

UNYAC2015.10 Fruits of Repentance: An End to the Celebration of Columbus Day

RATIONALE: *"Bear fruits worthy of repentance!"* -John the Baptist

The Upper New York Annual Conference has accepted the challenge of the 2008 General Conference of The United Methodist Church to engage in an Act of Repentance and Healing Relationships with Indigenous Persons. Turning away from our frequent refusal to listen to history from the perspective of Native Peoples, we accept that repentance is a choice to grow in the way we see ourselves. We call the 2016 General Conference to continue living in a spirit of repentance by exploring a change in how we tell the story of the Americas.

Whereas, Christopher Columbus failed to treat the Native People of the Americas with respect,
Whereas, he engaged in human trafficking,
Whereas, he used his influence to establish a culture of sexual exploitation of minors of Native American descent by adults of European descent,
Whereas, he established systems of forced labor resulting in the destruction of cultures and untold suffering for millions of individuals,
Whereas, he engaged in brutal collective corporal punishment, the deliberate repression of Native American cultural expression, and other acts we now correctly name as genocide,
Whereas, he established a culture of exploitation of the earth that continues to dishonor and often destroy God's living creation,

Therefore, be it resolved that "Columbus Day" will no longer be recognized by the people of the United Methodist Church.

Be it further resolved, Annual Conference(s) will provide and distribute to local churches a liturgy designed to enact our repentance in worship on the Sunday closest to the first Monday in October.

Be it further resolved, we will invest our influence with local and regional leaders in the initiation of conversations intended to awaken the conscience of our people to the benefits of turning away from the legacy of Columbus.

Be it further resolved, the Upper New York Annual Conference adopts this resolution as an act of prophetic witness in advance of the General Church consideration of this resolution.

Submitted By: Rev. Harold Wheat