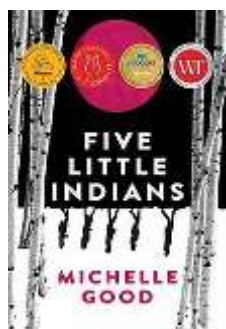




## ***Five Little Indians* – A Book Study Report**

“The Circle for Reconciliation and Justice (CRJ) was established at Synod Assembly in June 2018, extending the mission of the Biennium Reconciliation Task Force begun in 2014. Its mandate is to advise and assist ministry areas and congregations who have taken up the challenge of learning about our First Nations, Métis and Inuit neighbours and our collective history, and of walking with them in their ongoing efforts to undo the devastating effects of colonization.” (taken from the website of the Eastern Synod ELCIC)



June is national indigenous history month. In the spring of 2022 the CRJ chose this book for a synod wide book study during June of 2022. People were invited to either join online or create their own book study group in their congregations if possible. At All Saints a small group gathered on June 15 to discuss the selected award winning book – *Five Little Indians* by Michelle Good, an indigenous author.

People were asked in advance to choose three words to describe the book. When we arrived we each wrote one word on a piece of paper and posted them on the wall. We used a PowerPoint presentation provided by CRJ that included a short biography of the author (see below) and a short quiz with a variety of questions about different aspects of indigenous life, history or knowledge. We then grouped our words and it was interesting that they grouped quickly into the following: resilience, the “painful” words (i.e. sadness, devastation, pain), healing (i.e. healing, hope, redemption) and friendship (i.e. trust, friendship, love).

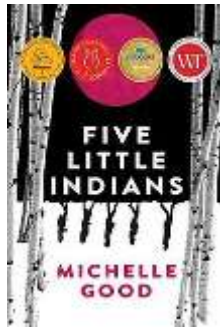
The remaining time was spent talking about how these words resonated with the group and how the stories in the book unfold. There was a rich discussion of the different themes we identified in the book. We finished by looking at the questions posed by the CRJ on the Synod website for feedback.

1. What was your group's overall impression of the book?
2. What new things did you learn?
3. What surprised you?
4. What troubled you?
5. What would you like to learn more about?
6. How will you encourage your congregation to live into truth and reconciliation moving forward?

Question 6 invites further discussion. If you are interested in being part of a Learning Circle that looks at relationship building and what reconciliation might look like at All Saints please let Pastor Brian or Michele Altermann know.

Everyone found the book engaging and easy to read (and often hard to put down!). We all decided that we would like to have another book study with a new book written by an indigenous author. Look for that in the fall!

Respectfully submitted  
Michele Altermann



- 2020 Governor General's Literary Award for fiction
- 2021 Amazon Canada First Novel Award.
- 2022 Winner of the CBC's Canada Reads
- Nominated to the Giller Prize longlist
- Writer's Trust Canada fiction shortlist

Michelle Good is of Cree ancestry, a descendent of the Battle River Cree and a member of the Red Pheasant Cree Nation. She has worked with indigenous organizations since she was a teenager and at forty decided to approach that work in a different way obtaining her law degree from UBC at 43. She has practiced law in the public and private sector since then, primarily advocating for Residential School Survivors. She graduated from UBC with a Master of Fine Arts Degree in Creative Writing MFA in 2014 where her novel *Five Little Indians* first started taking shape.

Her poetry and short stories have appeared in a number of publications. Her first novel, *Five Little Indians* won the HarperCollins/UBC Best New Fiction Prize and her poetry has been included in Best Canadian Poetry in Canada 2016 and Best of the Best Canadian Poetry in Canada 2017. Michelle is currently working on her second novel.

