

SPECIAL
SUNDAY

NATIVE AMERICAN MINISTRIES SUNDAY

Holy Presence: Declaring Divine Love

*“Remember your work
that comes from faith,
your effort that comes
from love, and your
perseverance that
comes from hope in our
Lord Jesus Christ in the
presence of our God
and Father.”*

—1 THESSALONIANS 1:2-3, CEB



Open Hearts. Open Minds. Open Doors.

The people of The United Methodist Church®

NATIVE AMERICAN MINISTRIES SUNDAY

Holy Presence: Declaring Divine Love

Members of the Lenape Nation rallied on the Pennsylvania State Capitol steps in May, urging legislators to grant them legal recognition as a tribe.

The Rev. Bob Coombe, a member of the Eastern PA Conference's Committee on Native American Ministries (CoNAM), attended the rally. "The spirit at the Capitol was uplifting, peaceful, powerful, fair and for justice," he commented.



Verna Colliver, secretary of EPA's CoNAM, speaks next to Chief Chuck Gentlemoon Demund, Keeper of Ceremony and Intertribal Liaison at the Lenape Nation of Pennsylvania rally for tribal recognition on the steps of the State Capitol in Harrisburg May 1.

Led by Chief Chuck Gentlemoon Demund and Clan Mother Shelley DePaul, the rally addressed the historical erasure and "documentary genocide" faced by the Pennsylvania Lenape. Adam Waterbear DePaul, director of education, emphasized the impact of lacking state recognition on the tribe's identity, especially for the youth. The Lenape, rooted in the woodlands of eastern North America, called for an end to erasure and a restoration of their identity.

Speakers at the rally, including educators, environmentalists, faith leaders, and preservationists, shared stories of cultural resilience. A clan mother spoke of a relative practicing sacred ceremonies in isolation due to shame, highlighting the struggle for cultural expression. Another speaker revealed discovering her Native heritage later in life and its profound impact on her identity.

Pennsylvania is the only Eastern state without recognition for its indigenous people. Clan Mother Shelley DePaul expressed that awareness of the Lenape's role as caretakers of the land and the Delaware River would foster pride and recognition. Throughout the event, the call-and-response "We are... Still here" echoed, symbolizing the tribe's determination to overcome historical neglect and gain the recognition they deserve.

Based on a story by Verna Colliver, a member of Lansdale UMC and Secretary of EPA's CoNAM.

Your gifts on Native American Ministries Sunday help support the ministries of the Committee on Native American Ministries in their annual conferences. This offering serves to remind United Methodists of the gifts and contributions made by Native Americans to church and society.

HOW TO GIVE:

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