

Hello, Friends.

We want to welcome you to the Regional Meeting. We hope you have booked accommodation in Prince Albert now. If not, please do so as soon as possible.

As representatives from your communities of faith, you have been asked to prayerfully consider all the business that will come before us. Our decisions will impact on the ways we live and work together in Living Skies Region, and how we will speak collectively to the wider United Church about what we believe and how we will embody our discipleship here in Saskatchewan.

From the perspective of St. Paul, we are always ambassadors in the world for the kin-dom of God. On this occasion, we will be more tangibly ambassadors of our United Church when we attend the Pow Wow to which we have been invited on Friday, May 29th. At that event, we will be the guests of the First Nations community of Prince Albert. It is an honour. Whatever we can do ahead of time to be truly as present as possible to our hosts will be time well spent.

And our meeting agenda includes two guest speakers to our plenary as well, Chief Cadmus Delorme, and Elder Liz Settee. They are leaders in their communities and have agreed to bring a word to us about how we can walk a good path with all our relations so that we may be faithful to one another and ultimately, to the One we follow. To that end, today we are including a list of books (see next page) that offer a variety of voices and stories about reconciliation, residential schools, colonization, and brave hopes for a renewed future.

Some of these resources were published quite recently, so may be readily available. Some are older and may be harder to find. Ask around and check the shelves at your church. Online portals may have them available. We invite you to engage with at least one of them between now and the meeting in May. You could gather a circle of friends or have a study at your church to support your reading.

The Easter season is always a time when we explore how the good news spread out through communities and across the eastern empire in the first decades after the Jesus events. These stories, the stories of this place and time, are hard ones for they speak of much suffering. By reading them, we honour the courage of those who have been brave in sharing them. And, like the crucifixion story at the heart of our faith, they are good news in so far as they speak truths that can set us free when we allow ourselves to be changed by those truths. May it be so.

The materials in relation to our decision to be AFFIRMing as a Region are available on the Living Skies website. Though the time for comments on the statement has passed, still it is important that each of us review the statement so that when the question comes to the floor, we may celebrate together a reaffirmation of the commitments we made as a Conference to live justly and uphold our solidarity as 2S and LGBTQIIA+ and allies.

May you be blessed in your reading, prayer, and preparation in this holy season.

*Cordially, Carolyn*

for the Living Skies Regional Meeting Planning Committee

*A List of Resources for the Regional Meeting, in Prince Albert SK, May 25-28, 2023.*

21 Things You Might Not Know About the Indian Act: Helping Canadians Make Reconciliation with Indigenous Peoples a Reality, by Bob Joseph

Braiding Sweetgrass, by Robin Wall Kimmerer

Bridges in Spirituality, by Joyce Carlson and Alf Dumont

Five Little Indians, by Michelle Good

From Our Mother's Arms: The Intergenerational Impact of Residential Schools in Saskatchewan, by Constance Dieter

Healing Haunted Histories: A Settler Discipleship of Decolonization, by Elaine Enns and Ched Myers

"I Thought Pocahontas Was a Movie." Perspectives on Race/Culture Binaries in Education and Service Professions, Eds. Carol Schick and James McNinch

One Drum, by Richard Wagamese

Peace and Good Order, by Harold R. Johnson

Residential Schools and Reconciliation: Canada Confronts Its History, by J.R. Miller

Sacred Stories of the Sweetgrass Cree, recorded by Leonard Bloomfield, 1925, includes Cree language transcription.

Seven Fallen Feathers, by Tanya Talaga

Speaking My Truth: Reflections on Reconciliation and Residential School, selected by Shelagh Rogers, Mike DeGagne, Jonathan Dewar, and Glen Lowry

Strong Women Stories: Native Vision and Community Survival, Eds. Kim Anderson and Bonita Lawrence

The Other Side of the River: From Church Pew to Sweat Lodge, by Alf Dumont

The Reason You Walk, by Wab Kinew

The Red Road and Other Narratives of the Dakota Sioux, stories of Samuel Mniyo and Robert Goodvoice, Ed. Daniel M. Beveridge

They Called Me Number One: Secrets and Survival at an Indian Residential School, by Bev Sellars

Where the Pavement Ends: Canada's Aboriginal Recovery Movement and the Urgent Need for Reconciliation, by Marie Wadden

This is not an exhaustive list by any means. There are several different genres of writing here, from novel to memoir to spiritual meditation to textbook to sourcebook. This list does not include any children's storybooks. There are many.