

## LAND ACKNOWLEDGEMENT RESOLUTION

**WHEREAS,** the Northwest Synod of Wisconsin has an existing General Land Acknowledgement for the Northwest Synod of Wisconsin, which reads, in part:

- o *"We reside on these ancestral homelands and have benefited from the rich natural resources and diverse flora and fauna of the area. The means by which we came to live in this place include violence, forced removal, and genocide. These acts of atrocity were committed by our ancestors against the ancestors of Native Americans in the name of God through the Doctrine of Discovery and Manifest Destiny. As faith community leaders, we reject the Doctrine of Discovery and actively seek to dismantle the systems of oppression that have normalized the dehumanization of Native American people. Jesus' life and ministry demonstrate how to resist such forces and stand beside those who are suffering. This is not easy; however, such is the way our faith guides us. In this moment, as we gather across these ancestral lands, we are mindful of the historical and continued sacredness of the land in the hearts of our Native American relatives. And we recognize and honor the wisdom and resilience of our Native American relatives with whom we share this land."* and

**WHEREAS,** we are called to live in right relationship with ourselves, our God and our neighbors (Exodus 20:1-17), this requires humility, curiosity, and bravery and given that we have various levels of anti-racism training available, numerous book studies past, present and future, pilgrimages, and many learning opportunities, we are able to take another step from informed to allied; and

**WHEREAS,** Paul reminded the people of God in his letter to the churches of Galatia that "in Christ Jesus you are all children of God through faith. As many of you as were baptized into Christ have clothed yourselves with Christ. There is no longer Jew or Greek, there is no longer slave or free, there is no longer male and female; for all of you are one in Christ Jesus." [Galatians 3:26- 28]; and

**WHEREAS,** we can continue to be taught by the traditions and belief systems of our indigenous neighbors manifested by regarding nature with deep respect, and a strong sense of place and belonging. This sustained knowledge and ways of life that match up well with modern notions of nature conservation and the sustainable use of natural resources, which we are called to do in our vocation as created, beloved children of God (Genesis 1:28); and

**WHEREAS,** our neighbors were displaced, removed, killed and forced to assimilate, and this is a violation of the Greatest Commandment (Matthew 22:39), we can and should honor the sacrifices made, recognize the systems which continue to exist to open opportunities at the expense of other cultures, and acknowledge the joy that this time and place in history allows us to begin to repair the damage inflicted on our neighbor and our ourselves, for we are commanded, "'Love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your mind.'<sup>[c]</sup> <sup>38</sup> This is the first and greatest commandment. <sup>39</sup> And the second is like it: 'Love your neighbor as yourself.'<sup>[d]</sup> <sup>40</sup> All the Law and the Prophets hang on these two commandments." (Matthew 22:37-39), therefore be it

**RESOLVED** that each congregation take the small step to include a land acknowledgement in their bulletin and newsletter, and speak the words or a variation of these words: **“we gather today on the ancestral land of the (appropriate tribe or nation) and honor their elders past, present, and emerging”** before every public gathering, including but not limited to, worship.

Submitted by the NWSWI Minister for Right Relationship, NW Synod Racial Justice Group, the NW Synod Justice Team, and the Northwest Synod of Wisconsin Council. Resolution approved January 30, 2023.

### **Background information:**

- The Northwest Synod of Wisconsin passed a resolution to support Racial Justice Training at Synod Assembly, April 2021
- The Northwest Synod of Wisconsin passed a Racial Justice and Equity Statement at Synod Assembly, April 2021
- History did not begin when European immigrants arrived in the geographical area now called Wisconsin; we are on the ancestral homelands of indigenous peoples of the Council of Three Fires including the Ho-Chunk, Menomonee, Dakota, and the Anishinaabe (or Ojibwe) which includes the Bands of Red Cliff, Bad River, Fond du Lac, Lac Courte Oreilles, Lac du Flambeau, Mille Lacs, and St. Croix. Each of these Nations and Bands is unique and sovereign.

### **DISCUSSION:**

#### Our Shared History

- What is our history here?
- How is it connected to the history and experience of Indigenous people?
- Where does our knowledge about Indigenous people come from?

#### What is reconciliation?

- What does reconciliation mean to me?
- Why is reconciliation meaningful to me?

#### Wondering about Reconciliation

- Why do we resist talking about reconciliation or taking even a small action like this?
- What does it signify theologically to the congregation, the church, or the culture?
- Why do we resist discussing or thinking about this?
- How are Reconciliation and Divine Hospitality similar? Or different?

#### Planning for a Future of Reconciliation?

- Ideally, what does reconciliation look and feel like in our community?
- What actions toward reconciliation can we make together as leaders in our community



Map obtained from: from [www.wisconsinfirstnations.org/map/](http://www.wisconsinfirstnations.org/map/)