

Greetings to everyone here from the executive committee of the Northeastern Jurisdiction Native American Ministries Committee. We are so glad you are here with us, even though we cannot be together in person today.

This year has been one of change and challenge. October of 2020 brought us together via ZOOM for the first time. COVID 19 had done away with in person meetings, but thank God for the technology to help us continue.

At that time, we voted in several members of the executive committee, including Kae Wilbert as treasurer, Ellesa High as secretary, Cynthia Kent as nominations chair, and myself as chair, after having spent four years as secretary. I was stepping into enormous shoes. Cynthia Kent had been our fearless leader for twelve years, doing a phenomenal job in the process. Her knowledge, wisdom and strength helped build the NEJNAMC into what it is today. Imagine my fear and trembling at such a prospect!

And so we went forward. In early 2021 we came together for a special meeting to firm up our statement on total inclusion/LGBTQIA2S+ issues and to move forward with the work to create a new Plan Of Action for our next quadrennium.

This meeting was originally planned for January, but on the 13th of that month, I had awakened to find my husband of almost 47 years had passed in his sleep. Since then I have had to move twice, among other things. I am not the only one who has faced challenges this year. In our executive committee alone, we have had bouts with COVID, losses in finances and other moves, even lightning strikes. Our beloved secretary, Elle High, had to step aside because of her doctor's orders. Throughout our larger committee, there have been many, many struggles this year.

Our longtime bishop liaison, Bishop Peggy Johnson, has retired this year, and we await her recommendation for someone to fill that position.

And yet, the work goes on. As you will learn from our various committees, we have worked on a new POA based on the hard work done by a subcommittee coordinated by RoBear Wilson; we have pushed for justice issues for Missing and

Murdered Indigenous Women and Girls and the victims and survivors of residential schools. We have worked with NAIC in their efforts to keep such issues before others.

We now face the need to fill our secretary position and ask you to be in prayer about nominations from the floor today. Please consider helping this vital need.

Now, today, we find ourselves again on ZOOM, working together as best we can and missing our much needed personal coming together. We pray for a return to that coming together in person again for 2022.

The work continues, because our commitment continues. Let us all pull the load together in this that God has given us to do.

Sincerely, Patricia Parent, chair, NEJNAMC.