A Reflection – Rev. Whitney Bruno - September 27, 2026 – LCPC
National Day for Truth and Reconciliation.

"Words into Action"

The devastating mercury crisis in Grassy Narrows First Nation has persisted for decades, ever since 9 tonnes of mercury was dumped upstream from the community in the 1960s, with little action since from governments to help the people. The Dryden paper and pulp mill used mercury to make paper bleached. The wash off the paper went right into the river.

To this day, most Grassy Narrows members get no compensation for the serious impacts of the ongoing mercury crisis on their health, culture, and livelihoods. The First Nation's main source of food - fish - and water - the river - are both poisoned with mercury. The mercury is no longer dumped, but it doesn't go away. In fact, it merged with the pulp still being released into the river and the mud and silt to make methylmercury, which is even more toxic.

To make matters worse, Ontario is still allowing mining exploration on Grassy Narrows lands–against Grassy Narrows' will. And nearby is being considered for nuclear waste. There is a arms race in Canada to make ourselves immune from the economic warfare happening around us. Because of that, our Prime Minister has proposed Bill C-39, which would limit the input of environmental reviews and Indigenous consultation. The idea is we cannot wait for all parties to be heard and satisfied.

But such actions make the promises and apologies of our government like the son who said nice things, but then did not follow through.

Jesus calls us to be people who do God's will - the will of loving one another, loving ourselves, loving God, and loving all creation. The United Church of Canada was present this week for the Grassy Narrows River Run. We stood with Grassy Narrows First Nation and advocated for words to become actions. For promises of water for all to become water for all. For the government who has said again and again it will honour Indigenous rights and lands to do so.

When we care for water, we care for how it will be used a generation, or two, or seven from now. We care about where it goes and all the lives and peoples, animals and plants it touches. Jesus says to curse all we want or say nice words all we want - but when its time for action... Do God's will.
Love creation. Love each other. Love yourself. Love God. Embody love.
Amen.



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Scripture Reading – Sept. 27, 2026 - LCUCPC

Matthew 21:23-32 NRSV Ue

The Authority of Jesus Questioned

23 When he entered the temple, the chief priests and the elders of the people came to
him as he was teaching and said, “By what authority are you doing these things, and
who gave you this authority?” 24 Jesus said to them, “I will also ask you one question; if
you tell me the answer, then I will also tell you by what authority I do these things. 25 Did
the baptism of John come from heaven, or was it of human origin?” And they argued
with one another, “If we say, ‘From heaven,’ he will say to us, ‘Why, then, did you not
believe him?’ 26 But if we say, ‘Of human origin,’ we are afraid of the crowd, for all
regard John as a prophet.” 27 So they answered Jesus, “We do not know.” And he said
to them, “Neither will I tell you by what authority I am doing these things.

The Parable of the Two Sons

28 “What do you think? A man had two sons; he went to the first and said, ‘Son, go and
work in the vineyard today.’ 29 He answered, ‘I will not,’ but later he changed his mind
and went. 30 The father[a] went to the second and said the same, and he answered, ‘I
go, sir,’ but he did not go. 31 Which of the two did the will of his father?” They said, “The
first.” Jesus said to them, “Truly I tell you, the tax collectors and the prostitutes are
going into the kingdom of God ahead of you. 32 For John came to you in the way of
righteousness, and you did not believe him, but the tax collectors and the prostitutes
believed him, and even after you saw it you did not change your minds and believe
him.

May God’s spirit shape our understanding of these words.
And may they awaken in our hearts

