

ST. PATRICK'S PARISH

DRUM BEAT NEWSLETTER

Healing and Reconciliation Ministry



March 2026



Sharing stories and reflections that build understanding, healing, and unity with Indigenous peoples, a journey of truth and reconciliation.

Let the drum guide our hearts forward.

THE JOURNEY OF NATIONAL INDIGENOUS LANGUAGES DAY

March 31: A Day of Renewal, Respect, and Relationship

Every year on March 31, communities across Canada pause to honour National Indigenous Languages Day—a day dedicated to celebrating the beauty, resilience, and sacredness of Indigenous languages. There are more than 70 Indigenous languages across Canada, belonging to 12 distinct language families—a richness unmatched in most countries.

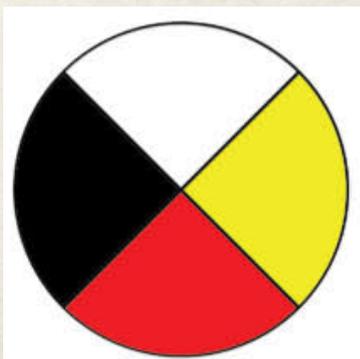
For Indigenous peoples, language is more than communication. It is identity, worldview, ceremony, and relationship with the land. It carries stories, humour, teachings, and the wisdom of ancestors. When a language is spoken, a people's spirit lives.

For us at St. Patrick's Parish, this day invites reflection, learning, and solidarity. It is an opportunity to deepen our commitment to reconciliation by honouring the languages that colonial systems attempted to erase—and that Indigenous communities continue to revitalize with strength and hope.



The Sacredness of Language – Words as Gifts, Carriers of Spirit

In many Indigenous cultures, language is understood as a living being. Words are gifts that shape how we see the world and how we relate to creation. This resonates deeply with our Christian faith, where the Word becomes flesh and dwells among us



Four Teachings for National Indigenous Languages Day

Just as in our Advent reflection using the four candles, this reflection uses the Four Directions, a teaching shared across many Indigenous nations. Each direction offers an invitation for our parish.

East – Renewal

The East is the direction of new beginnings and illumination. On this day, we honour the renewal of Indigenous languages—many once suppressed, now rising again through immersion schools, Elders' teachings, and community-led revitalization.

Our call: Support and celebrate Indigenous-led language revitalization efforts

South – Relationship

The South teaches warmth, growth, and relationship. Indigenous languages carry relational teachings—how to live well with one another, with the land, and with future generations.

Our call: Build relationships with Indigenous neighbours through listening, learning, and respect.

West – Reflection

The West invites introspection and truth-telling. We acknowledge the Church's role in suppressing Indigenous languages through residential schools and forced assimilation.

Our call: Reflect honestly, repent sincerely, and commit to ongoing reconciliation.

North – Wisdom

The North is the direction of Elders, knowledge keepers, and ancestral wisdom. Indigenous languages hold teachings that have guided communities for thousands of years.

Our call: Honour Elders and knowledge keepers who protect and pass on language.

THE JOURNEY OF NATIONAL INDIGENOUS LANGUAGES DAY

What This Day Means for St. Patrick's Parish

National Indigenous Languages Day is not only a celebration—it is a call to action.

We are invited to:

- Learn the names of local nations and their languages
- Honour the traditional territories we gather on
- Include Indigenous languages in prayer, song, and liturgy
- Support Indigenous-led cultural and language initiatives
- Advocate for the protection and revitalization of Indigenous languages
- Listen to Indigenous voices with humility and openness

Every small act of learning becomes a step toward healing.



Upcoming Parish Event – Open for All to Attend – June 6, 2026

The KAIROS Blanket Exercise is an interactive learning experience that helps participants understand the history of Indigenous peoples in Canada from an Indigenous perspective. Using blankets to represent the land, participants walk through a narrated story of pre-contact life, colonization, residential schools, and the ongoing impacts of government policies. As the blankets change, shrink, or are removed, participants witness how Indigenous lands, rights, and communities were affected. The exercise concludes with a sharing circle led by Indigenous facilitators, offering space for reflection, learning, and healing. It is a powerful way for our parish to deepen our commitment to truth, reconciliation, and right relationship with Indigenous neighbours.



Closing Reflection

“When a language lives, a people live.”

National Indigenous Languages Day reminds us that reconciliation is not only about the past—it is about nurturing a shared future rooted in justice, respect, and relationship.

As we honour this day at St. Patrick's Parish, may we open our hearts to the beauty of Indigenous languages and the teachings they carry. May we walk gently with our Indigenous neighbours, celebrating the diversity of God's creation and the sacred gift of every language spoken on this land.

May our learning lead to understanding.
 May our understanding conduct to relationship.
 May our relationships lead to healing.