**Preamble**

At the 2015 Upper New York Annual Conference, members participated in an Act of Repentance & Healing of Relationships with Indigenous Persons. As fruit of that repentance, a resolution was passed to move away from honoring Christopher Columbus who treated Native Peoples cruelly and inhumanely and move to a place of honoring Native Peoples. Turning away from our frequent refusal to listen to history from the perspective of Native Peoples, we understand that repentance is a choice to grow in the way we see ourselves and others. We live in a spirit of repentance as we explore a change in how we tell and celebrate the story of the Americas.

Upper New York Annual Conference offers this preamble and liturgy to all local churches for use on a Sunday near the weekend our country traditionally celebrates Columbus Day. Let us re-purpose this holiday to honor Native Peoples.

**Liturgy**

[Adapted from *A Liturgy for Native American Sunday* by Betty Jacob]

Leader: For the unending baskets of food, coaxed from Mother Earth by the hands of her Native children; for potatoes, corn, beans, squash, peanuts and sweet potatoes;

**People: For the skills in planting, care and harvesting taught freely to the Europeans, for all these things which brought health and growth to the populations of Europe and new settlers to American shores,**

**All: We offer a song of honor and thanks.**

Leader: For the creativity and skill of Native hands; for designing canoes, snowshoes, toboggans; and inventing Lacrosse and hacky sack;

**People: For rubber which spawned thousands of new inventions, for technology and industry which rose from those gifts,**

**All: We offer a song of honor and thanks.**

Leader: For the making of medicines: for quinine, ipecac, curare, petroleum jelly, witch hazel and a host of medications;

**People: For the medicine women and men who shared them freely,**

**All: We offer a song of honor and thanks.**

Leader: For rivers and streams, passes and paths; for the path making and path taking of America’s first peoples, for their leading the newcomers across these paths;

**People: For personal liberty; for freedom first experienced by European immigrants in the lodges and circles of Native nations, for the tribal democracy that gave birth to American democracy,**

**All: We offer a song of honor and thanks. Accept, O God, our honor song, and make our hearts thankful for what we have been freely given. Make our hearts humble for what we continue to take. Make our hearts thoughtful for genuine repentance leading to action. Give our hearts power and peace to do as you bid us, in the name of our Brother and Savior, Jesus Christ your Son, and in the power of the Holy Spirit. Amen**

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**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