

June 10, 2026

Dear Friends and Allies on the Road to Reconciliation,

Best wishes to you and your family as we continue to enjoy the beautiful month of June. With June being designated as National Indigenous History Month and June 21st being designated as National Indigenous Peoples Day, there are numerous opportunities to celebrate and learn about Indigenous culture, history, and spirituality, and their many contributions to our country and our way of life.

Friends and allies have informed me of additional Indigenous learning and activist opportunities, which I wanted to share with you. There is always more to learn and do along the road towards reconciliation and right relations with First Nations, Inuit, and Métis communities.

Samia O'Day, who is the Director of the Brockville Concert Association and the Music Director of Wall Street United Church, has kindly informed us of a concert to be held at the Brockville Arts Centre on June 21st (National Indigenous Peoples Day). As Samia noted, "The Brockville Concert Association (BCA) believes that music can make a meaningful difference in communities. Our ongoing commitment to presenting an annual concert in celebration of National Indigenous Peoples Day is one way we put that belief into action. National Indigenous Peoples Day, celebrated annually on June 21, is a time to recognize and honour the rich cultures, histories, languages, knowledge, and contributions of First Nations, Inuit, and Métis Peoples. It is an opportunity for all Canadians to learn, listen, reflect, and celebrate the enduring presence and leadership of Indigenous communities across this land. The day also invites us to deepen our understanding of Indigenous experiences and to continue the work of building respectful relationships rooted in truth, justice, and reconciliation."

As Artistic Director Matthias Maute has expressed so beautifully: "On Sunday, June 21 at 2:30 PM, Brockville audiences are invited to experience a powerful and unusual concert: **J.S. Bach & Andrew Balfour — A Dialogue Between a Baroque and an Indigenous Composer**. Presented without intermission, this 70-minute musical encounter brings together the luminous world of Johann Sebastian Bach with the voice of Andrew Balfour. The program also features Nina Segalowitz, an Inuit throat singer, hand drummer, and spoken word artist known for creating

bridges between Indigenous and non-Indigenous communities through performance, memory, and cultural transmission. Taking place on National Indigenous Peoples Day, the concert becomes more than a performance—it becomes a conversation. Bach's baroque genius seems to speak across time to Balfour's contemporary Indigenous sound world, and Balfour answers back, transforming the dialogue into something alive, generous, and deeply moving. Performed by Ensemble Caprice and Ensemble ArtChoral under the direction of Matthias Maute, this concert invites listeners of all backgrounds to hear how two musical traditions can meet without losing their identity. At a time when reconciliation calls us to listen deeply, this program offers exactly that: beauty, respect, and a shared space for discovery. For the Brockville Concert Association, this concert is more than an event. It is an opportunity to celebrate National Indigenous Peoples Day, support artistic excellence, learn from Indigenous voices and experiences, and create meaningful connections through the universal language of music.”

KAIROS Canada consists of ten churches and religious organizations that work together in faithful action for ecological justice and human rights. On June 1st, they kindly shared a blog post by Brandi Bilodeau who reflects on the sacred teachings of the Medicine Wheel, reminding us of the deep interconnectedness between self, community, land and Spirit. She noted the following in her blog post: “While teachings and interpretations differ among Nations, communities and Knowledge Keepers, the Medicine Wheel is widely understood as a sacred framework representing balance, connection, cycles and wholeness. It reminds us that all things are interconnected, our spiritual, emotional, physical and mental selves, the people around us, the natural world, the ancestors who came before us and the generations yet to come. The Medicine Wheel teaches us that healing is not linear and that life moves in cycles: seasons, stages of life, directions, ceremonies, teachings and relationships. Each direction carries meaning, gifts, responsibilities and teachings that help guide us toward living in balance. The wheel also reflects the understanding that no part is more important than another. Every direction, every being and every role within Creation matters. The circle itself is sacred because it has no beginning and no end. It reminds us of continuity, unity and the ongoing relationship we hold with all living things.” The entire blog post may be accessed using the following link:

[Indigenous History Month |](#)



Canada Helps has stated that National Indigenous Peoples Day celebrates the history, heritage, resilience, and diversity of First Nations, Inuit and Métis Peoples. If you wish to make a donation to Indigenous-led charities participating in the practice of reconciliation by supporting arts and culture, the environment, etc., you may click on the following link:

[Support Indigenous charities.](#)

Kip Ip, who is the Joint Truth and Reconciliation Action Group (JTRAG) Library Reading Coordinator, has reviewed three adult books for this month, as follows:

1. Our Hearts Are as One Fire: An Ojibway-Anishinabe Vision for the Future (2020)

- Author: Jerry Fontaine, makwa ogimaa, from the Ojibway-Anishinabe community of Sagkeeng. Foreword by Lee Anne Cameron.
- Publication: UBC Press, 2020.
- Synopsis: Fontaine presents an Ojibway-Anishinabe vision for the future through stories of leaders, language, ceremony, land, and political responsibility. The book asks readers to understand Indigenous governance, spirituality, and nationhood from within Anishinabe knowledge.
- Group Discussion: Discuss what it means to read history through Indigenous knowledge, language, and law. Discuss how communities can move from learning about Indigenous peoples toward respecting Indigenous visions for the future.
- How to access: Open the UBC Press page or search your library catalog.
- URL: <https://www.ubcpres.ca/our-hearts-are-as-one-fire>

2. Clearing the Plains: Disease, Politics of Starvation, and the Loss of Indigenous Life (2013)

- Author: James Daschuk.
- Publication: University of Regina Press, 2013.
- Synopsis: A major historical study of disease, hunger, government policy, and the making of the Canadian Prairies. The book shows how colonial policy and starvation damaged Indigenous health and communities in ways that still matter today.
- Group Discussion: Discuss how health, land, hunger, and government policy were connected. Discuss why reconciliation requires serious attention to material history, not only symbolic language.
- How to access: Open the publisher page or search your library catalog.

- URL: <https://uofrpress.ca/Books/C/Clearing-the-Plains>

3. On Dismantling Settler Colonialism: An Insider’s Perspective on Reconciliation with Indigenous Peoples (2025)

- Author: John A. Olthuis, founding partner and Senior Counsel at OKT | Olthuis Kler Townshend LLP, Member of the Order of Canada, and long-time Indigenous rights lawyer.
- Publication: University of Toronto Press, 2025. UTP Insights series.
- Synopsis: Olthuis argues that reconciliation cannot remain at the level of apology, goodwill, or symbolic inclusion. He challenges assimilation and calls for political, economic, social, and cultural space where Indigenous nations can self-govern, restore land relationships, and live by their own laws, values, and responsibilities.
- Group Discussion: Discuss what “dismantling settler colonialism” can mean in local church and community life. Discuss how support for Indigenous jurisdiction, land relationships, and self-government differs from simply supporting reconciliation in words.
- How to access: Open the CPJ study and action group page, search your library catalog, or order through Canadian booksellers.
- URL: <https://cpj.ca/on-dismantling-settler-colonialism/>

Questions may be directed to Kip Ip at:

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Rachel Buchner, who is a member of our Indigenous Sub-Committee, kindly informed us of a course she is taking this summer based on the book entitled *Indigenous Theology and the Western Worldview: A Decolonized Approach to Christian Doctrine* by Reverend Dr. Randy Woodley. Many of you will recognize Randy Woodley as the author of *Becoming Rooted: One Hundred Days of Reconnecting with Sacred Earth* that we read for our summer study in 2023. Although the date for registering in the course has passed, the book is now available in paperback at Chapters/Indigo and is much less expensive than the cost of the course. I have purchased a copy and plan to read it. Anyone who is interested is welcome to borrow it from me.

Indspire has suggested a number of thoughtful resources to help inspire deeper understanding and connection throughout the month of June, as follows:

- [Unreserved](#) with Rosanna Deerchild, a CBC podcast celebrating Indigenous culture, creativity, and community through conversations with guests across Turtle Island.
- [The Knowing](#) by Tanya Talaga, a powerful documentary exploring intergenerational truths, memory and Indigenous identity.

[Red Sky Performance](#), a leading Indigenous contemporary performance company whose work blends dance, theatre, music, and storytelling to share powerful Indigenous perspectives and experiences.

The complete list of resources may be accessed using the following link:

community@indspire.ca

Thank you for your ongoing interest and involvement in learning about opportunities for increasing our understanding and taking actions to work towards reconciliation and right relations with Indigenous brothers and sisters everywhere.

In faith and friendship,

Donna Greenhorn
Founder and Team Leader of our Indigenous Sub-Committee Since
2013
Member of the Outreach Committee
Wall Street United Church