

M4RR – August 30, 2026 – 40th Anniversary of UCC Apology - for LCUCPC

40th Anniversary of Church Apology to Indigenous Peoples
Commemorated in Sudbury – August 15, 2026

Speakers including participants in the original Apology,
and The Very Rev. Dr. Stan McKay,
call for continual remembrance and reconciliation



The 40th anniversary commemoration of the 1986 Apology to Indigenous Peoples
at Laurentian University, Sudbury

Credit: Kim Uyede-Kai

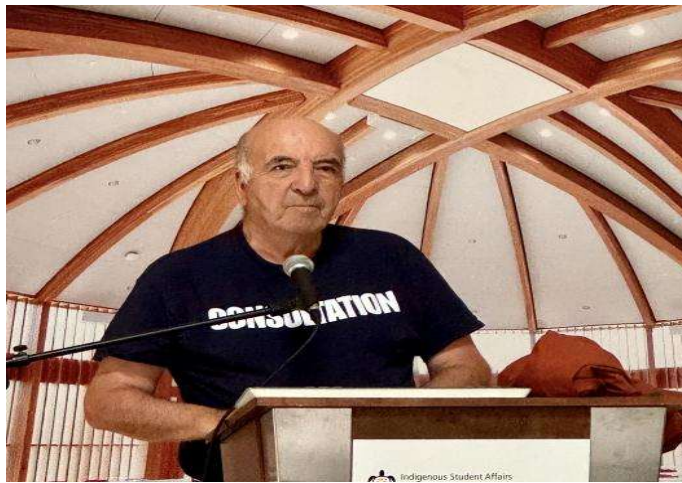
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The 40th anniversary of the [1986 Apology to Indigenous Peoples](#) by The United Church of Canada was commemorated in Sudbury, Ontario this past Saturday, August 15.

Over 100 people, including the first Indigenous Chancellor of the University and the General Secretary of the United Church, gathered to remember, witness, and recommit to the words of the Apology with presence and meaningful action at the Laurentian University Indigenous Sharing and Learning Centre. Many others not able to attend lifted prayers.

The Apology was delivered in Sudbury in 1986, at the 31st General Council by Moderator The Very Rev. Robert Smith. It followed an urgent call made the previous year by Alberta Billy, Laichwiltach We Wai Kai Nation member and then-representative of the Native Ministries Council, to apologize for the church's role in colonization, residential schools, and the loss of Indigenous languages, culture, and spirituality.

Two speakers were invited by Canadian Shield Regional Council's planning team. The Rev. Kellie McComb, a member of the 31st General Council Youth Forum, spoke of the profound impact the experience of the Apology had on her, and how it set the path to her call to ministry.



The Very Rev. Dr. Stan McKay speaks at the commemoration

Credit: Kim Uyede-Kai

Special guest speaker The Very Rev. Dr. Stan McKay shared an understanding of the Apology as a covenant statement, and spoke of why consultation is critical. His father was one of the Elders at the 31st General Council and witnessed the Apology. The Very Rev. McKay noted, for the non-Indigenous Church to ponder, one line of the Apology that did not speak to him: “We ask you.... to walk with us...,” given Indigenous people had already long been walking in the Spirit of Christ.

Following the Apology in 1986, rocks and stones contributed by each of the twelve Conferences in attendance at GC31 were constructed into a cairn. The project was guided by Anishnaabe Elder and stonemason Art Solomon, and project coordinator Pastor Maxine McVey. Family members of Art Solomon and Maxine McVey, who have both passed, attended the anniversary event.

Ann Solomon recalled how her father was often consulted for guidance and advice. Once, she said, when a peer felt he wasn’t ready to take action on something Art suggested, Art’s response was simple: “Then get ready.” She reminded those present that leaders like her father are not tireless; they do get tired, and we can all help them carry the load.

Art Solomon’s own response to the 1986 Apology was a question:

“What are you going to do about it?”

The 40th anniversary attendees heard and reflected on that question, one the church has had 40 years to get ready for. They responded with commitments painted on stones, which were added to the cairn.



The commemorative cairn at Laurentian University, originally conceived by Art Solomon and Maxine McVey
Credit: Kim Uyede-Kai

Following the speakers' words, participants made a pilgrimage to the site of the cairn. Non-Indigenous participants read the words of the Apology. Indigenous participants were invited to read the words of the [1988 Response](#), delivered in 1988 by Edith Memnook, representative of the newly formed All Native Circle Conference.

As an act of remembrance and reconciliation, Lois Kunkel, representing Trinity-St. Paul's United Church, Toronto, urged every United Church community of faith across the country to read the words of the 1986 Apology in their worship service on Sunday, October 4, 2026 prior to their land acknowledgement.

Kunkel also urged communities of faith to act on one or more of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission's [Calls to Action](#). To be what God has meant us to be and to heal Creation, all United Church of Canada communities of faith have the capacity to do something.