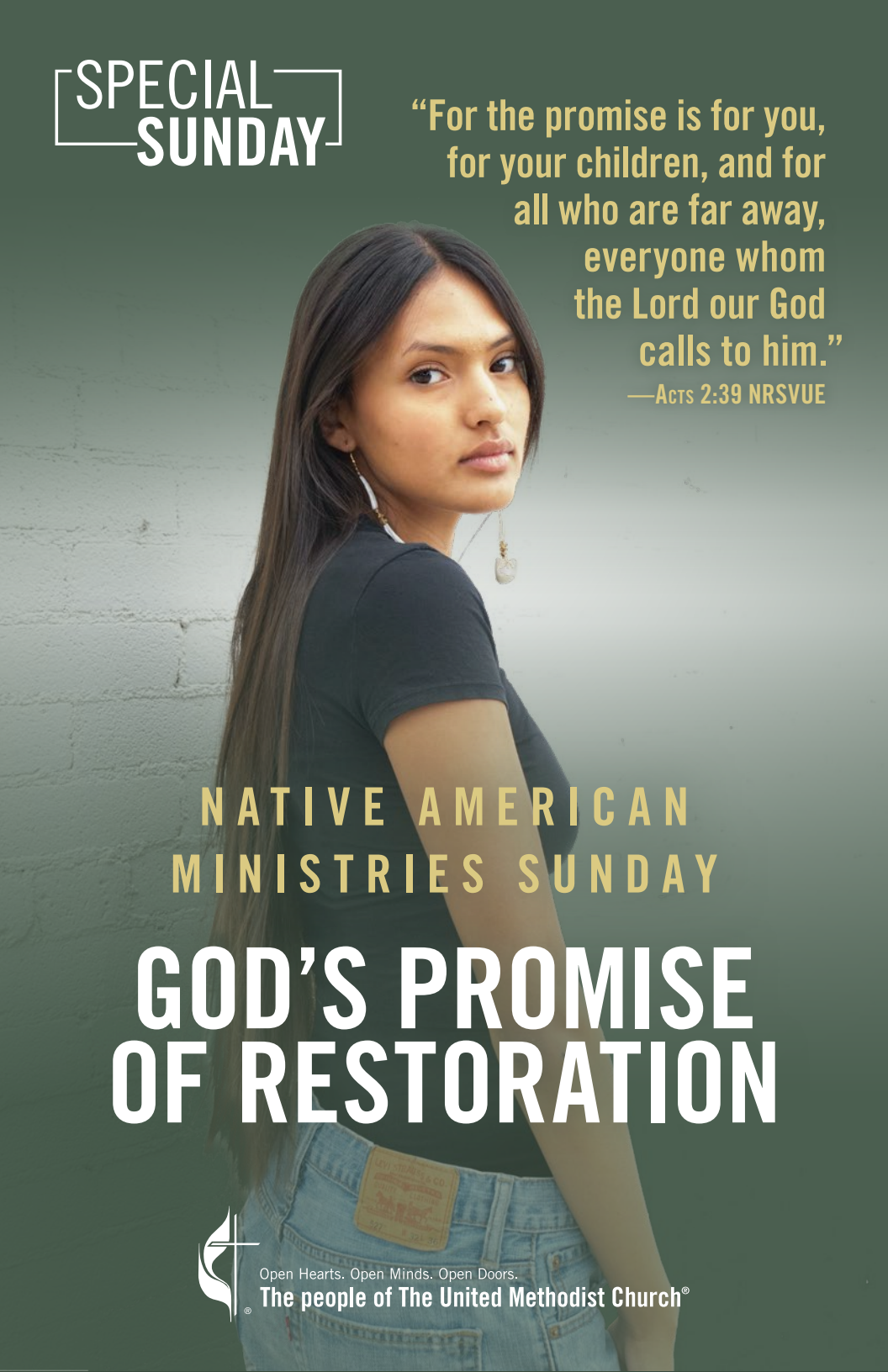
SPECIAL SUNDAY

"For the promise is for you, for your children, and for all who are far away, everyone whom the Lord our God calls to him."
—Acts 2:39 NRSVUE



NATIVE AMERICAN MINISTRIES SUNDAY

GOD'S PROMISE OF RESTORATION

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BACKGROUND PHOTO BY MIKE DUBOSE, UM NEWS

SPECIAL SUNDAY

NATIVE AMERICAN MINISTRIES SUNDAY

GOD'S PROMISE OF RESTORATION

In August, beneath a gorgeous sunset, a display of empty red dresses and a board gently floated in Tennessee's Lake Benson. Candles burned inside glasses on the board. The dresses and candles symbolized missing Indigenous women.

The National Crime Information Center indicates that there were 5,712 reports of missing American Indian and Alaska Native women and girls in 2016. Murder is the third-leading cause of death among this population, and rates of violence on reservations are as much as 10 times the national average. It's believed sex traffickers are to blame for some of the missing women and girls.

"A daughter, an auntie, a grandmother, a cousin—someone maybe not even allowed to grow up and mature," said Mary T. Newman, a lifelong United Methodist of Cherokee ancestry who works with the Tennessee-Western Kentucky Conference and assists the conference with having a better understanding of Native cultures.

"We have to stand for justice," she continued. "We have to lift up prayers and we have to say, 'It needs to stop.' An epidemic of women and girls who are dying has got to stop, and we are the ones that have to stand up and say there should be justice."

The event was a solemn beginning to the Native Moccasins Rock conference, a relaxed and convivial annual meeting for all things Native American. It's held at Camp Lake Benson, a bucolic Christian camp and retreat center about an hour west of Nashville.

"My interest in Native American culture is not just a curiosity," said Linda Quick of Nunnelly, Tennessee, one of several conference attendees who suspects they have Native American heritage but haven't taken steps to confirm it. "I love the prayers, and I love the thought of the Great Spirit."

The Native Moccasins Rock conference, known as "Mocs Rock" for short, is directed at Native and non-Native Americans, said Debbie Fitzhugh, a member of the Secwépemc Tribe and cochair of the Native American Ministries Committee of the Tennessee-Western Kentucky Conference. The conference illustrates the importance of how building relationships and awareness can strengthen Native American culture and ministries.

When you support Native American Ministries Sunday, half of your gift remains with local ministries in the annual conference and half benefits national ministries. One of the denomination's six Special Sundays with offerings, this Sunday's offering equips and empowers Native American pastors, congregations and seminary students.

Read the full story with photos at:* ***https://www.umnews.org/en/news/weekend-spotlights-native-culture*

HOW TO GIVE:
Write a check to your local church with "NAMS" written in the memo line.
To give online or set up monthly giving, go to **UMC.org/SSGive**.

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