, where would the body be? As it is, there are many parts, but one body.

The eye cannot say to the hand, "I don't need you!" And the head cannot say to the feet, "I don't need you!" On the contrary, those parts of the body that seem to be weaker are indispensable, and the parts that we think are less honourable we treat with special honour. And the parts that are unpresentable are treated with special modesty, while our presentable parts need no special treatment. But God has put the body together, giving greater honour to the parts that lacked it, so that there should be no division in the body, but that its parts should have equal concern for each other. If one part suffers, every part suffers with it; if one part is honoured, every part rejoices with it.

REFLECTION: Grandfather teaching #2 = RESPECT

Respect is the gift from the Buffalo.

Respect is all about giving and sharing, one of the greatest secrets of a good life. Through giving its life and sharing every part of its being, the buffalo showed the deepest respect it had for people. No animal was more important to the existence of many indigenous nations. Its gifts provided shelter, clothing, and utensils for daily life. Indigenous people believed they were the true caretakers of the

herds and developed a sustainable relationship with the buffalo that resulted in a relationship of true respect.

The Grandfathers teach that the way to honour creation is by showing respect. There should be no part of creation that should be excluded from the honour that we are to give. We demonstrate respect by realizing the value of all people and things, and by showing courteous consideration and appreciation.

We must give respect if we wish to be respected. We honour the traditional roles that we fill and the teaching we have been given. We honour our families and others, as well as ourselves. We are not to bring harm to anyone or anything. Respect is not just an action, but a heart-grown feeling.

The buffalo is a generous animal. The indigenous nations and the buffalo coexisted in a rare balance between nature and man. Not only did the buffalo provide food, clothing, weapons and shelter, it also played a central role in their spiritual life. It gave its life so the indigenous peoples of the plains could live and the relationship between the people and the buffalo was a sacred one. They modeled the generosity of the buffalo. Like the buffalo, the indigenous people are generous.

As related by Nii Gaani Aki Inini – Leading Earth Man: The Buffalo said, “I come to let you know you must now serve your people. This is what respect is – to give yourself to the people using the laws we will bring you. The greatest gift you can give your Nation is yourself, being a model and example of the Seven Sacred Laws.”

LISTEN: Holy One

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=MBz_ppCLRjQ

Performed by Broken Walls at World Outreach Worship Centre 2007

CLOSING PRAYER:

In the midst of a world filled with clamour and boasting,
may our faithful presence be for others a quiet moment
filled with the love of God that reveals the good news of the kingdom of God
to those who are searching for hope. Amen.

Written by Sandy Ferguson, Strathearn U.C., Edmonton, Alta.

From Gathering Pentecost 1 2021. Used with permission.

5) August 1: Grandfather teaching #3 = COURAGE / BRAVERY

OPENING PRAYER:

Holy One,
in your heart, there is room for all
and a welcome that is deep, wide, and rich.
You join us together in your love.
You feed us with teachings
of kindness, respect, and justice.

You heal us and make us whole.
As we gather today,
we give thanks
that these gifts of welcome and warmth await us.
We would fill ourselves with these gifts
that we might take them and share them
with everyone we meet.
Bless us in this time together,
and send us out to be a blessing.
In Jesus' name. Amen.

Written by Bob Root & Co., Peterborough, Ont.

From the Gathering, Pentecost 1 2021. Used with permission

OPENING HYMN: Like a Rock

Faith musicians

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=uWLbwQxMqb4>

SCRIPTURE:

2 Timothy 1:7 ESV

God gave us a spirit not of fear but of power and love and self-control.

Acts 21: 10-14

Background: The Apostle Paul continues his third missionary journey and zeroes in on the city of Jerusalem, well aware that all the way along, every step he took, every town he came to, the Holy Spirit kept testifying to him that bonds and afflictions awaited him. But did that stop him? No, not a bit.

After we had been there a number of days, a prophet named Agabus came down from Judea. Coming over to us, he took Paul's belt, tied his own hands and feet with it and said, "The Holy Spirit says, 'In this way the Jewish leaders in Jerusalem will bind the owner of this belt and will hand him over to the Gentiles.'"

When we heard this, we and the people there pleaded with Paul not to go up to Jerusalem. Then Paul answered, "Why are you weeping and breaking my heart? I am ready not only to be bound, but also to die in Jerusalem for the name of the Lord Jesus." When he would not be dissuaded, we gave up and said, "The Lord's will be done."

REFLECTION: Grandfather teaching #3 = COURAGE / BRAVERY

The Bear carries courage.

Most Native American tribes revere the bear. Like the turtle, each tribe's cultural view of the bear varies; however, at the core, the bear represents authority, good medicine, courage, and strength. The bear is said to be a healer and protector, and stands up for what is right and fight for what is good and true.

The Bear provides many lessons in the way it lives, but courage is the most important teaching it offers. Though gentle by nature, the ferociousness of a mother bear when one of her cubs is approached is the true definition of courage. To have the mental and moral strength to overcome fears that prevent us from living our true spirit as human beings is a great challenge that must be met with the same vigour and intensity as a mother bear protecting her cub. Living of the heart and living of the spirit is difficult, but the bear's example shows us how to face any danger to achieve these goals.

The bear will give us the understanding to seek resolutions through spiritual intervention: hence, spiritual healing to deal with anger, pain and ourselves. We seek the strength and courage to face our greatest enemy-oneself.

Courage is the ability to face danger, fear, or change with confidence and bravery. The bear teaches us courage with many lessons in the way it lives. Courage is the most important teaching the bear offers. The true definition of courage is a mother bear's ferociousness when it comes to her cubs being approached, very much like a human mother when she comes to her child. This same ferociousness is needed to have the moral and mental strength to overcome fears that prevent us from living our true spirit as human beings. Living in the heart and spirit is difficult. The bear's example shows us how to face any danger to achieve courage in our lives.

Facing a problem with integrity is a true demonstration of bravery. We do what is right even when the consequences may be unpleasant. We face life with the courage to use our personal strengths to face difficulties, stand tall through adversity, and make positive choices. We must stand up for our convictions and have courage in our thinking and speaking. All of these actions together will lead to ceaseless bravery.

As related by Nii Gaani Aki Inini – Leading Earth Man:

The Bear said, "I will give you the courage to become close to Mother Earth who will teach you."

LISTEN: Carry It On

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=08gyjR0Sk4s>

Buffy Sainte-Marie from her 2015 Polaris Prize Winning Album "Power in The Blood"

CLOSING PRAYER:

Treat the earth well.

It was not given to you by your parents,
it was loaned to you by your children.

We do not inherit the Earth from our Ancestors,
we borrow it from our Children.

A Ute prayer found on:

<http://www.sapphyr.net/natam/quotes-nativeamerican.htm>

6) August 8: Grandfather teaching #4 = HONESTY

OPENING PRAYER:

Hope is where the love is found.

We come seeking hope for ourselves and for all humankind. We come with anticipation and joy in our hearts.

Now let us worship the Presence as we pray and sing.

Written by Jim McKean, Orillia, Ont.

from the Gathering, Pentecost 1 2021. Used with permission.

OPENING HYMN: How Great Thou Art

Performed by our Faith musicians

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=tyS_zWo4Dk8

SCRIPTURE:

Ephesians 4:25 NIV

Therefore each of you must put off falsehood and speak truthfully to your neighbor, for we are all members of one body.

James 1: 2-5 NIV

My brothers and sisters, you will face all kinds of trouble. When you do, think of it as pure joy. Your faith will be tested. You know that when this happens it will produce in you the strength to continue. And you must allow this strength to finish its work. Then you will be all you should be. You will have everything you need. If any of you needs wisdom, you should ask God for it. He will give it to you. God gives freely to everyone and doesn't find fault.

REFLECTION: Grandfather teaching #4 = HONESTY

The Sabe (Sasquatch) represents the teaching of honesty.

Long ago, there was a giant called Kitch-Sabe. Kitch-Sabe walked among the people to remind them to be honest to the laws of the Creator and honest to each other. The highest honour that could be bestowed upon an individual was the saying: "There walks an honest man. He can be trusted." To be truly honest is to keep the promises one makes to the Creator, to others and to oneself. The Elders say, "Never try to be someone else; live true to your spirit, be honest to yourself and accept who you are the way the Creator made you."

The Sabe (Sasquatch) represents the teaching of honesty because he knows who he is in his life, and how to walk in a good way. An honest person is said to "walk tall like the Kitchi-Sabe"; he does not seek the power, speed or beauty of others. Be honest with yourself; recognize and accept who you are. Accept and use the gifts you have been given by the Creator. Do not seek to deceive yourself or others.

Facing a situation is to be brave, but having the courage to not only do the right thing, but also saying it, is honesty. We must allow truth to be our guide. We must first be honest with ourselves. This will

allow us to be honest with others. We must give full value to both the efforts of our own and others. When we walk through life with integrity, it is then that we know honesty. Be truthful and trustworthy. We must also remember to accept and act on truths through straightforward and appropriate communication.

As related by Nii Gaani Aki Inini – Leading Earth Man:

Sabe said, “The more honest you are in your life, the more tall you will become as I am, as the Sabe. I live in the trees, watching and listening to see if you are honest. I bring medicine from the land to keep you strong and healthy. I am always there to help you.”

LISTEN: Honour Song

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=7wtB-XN3pql>

Sung by Jeremy Dutcher

Translation

Let us greatly respect our being L'nu

My people let us gather

Let us greatly respect our native roots

My people let us help one another

Let us help one another as Creator intended

When he put us on the earth.

Way-yoh-way-hi-yah Way-yoh-way-yoh-way-hi-yah Way-yoh-way-hi-yah Way-yoh-way-hi-yah

Way-yoh-way-hi-yah Way-yoh-way-hi-yah Way-yoh-way-hi-yah-hay-yoh

CLOSING PRAYER:

May all I say and all I think
be in harmony with thee,
God within me,
God beyond me,
maker of the trees.

A Chinook Prayer

7) August 15: Grandfather teaching #5 = WISDOM

OPENING PRAYER:

Loving God,
you live in us through the Spirit.
We feel the holy breeze on our hearts,
as surely as the trees feel the gentle wind
on their leaves.
Thank you for always being with us,
for giving us the courage and strength
to let the Spirit into our lives,
to let it fill our spiritual sails and carry us forward,

so that we may be winds of change
in a becalmed world.

Through your love, O God, this is possible. Amen.

*Written by Dianne Young, St. Martin's U.C., Saskatoon, Sask.
from the Gathering, Pentecost 1 2021. Used with permission.*

OPENING HYMN: God of the Sparrow

Performed by our Faith musicians

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=an6nWlldYic>

SCRIPTURE:

James 3:13:

Who is wise and understanding among you? By his good conduct let him show his works in the meekness of wisdom. (NIV)

Matthew 25:14-30 (NIV)

Jesus teaches the Parable of the Bags of Gold

“Again, it will be like a man going on a journey, who called his servants and entrusted his wealth to them. To one he gave five bags of gold, to another two bags, and to another one bag, each according to his ability. Then he went on his journey. The man who had received five bags of gold went at once and put his money to work and gained five bags more. So also, the one with two bags of gold gained two more. But the man who had received one bag went off, dug a hole in the ground and hid his master’s money.

“After a long time the master of those servants returned and settled accounts with them. The man who had received five bags of gold brought the other five. ‘Master,’ he said, ‘you entrusted me with five bags of gold. See, I have gained five more.’

“His master replied, ‘Well done, good and faithful servant! You have been faithful with a few things; I will put you in charge of many things. Come and share your master’s happiness!’

“The man with two bags of gold also came. ‘Master,’ he said, ‘you entrusted me with two bags of gold; see, I have gained two more.’

“His master replied, ‘Well done, good and faithful servant! You have been faithful with a few things; I will put you in charge of many things. Come and share your master’s happiness!’

“Then the man who had received one bag of gold came. ‘Master,’ he said, ‘I knew that you are a hard man, harvesting where you have not sown and gathering where you have not scattered seed. So, I was afraid and went out and hid your gold in the ground. See, here is what belongs to you.’

“His master replied, ‘You wicked, lazy servant! So you knew that I harvest where I have not sown and gather where I have not scattered seed? Well then, you should have put my money on deposit with the bankers, so that when I returned, I would have received it back with interest.’

““So, take the bag of gold from him and give it to the one who has ten bags. For whoever has will be given more, and they will have an abundance. Whoever does not have, even what they have will be taken from them. And throw that worthless servant outside, into the darkness, where there will be weeping and gnashing of teeth.’

REFLECTION: Grandfather teaching #5 = WISDOM

The Beaver brings us the Law of Wisdom.

Wisdom is knowing your gifts and using these gifts to serve your fellow human beings. Living your gifts will define your identity and purpose in life. Your gifts are to help you build a world connected to the Laws we have brought, to bring peace and balance.

Wisdom is the ability to make decisions based on personal knowledge and experience. A community is entirely dependent on the gifts given to each member by the Creator. The beaver's example of using its sharp teeth for cutting down trees and branches to build its dams and lodges expresses this teaching. If the beaver didn't use its teeth in this way, the teeth would continue to grow until they became useless, ultimately making it impossible for the beaver to sustain itself. The same can be said for human beings. One's spirit will grow weak if it is not fulfilling its use. When used properly, one's gifts contribute to the development of a peaceful and healthy being and community.

Wisdom is given to us by the Creator to be used for good. Wisdom carries other meanings, which also include intelligence or knowledge. When we cherish our knowledge or intelligence, we are also cherishing our wisdom. We must use sound judgement along with the ability to separate inner qualities and relationships. We must use a good sense and course of action to form a positive attitude. We must remember to listen and use the wisdom that has been provided by our elders, tribal leadership, and our spiritual leaders. We must also always remember that wisdom comes in all shapes, sizes, forms, and ages.

Wisdom is not to be confused with knowledge. Wisdom is the gained experience and knowledge is to know the difference and accept responsibility and accountability. As an example: when one pollutes the water, one does not break a human law, but the law of nature, which states that to poison the water is to destroy oneself.

As related by Nii Gaani Aki Inini – Leading Earth Man:

Beaver said: "To know wisdom is to know yourself. If I did not use the gift that I have been blessed with, my sharp teeth to build dams, my teeth would grow long and I would get sick and eventually die. The same is true for you. If you don't use your gifts, it will affect your health and life. Stay true to your identity and gifts. Now is the time to bring them forward to help build a new world. What are your gifts?"

LISTEN: Children of the World

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=1-r56pnfZ5E>

CLOSING PRAYER:

Peace and happiness are available in every moment.

Peace is every step. We shall walk hand in hand.

There are no political solutions to spiritual problems.

Remember: If the Creator put it there, it is in the right place.

The soul would have no rainbow if the eyes had no tears.

Tell your people that, since we were promised we should never be moved, we have been moved five times.

Cherokee Prayer found on: <http://www.sapphyr.net/natam/quotes-nativeamerican.htm>

8) August 22: Grandfather teaching #6 = HUMILITY

OPENING PRAYER:

Creating, Loving God,
in Christ, you show us a way
to heal and to shape a new day,
and you entrust us with the gifts of faith:
forgiveness, compassion, trust, and love.
In the changing seasons,
in the changing world,
your love is constant.
May our witness and prayer sustain
and support goodness, justice, and peace
in our worship and work,
enough for this day
and for all the generations who follow us. Amen.

Written by Wendy MacLean, Christ U.C., Lyn, Ont.

from the Gathering, Pentecost 1 2021. Used with permission

OPENING HYMN: What a friend we have in Jesus

Performed by our Faith musicians

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=kMkdYkVk3Y0>

SCRIPTURE:

Proverbs 18:12 (NIV)

Before a downfall the heart is haughty, but humility comes before honour.

Philippians 2: 2-4 (NIV)

Imitating Christ's Humility

Therefore, if you have any encouragement from being united with Christ, if any comfort from his love, if any common sharing in the Spirit, if any tenderness and compassion, then make my joy complete by being like-minded, having the same love, being one in spirit and of one mind. Do nothing out of selfish ambition or vain conceit. Rather, in humility value others above yourselves, not looking to your own interests but each of you to the interests of the others.

REFLECTION: Grandfather teaching #6 = HUMILITY

The Wolf brings the law of humility.

Central to the wolf is the family pack. To ensure survival, the pack must be as one. In one's life, much the same as the wolf, we need to understand humility. In the wolf pack, each member understands his individual role and in our individual lives humility becomes the factor, which allows us to ask for guidance humbly.

The Wolf says: "In life you must walk in humbleness. Never put yourself above any of your fellow human beings and never put yourself above Nature because she is our Mother. I also bring you other teachings that are good from your brothers and sisters that have arrived on your homeland we call Turtle Island. Always show gratitude for the blessings you receive in life."

Humility is recognizing and acknowledging that Creator is a higher power than people. The expression of this humility is manifested through the consideration of others before oneself. The wolf teaches us humility; it bows his head in the presence of others in deference, and once it has hunted the wolf will not take any of the food until it can be shared with the pack. The wolf's lack of arrogance and its respect for its community is a hard lesson, but is the indigenous people's way.

Humility is to know that we are a part of creation. We must always consider ourselves equal to one another. We should never think of ourselves as being better or worse than anyone else. Humility comes in many forms. This includes compassion, calmness, meekness, gentleness, and patience. We must reflect on how we want to present ourselves to those around us. We must be aware of the balance and equality with all of life, including humans, plants, and animals.

The Wolf said, "You must live the Laws we have brought you in a most humble way and we will always be here to answer your call. Walk gently on Mother Earth. Treat everyone as your brother and sister with humbleness and kindness."

LISTEN: Amazing Grace (in Inuktitut)

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=l7oiORR2gbY>

CLOSING PRAYER:

As you return to the world,
know that God remembers you,
God gathers and upholds you,
and God sends you out as evangelists,
to share the Good News of Jesus Christ
with your neighbours,
by word and by example.

Written by George Allan, Chatham, Ont.

From Gathering Pentecost 1 2021. Used with permission.

9) August 29: Grandfather teaching #7 = TRUTH

OPENING PRAYER:

Holy Spirit, we see your power
in lives transformed, hearts on fire.
We listen for your still, small voice,
comforting, guiding, calling.
Holy Spirit, in this season of the Spirit,
we praise you. Amen.

*Written by Ronald Black, Northminster Memorial U.C., Flin Flon, Man.
from the Gathering, Pentecost 1 2021. Used with permission.*

OPENING HYMN: Spirit of Life

Performed by our Faith musicians

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=b00O61HQBfA>

SCRIPTURE:

1 John 5:20 NIV

We know also the Son of God has come and given us understanding, so that we may know him who is true. And we are in him who is true by being in his Son Jesus Christ. He is the true God and eternal life.

Colossians 1:15-20 (NIV)

The Supremacy of the Son of God

The Son is the image of the invisible God, the firstborn over all creation. For in him all things were created: things in heaven and on earth, visible and invisible, whether thrones or powers or rulers or authorities; all things have been created through him and for him. He is before all things, and in him all things hold together. And he is the head of the body, the church; he is the beginning and the firstborn from among the dead, so that in everything he might have the supremacy. For God was pleased to have all his fullness dwell in him, and through him to reconcile to himself all things, whether things on earth or things in heaven, by making peace through his blood, shed on the cross.

REFLECTION: Grandfather teaching #7 = TRUTH

The Turtle carries truth.

Turtle represents Woman, the giver of life – your Mother Earth, and your own mother who gave you life. On the turtle's back are thirteen markings, representing the truth of the thirteen moons of the journey Mother Earth makes around Grandfather Sun, a symbol of the Great Spirit. Thirteen also represents: the nine moons it takes to be created in the womb of your mother, plus the four seasons that you must follow; the four elements of life – earth, air, water and fire, the four elements of your human nature – spirit, emotions, body, and mind, with the four directions where the Grandfathers and Grandmothers sit in the spirit world.

Truth is to know and understand all of the original laws given by the Creator and to remain faithful to them. The turtle teaches us about truth. It is said that in the beginning when the Creator made humanity and gave them the Sacred Laws, the Grandmother Turtle was present to ensure that the laws would never be forgotten.

Truth is symbolic of law and principle. Since the beginning of time the turtle has not changed. The turtle has been chosen to be the bearer of truth and the basic truth of the laws of nature have not changed. The turtle has been able to adapt to change without changing; thus, he represents truth.

LISTEN: O Siem

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=nS7e3A4Z8bE>

Sung by Susan Oglukark

CLOSING PRAYER:

Go from this place today
filled with God's abundant love.

Go from this place today
filled with God's love in your heart.

Go now from this place
and share this abundance and love with others.

Go now from this place
and know that God is grateful
for each and every one of you.

Go from this place. Go with peace. Go with grace. Amen.

Written by Julie Hutton, Minnedosa U.C., Minnedosa, Man.

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