



Indigenous Reconciliation Action Fund (IRAF) – Background Information

Edgewood Camp and Conference Centre served for seven decades as a place for Lutherans, particularly children, youth, and young adults, to connect deeply with God's Creation by engaging in outdoor ministry. This education in loving the land took place on the traditional territory of the Haudenosaunee, Attawandaron/Neutral people, and the Mississaugas of the Credit First Nation within the Dish with One Spoon Covenant territory. As such, we acknowledge that the relationships built with Creation at Camp Edgewood were only possible because of the collective responsibility that Indigenous peoples showed historically and continue to provide in caring for the land.

Young leaders in the ELCIC have demonstrated increasing interest in connecting care for Creation with justice for Indigenous peoples. The 2011 ELCIC National Convention passed the Resolution on Right Relationships with Indigenous Peoples. In 2014, National Bishop Susan Johnson presented an Expression of Reconciliation at the Truth and Reconciliation Commission Alberta National Event, emphasizing our church's commitment to the ongoing, urgent, and long-term engagement in finding truth and Reconciliation together. To pursue this mandate, the National Youth Project from 2012-2016 focussed on the Right to Water in Indigenous communities. Youth interest has multiplied over time, as we saw at CLAY in 2018 in Thunder Bay where about 800 Lutheran and Anglican youth took part in the KAIROS Blanket Exercise. The ministry of young Lutherans has identified the importance of understanding Indigeneity and building relationships with Indigenous communities. We are seeing the attention of our greater faith community focus even more on Reconciliation, as the National Convention of the ELCIC's theme for 2019 is Called to Journey Together: The Ministry of Reconciliation. We are committed to moving forward from education to action towards Reconciliation.

We have seen the release of reports such as *Honouring the Truth, Reconciling for the Future: Final Report of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Canada* and *Reclaiming Power and Place: The Final Report of the National Inquiry into Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women and Girls*. Indigenous communities have guided us to the path of Reconciliation and provided the tools to renew the relationships between settlers and Indigenous peoples. We have heard apologies from politicians and faith leaders that have promised changed behaviour. We know that there is no Reconciliation and no justice without action. It is our responsibility to keep our promises and follow up on what has been asked of us to ensure that these conversations are translated into direct actions. It is especially important to center youth in these movements so that the future can look different than the past. We must honour the life-giving labour of Indigenous Elders and youth to date by pursuing meaningful change in our church and heart-based connections with our Indigenous neighbours.

In addition to the donation made to the Restoration of Identity Indian Residential School Survivors Legacy Project, it is suitable that one of the legacies of the sale of Edgewood Camp and Conference Centre is a \$25,000 contribution to implementing an Indigenous Reconciliation

Action Fund. The Youth and Young Adults Committee of the Eastern Synod (YAYA) will manage this fund which aims to contribute to the growing consciousness in the Eastern Synod of the need for truth about Canadian history and the impact of Christian communities on Indigenous nations across Turtle Island.

The Indigenous Reconciliation Action Fund is seed funding and growth funding intended to support learning, relationship building, and justice work between Lutheran and Indigenous children, youth, and/or young adults under 30 years old. This funding will support projects that directly address Articles 48 through 49 and 59 through 61 of the *Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Canada: Calls to Action* (see Appendix A). The funds from Edgewood Camp and Conference Centre are intended to be disseminated within the next three years as the imminent legacy of Lutheran outdoor ministry and to energize action regarding the conversations of Reconciliation garnered within the past ten years.

We are looking to build relationships and acknowledge that this will take more than three years to establish as well as ongoing financial support to maintain. We recognize that the sale of Edgewood's property and cash assets resulted in a \$330,000 contribution to the YAYA Endowment Fund and we recognize that the investment income from this fund supports YAYA ministries. YAYA is committed to uplifting Reconciliation projects and upholding relationships with Indigenous partners long into our future ministry work. As we consider what it means to reconcile with Indigenous neighbours and what tangible changes these relationships will yield for our church, YAYA will commit to allocating an additional 10% of our annual discretionary funding from the investment income of the YAYA Endowment Fund to the Indigenous Reconciliation Action Fund with a minimum contribution of \$5000 per year for the next five years to be reviewed at least every five years. YAYA will also gratefully accept cash and in kind donations to the Indigenous Reconciliation Action Fund.

Indigenous Elders who are in relationship with the ELCIC have said that we need youth at the table to create meaningful and lasting change. As we think about the next seven generations of youth that are growing up in the church, we have the opportunity to reimagine what it looks like to "do justice, love kindness, and walk humbly with God" (Micah 6:8). This financial support of Reconciliation actions is a powerful way for Camp Edgewood's legacy to continue to serve future generations of children, youth, and young adults by helping them to understand the relationship between the land, the church, and Indigenous neighbours. We trust our youth to guide our church to grow in faith and community while walking humbly with the Creator and our Indigenous neighbours down a path of Reconciliation.

Guidelines for Fund Dispersal

1. The initial contribution of \$25,000 from the sale of Edgewood Camp and Conference Centre to establish the Indigenous Reconciliation Action Fund is intended to be dispersed within three years of the establishment of the fund. This is seed funding intended to support learning, relationship building, and justice work between Lutheran and Indigenous communities throughout the Eastern Synod of the ELCIC.
2. As long term growth funding, YAYA will commit to allocating an additional 10% of our annual discretionary funding from the investment income of the Endowment Fund to the Indigenous Reconciliation Action Fund, with a minimum contribution of \$5000 per year for the next five years to be reviewed at least every five years. YAYA will also manage cash and in kind donations to the fund.

3. Projects accessing IRAF funds must center both Lutheran and Indigenous children, youth, and/or young adults under 30 years old. Applications must provide a name, email, and phone number for an Indigenous contact person who can speak in support of the project prior to the allocation of funds. YAYA will take responsibility for reaching out to these partners, to our best ability, during the application process to ensure that the projects pursued by Eastern Synod members are desired by Indigenous community members and are not an unwanted burden on Indigenous community members.
4. Applications must stipulate how they directly address one of the Calls to Action of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Canada, specifically Articles 48 through 49 and 59 through 61 which refer directly to churches and faith communities. This is to ensure that applications speak to Reconciliation actions already identified by Indigenous peoples.
5. While general education and capacity building projects may be supported by IRAF, priority will go to supporting projects that demonstrate the ability to form long lasting relationships between Lutheran and Indigenous communities.
6. While applications will be accepted from across the Eastern Synod with a diversity of Indigenous partners from across this region, special consideration will be given to projects including the Haudenosaunee, the descendants of the Attawandaron/Neutral peoples, and the Mississaugas of the Credit First Nation, recognizing that the origin of this funding was the sale of Edgewood Camp and Conference Centre which was located on the traditional territory of these three nations.
7. Priority will go to projects that include consciousness and respect for land, recognizing that caring for Creation is one of the actions that we are called to pursue by our faith and that our presence on Indigenous territory causes tangible detriment to the ability of Indigenous peoples to access their traditional territory.
8. To demonstrate the relationship building capacity of this fund and to support the continued contribution from the YAYA Endowment Fund investment income to the Indigenous Reconciliation Action Fund, successful applicants will be responsible for providing a one page summary of the pursued project including at least one picture of the events/activities supported with IRAF funding, with proper acknowledgements and consent for publication purposes, to YAYA after the events/activities have taken place.
9. YAYA is committed to helping our community engage in action toward Reconciliation with a Good Mind. If you are unsure of how to start, please contact Christie Morrow for more information, contacts, and resources at christiemorrow76@yahoo.ca.

Appendix A: *Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Canada: Calls to Action*

Settlement Agreement Parties and the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples

48. We call upon the church parties to the Settlement Agreement, and **all other faith groups and interfaith social justice groups** in Canada who have not already done so, to formally adopt and comply with the principles, norms, and standards of the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples as a framework for reconciliation. This would include, but not be limited to, the following commitments:
 - i. Ensuring that their institutions, policies, programs, and practices comply with the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples.

- ii. Respecting Indigenous peoples' right to self determination in spiritual matters, including the right to practise, develop, and teach their own spiritual and religious traditions, customs, and ceremonies, consistent with Article 12:1 of the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples.
 - iii. Engaging in ongoing public dialogue and actions to support the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples.
 - iv. Issuing a statement no later than March 31, 2016, from all religious denominations and faith groups, as to how they will implement the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples.
49. We call upon **all religious denominations and faith groups** who have not already done so to repudiate concepts used to justify European sovereignty over Indigenous lands and peoples, such as the Doctrine of Discovery and terra nullius.

Church Apologies and Reconciliation

59. We call upon church parties to the Settlement Agreement to develop ongoing education strategies to ensure that their respective congregations learn about their church's role in colonization, the history and legacy of residential schools, and why apologies to former residential school students, their families, and communities were necessary.
60. We call upon leaders of the church parties to the Settlement Agreement and **all other faiths**, in collaboration with Indigenous spiritual leaders, Survivors, schools of theology, seminaries, and other religious training centres, to develop and teach curriculum for all student clergy, and all clergy and staff who work in Aboriginal communities, on the need to respect Indigenous spirituality in its own right, the history and legacy of residential schools and the roles of the church parties in that system, the history and legacy of religious conflict in Aboriginal families and communities, and the responsibility that churches have to mitigate such conflicts and prevent spiritual violence.
61. We call upon church parties to the Settlement Agreement, in collaboration with Survivors and representatives of Aboriginal organizations, to establish permanent funding to Aboriginal people for:
- i. Community-controlled healing and reconciliation projects.
 - ii. Community-controlled culture- and language revitalization projects.
 - iii. Community-controlled education and relationship building projects.
 - iv. Regional dialogues for Indigenous spiritual leaders and youth to discuss Indigenous spirituality, self determination, and reconciliation.