

Native American Work Team, Southwestern Washington Synod, ELCA – Resources for Congregations, October 2022



“Upstream”, designed by Toni Jo Gobin, Tulalip Tribes, is the symbol of the NAWT.

Our symbol depicts a salmon in a struggle to return to its spawning waters in order for there to be new life. This symbol is a way of inviting us as Lutherans into the work of ministry with our neighbors.

Our work consists of **curating resources, cultivating sacred curiosity, and encouraging mutual relationships** between our congregations and their Native American neighbors and siblings. Find out more about our mission here: <https://swwasynod.org/about/justice-work/native-american-resources/>

This document provides resources and suggestions as to how to gain deeper knowledge, develop mutual relationships and appropriately observe holidays and commemorations associated with indigenous peoples.

LEARN HISTORY

“It is detrimental to everyone, not just to us, to not know that history. It impacts everyone. If people had known, if it had been part of our school curriculum over the generations and had been taught instead of ignored, we wouldn’t have this problem.”

Frances Charles, čʔétxʷaʔ nəxʷsłáým (Lower Elwha Klallam), in the Foreword to *Breaking Ground* by Lynda V. Mapes, University of Washington Press 2009. The book is about the Unearthing of čixʷícən (Tse-whi-zen) Village on the water front of Port Angeles, WA, for a bridge repair project.

<https://uwapress.uw.edu/book/9780295988788/breaking-ground/>

Thankfully, a Native American curriculum is mandatory in all schools in Washington State since 2015. Find it, and additional Native American teaching units here:

<https://www.k12.wa.us/student-success/resources-subject-area/time-immemorial-tribal-sovereignty-washington-state>

<https://www.k12.wa.us/student-success/access-opportunity-education/native-education/native-education-curriculum-materials>

Your local tribe/s might have additional, local teaching material. Many tribes have a webpage on which you can find the contact info of their outreach specialist. Don't know what your local tribes are? Find them here:

[Native Land Digital https://www.washingtontribes.org/the-tribes-of-washington/](https://www.washingtontribes.org/the-tribes-of-washington/)

LEARN LANGUAGE

Does your local tribe offer **native language and/or culture classes**? Some WA state tribes offer early childhood education classes, and some of those are open to all. Some public-school districts and colleges offer classes in Native languages. Consider learning a Native language. Consider signing your children up for Native language learning. It takes a village to revive a language. Be part of that village.

START A NATIVE AMERICAN READING GROUP OR INCORPORATE NA BOOKS IN YOUR EXISTING READING GROUP

Transformational book recommendations by Briana Brannan, Synod Staff

[*Healing Haunted Histories: A Settler Discipleship of Decolonization*](#) by Elaine Enns and Ched Meyers - invites deeper understanding of immigrant & settler histories within a family lineage and understanding of Christian church history in the U.S. and Canada.

[*Braiding Sweetgrass: Indigenous Wisdom, Scientific Knowledge and the Teachings of Plants*](#) by Robin Wall Kimmerer - invites a more holistic and healing relationship for non-native people with the land and more-than-human kin.

Foundational book recommendations by Marva Janik, Lutheran Church of the Good Shepherd, Stevenson

[*Neither Wolf nor Dog: On Forgotten Roads with an Indian Elder*](#) by Kent Nerburn

[*The Bitter Waters of Medicine Creek – A tragic clash between white and native America*](#) by Richard Kluger

Foundational book recommendation by Rev. Kristin-Luana Baumann, Holy Trinity Lutheran Church, Port Angeles [*First Nations Version – an Indigenous Translation of the New Testament*](#)

ELCA RESOURCES AND DEVELOPMENTS

In 2016, the ELCA repudiated the Doctrine of Discovery. The Doctrine of Discovery originates in 15th century papal bulls which sanctioned the brutal conquest and colonization of Non-Christians.

https://download.elca.org/ELCA%20Resource%20Repository/Repudiation_Doctrine_of_DiscoverySPR16.pdf

In 2021, the ELCA formulated a follow-up document of confessions and commitments:

https://download.elca.org/ELCA%20Resource%20Repository/Declaration_to_American_Indian_Alaska_Native.pdf

The commitments in this document were affirmed at the 2022 Churchwide Assembly:

“Encouraged members, congregations and synods of this church to educate themselves about Indigenous peoples, calling on the churchwide organization to work with synods and Indigenous partners to identify sources of funding for ministries for Indigenous peoples, and encouraging restorative justice that could include the return of land to the appropriate Native nations.”

<https://elca.org/News-and-Events/8172>

LAND ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

Rev. Louise Buckles, Ocean Park Lutheran Church, Ocean Park, found this insightful article:

<https://crossings.org/on-performative-utterances/>

Here is the ELCA guide for land acknowledgements:

https://download.elca.org/ELCA%20Resource%20Repository/Land_Acknowledgement_Guide.pdf?ga=2.48944294.1897572066.1673284848-1870145156.1654022968

Kai Abrahamson is the person who creates the plaques in this Synod. Contact Rev. Kristin-Luana Baumann kristinluana@gmail.com to receive a land acknowledgement plaque for your church.

Many tribes are doing amazing work in the area of **land and water restoration**. Find out if your local tribe organizes volunteer events for tree plantings, creek restorations, etc., and participate. Maybe you have the possibility to organize a visit to a Native ‘Sacred Site’ in the sense of a neighboring tribal center, museum, library, project, public celebration or such

OBSERVE AND CELEBRATE

Celebrate holidays and anniversaries associated with Indigenous people appropriately. For

Example:

January – Treaty Days

[Find WA state treaties which were signed in January here.](#)

- April 29-May 5th is the National Week of Action for Missing and Murdered Indigenous People

Contact Rev. Linda Smith linda_smith163@yahoo.com and Deacon Bonnie Sanchez bonsan7@gmail.com to request an education about MMIP.

June – Treaty Days

[Find WA state treaties which were signed in June here.](#)

- Summer Tribal Canoe Journeys – North Western Tribes travel the ancestral highways of their cultures

July 30-August 6, 2023 – Paddle to Muckleshoot

<https://muckleshootcanoejourney.com/>

- September 30 is National Day of Remembrance for US Indian Boarding School.

Learn more about Indian Boarding Schools at the National Native American Healing Coalition.

You can also join, donate and advocate here:

<https://boardingschoolhealing.org/>

Contact Rev. Seth Novak at pastorseth@agnusdeilutheran.org to receive a template and further resources for an orange commemorative banner for your church.

Contact Rev. Linda Smith linda_smith163@yahoo.com and Deacon Bonnie Sanchez bonsan7@gmail.com or Rev. Pam Hunter callirev@yahoo.com to request an education about US Indian Boarding Schools.

- October 10 is Indigenous Peoples Day
- November is Native American Heritage Month

December – Treaty Days

[The Treaty of Medicine Creek was signed in December.](#)

WORSHIP RESOURCES

Churchwide Assembly 2022 Native Worship Resource:

https://download.elca.org/ELCA%20Resource%20Repository/CWA2022_Wednesday_Holy_Communion.pdf

Shepherd of the Hills Lutheran Church in Stevenson has observed Native American Celebration Sunday for 28 years! They graciously developed a **tool kit** for our use; find excerpts below:

Contact Rev. Kristin-Luana Baumann kristinluana@gmail.com for further resources.

Recommendations for relationship building and ministry with Native American neighbors

Plan a yearly Native American Celebration Sunday.

1. Invite a Native American speaker.
2. Native worship leaders and Native American congregation members are encouraged to wear tribal regalia.
3. Display Native American Art in both the Sanctuary and Narthex. Borrow from congregation members, local museums, private artists, collectors, etc.
4. Share a feast following worship that includes tribal customs and dishes. Perhaps a local tribal member can help prepare or serve.
5. Send notice of the celebration to local newspapers as well as post on social media inviting all to worship. RSVP required if a feast is planned.
6. Special offering during the worship service dedicated to an outreach program or a special need of the Native community.

Dedicate a year to *Seeing* your Native American neighbor. In general, invite your congregational members to NOTICE: newspaper articles (or absence of) regarding Native people, notice if the article is written by a native person. Get to know which tribes have/do live on the land on which you are situated.

Include your native neighbors in your intercessory prayers on Sunday, include prayers for water, salmon, birds and other things that have special meaning to Native people in your area. Place artwork in your narthex or fellowship area that reflects Native presence. Seek out art, movies, books, history BY Native people.

Be patient and always respectful. Building trust and relationships takes time.

We hope the resources in this document are helpful to you. Would you like to suggest a resource or a Site Visit or to join the Work Team? Please contact Rev. Kristin-Luana Baumann at kristinluana@gmail.com.