



News and information

[Home](#) | [About us](#) | [News](#) | [Faith & Worship](#) | [Indigenous Ministries](#) | [Mission and Justice](#) | [Resources](#)



You are here: [Home](#) > [News](#) > Church celebrates National Day of Reconciliation

- **News and information**
- Press releases
- Ministry Matters
- Feature stories
- Anglican For your information
- Backgrounders
- Episcopal Blogs
- Photos
- Ecumenical
- RSS feeds
- Church News on your website
- **Newsletter Centre**
- **News Services**

For your information

Church celebrates National Day of Reconciliation

, Anglican Church of Canada

June 10, 2009 - Canadian Anglican leaders will join Aboriginal and government leaders in celebrating the National Day of Reconciliation on June 11, 2009. This marks one year since Prime Minister Stephen Harper apologized for Canada's role in Indian residential schools.

Several churches, including the Anglican Church of Canada, have called for a month of healing and reconciliation between May 26, the National Day of Healing and Reconciliation and June 21, the National Aboriginal Day. The June 11 landmark is intended as a reminder to Canadian Anglicans to improve relations and work for justice between Aboriginal and non-Aboriginals.

National Reconciliation Day events are happening in both Ottawa and the Toronto area.

Ottawa:

Archbishop Terry Finlay, the Primate's special envoy on residential schools, and Henriette Thompson, director of Partnerships, will attend many of these public events along with Bishop John Chapman (Diocese of Ottawa), diocesan staff, and parishioners.

5:00 a.m. Assembly of First Nations National Chief Phil Fontaine and the Hon. Chuck Strahl (Minister of Indian and Northern Affairs) take part in a sunrise ceremony of reconciliation on Victoria Island.

10:30 a.m. Aboriginal, church, and government leaders participate in a gift-giving ceremony on Victoria Island.

11:00 a.m. The group gathered at Victoria Island marches to Parliament Hill. Local churches are encouraged to ring their bells to mark the start of the march.

Noon to 2:00 pm. National Chief Fontaine and other speakers lead a unity rally on Parliament Hill. Children will then invite those gathered to join a round dance in the spirit of friendship and goodwill.

3:00 to 4:00 p.m. The Truth and Reconciliation Commission Roundtable hosts an acknowledgement gathering and honouring ceremony on Victoria Island.

Toronto Area:

11:30-noon The Rev. Canon Maylanne Maybee, Ecojustice coordinator, attends the Presbyterian Church in Canada General Assembly, Hamilton, Ont, to hear a reflection on the government's apology.

4:00-6:00 Esther Wesley, coordinator of the Anglican Healing Fund, and Sister Margaret Hayward, program assistant for residential schools, attend a public panel discussion on the Indian Residential School adjudication process at Osgoode Hall, 130 Queen Street West, Toronto. Reception to follow.

For more information about these events, contact Henriette Thompson, director of Partnerships, at (416) 400-4142.

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[jump to top of page](#)

[website content policies](#) | [information desk](#) | [technical standards & support](#) | [banner photos](#)

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