

I. THE SACRED CIRCLE

1. The Sacred Circle was always and continues to be a reality among the Indigenous Peoples of the Land and Waters — First Nations, Inuit, and Metis, wherever they reside, whether it be in their communities, on the Lands, or in urban areas. It was known in the dreams and visions of the Elders, in the care and compassion of families and communities, and in the hope of the World to Come. It is manifest among us, as the seeds of the Word come to fruition in the Gospel's call to a new life. We believe that, in Jesus, God has placed the Gospel in the Centre of the Sacred Circle.

We believe and proclaim that this Sacred Circle is the manifestation through which all of Creation is related. From the beginning of our encounter with the Anglican Church, Indigenous priests, catechists, lay readers and Elders dreamed of and worked for a truly Indigenous expression of Christian faith. In the middle of the twentieth century, as the pain of colonization became more and more revealed and acknowledged, Elders across the Land, in different places, languages, cultures and times (without any coordination or mutual knowledge) began to dream of, announce and advocate for the coming of a truly Indigenous Church, focused on justice, fairness and equality. This, we believe and proclaim, was a work of God and it continues to be manifest among us. It is in their vision and work that the first gathering of what came to be known as the Sacred Circle appeared in 1988.

At the base of this spiritual movement was the full acknowledgement, celebration, and honouring of the sovereignty of the Indigenous Peoples of the Land and Waters, and their God-given spiritual authority for care of this Land and these Waters. The Sacred Circle is a light, a dream, a prophetic calling to the life of the Kingdom of God, God's presence in Creation, here present and leading to a New Heaven and a New Earth. This is true and present in our hearts, our families, and our communities. It announces a New Day for all the peoples of this Land.

2. The Sacred Circle is the spiritual reality, unity, and work of God among the Indigenous Peoples, the Peoples of the Land and Waters, related to the Anglican Church of Canada. It is both a community and a communion. It is both an ever-present spiritual reality and an in-person meeting of people who represent the Peoples of the Land and Waters. This spiritual joining has been made through the Word of God becoming flesh.

The Sacred Circle is the presence, healing, and freedom of God discovered and revealed in the discipleship, daily prayers, and celebration of the Eucharist among the Peoples of the Land and Waters. It is daily renewed in the placing of the Gospel in the centre of Indigenous Life. It is renewed across the Land whenever Sacred Circle convenes.

The foundation of Sacred Circle and its highest point is our Sacred Feast, the celebration of the Holy Communion (also known as the Holy Sacrament, Holy Eucharist, or the Lord's Supper), where it thankfully offers up Creation within the eternal offering of Jesus, where it finds its unity with all its members and all of Creation, and where it tastes and receives the first fruits of a New Heaven and a New Earth.

3. The Sacred Circle is an honoured central gathering of the community of Indigenous Peoples in the Anglican Church of Canada. It meets every three years, as it seems good, and also for special purposes as decided by the Anglican Council of Indigenous Peoples (ACIP) and the Presiding Elder (the National Indigenous Anglican Archbishop). It is the holistic, consensus-building governing body of the fellowship of Indigenous Peoples of this Land and these Waters who are related to the Anglican Communion.
4. The Sacred Circle is committed to following the *Good Way of Life*² of the Peoples of the Land and Waters. Jesus places the Gospel in the Centre of this Sacred Circle. It will be guided by Indigenous values, accords/rules, customs or procedures, found in the circle of gathering, smudging, or greeting as well as the oral traditions handed down in our stories, art, ceremonies, and the music of the Peoples. This is where Indigenous law is found, and it is our spiritual governance.³ We include here a respect and honour of the various treaties that Indigenous Peoples have made among ourselves and with non-Indigenous nations.
5. Sacred Circle uses a consensus model of unanimous decision-making derived from our experience through story, requiring great patience and respect, always placing the Gospel at its Centre as our guide. The

² An Indigenous concept where the central goal in life which is to try to live life in balance with all of Creation in sustainable ways.

³ Governance is situated within our GBD tradition, as well as prayer, dance, information-sharing, storytelling, fellowship, art, oral tradition, healing, and celebrating the Good Way of Life in all of Creation.

style of gathering is to provide a place for the people to come together in respect and unity. Its governance is not to impose a way on local communities. It is to help them discover their own way to be disciples with the Gospel in the Centre of their own circles and with respect for our own local ways of gathering and governing.

6. At the community and communion of the Indigenous Peoples of the Anglican Church of Canada, the Sacred Circle gathering guides the ministry and work of the Indigenous Peoples of the Anglican Church of Canada.
7. When the Sacred Circle is not gathering, the Anglican Council of Indigenous Peoples (ACIP), with the Presiding Elder of Sacred Circle — the National Indigenous Anglican Archbishop — assisted by ACIP co-chairs will carry out the work of Sacred Circle between its sessions according to our *Way of Life*.
8. Living networks or working groups within the Indigenous church, whether linguistic/cultural, regional, demographic (e.g., youth, women, Elders), urban/non-urban, issue-based (e.g., suicide), diocesan, clergy/lay, educators, etc. will continue to evolve within the Indigenous church, for the purpose of enriching dialogue and promoting understanding at Sacred Circle and assisting ACIP's work, as appropriate.
9. Respectful non-Indigenous participation, where determined to be allies/companions/guests or partners, are welcomed as part of worship at Sacred Circle, as well as in talking circles, as endorsed by Sacred Circle.
10. The Anglican Council of Indigenous Peoples (ACIP), with support from the Office of the Presiding Elder, organizes the gatherings of Sacred Circle.

II. OF OUR WAYS OF PRAYER

11. The life of Sacred Circle is experienced and renewed every day in the life of prayer. All of us, through our Baptism, join our Creator in placing the Gospel in the Centre of the Sacred Circle through which all of Creation is related. Our individual daily prayer is a part of the Sacred Circle, and this is true in a special and powerful way whenever two or three are gathered in the Name of Jesus.
12. Prayer is our way of life. This is seen in the translations our Elders made of the hymn books, the Book of Common Prayer, and the Holy Scriptures. We look to the Book of Common Prayer as a guide to the making of disciples. We have many different forms and languages of the Book of Common Prayer among us, including the Book of Alternative Services of the Anglican Church of Canada.

Our Elders used the Book of Common Prayer within the traditional languages and patterns of their life. It is a partner and a guide to every moment of our lives, including and especially our life on the Land and Waters. Together with the hymnals in their many languages, the Book of Common Prayer was part of their shield, their companion, and an aid to resist the darkest forces and moments of colonization. It is the same kind of guide to us today.

13. We also use *The Disciple's Prayer Book* as a guide to our individual discipleship and our gathering together.
14. Guided by the Gospel and the practice of Jesus and his followers over the ages, we continue the practice of our ancestors of daily prayer, honouring the morning and evening with our prayers and praying throughout the day, as individuals and communities. We encourage our various communities to continue to develop their own forms of discipleship, guided by the principles, values, and patterns of the Book of Common Prayer.
15. As has been the practice of the Church since the beginning, we are committed to reading the Scriptures as a part of our daily discipleship. Sacred Circle is renewed and guided by the reading of Scripture. The practice of reading and listening to the Scriptures is a part of each of our lives, especially those who are ministers, ordained or not.