# Moderator’s National Indigenous Peoples Day Message 2024

## Transcript of video message

*Yáu* [“Hello” in Heiltsuk]. Summer solstice is the day when the sun travels its longest path through the sky, which is why it is the longest day of the year. The summer solstice is a sacred time for Indigenous Peoples, so it is no mistake that here on Turtle Island we celebrate Indigenous Peoples Day at this time. Indigenous Peoples Day happens on June 21st, and it is a time for Canadians to consciously learn about Indigenous Peoples and to learn about our cultures and our history.

June is Indigenous Peoples month in Canada. The marking of this month and the June 21 solstice day is because of the successful lobbying and advocacy of Indigenous Peoples in Canada. This time is marked to recognize our people, our languages, our contributions, and our cultures that have been here since time immemorial. National Indigenous Peoples Day is important for all Canadians to participate in to understand that the history of Indigenous Peoples stretches long before the arrival of the European settlers. Our peoples’ rich relationship to the land, languages, and ways of being extends beyond the formation of Canada. We also have a relationship to Canada and have made many contributions along the way, and that needs to be celebrated. National Indigenous Peoples Day is a time of celebration to recognize and lift up the resilience of Indigenous people and communities, and to celebrate what we have to share with the rest of the country.

For the Indigenous Church, this is a special time of year where we get to highlight our cultural pride, our connectedness to our home territories, our resilience, and the ways that we are reclaiming our family and cultural connections that colonization attempted to break.

We can all continue to take specific action to celebrate or recognize this day:

* Attend a local celebration or cultural event; plan to attend with family, friends, or colleagues.
* Spend the day exploring the Indigenous heritage of the place where you work or live.
* Learn to introduce yourself in the Indigenous language or languages from where you live or work.
* Add to the Indigenous economy: Support Indigenous businesses by shopping or dining in Indigenous-owned stores and restaurants (actually, this one you should do year-round).
* Listen to Indigenous music.
* Visit an art gallery or museum with a show curated by Indigenous Peoples.
* Read a book—fiction, nonfiction, or poetry—by an indigenous author.
* Watch a movie or TV show featuring Indigenous direction, screenwriting, and acting—there are so many great new productions across all genres.

Today we celebrate and commemorate Indigenous Peoples and their contributions to this country and continue to engage in efforts to walk differently into the future together.

To the Indigenous Church, and especially our elders, *walis ǧiáxsix̌a* [“thank you” in Heiltsuk] for the ways that you have fought, sometimes against all hope, for recognition and respect in The United Church of Canada. All of the ways we are bridging faith and culture today are because of your tireless efforts for a daring justice grounded in deep spirituality.

Happy National Indigenous Peoples month this June, and please do something to participate in Indigenous Peoples Day this June 21.