

**Western Pa Annual Conference Committee on Native American Ministries Report
To Northeastern Jurisdictional Native American Ministries Committee
October 15, 2021**

We are seeking to become aware of Native American realities in our area both in our congregations and beyond. Our increased awareness will become a basis for us to assist our churches to become aware. We are discerning the shape and scope of our role as a CONAM as we seek to align ourselves with Native folks in our area who are both in and beyond our churches. We intend to avoid further colonization as we step forth. We will make mistakes and have failures, yet we trust we will learn from them.

We are attentive to paragraph 654 of the Book of Discipline which gives us the mandates to:

- Coordinate the promotion of Native American Ministries Sunday
- Determine the distribution of the Native American Ministries Sunday Offering
- Monitor Native American Ministries within the Annual Conference
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OUR JOURNEY THIS YEAR

CONNECTING WITH NATIVE FOLKS BEYOND OUR CONGREGATIONS

We continue to work with and strengthen our relationship with the Council of Three Rivers American Indian Center. They are members of our CoNAM committee.

We are building a relationship with the Caney Indigenous Spiritual Circle (Taino). They are willing to work with us to offer authentic demonstrations and workshops from their tradition so that our CoNAM can provide opportunities for United Methodists and others to experience the richness of their traditions and to become aware of the gifts they bring to the table.

We are also working to build relationships with other Native groups that exist within the boundaries of our annual conference. COTRAIC is helping us with this difficult challenge as there are very few Native communities that are visible to us.

NATIVE AMERICAN MINISTRIES SUNDAY and OFFERING

We advocate for our congregations to accent Native American Sunday and to receive the offering. Near Thanksgiving we will do another blast sharing possible resources for worship and study and encourage churches who have not received the offering to do so. We prepared bidding prayers as one resource for our congregations.

Thus far this year we have received a total of \$6091.00

\$3045.50 has been disbursed to GCFA

This is an increase over the previous year

OUR MISSION VALUES AND PRIORITIES

We continue to base our work on our adopted position stating our MISSION/VALUES/PRIORITIES. It is below.

SUPPORT OF POW-WOWs

In order to create awareness we use our media resources to encourage United Methodists and other non-natives to attend pow wows. This year we also gave financial support to two: (1) MOUNTAIN SPIRIT held at the Mason Dixon National Park in Core, W. Va. (2) the COTRAIC Pow-Wow in Dorseyville Pa. The Seneca pow wow held in Salamanca N.Y. has been postponed until 2022.

OUR CONAM AND THE VIRTUAL WORLD

We provided the resources for the Caney Indigenous Spiritual Circle to offer an educational native-centered video focused on their full moon traditions. This was in harmony with our mission to create awareness and understanding of the Taino people in our area as well as deepen our relationship. With a meaningful script presented by the Taino people Michael Dodin used his superb videography skills to produce an excellent educational product.

Due to a negative response from some people of the NEJNAMC, the Executive Committee requested the video be removed from public view and that we meet with them and others to discuss the situation. Primary concerns focused on the choice of venue for production and diverse perspectives concerning what portions of indigenous life and culture are appropriate to video.

As a result, while we stand by the video as Native American centered and appropriate, we will keep the video private to be collaborative and cooperative with NEJNAMC. We agreed that future videos would be filmed in a neutral or native sacred space.

During the production of the video our Taino friends experienced some deep reconciliation, healing, and repair with the Christian church. By the way the situation was addressed and the decision made to remove the video from public view the wound has been reopened and deepened. Fortunately, the Caney Indigenous Spiritual Circle is still willing to work with our CoNAM.

Our NEJNAMC needs to give serious consideration as to how we approach conflict when some people are disturbed by the actions of a particular Conference CoNAM. It is inappropriate and disheartening for us to use a white patriarchal dominant power approach as happened in this situation.

NEJNAMC 2023

Our understanding is that we are to host the fall gathering in 2023. We are aware that this could change.

We will continue growing as a CONAM. Our team enjoys working together and engaging in the challenges that need to be addressed.

Respectfully submitted
Western Pa Conference CoNAM
RoBear Wilson, facilitator

MISSION, VALUES, PRIORITIES WESTERN PA UNITED METHODIST CONFERENCE COMMITTEE ON NATIVE AMERICAN MINISTRIES

MISSION:

Embracing the vision of “Beloved Community”, The Committee on Native American Ministries is creating awareness and engagement with First Nations People by gaining a deeper understanding as we focus on building relationships with Indigenous people. We encourage our United Methodist congregations and the broader community to join us on this interfaith journey.

VALUES:

- Ecumenical and Interfaith engagement
- Avoid cultural misappropriation
- Authentic Relationships
- Intentionally anti-racist/de-colonization
- Trust
- Commitment to learning, reflection, transformation
- Accepting our responsibility

OUR WORK

Our primary focus is to build relationships with Indigenous families and communities in Western Pa that may lead to healing and greater sharing of “beloved community” together; this requires identifying and connecting to Indigenous folks in and beyond the boundaries of the United Methodist congregations.

Organizing events and opportunities for learning, growth, and experience and doing advocacy with and on behalf of Indigenous people are avenues to be used.

Participating in the United Methodist Northeast Jurisdiction CONAM is beneficial to our work.

GUIDELINES FOR GOVERNING OUR FUNDS TO THESE ENDS

Our limited funds are prioritized and allocated to fulfill the mission and work described above.