

PHOTO TAKEN AT LAND TRANSFER CEREMONY, WYANDOTTE NATION
PHOTO BY ANTHONY TRUEHART, GLOBAL MINISTRIES

ALL IN GOD'S IMAGE

A STUDY IN THE HISTORY OF INDIGENOUS PEOPLES

UNIT 3 **Let's Learn About Native American Ministries Sunday!**

A Family Guide for the East Ohio Conference of The UMC



EAST OHIO CONFERENCE
MULTICULTURAL VITALITY

Developed by
Corinne R. Dunn, M.Ed., M.A.
Certified Diversity Professional
Diversity Learning Consultant/Trainer

*Thank you, Creator of the universe,
for the people gathered around us today.
We give thanks for the things of the earth that give us the
means of life.
Thank you for the plants, animals and birds
that we use as food and medicine.*

*Thank you for the natural world,
in which we find the means to be clothed and housed.
Thank you, Lord, for the ability
to use these gifts of the natural world.*

*Help us to see our place among these gifts,
not to squander them or think of them as means for selfish gain.
May we respect the life of all you have made.
May our spirits be strengthened by using only what we need,
and may we use our strength to help those who need us. Amen.*

Sue Ellen Herne, Mohawk, 20th Century
The United Methodist Book of Worship, #558
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Note to Families

This is the third in a series of guides to help adults and children in The United Methodist Church learn more about specific days we observe as we grow together in our knowledge and respect for the Native American Tribal Nations in the United States. The two other guides, which are about Indigenous People's Day and Thanksgiving Day, are available for downloading on the East Ohio Conference website: <https://www.eocumc.com/multi-cultural/index.html>.

In this guide, we will explore **Native American Ministries Sunday**, the third Sunday of Easter (May 1, 2022). The guide will give you more information about how this day first began, how it might be observed in church and home settings, and how we can raise our awareness of the importance of the contemporary Native American in the 21st Century. Both adults and children will learn some enlightening facts in addition to activities and a wide variety of resources, including books and websites.

Special thanks to Nancy Kelsey for lending her Native American voice to this family guide as well as Traci Sorell for her numerous contributions to the field of children's literature as experienced by a Native American writer.



Dear Reader,

Thank you for your willingness to engage in learning through the study guide series *All in God's Image A Study in the History of Indigenous Peoples*. These study guides are intended to be a resource for non-Native individuals to begin a journey of self-learning and of seeking Native and Indigenous voices from which to learn. The material in this guide features Native and Indigenous authors and our hope is that you will continue to center Native and Indigenous voices in your life.

I want to take a moment to acknowledge that this guide was compiled by a non-Native person, Corinne Dunn, an accomplished diversity consultant and trainer. While ideally resources like this would be written and compiled by Native and Indigenous persons, there is important work to be done by non-Native people to educate themselves. Authors like Ta-Nehisi Coates and others in the anti-racism movement acknowledge the difficult work of centering voices of Black, Indigenous, and People of Color (BIPOC), and of members of dominant groups learning for themselves without relying or putting the work on BIPOC individuals. This guide is in that space. This is work in which non-Native and the predominantly white organization of The United Methodist Church need to participate.

We also recognize that this work is not just about learning facts or history. We have a responsibility to be in relationship with Native and Indigenous peoples and to hear their stories and perspective. The United Methodist Church also has a place in the story (both good and bad) and this guide is a starting place to help you consider your place in the story. There is much repair, repentance, and restorative work to be done that simply cannot be accomplished in a study guide.

Cited resources featured in this guide are from Native and Indigenous people and authors and permission was given from the publisher or author to be used by non-Native people to educate non-Native people. As demonstrated in this guide, we highly encourage you to continue to seek the voices and relationships with Native and Indigenous peoples. Our prayer is that this guide will be meaningful for you and for your family or small group. If you have any questions or concerns about this guide, please e-mail me at willj@eocumc.com so that we may continue to be in dialogue with one another.

In Christ,

Will Fenton-Jones
Director, Multicultural Vitality

When and Why Was Native American Ministries Sunday First Observed? (A message from The United Methodist Church):

“Native American Ministries Sunday serves to remind United Methodists of the gifts and contributions made by Native Americans to our society and in our communities. With more than 20,000 Native Americans within the denomination, this Special Sunday helps to ensure that Native American United Methodist leaders are recognized and to celebrate their special voice in The United Methodist Church.

This Special Sunday was officially recognized in 1988 and has been celebrated on the Third Sunday of Easter since 1989. An offering is taken on this day and is used to develop and strengthen Native American ministries in the annual conferences, and Native American rural, urban, reservation ministries and communities. It also provides scholarships for Native Americans attending United Methodist schools of theology.

Donations support vital ministries and churches in the Native American communities and allow The UMC to partner with existing native ministries to develop new programs on behalf of Native Americans. Half of the donations collected remain within the annual conference to provide hope to children and youth, hope for a brighter future in impoverished communities and a voice to those who have felt voiceless for years. This fund is distributed by the General Board of Higher Education and Ministry.

When you give generously on Native American Ministries Sunday, you equip seminary students who honor and celebrate Native American culture in their ministries. You empower congregations to find fresh and culturally appropriate ways to minister to their communities with Christ's love.”

Resource courtesy of The United Methodist Church:

(<https://www.umc.org/en/content/native-american-ministries-sunday-ministry-article>)

How can Native American Ministries Sunday be observed in individual churches throughout the East Ohio Conference?

In addition to a congregational offering, churches are encouraged to invite Native Americans, including seminarians, to speak at a service or group presentation. In addition, Indigenous individuals might be asked to pray or present music at specific church services. Local Native organizations, such as the Lake Erie Native American Center (LENAC), www.facebook.com/lenacohio/, may be of assistance in connecting to Native individuals in your area.

This could also be a valuable time to discuss the reparation of land to the Wyandotte Nation which occurred in the East Ohio Conference in 2019 and to revisit an EOC-produced video, <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=dZYUbB-nBY4>, which was first introduced in an earlier family guide in 2021.

Activities to Celebrate Native American Ministries Sunday at Home or Church

- ☐ Write a letter to one of the United Methodist Church seminaries in Ohio. Ask if it may be possible to invite a Native American seminarian to speak to your church or Sunday school class about his or her life as a contemporary Native American. You might also inquire as to how Native American students at the seminary have benefitted from funds donated in the past on Native American Ministries Sunday.

- Methodist Theological School in Ohio, 3081 Columbus Pike, Delaware, OH 43015 (www.mtso.edu)
- United Theological Seminary, 4501 Denlinger Rd., Dayton, OH 45426 (www.united.edu)

- ☐ Investigate if your church or community was ever located on Native American land. Learn about the East Ohio Land Acknowledgment which was enacted in 2019. The United Methodist Church returned land, a church, and a burial ground cemetery in the Sandusky area to the present Wyandotte Nation. View the story at <https://www.eocumc.com/multi-cultural/native-american.html>.

- ☐ In *The United Methodist Hymnal* sing Hymn #378 “Amazing Grace” by John Newton (1779). Notice the translations from different Tribal nations of this beloved hymn. Research one of these tribes online and see where it is presently located. Share some facts about these contemporary Native Americans with others. See if you can find someone in your area who speaks one of these languages! (Tribal languages include Cherokee, Navajo, Kiowa, Creek, and Choctaw.)

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- ☐ As a family or Sunday school class, create prayer sticks which “are used by Native Americans in prayer and healing, thinking about the natural gifts of Mother Earth.” The prayer sticks might include items such as branches, feathers, shells, stones, leaves, buckeyes, or other items found in the natural world. Make sure, however, that individuals do not disturb already-living items. Glue, tape, yarn, or twine will help bind the items of each stick together. Say, “as we bind together the elements that we have chosen, think about how God created and connects us to the earth.” For this activity and other resources, see the following link to the UMC Native American Ministries Sunday (Children’s Activities), 2021: https://www.resourceumc.org/-/media/umc-media/2021/02/25/13/54/2021_nams_children_activity_final.ashx?la=en.

Note: While holding the prayer stick, recite the prayer of thanksgiving featured on the second page of this family guide, which was written by Susan Ellen Hearne, Mohawk Nation.

Do Native Americans Live in Eastern Ohio Today? YES! (A conversation for all ages with Nancy Kelsey, Anishinaabe (Little River Ottawa), and Corinne Dunn, Diversity Consultant)

Corinne: What is your tribal nation? Where is it located? Are you a citizen of both that tribe and the United States of America?

Nancy: I am a multicultural woman. I am Anishinaabe, an enrolled member of the Little River Band of Ottawa Indians in Michigan and Salvadoran. My people come from the western part of the lower peninsula, specifically near present-day Grand Rapids. I am of the crane clan.



As an enrolled member of a federally recognized tribe, I am both a member of my sovereign tribe and a United States citizen. Unlike any other peoples in the United States, the federal government designates my degree of Indian-ness using tribal enrollment documents and historical census records. Therefore, under this system, I am regarded as half-Anishinaabe and in order to prove my Indigeness for certain things like academic scholarships or grants, I must produce my tribal ID or a Bureau of Indian Affairs (BIA) Certificate of Degree of Indian Blood. We would not ask any other peoples to prove how white or Black or Asian they are yet defining blood quantum – like we do for dog breeds – reduces Indianness to fractions but has been in place for Native people in the United States for generations. It is a flawed system rooted in colonization.

Corinne: Tell us a little about yourself, growing up in the Cleveland area. Was your life different from other children who were not Native Americans? If so, how? If not, why?

Nancy: I grew up on Cleveland's East Side in the northernmost part of the Slavic Village neighborhood. It was a diverse area. Some of my classmates and neighbors were first generation or recent immigrants of Poland, the then-Czechoslovakia and then-Yugoslavia, among other Eastern European countries. A few were from Puerto Rico. At the time, I was always one of only a handful of students of color and grew accustomed to being the only Indigenous student in my class pretty quickly. Being a '90s kid in Cleveland and a Native person, I had mixed feelings about my Indigenous heritage. This was largely due to adolescent internal conflict: living in a city that glorified a dehumanizing mascot like Chief Wahoo and wanting to fit in while preserving my love of the city. On the one hand, I wanted to enjoy the experience of embracing one's hometown teams especially in those years they made the World Series. On the other hand, it felt like betrayal to all of the generations of my relatives that came before me.

Corinne: Did you attend college? What are the kinds of jobs you have had since becoming an adult?

Nancy: I attended Creighton University in Omaha, Nebraska. After graduating, I spent a few years on the Pine Ridge Indian Reservation in South Dakota as an AmeriCorps volunteer at Red Cloud Indian School. After that, following a series of internships, I worked as a journalist in newsrooms around the country in print, radio and online news. Storytelling is my passion but as the news industry changed, I found myself gravitating to communications. I've worked in communications for non-profits, higher education institutions, and government, including for the Mayor of the City of Cleveland. I have learned doing work in service of others is important to me, especially when it involves sharing the stories of BIPOC communities.

Corinne: What do you think are the biggest stereotypes of Native Americans today?

Nancy: There are a few stereotypes I'd call the biggest, based on my experiences. [Some have already received focus in earlier family guides and deserve a second look.] For the purpose of this guide, I would like to focus on the stereotype that Native people were exterminated long ago and don't exist anymore, or all Native people are the same: There are more than 500 federally recognized tribes in the United States. This does not include all of the tribes whose status was dismantled during disastrous periods of American policy such as the Termination Era. My tribe, for example, was terminated and, in the '90s, was reaffirmed. Still, our people thrived carrying on our ancestors' traditions and language. In 1994, Congress reaffirmed my tribe's status. But even those tribes who haven't been reaffirmed carry on their traditions and they are unique to their tribes. Bottom line: from region to region, tribes differ from each other greatly by language, traditional dress, form of governance, enrollment requirements and more. Some of us live in cities, on reservations and in other countries. We are not a monolithic people.

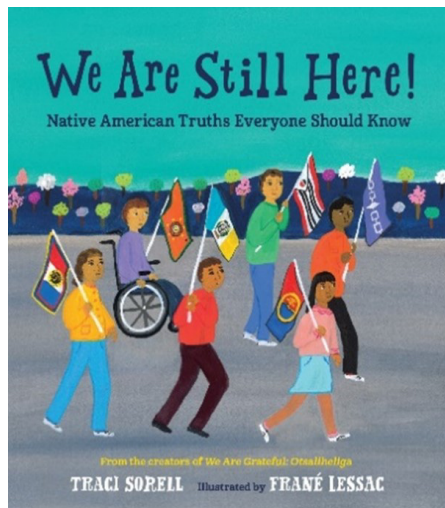
Corinne: What do you believe to be the greatest challenges of the contemporary Native American in 2022? Why do you think it is important for United Methodists to offer financial support on Native American Ministries Sunday? How can non-Native families learn more about Indigenous families presently living in their own communities or state?

Nancy: There are many issues around Indian Country that are notable. From land guardianship to health care to Indian education to protecting sovereignty to suicide rates on reservations to highlighting the too-often-ignored Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women, they are numerous. Rather than list a few, I recommend following Native storytellers who cover these important issues. A few that come to mind are Indian Country Today, Indianz.com, Native American Calling and Nia Tero. (See list of resources at end of guide.)

Corinne: Is there anything else you would like to share with the children and adults who are reading this interview? We have been so fortunate to hear from you!

Nancy: I write a semi-regular column for Cleveland.com, discussing a variety of topics, including Indigenous issues. My introductory column is here: <https://www.cleveland.com/opinion/2022/01/striving-to-be-of-service-to-others-as-clevelands-daughter-and-as-a-new-columnist-nancy-kelsey.html>.

Continuing the Discussion: Contemporary Native American History for Young People



"Despite all that has occurred since Europeans arrived on this continent, Native Nations proclaim 'We are still here!' because we have survived. We seek opportunities to thrive and work alongside others to protect the land, water, and other resources everyone depends on to exist on this planet." Traci Sorell, We Are Still Here! Native American Truths Everyone Should Know

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Note: For more information about contemporary Native Americans, readers of all ages are encouraged to check your local library or bookstore for this title and others. The book is a companion piece to *We Are Grateful/Otsaliheliga*, also written by Traci Sorell and illustrated by Frané Lessac, which was featured in another EOC family guide. For free teaching materials on this book, please go to the Charlesbridge Publishing, Inc. website at www.charlesbridge.com.

Books and Websites to Explore Together

Printed material and electronic websites are great ways to learn more about Indigenous peoples in the United States and other parts of the world. There are some important guidelines to take into consideration when choosing materials:

- Who has written the book or contributed to the website? It is always best that the author is a member of the tribal nation being described for accuracy.
- Look for materials which describe Native Americans not only in the past but also in the present. Characters should reflect varied personalities and geographic settings.
- Avoid books which depict non-Native children and even animals wearing headdresses and other types of regalia. These pictures do not reflect a respect for the significance of traditional apparel in the Indigenous culture.
- Watch out for materials which display stereotypes, both in language and in illustrations. This translates into visual media as well, i.e. streaming, animation, and cinema.
- Both fiction and nonfiction books are valuable, and don't forget Native American poetry as well!

General Book Listings:

- <https://coloursofus.com/32-native-american-childrens-books/>
(Resources for young people, babies through high school age)
- <https://socialjusticebooks.org/booklists/american-indians/>
(Dr. Debbie Reese, noted children's literature authority)

Websites for All Ages:

- <https://americanindian.si.edu/>
(The National Museum of the American Indian - Smithsonian Institution)
- <https://americanindian.si.edu/nk360>
(Native Knowledge portal for students and teachers)
- <https://www.nationalgeographic.org/education>
(National Geographic)
- <https://www.eocumc.com/multi-cultural/native-american.html>
(East Ohio Conference Native American Ministries)
- <https://www.umc.org/en/what-we-believe/umc-topics/our-people/native-people>
(The United Methodist Church)

Books and Websites to Explore Together, cont.

Websites Created by Contemporary Native Americans:

- <https://indiancountrytoday.com>
(Indian Country Today)
- <https://www.indianz.com>
(Indianz.com)
- <https://www.nativeamericacalling.com>
(Native America Calling)
- <https://www.niatero.org>
(Nia Tero)

Fiction and Non-fiction Books

Do All Indians Live in Tipis? Questions and Answers from the National Museum of the American Indian-- Smithsonian Institution, Second Edition. (2018). Washington, DC: Smithsonian Books.

Native Heritage: Personal Accounts by American Indians 1790 to the Present. Hirschfelder, Arlene. (1995). New York: Macmillan.

The Native American Story Book: Stories of the American Indians for Children. Mullins, G.W. and C.L. Hause. (2016). Light of the Moon Publishing.

Native American Spirit Beings. Nagle, Jeanne, ed. (2015). New York: Britannica Educational Publishing.

Voices in the Stones: Life Lessons from the Native Way. Nerburn, Kent. (2016). Novato: New World Library, 2016. (Spirituality)

Encyclopedia of American Indian History & Culture: Stories, Time Lines, Maps, and more. O'Brien, Cynthia. (2019). Washington D.C.: National Geographic.

At the Mountain's Base. Sorell, Traci and Alvitre, Weshoyot. (2019). New York: Penguin Random House L.L.C. (Picture Book)

Classified: The Secret Career of Mary Golda Ross, Cherokee Aerospace Engineer. Sorell, Traci and Donovan, Natasha. (2021). Minneapolis: Millbrook Press. (Picture Book)

We Are Grateful/Otsaliheliga. Sorell, Traci and Lessac, Frané. (2018). Watertown, MA: Charlesbridge Publishing, Inc. (Picture Book)

We Are Still Here! Native American Truths Everyone Should Know. Sorell, Traci and Lessac, Frané. (2021). Charlesbridge Publishing, Inc. (Picture Book)