Attention Parish Leadership Lay and Ordained: From the Relationship Matters Team of Our Diocese

In response to a request from Diocesan Council we ask your help and support in responding and accessing our personal and communal response to the Ninety-four Calls to Action to Canadians of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission.

We encourage you that if you are a parish that is progressing in these important areas of reconciliation to share that with us and to point to Calls that your activities and relationships apply to. We look to the Vision and specifically to Reconciliation and Beyond. We thank our Bishop for his amazing and persistent holding of the values of our Diocesan Vision.

We endeavor to make real the commitment from across our diocese to the words from Justice Murray Sinclair, all who wrote the Calls to Action and especially for survivors of Residential Schools and their families. Therefore we propose what follows.

We anticipate several opportunities to share your stories. The first will be a sample of a few at the We Together Conference September 15, 16.

If your parish struggles with seeing and cannot name one we invite them to talk to us, use us resource and support. Contact information is listed below

* We ask for creativity in responding. We hope that rather than being seen as “another diocesan hoop or report that we have to do”, **that it be seen as an opportunity to tell reconciliation stories, relate experience and share hope! Just a few ideas: Videos, interviews, invite us to meet with you in your context, posters….**
* **Contact People: The Ven. Lon Towstego** [**ltowstego@shaw.ca**](mailto:ltowstego@shaw.ca)**, 250-386-6833; Sr. Brenda Jenner,** [**brenda@ssjd.ca**](mailto:brenda@ssjd.ca) **250-9207787;** The Rev. Rob Hutchison, [robhutch2902@hotmail.com](mailto:robhutch2902@hotmail.com), 250-594-0880; **Janice Varga,deedoggyjan@gmail.com,250-6614033**

For your Reference here are the Calls to Action specific to Faith Communities. We have also attached a link to all 94. We encourage you to look at all of the Calls. It could well be the case that in your particular area partnering with or advocating in front of one of the government and or other institutional bodies is your best role. Remember to be creative and listen for where God may be directing you.

94 Calls to Action: <http://www.trc.ca/websites/trcinstitution/File/2015/Findings/Calls_to_Action_English2.pdf>

This is us as a diocese, parishes and individuals living Gospel.

All this is from God, who **reconcile**d us to himself through Christ and gave us the ministry of reconciliation. 2 Corinthians 5:18.

It is us being reconciling Ambassadors for Christ and with Christ.

You are in our prayers as you do this precious and holy work together.

Please send your completed response to The Ven. Lon Towstego and Sister Brenda Jenner at ltowstego@shaw.ca and brenda@ssjd.ca. By sending we will be sure to see them even if one of us is away.

**Truth and Reconciliation Commission: Calls to Action, Specific to Faith Communities:**

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.

73. We call upon the federal government to work with churches, Aboriginal communities, and former residential school students to establish and maintain an online registry of residential school cemeteries, including, where possible, plot maps showing the

location of deceased residential school children. 74. We call upon the federal government to work with the churches and Aboriginal community leaders to inform the families of children who died at residential schools of the child’s burial location, and to respond to families’ wishes for appropriate commemoration ceremonies

and markers, and reburial in home communities where requested.

75. We call upon the federal government to work with provincial, territorial, and municipal governments, churches, Aboriginal communities, former residential school students, and current landowners to develop and implement strategies and procedures for the ongoing identification, documentation, maintenance,

commemoration, and protection of residential school cemeteries or other sites at which residential school children were buried. This is to include the provision of Calls to Action| 9 appropriate memorial ceremonies and commemorative markers to honour the deceased children.

Co-Chairs: Sister Brenda Jenner & The Ven Lon Towstego