

## **2017 Charter for Racial Justice Program Wisconsin Conference United Methodist Women**

- Who: For all units/local organizations/circles in Wisconsin Conference.
- What: A program geared to Wisconsin about issues of race. Duration 30-45 minutes.
- Where: At any place that United Methodist Women meet.
- When: Any time in 2017 and after.
- Why:
  - \*To become aware of what is happening in our own communities.
  - \*To become more aware of people hurting around us.
  - \*To be able to live peacefully in our neighborhoods, both local and extended.
  - \*To get credit for Mission Tasks.
- How: By using this prepared program in your local unit/organization/circle. Feel free to adapt this program in order to make it useful for your particular situation and time constraints.

### **“Listening to Native Americans: Stories and Struggles”**

Focus statement from the Charter for Racial Justice: (read together as directed)

**Left side:** BECAUSE WE BELIEVE (#4) Racism robs all human beings of their wholeness and is used as a justification for social, economic and political exploitation.

**Right side:** WE WILL (#4) Create workshops and seminars in local churches to study, understand and appreciate the historical and cultural contributions of each race to the church and the community.

#### Worship

OPENING HYMN (choose one)

Come, Ye Thankful People, Come UMH #694

Heleluyan, heleluyan UMH #78

Guide My Feet FWS #2208

God Made From One Blood FWS#2170

#### SCRIPTURE

Read Luke 4: 14-21

Have a short popcorn discussion on the following:

Reflect on ways in which this quote from Isaiah was fulfilled in Jesus. How is it fulfilled today by Christ’s representative the church? Is this reflected in how the church has viewed Native Americans?

#### CONFESSION

- In the spirit of confession lead the group in a modified smudging ceremony. Although you will probably not actually be able to have scared tobacco burning,

have a leader take the group through this responsive process. Have the group turn to face each direction as you read the parts for East, South, West, North, Heaven (up) and Earth (down).

Spirit of God, present in the East, the direction of the rising sun, we greet You and seek peace and light, wisdom and knowledge. You bring us the hope of a new day, hope that we can live in harmony with one another and with the whole community of life.

**Spirit of the East, awaken in us new hopes, new dreams; invigorate us to reach out and grasp the miracles that are given birth with each new dawn. May we not continue to live in darkness. We are grateful for these gifts, Creator God.**

Spirit of God, present in the South, whence comes warmth, maturity, and growth, we greet You. We ask for the spirit of growth, of fertility, of gentleness. Give us seeds and rain that the flowers, trees, and fruits of the earth may grow. These are gifts offered to us from You, Creator God.

**Spirit of the South, thaw and soften the coldness of our world. Draw us by the urgings of your warm breath to break through the soil of our own barrenness and fears. Give us the warmth of happy families and good friendships. We are grateful for Your gifts of food, Creator God.**

Spirit of God, present in the West, home of the rain, purifying waters that sustain all living things, we greet You. We turn to You in praise of sunsets and in thanksgiving for the change of seasons. You give us a time to rest and recall with gladness all that has happened each day.

**We greet you, Spirit of the West, for you cool our hot and tired bodies; refresh and bring laughter to our hearts. Guide us at the end of each day that, filled with your peace, we might rest securely in your great mystery of night until morning calls us forth again.**

Spirit of God, present in the North, the place of cold and mighty winds, the white snows, teaching us strength and endurance, we greet You.

**Teach us, Spirit of the North, in the solitude of winter, to wait in darkness with the sleeping earth, believing that we, like the earth, already hold within ourselves the seeds of new life. Help us to be faithful when the struggles of life are hard.**

We greet You, Creator God, present in the heavens above where we receive darkness and light. You breathe into our nostrils the breath of life. You send us melody in the skies through Your winged creatures. The moon and stars influence the seasons of life, thereby insuring a balance harmony of all You have created.

**We are grateful for these gifts, Creator God.**

We greet You, Spirit God of the Earth. It is from You we came, as from a mother; You nourish us still and give us shelter.

**For all the plant life and animal life, for nourishment provided for us by Mother Earth, we are grateful, Creator God. Teach us to use with care your gifts.**

May we walk good paths, living on this earth as brothers and sisters should; rejoicing in one another's blessing, living in harmony with all of Your creation and together with You, Creator God, always renewing the face of the earth. **Amen.**

## WHO ARE THE NATIVE AMERICANS IN WISCONSIN?

Instructions: Enter a time of learning and discussion.

**Leader:** There are 11 officially recognized tribes in Wisconsin, including the Bad River, Red Cliff, Lac Courte Oreilles, Lac de Flambeau, Sokaogon and St. Croix Chippewa, Ho-Chunk Nation, Menominee Nation, Oneida Nation, Forest County Potawatomi and Stockbridge-Munsee Mohican Nations. The Brothertown tribe is not officially recognized. (Hand out to each person a copy of the map or show the map of tribal center locations – see final page). [Have someone or several people read for the group the section on Historical Trauma. Show videos as time and technology allow].

### **Historical Trauma (Reader)**

To understand American Indians today, one must understand historical trauma. So what is historical trauma? It is a cumulative emotional and psychological wounding, over the lifespan and across generations, emanating from massive group trauma experiences. Intergenerational trauma- experience in an earlier generation and can reach into future generations.

Historical trauma response (HTR) is a constellation of features in recognition to trauma. It includes multiple symptoms and other self-destructive behaviors.

American Indians have suffered a series of traumatic events since European contact including:

1. Disease- No immunity to European disease; whole tribes could be wiped out before even seeing the Europeans; biological warfare through small pox infested blankets; 75-90% of the population was wiped out by disease; *Divine Providence*- settlers and missionaries believed and endorsed that through epidemics, God was clearing the way for the white man.
2. Warfare- Any Indians that resisted were considered hostile and attacked; 1622-1890 warfare killed many. At the Battle of Wounded Knee 300 unarmed women, children, and elderly were killed by the US Calvary.
3. Extermination- In 1755, the British Crown Proclamation offered 40 pounds for male scalps and 20 pounds for female scalps and/or males under age 12.
4. Slavery- Every European nation that colonized North America used slaves for construction, plantation, and mining; more Indian people were exported than African Americans were imported.
5. Starvation- Crops were burned, animal's slaughtered, and food sources were destroyed. For 45 years during the years of 1840-1885, buffalo on the plains went from 30 million to 200.

6. Removal- In less than 100 years, Indian lands were reduced from all land west of the Appalachians to the desolate reservations totaling less than 4% of the continental US. Some of the events that caused the removal of the Indians were: In 1744 the Treaty of Lancaster; In 1830 the Indian Removal Act; In 1838 The Trail of Tears. In 1848 there was the California Gold Strike; In 1854 there was the Indian Appropriation Act.
7. Treaties- Over 370 treaties were negotiated by the US and Indian tribes within 100 years. Each one was broken by the US.
8. Assimilation- Policy was shaped by a series of laws that wanted to “civilize” the Indians.

Onondaaga Chief Canassatego said, “We know you highly esteem the kind of learning taught in these colleges. And the maintenance of our young men, while with you, would be very expensive to you. We're convinced, therefore, that you mean to do us good by your proposal, and we thank you heartily. But you who are so wise must know that different nations have different conceptions of things. And you will not, therefore, take it amiss if our ideas of this kind of education happen not to be the same with yours.

We have had some experience of it. Several of our young people were formerly brought up in the colleges of the Northern Province. They were instructed in all your sciences. But when they came back to us, they were bad runners, ignorant of every means of living in the woods, unable to bear either cold or hunger, knew neither how to build a cabin, take a deer, or kill an enemy, spoke our language imperfectly, and therefore were neither fit for hunters, warriors, nor councilors. They were totally good for nothing.

We are, however, not the less obliged for your kind offer, though we decline accepting. To show our grateful sense of it, if the gentlemen of Virginia shall send us a dozen of their sons, we would take great care in their education, instruct them in all we know, and make men of them.”

Retrieved from:

<http://www.americanrhetoric.com/speeches/nativeamericans/chiefcanasatego.htm>

9. Boarding Schools- Children were forcibly taken from 4 years old until 18; in some schools, as much as 40% of the children were sexually abused; many died of illness, heartbreak, starved or froze to death; 80% of Indian children were in boarding schools during the boarding school era; the boarding school era ended in 1958. The schools left three generations of children empty, lost, hopeless, and broken; Keshena had a government and Catholic boarding school; In 1879, the first boarding school was in Carlisle, Pennsylvania under

the War Department run by Captain Richard Henry Pratt who had the motto, "Kill the Indian, Save the Man." Native American prisoners of war were the first students. Over 100,000 children were forced to attend boarding schools; 19 Hopi men were imprisoned at Alcatraz for not sending their children to boarding schools; late 1940s/1950- children were forced to be circumcised and get tonsils out; If kids spoke in their native language, they were hit and beaten; their hair was cut; corporal punishment was used;

Video clip: Boarding School Abuse (10 minutes):

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=lq70hPUBF7o>

10. Native American Relocation Act of 1956- Milwaukee, Chicago, San Francisco, Dallas, and Denver all had ads to entice people to move which dislocated them from their tribal communities.
11. Sterilization- In 1976, the Indian Health Service conducted secret involuntary sterilization of Indian women usually without their knowledge or consent; 1974- 42% of American Indian women of childbearing age had been sterilized without their consent. From 1970-1976 20-25% of Native women were sterilized.
12. Termination- Terminated federal funding of health care, education programs, utility services, police and fire departments; 1953-1964, more than 100 tribes and bands were terminated, and more than 12,000 people, 3% of Native population; Approximately 2.5 million acres of trust land was removed from protected status, much was sold to non-Natives. The Menomonee tribe was the first experimental group, but they fought back and won restoration in December 22, 1973.
13. Symptoms of Injury- The unemployment rate is 3-9 times higher than the national average; the median income is 50% compared to Whites; 60% high school dropout rate; Menominee has a 32% truancy rate; mobility rate of 35%; Suicide rate is three times higher than the national rate for 15-24 year olds, up 1000% since 1970; Victimized (rape, assault, battery) at 2 times the rate of Blacks, 2.5 times the rate of Whites, 3 times the rate of Asians; 70% assaults are non-Native; Arrest rate 10 times higher than Whites, 3 times more than African Americans; High rates of drug use; Alcoholism is double the national average.
14. Genocide- In 1948, the United Nations defined genocide. Under this definition, the United States of America has committed genocide against Native Americans, yet to this day genocide is not recognized with American Indians.

#### Healing and breaking the cycle

Horrible events damage people, families and communities. Trauma creates distances, distress and disconnection between people. Healing is about reconnection, reconstruction and finding meaning. Healing must repair

connections with others, with self-image, and with values and beliefs. (Video 6 minutes)

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=sjJUQlodh0g>

Discussion: Did you know the Native American tribes in Wisconsin? Does the difficulties Native Americans face surprise you? Why or why not? What more do you want to know?

### EXPERIENCES IN WISCONSIN

Instructions: If you have someone present who is comfortable sharing their own experience(s) with Native Americans in Wisconsin, feel free to share that story in place of or in addition to the topics below. Otherwise, choose 1 or more of these topics as time allows to be read to the group. Alternately if you have a larger group, you can divide the group and have each subgroup pick a topic to discuss as a small group. Use the discussion questions or other questions which arise to guide you in spiritual discussion.

#### TOPIC 1: Stereotyping (Reader):

A stereotype is a generalized statement that is based on a biased or naïve opinion about a person, a group, an idea or a place. It is an image that is based on a preconceived notion and has the potential to hurt and diminish the humanity of an individual or a group of individuals. On the other hand, it also limits the perceptions of the person who does the stereotyping and prevents her from realizing the other as a whole and fully functioning human being. Most often the negative language or image is verbal, but it can be noted through tone of voice, laughter or body language also. Although an image may be over generalized and view the other as superhuman, it is, never the less, demeaning. In other words, it is still a put down.

Native Americans have been described through stereotypes and demeaning language that make them appear childlike, blood thirsty warriors or someone who just simply doesn't or can't live up to the standards of contemporary American culture. That's not the case. Skin color and other differences fade as we get to know Native Americans as friends, neighbors and colleagues. I have fond memories of teachers, social workers and staff as I worked side by side with Native people when I was the Director of Project Head Start on Standing Rock Reservation.

A fallacy is that all Native Americans live the same way, dress similarly and have the same aspirations. That simply is not the case. All Native Nations have their own culture. It is as absurd as thinking that all European cultures are the same. True, there may be similarities, but there are also differences.

The notion that all Natives Americans live on reservations is also false because only 22%- 25% live there. Maybe that's because we fail to recognize that Native people participate in all ways of life in America. For instance, they live in diverse communities and have professions such as teachers, lawyers, pastors, college/university professors and skilled and unskilled workers. Characterizing Native people as drunken or lazy Indians is no more descriptive of Native men than referring to Native women as squaws or Indian princesses.

One of the most blatant examples of use of negative language is naming athletic teams or school mascots after Native Nations or characteristics of Native people. Often communities or alumni of academic institutions will fight “tooth and nail” to keep the names, as if it is an honor to the Native Americans to be portrayed in that manner. A prime example of this is, my alma mater, the University of North Dakota. For years the athletic teams were called the “Fighting Sioux.” Some alumni refused to donate funds to UND and some fans were upset because they might lose the name. Fortunately, after a few years of bickering, the name “Fighting Sioux” was retired and the athletic teams became the “Fighting Hawks.”

Perhaps no format has provided and perpetuated more misconceptions of Native Americans than movies, literature and other forms of media. Although there is improvement, negative or naïve perceptions still creep into the depiction of Native people. Most publishers today have specific guidelines that project a more realistic representation of people of all backgrounds and abilities.

Sometimes a character is interjected into the narrative as a token, having only minimal representation and has little or no relationship to the plot or to the outcome of the story. In this case, the character may be in a picture, have insignificant dialogue and simply be there. When Native Americans are omitted in popular media it is as if they are not part of the fabric of American culture.

It is imperative that books and other media prepared for children must be free from stereotypes of and negative language about Native Americans. This purpose is twofold: the Native child needs to see accurate and appropriate role models, and, secondly, the other needs to see them as worthy and fully functioning persons.

Librarians from the University of Wisconsin-Platteville and from the Platteville Public Library identified sites that identify appropriate books for children to read. If you have children in your life, give books as gifts or enjoy reading to children, visit your local library and become familiar with these sites and use them often. They suggest new and fresh titles that appeal to children and depict others realistically.

[www.BadgerLink.net](http://www.BadgerLink.net)   <http://oyate.org>

<https://americanindiansinchildrensliterature.blogspot.com/p/best-books.html>

<http://ccbc.education.wisc.edu/books/multicultural.asp>

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Weaver, Hillary N. Indigenous Identity: What Is It and Who Really Has It?

<https://muse.jhu.edu/article/252/summary>.

Discussion questions: Has anyone described you in words that are unflattering, demeaning or judgmental? Or characterized your abilities and talents as if they are inferior? If your answer is yes, how did it make you feel? Did you feel as if you are to

blame, diminish your feeling of self-worth, or affect your self-concept? How can we combat stereotypes?

TOPIC 2: Healthcare (Reader):

[Note this story is told from the point of view of Wendy Wilson-Uhl, Conference Social Action coordinator]

When I first stepped into Janet's Germantown home, I noticed the smell of stale cigarette smoke. I worked with Janet for several years at the Visiting Nursing Association of Milwaukee before we actually interacted socially. We grew up on the Northwest side of Milwaukee and we attended the same high school; four years apart in parallel universes. I didn't really get to know her until after my divorce in 1988.

Although I was a Registered Nurse and she was a clerk in the billing department (those two groups rarely interacted at the time), she was the first to really befriend me and offer social interaction which I so badly needed. I would visit Janet at least once a week in her home. Janet worked day shift and her husband worked 3<sup>rd</sup> shift, so he was usually sleeping when I was there. We would watch movies that she had rented, drink coffee and talk. We talked about everything. School, kids, men, parents, Hollywood stars, and food, recipes and many things I can't even remember now.

I knew Janet for probably two years before a portrayal of Native Americans in a movie led to a discussion of her growing up between the Ojibwa White Earth Reservation in Minnesota and the city of Milwaukee where her mother was relocated in the early 60's. This was a plan by the US government to transfer Indians from reservations to several American cities to "help them blend in to regular American culture". Indians were removed from the land their ancestors lived on for centuries and dropped into cities with no advance preparation or support. This was very difficult on her mother and she ended up with severe depression and an early death due to alcoholism. Breaking up families was also part of the plan to ensure that Native Americans didn't return to their Indian roots. (1) Janet and her sisters moved to Milwaukee and her brother and father remained on the reservation in Minnesota. Her father died and her mother remarried to a man in Milwaukee that Janet always considered her father.

Janet became pregnant after her Junior year in high school and managed to carry her daughter and get her diploma. She and her boyfriend, Tim, did not marry for 2-3 years when she became pregnant again with their son, Tony. They both worked hard and managed to save money to move out of the city and buy a house in Germantown. When I first met Janet things were going well and she had felt that she was overcoming her difficult past. Then her daughter became pregnant in her senior year and her boyfriend quickly left the situation. Things seemed to take a turn from there. I know Janet was hoping for a life different from hers for her children but history seemed to be repeating itself. In about 1993, Janet began having difficulty with keeping up with her job in billing and it became difficult for her to type on the keyboard to keep with her expected quota. Her fingers began to swell and her joints became painful. She was diagnosed with Rheumatoid Arthritis (RA). She was only 35 years old



RA is an autoimmune disease that affects the joints but is a systemic disease as well. The Journal of Rheumatology reported that “Compared to white patients NAN (North American Native) patients with RA develop disease earlier, ...have greater large joint involvement and greater disease burden, although treatment is more aggressive”. (2) Janet had health care coverage through work but it became clear that the long commute from Germantown to West Allis was becoming too difficult and she found another job closer to home that also involved keyboarding. She maintained her position for a while but then as her RA progressed she began having increasingly more problems keeping up with her claims quotas and even though her doctor wrote a letter saying that she needed disability accommodation they refused to change her quotas and the request that she be allowed work no more than 2 days in a row. She found a lawyer willing to take on her disability case through the then called Indian Health Board in Milwaukee. The stress at work, her new health care insurance, and the rapid progression of her disease led to a stress in her marriage. Her husband wasn't happy that she couldn't work full time and they pulled apart. After being together since they were 16 years old he moved all the money out of their joint accounts and filed for divorce. Janet was dealing with a progressive debilitating disease, unable to work more than 24 hours per week, and was now alone.

At the same time, her daughter was having difficulty caring for her daughter and was in a series of bad relationships with men, became pregnant again and began using drugs. As Janet would say “If it wasn't for bad luck I'd have no luck at all” She moved out of her home and into a rented home with her dog. She became increasingly more disabled and was unable to pay her rent and managed to get a subsidized apartment in West Bend. She was forced to give up her dog which was her only family member left. I saw her periodically but she was even further away now and it was more difficult for me to get away; working full time and a single mother myself. This was especially true after I met Andy and spent more time in Oconomowoc.

One Saturday, we had planned to meet at her apartment and go to lunch. When I got to the apartment and buzzed for her to let me in, there was no answer. I tried several times, still nothing. I had talked to her earlier that day so I was sure that she knew I was coming. It was not like her to forget. I buzzed the office manager and expressed concern that she didn't answer. The regular manager wasn't there but the secretary let me through the locked lobby. I ran up to her apartment and knocked on the door. No answer. I tried the door and it was unlocked, also not like Janet. I walked in and found her lying on the bed. I called out to her and she didn't respond. I shook her and still no response. I saw an open bottle of pain pills on her bedside table. I looked no further but dialed 911. When the paramedics arrived, they came in and began taking her vital signs, giving her oxygen and preparing to transfer her to the hospital. I gave them the empty pill bottle. One of the paramedics picked up a note from the bed, looked and asked me if I'd seen it. I told him “no”. He didn't show it to me, but I guessed that she had written a suicide note, but even so she knew I was coming and that I would get her help.

I drove to the hospital and waited until her daughter and son showed up. A policeman came up to me and I was told that I couldn't see her that night and that I would be contacted. The ride home was a blur as I tried to remain focused on driving through my tears. I blamed myself for not seeing her as often and not being supportive enough. I blamed her for setting me up to be responsible to save her. The next day in church I was still stunned and asked for prayers for me and for her. I was called to testify in her court case, yes, this is a crime. I showed up but while I was waiting I was told the case had been settled.

I am describing this to you because it's important for all of us to know that people that deal with chronic illness in our society have a very difficult time getting medical treatment, have to deal with massive amounts of medical debt and that even when they qualify for subsidized housing and Medicaid that it is almost impossible to get the full amount of medical care needed and the social and mental health support is often close to nothing. "Although tribal members are entitled to free health care, most Indian facilities do not offer a full array of services. When patients need major surgery or cancer treatments, for example, they are referred to specialists outside of Indian lands and health centers. At least 2/3rds of those referral claims are rejected" (3) Janet was not treated by the system as a citizen trying to cope with chronic illness and the alienation of her family. She was treated as a criminal.

As her RA progressed she confronted more complex and expensive treatment that had more severe side effects. The side effects of her RA treatment caused her to have a stroke and heart attack. Recovering from that delayed her RA treatment and she was concurrently dealing with RA flare ups as well. Janet improved in her stroke recovery but never fully regained the use of her left hand and leg. Between the residual effects of the stroke and the RA, she was forced into a nursing home. Something she had been trying to avoid. All the while, she had to keep fighting to maintain her Medicaid eligibility, pay back massive amounts of back medical debt and find physicians that were willing to treat her since she lost her employee based health care. She had been forced to sue a former employer for not adhering to the Americans With Disabilities Act. This took incredible amounts of time and aggravation only to find that the little she received in compensation was applied to her old debts. Janet lost all hope of ever becoming independent again.

Between her small pension from a former job, and her social security, she might have been able to go into an assisted living apartment again and regain some level of self-respect, but it was not to be. Janet died in the nursing home in April of 2016. She was never able to dig herself out of the hole that chronic illness had produced. She spent all the energy she had trying to deal with a system that was setting her up to fail.

Janet had tried several resources, such as the Indian Health clinic in Milwaukee, to get help. The IHB (Indian Health Bureau) did help her to some degree, but they did not have access to the specialists she really needed. She spent countless hours making appointments and trying to find some real assistance. She also had to deal with Native American stereotypes that she was "lazy" or must be an alcoholic. Neither of which were true. Recent evidence is now suggesting that Native Americans are not uniquely prone to

alcoholism. The stereotype is that that Native American's do not have the enzyme to metabolize alcohol as they didn't ever come in contact with it until the white men arrived. This has been shown to be historically inaccurate, as some Indian tribes have produced their own alcoholic drinks since well before Columbus landed in the Americas.

An article in the Washington Post from a study done at the University of Arizona Health Sciences Center, reported that alcohol use is higher in the white community and that the risks are no greater from binge drinking for NA's than they are for Whites. The study concluded that "Native Americans may be more vulnerable to the risks associated with drinking because of other issues, including a lack of access to health care, safe housing and clean water" (4)

The issues that most affect Native Americans are ones that can affect most of our population, Diabetes, acute injuries, sexual abuse, and suicide. These are often caused by inadequate access to fresh fruits and vegetables and stressed living conditions. The issue of Tuberculosis, while in decline, is still five times higher than for non-Hispanic Whites. (5)

In conclusion, the health issues that affect Native Americans can also affect any other American. As with the African American population, some of these issues are made more challenging due to forced disruption of the original cultural family units and most importantly, poverty. My friend had a chronic illness that disproportionately affects young Native Americans. When illness strikes at the time when we are supposed to be working and saving for retirement, there just is no opportunity to do that. The challenge becomes just to make it until the next rent or medical bill is due.

(1) PBS.org Sept. 2006, "Indian Country Diaries: The Urban Relocation Program

(2) The Journal of Rheumatology June 15, 2010 "Rheumatoid Arthritis in a North American Native Population: Longitudinal Follow-up and Comparison with a White Population:

(3) USA Today Oct. 15, 2013, "Affordable Care Act a Hard Sell for Native Americans"

(4) The Washington Post, 2/12/16 "Your Assumptions about Native Americans and Alcohol are Wrong"

(5) Al Jazeera America, 5/29/14, "5 big Native American health issues you don't know about"

Discussion: What is your reaction to Wendy and Janet's story? How are healthcare issues especially difficult for Native Americans? What things might be done to change things?

### TOPIC 3: Domestic Abuse:

Native American women, including those on reservations, suffer domestic violence and physical assaults at rates far exceeding those of women of other ethnicities. The Department of Justice has estimated that these assaults occur as much as 50% higher than the next victimized group.

These assaults tend to take place at private residences. A significant number of Native American women live on tribal lands (often with **non** – Native partners) and that their death rate on some reservations is 10% higher than the national average.

Sexual violence against Native women tends to be perpetrated by non-Native men. Victimization against Native American women were 70% more likely **interracial**, while the majority of sexual assaults and rapes of other races of women were **intra-racial**.

In many cases, U. S. attorneys have declined to prosecute a majority of violent crimes in “Indian Country (reservations)” and tribes do **not** have the authority to prosecute non – Natives who commit violent crimes on Native land. When PL 280 was enacted in 1953, the BIA contended that the law made tribal criminal jurisdiction unnecessary and pushed federal support away. This caused many tribes not to be able to fund their own court systems. This allowed PL 280 to expand the realm of non – Indian control over reservation activities.

### **Rates of violence against Native Women**

- Native women are two times more likely to experience rape or sexual assault.
- 61% of Native women have been assaulted in their lifetime.
- 34% of Native women will be raped.
- 39% of Native women will be attacked violently by an intimate partner.
- 17% of Native women reported being stalked.
- 67% of victims describe perpetrators of violent act as non-Native.
- 71% of violent offenders are known to the victims.
- 96% of Native women were victims of physical and sexual abuse as children.

*In 2010 the U. S. Census Bureau found that 46% of people living on reservations were non-Native Americans.*

Discussion: Do these statistics surprise you? Why or why not? What might be done to change this situation?

### TOPIC 4: Human Trafficking:

#### **Sex Trafficking among Native American women**

Prostituted Native American women often enter prostitution as minors, as young as 12 or 13 – sometimes younger. Physical abuse, sexual abuse, neglect and lack of opportunities on impoverished reservations all play a part. A history of family and personal alcohol and drug abuse is another primary characteristic of trafficked Native American women and girls.

“Most were sexually abused as kids before they got to pimps later in life. They walk around thinking everything that everything that has happened to them is their fault, that they simply made bad choices; they don’t see themselves as victims,” said the founder of non-profit dedicated to helping women escape prostitution.

### **Generational Trauma**

The defining characteristic of Native American sex trafficking is the unique generational trauma from which victims suffer. An attorney and professor of law who

works to highlight the high rates of sexual abuse and sex trafficking among Native American women says that “the sexual exploitation of Native women is a story 500 years in the making. It began with their initial contact with Europeans and continues to this day. “

From colonization to westward expansion to forced migrations to reservations by military to Native Schools to relocation programs to cities to forced sterilization and child removal policies of the 1960s and 1970s left yet another generation of Native women to be exposed to sexual abuse and repeated exposure to trauma, which impeded a natural grieving process. Each time, past and current trauma was transferred to the next generation along with the unresolved grief in what has been termed generational trauma or historical trauma.

Generational trauma leaves “entire communities unable to internalize a healthy sense of self” and protect themselves against exploitation.

Studies find that this deeply pervasive generational trauma leads many Native American families and communities to turn at high rates alcohol, drugs, violence and crime and they try to make sense of their own hopelessness. It has also been linked to the high rate of post-trauma stress disorder among Native American women and the extreme vulnerability of many Native girls. These disparities open the door to sex traffickers. This traumatic legacy also deeply affects their ability to exit sex trafficking.

As a result of these disparities, many Native women do not report such crimes, believing no one will investigate. They also fear they will be blamed, criticized or physically hurt by their own community because generational trauma has normalized sexual exploitation and the culture of silence. This combination of reluctance, indifference and vulnerability has allowed traffickers to get a foothold in Native American communities.

Discussion questions: Where you familiar with this concept of generational trauma? Why do the stereotypes and history of Native Americans make this a particularly difficult situation? What could be done to change this?

### **ACTIONS**

WHAT DO WE DO NOW? (Have the leader ask at least one of the questions below.

Write down suggestions on newsprint or record responses in some other way.)

Consider these questions and perhaps create a plan to do an activity or action in the future to address concerns of Native Americans in Wisconsin.

1. Do you still have questions about these or other topics related to Native American in Wisconsin? Where might you find and share this information?
2. Would you consider going on a mission trip in Wisconsin to visit or work at one of our reservations? (If so, consult the VIM trips in Wisconsin to see what opportunity is available to you).
3. Would you consider expressing your concern for Native American issues to an elected official, to an advocacy group or to a group addressing the topic or topics you discussed?

4. Are there other ideas/opportunities you have to make a difference in the lives of Native peoples in Wisconsin?

Closing:

CLOSING HYMN (choose one)

One Bread, One Body UMH #620

For the Beauty of the Earth UMH #92

Where Children Belong FWS #2233

Who Is My Mother, Who Is My Brother FWS #2225

LITANY OF SIX DIRECTIONS

(Source unknown; inspired by a traditional Native American blessing.)

**Leader:** We turn to the West for a blessing to the Spirit of Shalom, Peace: make us whole, make us holy, help us to love you and one another with our whole heart, our whole mind, our whole being, we pray:

**People:** Empower us, Holy Spirit.

**Leader:** We turn to the North for a blessing to the Spirit of Integrity: give us your strength and the courage to endure all the problems we may face, we pray:

**People:** Empower us, Holy Spirit.

**Leader:** We turn to the East for a blessing, to the Spirit of Illumination: open our eyes to the sacredness of every living thing, we pray:

**People:** Empower us, Holy Spirit.

**Leader:** We turn to the South for a blessing, to the Spirit of Transformation: help us to grow in wisdom and grace and the goodness of the ages, we pray:

**People:** Empower us, Holy Spirit.

**Leader:** We look to the Heavens, to the Spirit of Openness: fill us with a breadth of vision to see that your love embraces all, we pray:

**People:** Empower us, Holy Spirit.

**Leader:** We touch the Earth for a blessing, and thereby touch the Spirit that lives among us and within us: help us to be more human and to praise you through the work of our hands, we pray:

**People:** Empower us, Holy Spirit.

**Leader:** Let us go from here blessed and renewed in the Spirit of Peace, in the Spirit of Integrity, in the Spirit of Illumination, in the Spirit of Transformation, with hopes lifted high to the heavens and with hearts loving the earth in the name of our loving, creating, nurturing God.

**People:** Amen!



## Native American References

Available through Mission Resources:

Singing the Sacred: Musical Gifts from Native American Communities (Song book and CD available)

Voices of Native American Women, Delryane Roy, editor

Suggested Reading List books:

**2017**

Falling into Place: A Memoir of Overcoming by Hattie Kauffman

Pre-Post-Racial America: Spiritual Stories from the Front Lines by Sandhya Rani Jha

**2016**

The House of Purple Cedar by Tim Tingle

The White Umbrella: Walking with Survivors of Sex Trafficking by Mary Francis

Bowley

Tilly: A Story of Hope and Resilience by Monique Gray Smith

Dreaming in Indian: Contemporary Native American Voices by Lisa Charleyboy and

Mary Beth Leatherdale

**2015**

The Round House: A Novel by Louise Erdrich

The Seven Paths: Changing One's Way of Walking in the World by Anasazi Foundation

**2014**

On This Spirit Walk: The Voices of Native American and Indigenous Peoples by

Henrietta Mann and Anita Philips

A Native American Thought of It: Amazing Inventions and Innovations by Rocky

Landon and David MacDonald

**2013**

Every Day Is A Good Day: Reflections by Contemporary Indigenous Women by Wilma Mankiller

Violet by Tania Duprey Stehlik

**2012**

Lacey and the African Grandmothers by Sue Farrell Holler

Forgotten Girls: Stories of Hope and Courage by Kay Marshall Strom and Michele

Rickett

Thanks to all of the contributors and Charter for Racial Justice Members: Julie Mieke, Conference Nominations Chair for prayers, litany and hymns, Deborah Pattee, Conference coordinator for Spiritual Growth for the section on education/statistics, Wendy Wilson-Uhl, Conference coordinator for Social Action for the section on healthcare, Muriel Gross Smith for section on abuse and trafficking, Carol Lange, South West District President for section on stereotypes, Laura Pfeffer, Conference President for layout and final edit.



