

**LAND ACKNOWLEDGEMENT TO OPEN NORTHEAST JURISDICTIONAL CONFERENCE OF THE UNITED
METHODIST CHURCH—PITTSBURGH, PA July 2024**

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APPROPRIATE TAINO drumming/ song/chant led by Miguel Sague

LAND ACKNOWLEDGEMENT (Miguel will drum under this)

As early as 19,000 years ago indigenous people wisely and carefully stewarded these lands. Their spirituality guided them to stay connected to mother earth and to live in harmony with all of creation.

Yet we called them savages and are now on land stolen from the Seneca, Monongahela, Adena Moundbuilders, Lenape, and Shawnee people.

Truth and acknowledgment are critical to building mutual respect and connection across all barriers of heritage and difference. We begin this effort to acknowledge what has been buried by honoring the truth.

We treated these people as less than human; we sought to eradicate them from this land. In 1763 Henry Bouquet wrote, “We must, on this occasion, use every stratagem in our power to reduce them.” Blankets contaminated with small pox were then given to native people with the expectation that this would start an epidemic among them.

As recently as the 1960’s we broke the Canandaigua Treaty and built the Kinzua Dam near Warren Pa. We stole 10,000 acres of land and destroyed 10 Seneca towns—these Native Americans migrated to New York while we covered their homes, schools, playgrounds, and burial grounds with water up to 120 feet deep. Annually the Seneca have a “Remember the Removal Walk”

We acknowledge that our sacred spaces have been built on lands already sacred before we arrived and continue to be sacred to indigenous people today.

AS we uncover the truth and move toward the future, we will own who we have been, who we are, and who we can become.

We will work with the Council of Three Rivers American Indian Center and other native organizations so that we may live into the aspiration that our work may lead to healing and beloved community. May we hold our native siblings’ existence and experience in our consciousness. May it be so.

CENTERING (Miguel will drum under this)

I invite you to sit with your feet firmly planted on the ground...and notice that you have the gift of breathing in and breathing out. (silence)

Breathing in and breathing out, may gratitude arise in you for the gift of living on this planet that generously births and sustains us. (silence)

May we feel gratitude for the ancestors who have stewarded this land for the generations before us...from the beginning of time to this moment. (silence)

May we be mindful of the gifts given and the sacrifices made that bring us to this moment. (silence)

May courage arise in us that we may dare to uncover the truth of the gifted way Native Americans stewarded this land and acknowledge that many were unjustly treated as less than human and displaced. (silence)

May we humbly offer respect to their elders past and present as we bring the past and future into the holistic now. (silence)

May our bodies resonate with the aspiration that our work will lead to healing, transformation, and repair as we hold their existence and their experience in our consciousness. (silence)

Breathing in, I am grateful for the privilege of living on this planet. Breathing out, I am aware I have love and gifts to share for the wellbeing of all creation. (silence)

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