Native American Day
in the
Presbyterian Church, USA

Native American Day is celebrated in the Presbyterian Church, USA on September 22nd or 23rd (Fall Equinox). You may celebrate the day on the Sunday before or after or on another appropriate day. Worship resources follow.

Since 1994, Native American Day appears on the Presbyterian Calendar as the day to recognize and celebrate the contributions of Native Americans/American Indians to the life of the church and community. The date of September 22nd or 23rd was selected and established the date for Native American Day. Ironically, Fall Equinox is noted on one or the other date. The Fall Equinox has marked “harvest time” for many Native American tribes for centuries and is a time of celebration and preparation for winter.

Native American Day 2014 was celebrated with a worship service held at the Presbyterian Center in Louisville, Kentucky. Rev. Judith Wellington, Surprise, AZ, will bring the Word in that service of worship.

The ninety-five Native American congregations and chapels are located on reservations, in rural areas and two urban congregations. There are twenty-one presbyteries and seven synods which have Native American constituents in them. Some of the churches are isolated due to location.

A shortage of ordained Native American clergy exists. The churches are dependent upon lay leadership because many cannot meet the presbytery minimum salary necessary to pay a full-time pastor. Most of these congregations are comprised of Native people who earn low incomes so consequently do not have the resources to sustain full-time ordained ministries. The loss of national and mid-governing body mission funding has contributed to an already acute leadership crisis in these churches.

DID YOU KNOW?

- As of May 2013, there are 566 federally recognized tribes located on reservations, in rural areas on allotment lands and in the cities.
- In the 2010 U.S. Census, for the first time more Native Americans reside in large in cities than on reservations.
- Allotment land: Break up of Indian territories resulted in land being distributed to individuals (180 acres). The “surplus land” was sold by the federal government to non-Native buyers.
Relocation: Was a government program which sought to relocate Native people to urban areas of the country in the 1950’s and early 60’s to assist families with employment and education for single adults. Some stayed and others returned to their homeland when the promised jobs never materialized. Often they were given bus fare to the city and a small stipend then were expected to support themselves without training for jobs or preparation to live outside their tribal communities. Many were without skills to obtain jobs.

As of 2011, there were 460 gambling operations run by 240 tribes. Many of the Pacts which created the gaming operations require tribes to give-back to surrounding municipalities a percentage of their earnings annually. Since there are 326 tribes who do not have gaming operations on their reservations, the idea that “all Indian tribes have casinos” is false.

Connections and partnerships between congregations and these Native American churches around mission projects have been ongoing for several years and mutually beneficial. Groups have worked together in the local community, help with church building needs and conduct Vacation Bible School. Others have given toward national gatherings for Native American youth, young adults and leadership development opportunities. A better understanding between both cultures has developed as well.

Diversity exists in the languages, cultures, and tribal governments but a common history is their faith journey. Native American Presbyterians love to tell the story and welcome opportunities to do so.

“May the warm winds of heaven blow softly upon you and the Creator make sunrise in your hearts.”
(Cherokee Prayer)

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WEB PAGE: http://www.presbyterianmission.org/ministries/nativeamerican/about-us/
FACEBOOK: https://www.facebook.com/pages/Native-American-Ministries-PCUSA/232067750278099

(First Indian Presbyterian Church, Kamiah, ID – Nez Perce Indian reservation. Established 1871)
(Native American Presbyterian Women’s Conference 2015)

(Native American Young Adult Council)

(American Indian Youth Council – Class of 2017)
Celebrating Native American Day
Liturgy Resources: Provided by Reverend Irvin Porter

Christ the Center

*L:* From the East, the direction of the rising sun, come wisdom and knowledge. Let us face East *(all face East, pause)* and let us pray: Enable us, O God, to be wise in our use of the resources of the earth, sharing them in justice, partaking of them in thankfulness. We learn from your creation that life is a sacred circle, of which there is no beginning and no end.

“We are all related. Lord, hear our prayer.”

*L:* Please face center. *(pause)* From the South comes guidance, the beginning and end of life. Let us face South *(all face South, pause)* and let us pray: May we walk good paths, O God, living on this earth as sisters and brothers should, rejoicing in one another’s blessings, sympathizing in one another’s sorrows, and together with you renewing the face of the earth.

“We are all related. Lord hear our prayer.”

*L:* Please face center. *(pause)* From the West come purifying waters. Let us face West *(all face West, pause)* and pray that the Holy Spirit of God may again breathe over the waters making them pure, making them fruitful. Let us pray: We pray that we too may be purified so that life may be sustained and nurtured over the entire face of the earth.

“We are all related. Lord hear our prayer.”

*L:* Please face center. *(pause)* From the North come purifying winds. O God, you have been called breath and wind of life. Let us face North *(all face North, pause)* and let us pray: May the air we breathe be purified so that life

*Voices: Native American Hymns and Worship Resources, 1992,*  
*Marilyn Hofstra, Discipleship Resources, Nashville, TN.*

Prayer of Confession

The circle of love is repeatedly broken because of the sin of exclusion. We create separate circles: the inner circle and the outer circle, the circle of power and the circle of misery, the circle of favor and the circle of denial.

**Forgive us our sins, as we forgive all who have sinned against us.**

The circle of love is broken whenever there is hostility, whenever there is misunderstanding, whenever there is insensitivity and a closed heart.

**Forgive us our sins, as we forgive all who have sinned against us.**
The circle of love is broken whenever we cannot see eye to eye, whenever we cannot link hand to hand, whenever we cannot live heart to heart and affirm our differences.

**Forgive us our sins, as we forgive all who have sinned against us.**

Through God’s grace we are forgiven, by the mercy of our Creator, through the love of the Christ, and in the power of the Spirit. Let us rejoice and be glad!

**All:** Glory be to the father and to the Son and to the Holy Spirit. As it was in the beginning, is now and ever shall be; world without end. Amen.

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**The Lord’s Prayer (Native American version)**

*O Great Spirit, Creator of the universe, You are our Shepherd Chief in the most high place. Whose home is everywhere, even beyond the stars and moon. Whatever you want done, let it, also be done everywhere. Give us your gift of bread day by day. Forgive us our wrongs as we forgive those who wrong us. Take us away from wrong doings. Free us from all evil. For everything belongs to you. Let your power and glory shine forever. Amen.*

*This version was written by Hattie Corbett Enos, Nez Perce, great grandmother of Rev. Irvin Porter Gifts of Many Cultures, 1995,* *Maren C. Tirabassi and Kathy Wonson Eddy, United Church Press, Cleveland, OH.*

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**Hymns**

**“O, God the Creator”**

*PH #273*

This hymn was written by Rev. Cecil Corbett, Nez Perce/Choctaw, and Elizabeth Haile, Shinnecock, in 1977. The song was originally written for the tune of “They’ll Know We are Christians By Our Love” but the composer would not permit the tune’s use for this song. The tune that is used here, KASTAAK, was written by Joy F. Patterson, 1989.

**“Many and Great, O God are Thy Things”**

*PH #271*

Wakantanka / "Many and Great”. Words & Music: Joseph R. Renville (1779-1846); This song was written by Joseph R. Renville and first appeared in the "Dakota Odawan", also known as "Dakota Dowanpi Kin" published in Boston in 1842). Of the hymns published in that book, this is the only one for which the original melody is known to have been a traditional Dakota tune. The tune is LACQUIPARLE, French for 'lake that speaks.' This was sung by thirty-eight Dakota as they were escorted to the gallows, at Mankato, Minnesota, on December 26, 1862, the largest mass execution in American history” according to Rev. Sidney Bird, Dakota Presbyterian minister whose ancestor was acquitted of charges by Lincoln. “The Sioux Uprising” began August 17, 1862.
after the Dakota had demanded annuities promised by treaty directly from their agent. Traders refused to provide any more supplies on credit and negotiations reached an impasse.