

## Native American Heritage Month and the Church

November is designated as Native American Heritage Month. We, in America, are reminded of the connection we have with our Native American sisters and brothers. Their history is our history. So, what does that have to do with the United Methodist church?

At the 2012 General Conference, the United Methodist Church held an Act of Repentance with Native Peoples (2016 Book of Resolutions). The act challenged every conference and local congregation to implement actions demonstrating a genuine attitude of repentance. Why? Because the UMC and its predecessor church bodies were, and continue to be, complicit, intended or not, in acts of discrimination, marginalization and violence against Native American communities.

What does our individual and collective repentance look like? It takes the form of advocacy and allyship. It means demonstrating our vows of prayer, presence, gifts, service and witness when we do mission work **with** Native American communities across America like the Oklahoma Indian Missionary Conference and make contributions to the OIMC programs that support clergy salaries, education for children and youth and construction projects. It means educating our selves and others with the truth about Native American history thus the history of America. It means supporting efforts to decolonize education and remove harmful mascots from schools and sports.

“... while living persons are not responsible for what their ancestors did, they are responsible for the society they live in, which is a product of that past.” (page 235, Indigenous Peoples History of the United States)

Ruth Bowen

Co-Social Action Coordinator NTC UMW

Links to helpful resources:

<http://www.umc-oimc.org/>

<http://www.nacp-umc.org/>

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=EmTAxg7j2eM> “Know My Truth” by Alyssa Underwood