



## Wednesday Prayer

### All Saints Sunday – Grieving for all the Saints

**When Jesus saw her weeping, and the Jews who came with her also weeping, he was greatly disturbed in spirit and deeply moved. He said, “Where have you laid him?” They said to him, “Lord, come and see.” Jesus began to weep. John 11:33-35**

This past Sunday, my pastor encouraged us to provide names of people who have died that we will read aloud on All Saints Sunday. My mind went to “How can I honor, grieve, and repent for all the children who lost their lives, children whose names I don’t even know?”

My church is engaging in 225 days of [Remembering the Children](#) – a period of remembrance, repentance and resolve to live in equitable partnership with our neighbors of Native identity. 225 days representing children who were taken from their families, sent away to boarding schools and died there without being returned to their families. In the [ELCA Declaration to American Indian and Alaska Native People](#), one of our confessions states,

*“We confess that we are complicit in the annihilation of Native peoples and your cultures, languages, and religions, and that we have refused to truly recognize the harm that we have caused our Native siblings. We confess that we must continue to learn more about our complicity and the roles our church played in dehumanizing Indigenous peoples, especially as it relates to the forced assimilation, abuse, and death in Indian boarding schools, adoption, and foster care ... and missing and murdered Indigenous women, girls, and relatives. (MMIWGR)”*

Our work through Cherish All Children recognizes these harms continue to afflict Indigenous children, youth, and families. According to the [Urban Indian Health Institute](#), there were 5,712 cases of Murdered and Missing Indigenous Women and Girls (MMIWG) reported in 2016, yet only 116 of these were logged in the Department of Justice database. I am deeply disturbed, and I weep for these saints.

Chris Stark, in her captivating novel [Carnival Lights](#), shares a story of two Ojibwe cousins in recent times, woven together with their ancestral connections. She explores generational trauma, resiliency, and violence upon Native women, girls, and boys at the hands of non-Native peoples.

*“The night the politicians from Harrisburg visited the Indian school, the boy bled to death from the sexual assaults and the girl was accidentally strangled to death by the rope they used to tie her to the bed...Both children disappeared from the school, from their families, and from their tribes. It was as if they’d never existed. Staff at Carlisle buried them on the grounds late that night, alongside the other hundred or so buried there over the years, their spirits caught between worlds.”*

**Jesus, as you weep with us, show us the way to learn and repent for these sins, and to advocate and work for the safety and care of all your children. Amen.**

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