



The Bishops of the United Methodist Church
c/o Bishop Cynthia Fierro Harvey
President, Council of Bishops
100 Maryland Ave NE
Washington, D.C. 20002

Greetings,

The UNY Committee on Native American Ministries (CONAM) has endorsed the Native American International Caucus' (NAIC) call for the United Methodist Church to observe October 6, 2021, as a day of Truth and Repentance for Our Children to begin a process of healing, justice, and reconciliation for families and communities. The Caucus's Call to Action states:

1. We call on the Church to commit to **discover the locations and records from the Methodist run boarding schools**, to search the physical properties for individual or mass graves by whatever means necessary and to make a determined effort to provide surviving family members with the information found. We urge the Church to search out, listen to and collect the oral stories of those family members whose ancestors were impacted by Methodist boarding schools.
2. The Boarding School Healing Project has designated October 6 as a Day of Remembrance. On that day in 1879 General Richard Pratt took children from First Nations and opened the boarding school in Carlisle, PA. **This year, we call on the Church to observe October 6, 2021, as a day of Truth and Repentance for Our Children.**

On October 6, 1879, General Richard Pratt took children from First Nations and opened the boarding school in Carlisle, PA. The United Methodist Church went on to support at least 12 Indian Boarding Schools and has never accepted responsibility for its role in supporting these schools for the forced removal of native children which sought to eliminate native languages, culture, and traditions. Nor has the Church accepted responsibility for the resulting intergenerational trauma which continues to this day.. Now is the time for the Church to confront its complicity in these horrifying actions.

Our CONAM has worked tirelessly to educate members of our Conference regarding the history of Native Americans and the realities facing native communities today. Sadly, we are usually met with comments such as "I didn't know" or "I'm sorry" and little else. While the work of the General Commission on Archives and History to identify graves in United Methodist Boarding Schools is encouraging, these actions are not well known throughout the denomination. Recognition of October 6 as a day of Truth and Repentance for Our Children must only be a beginning. More than words are required. As leaders of the United Methodist Church, the Council must work decisively to insure the boarding school legacy and current developments are truthfully and widely shared and meaningful worship and action materials are developed to lead congregations in awareness and response.

In faith,

Sharon A. Schmit, Chair
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