

Week One, Day One—We begin these two weeks of emphasis on equity with our indigenous neighbors with a review of the history of native people on this continent.

“We the People.” In this Ted Talk (17 mn), Mark Charles challenges us to come to grips with what those three words actually say and how our constitution, the doctrine of discovery, and legal precedent has fueled white supremacy and racial inequity in our country. Many of his book’s themes are passionately and convincingly presented here.

<https://www.bing.com/videos/search?q=Mark+Charles+TED+Talk&&view=detail&mid=F213411EA38461919442F213411EA38461919442&&FORM=VRDGAR&ru=%2Fvideos%2Fsearch%3F%26q%3DMark%2BCharles%2BTED%2BTalk%26form%3DVDMHRS>

For more from Mark Charles, here is a list of resources:

- **Book--Unsettling Truths: The Ongoing, Dehumanizing Legacy of the Doctrine of Discovery.** By Charles and Soong-Chan Rah. A challenging and important book about the Doctrine of Discovery and the history and continued effect of colonization and white supremacy on indigenous people in the United States. Written largely by Charles, a theologically trained man of Navajo and Dutch Christian Reformed descent, it is readable, well researched, eloquent, and a passionate cry for change.
- **Article—Mark Charles on the Doctrine of Discovery and care for the environment.** This short article introduces the reader to the work of Mark Charles, who from both a native and a Christian perspective, challenges us to see the story of America in a radically different light. The piece also contains two short video clips in which Charles talks about the importance of having a relationship with God as the Creator and how rare this is in our culture, even among Christians. He also speaks about two simple practices that help give him hope for the future.
[Doctrine of Discovery: A conversation with Mark Charles — Faiths4Future](#)
- **Articles--Mark Charles.** A collection of short articles from the 2012-2016 in *Sojourners* magazine by Mark Charles exploring the disconnect between religion, government, and culture--and the experience of Indian people.
[Mark Charles | Sojourners](#)

If you wish to learn more about the story of Indian people in the United States, there are many resources for you to read over time. Here are a couple of books worth reading.

- **Book—Indigenous Continent: The Epic Contest for North America.** By Pekka Hämäläinen. Hämäläinen is a history professor at Oxford University, but don’t let that scare you away. His work is every engaging as well as incredibly well researched. To quote a review from Harper’s: "In Hämäläinen’s first two books, he explored notable peaks of Native power, as many recent histories do. But now, with **Indigenous Continent**, he stitches them into a sustained counterpoint to the conquest narrative. Five hundred years of North American history appear in his telling not as the story of colonization, but of a fierce and unsettled continent, bristling with possibility . . . You cannot read **Indigenous Continent** and retain the belief that Native societies quickly and

permanently collapsed. Hämäläinen's book not only exposes settler boasts of continental conquest as self-serving fictions; it rejects the entire settler sense of what constitutes American history. It is stand-everything-on-its-head history, offering the thrills of a sharp perspectival flip." --Daniel Immerwahr I have not read this book— however, I did read his earlier book, **Lakota Empire**, and found it to be superb.

- Book—**The Wisdom of the Native Americans**. By Kent Nerburn. This short book consists entirely of quotes from consequential native figures in American history, including the great speeches of Chiefs Red Jacket, Joseph, and Seattle.

Day Two—In order to begin to understand a people, you need to listen to their stories in their own words. Here are stories from the Ojibwe and the Potawatomi, our neighbors here in the Northern Great Lakes Synod.

The Story of the Ojibwe and Potawatomi People. Many of the Indian people in northern Wisconsin and the UP of Michigan call themselves the Anishinaabe (the human beings). Historically they migrated west from the mouth of the St Lawrence to the Great Lakes area, in part because colonization pushed other tribes west and in part because of prophecies of a new land awaiting them. Near the rapids of the St Mary's River at Sault Ste Marie, they formed the Three Fires Confederacy, consisting of the Ojibwe, the Odawa and the Potawatomi people. The Ojibwe settled mostly in the Lake Superior region, in Ontario, Upper Michigan and Wisconsin, while the Potawatomi and Odawa migrated south and east, to eastern Ontario and lower Michigan and to Indiana, Illinois, and southern Wisconsin. Most of the bands within the Northern Great Lakes Synod are Ojibwe, while the Hannahville community west of Escanaba and the Forest County reservation near Crandon, Wisconsin are Potawatomi. Each of these tribes lost their land via cessation treaties and forced government removals. Many Ojibwe people were pushed west into Minnesota, Manitoba, and North Dakota, while Potawatomi people were marched to Kansas and Oklahoma.

Here are two 30 mn videos from Wisconsin PBS. The first is a visit with Eddie Benton-Benai, an Ojibwe elder from what is now northern Wisconsin. Herein, he describes the cultural and religious traditions of the Ojibwe people, along with the nation's history. It is a story filled with sadness, but also with hope.

[Tribal Histories | Ojibwe History | PBS](#)

The second video consists of a visit with two Potawatomi men from the Forest County Community, who share their history and the importance of maintaining their language and culture in a world where racism and white privilege continue to dominate.

[Potawatomi History | Tribal Histories - Bing video](#)

If you want to know more, here are other resources.

- Video--**The Seven Teachings of the Anishinaabe (Ojibwe) people.** This short video was prepared as a primer for people interested in becoming tribal leaders. It details the 7 Grandfather/Grandmother teachings that should guide the life of an Anishinaabe person.
[\(773\) The 7 Teachings – YouTube](#)
- Video--A deep dive into the history, culture, and religion of the Ojibwe people. It takes about an hour, but is comprehensive and helps illustrate just how differently Indian people look at the world, at time, at family, at nature.
[\(811\) Waasa-Inaabidaa Episode Two - Making Decisions the Right Way - YouTube](#)
- Book-- **Fire Keeper's Daughter.** By Angeline Boulley. This is a young adult novel written by a woman who is an enrolled member of Sault Ste Marie tribe of Chippewa Indians. It is a coming-of-age story, a story of a young woman's struggle to claim her native heritage in a secular and largely white world, and a crime thriller about drug trafficking and sexual abuse in the UP of Michigan. It also will teach you about Ojibwe language and traditions. A New York Times bestseller published in 2021. Boulley was formerly the Director of the Office of Indian Education at the U.S. Department of Education.
- Book--**Native.** By Kaitlin Curtice. A Potawatomi woman raised in the Evangelical world who continues to identify as a Christian while also claiming her traditional cultural and religious tradition as an Indian person. The book details her story, her struggle, and what it teaches all of us. This is a prophetic book that will challenge you! Highly recommended!

Day Three—Following up on yesterday's histories, here are the stories of two tragedies that befell the Ojibwe and Potawatomi people at the hands of US policy, guided by the Doctrine of Discovery.

Sandy Lake Tragedy. This video tells the story of events leading up to and following the Sandy Lake tragedy in 1850. Upon ceding possession of lands in Michigan and Wisconsin to the US, the Ojibwe secured the right to live on the land in perpetuity, as well as the right to hunt, fish, and gather. They also were to receive annuity payments on an annual basis. However, during that period, the US resident and Indian agents colluded in an attempt to force removal of the Ojibwe from their land in the Upper Peninsula and northwest Wisconsin westward to Minnesota. During the fall of 1850, annuity payments were not provided at Madeline Island, leading approximately 5000 Ojibwe to travel to Sandy Lake, Minnesota, where they were promised food, shelter, and the payment of the annuity owed them. The payment was delayed and about 400 Ojibwe people died in the cold waiting as winter closed in or in attempting to travel home. Later, Ojibwe leaders undertook the long journey to Washington, and managed to see the new president. The meeting resulted in the treaty of 1854, which again stated Indian rights to the land and its resources.

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=u6VaiLfy3CE>

Trail of Death. A very short video from Kansas tells one story of the “Trail of Death,” the forced removal of Potawatomi from lower Michigan and Indiana to Kansas and Oklahoma. There are more detailed videos available, but they are either dated or very long.

[Pottawatomie Trail of Death - Bing video](#)

Day Four

What are Treaty Rights and why are they important? This video begins with the Ojibwa creation story and focuses on the land and water uses guaranteed by the US government as various lands were ceded in nineteenth century treaties. The history of colonization, genocide, and displacement of Indian people is a shameful national story for Americans. Treaty rights are about the only thing that indigenous people have retained, yet their legitimacy is often under attack. For example, over the course of our lives here in the Northern Great Lakes Synod, we have seen protests—sometimes violent—by white sportsmen and women contesting spearing rights on inland lakes and netting on the Great Lakes. It is important that we recognize that the treaties with indigenous people remain in place. They are rights, not privileges. And the care and use of land, water, and the creatures that depend on them are fundamental to Ojibwe life and tradition.

[\(795\) Ojibwe Treaty Rights: Connections to Land & Water - YouTube](#)

For more information, see the following:

- Article—**Ojibwe Treaty Rights.** The following article (and other links on the same page) describes the story of treaties affecting northern Wisconsin and the central/western Upper Peninsula of Michigan—and how they have been ignored over the years—as well as more recent efforts to enforce treaty rights.

[Ojibwe Treaty Rights | Milwaukee Public Museum \(mpm.edu\)](#)

- A thorough review of how the US government came to exercise authority in Indian country, how the understanding of Indian tribes as sovereign nations came to be, and why it is so important for our relationships with Indian people.

[\(811\) Tribal Nations The Story of Federal Indian Law - YouTube](#)

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Day Five

Colonization and Decolonization—Where do we fit in as Lutherans? Next week, we will focus primarily on our response to the story of boarding schools, the trauma it has produced, and the continuing pain of loss as unmarked graves are discovered and the struggle to identify victims is undertaken. Today, we begin the discussion of our role as non-native Christians in the genocide, displacement, and marginalization of Indian people and their tradition. What is our involvement, past and present, as Lutheran people—and what we can do to become better neighbors?

What is Decolonizing? What is decolonizing? Decolonization is an action-driven ideology that incorporates truth-telling with the process of cultural reclamation in order to reverse the negative impacts of colonialism. It's a journey that invites you to explore your own roots while simultaneously taking inventory of the systems of colonization under which we all live today with the sole intention of deconstructing those systems so that they can be rebuilt in just and inclusive ways.

There are many ways to think about this, including such practical steps as making a land acknowledgement before every meeting or activity in which you participate: for example, “we live on the ancestral, traditional, and contemporary lands of the Ojibwe people.” However, that is just a starting point. What would it mean to provide reparations to Indian people? Not only for us as a nation, but for us as church communities and even as individuals? Since land and the care of the land is central to indigenous culture, can/should land be returned to the tribes? If so, where and how? What about paying “rent” for using lands that were occupied by native people? How does our system of government, our national ideals and culture, the way we practice our Christian faith contribute to the oppression of indigenous people? Is there implicit, if not explicit, bias and racism at work in us? Can we as non-Indian people who confess Christ Jesus as Lord also be about the work of “decolonization?” What would that look like?

Please select from the following resources below:

In their words--This short video features indigenous voices from the Native American Studies department at Northern Michigan University, explaining what that term means to them. Note the differences/similarities in each perspective. There are companion clips on Decolonizing Food and Education which are also interesting.

<https://www.youtube.com/playlist?list=PL-ELA7pUpBkV1PeTWywEbpG7X4TegrEE5>

Adopting the Native View--The following short article provides a survey of what is meant by decolonization for non-native people and takes a quite radical stance on what that might mean.

<https://unsettlingamerica.wordpress.com/2017/10/11/decolonization-meaning-what-exactly/>

What about the ELCA? Many Christian traditions, including Roman Catholics, Episcopalians, Presbyterians, and Methodists have had more contact historically with Indian people in North America than have Lutherans. Still, have you ever wondered about the history of Lutherans and the Lutheran Church with native communities across what is now the United States? This short article from Together Here, a ministry of the Northeast Minnesota Synod, provides an overview.

[NEMN Together Here Brief History \(nemnsynod.org\)](https://www.nemnsynod.org/Together-Here-Brief-History)

Repudiating the Doctrine of Discovery—the resolutions passed in 2016 by the ELCA assembly and in 2021 by the NGLS Assembly can be viewed here.

[Repudiation Doctrine of Discovery SPR16.pdf \(elca.org\)](https://www.elca.org/Repudiation-Doctrine-of-Discovery-SPR16.pdf)

[DoctrineofDiscoveryRepudiationResolution9SynodAssembly2021.pdf \(nglsynod.org\)](https://www.nglsynod.org/DoctrineofDiscoveryRepudiationResolution9SynodAssembly2021.pdf)

Living Lutheran October article—Churchwide Assembly . Did you see the article in The Living Lutheran on the liturgy used during ELCA Churchwide Assembly that included drumming, a confession based on the repudiation of the doctrine of discovery, a prayer to the four directions, and more? Check it out on page 10 of the October issue! Parts of this liturgy will be used at the NGLS Assembly this spring.

[Living Lutheran : October 2022 \(royle.com\)](https://www.lutheranliving.com/2022/10/01/royle.com)

Day Six

Reflection, catch up, and/or gathering with your Zoom group

Day Seven

Reflection, catch up, and/or gathering with your Zoom group

Week Two, Day One

Buried Secrets: America's Indian Boarding Schools on NPR's Reveal—a gripping account of how Indian boarding schools ripped children away from their families, stripped them of their culture and language, and exposed them to various kinds of abuse. Boarding Schools functioned under the dictum: “destroy the Indian and save the person.” But in fact, Indian children languished in these schools and lost their very identity. Some died while being held in these schools and many were unceremoniously buried in unmarked graves, still being uncovered across North America. For survivors, a life marked by PTSD, alcohol abuse, unemployment, and chronic disease often followed. Studies show that even biological genetic effects are passed down from parent to child following experiences like this. The trauma is not just personal, but generational.

Most boarding schools were run by churches in the US and financed by the US government. The last of these schools operated into the 1960's. Today, native people are seeking justice, not only in the form of apologies, but in the form of reparations—recognition that the cost to Indian people has been and continues to be great. Along with that, they seek the discovery of all unmarked graves on boarding school grounds, along with the identity of people buried there and the cause of their deaths.

This two-part series examines in particular the Holy Rosary Mission which later was renamed the Red Cloud Indian School on the Pine Ridge Indian Reservation in western South Dakota.

Part 1

<https://podcasts.google.com/feed/aHR0cDovL2ZlZWRzLnJldmVhbHJhZGlvLm9yZy9yZXZlYWxwb2RjYXN0/episode/cHJ4XzE0OV8xZDc5NTA3Zi1iMjA3LTRiNTYtOGMwNC0xOTZmNDY0MDQ2Yjk?hl=en&ved=2ahUKewjutvyT4YD7AhUeBDQIHSpWCnYQieUEegQIChAI&ep=6>

Day Two

Buried Secrets, Continued

<https://podcasts.google.com/feed/aHR0cDovL2ZlZWRzLnJldmVhbHJhZGlVLm9yZy9yZXZIYWxwb2RjYXN0/episode/cHJ4XzE0OV81NzU4ZmRmZi1hMDBiLTQ1ZWItOTMyNS1mNGEyM2YyOTg1M2M?hl=en&ved=2ahUKEwjutvyT4YD7AhUeBDQIHSpWCnYQieUEegQIChAF&ep=6>

Day Three

What is Intergenerational Trauma?

This article, from Mary Annette Pember (on Ojibwe woman from Red Cliff) in *Indian Country Today*, details the meaning of “intergenerational trauma,” how the traumatic experiences of one generation live on in the next, not only through social and cultural factors, but also through genetics. In the course of this article, she details the experiences of Indian people in boarding schools on the Bad River reservation in northwest Wisconsin and in Alaska.

<https://amber-ic.org/wp-content/uploads/2017/01/ICMN-All-About-Generations-Trauma.pdf>

Day Four

More on Boarding Schools and Intergenerational Trauma—Consider watching, reading, or listening to one of the following:

In Their Voices—one of the four videos here consists of native voices from NMU’s Native American Studies program talking about what intergenerational trauma has meant in their lives.

<https://www.youtube.com/playlist?list=PL-ELA7pUpBkV1PeTWywEbpG7X4TegrEE5>

The Unspoken History of Boarding Schools—This 2016 video from NPR traces the history of boarding schools in the United States and their devastating impact on native people and their culture, an impact that continues to this day. It focuses primarily on the experience of Navajo people in the four corners region. Toward the end of the video, other issues are raised, including controversy over indigenous mascot names, the newer, native run Indian schools which seek to nurture and strengthen native culture, and the legacy of native Americans serving in the military. Although a moving and comprehensive piece, many indigenous people might find this video too mild in its critique, too gentle in its call for change, and too optimistic about native people fitting in with American culture. What are your thoughts?

[Utah History | Unspoken: America's Native American Boarding Schools | PBS](#)

Federal Report on Boarding Schools. This report was released by the Department of the Interior, in cooperation with other agencies, during the summer of 2022. Approximately 100 pages long, it is a comprehensive, though preliminary, description of the location, purpose, practices, and consequences of the Indian Boarding School era in the United States. It is unsparing in uncovering the truth and points forward to the work that remains.

[Federal Investigative Report, Volume 1 - Google Drive](#)

Day Five

Please choose from among the following two resources:

Are you ready for a challenge? This lecture by Professor (now Professor Emeritus) George (Tink) Tinker of the Iliff School of Theology is a well-argued and passionate criticism of the idea that indigenous people can or should be assimilated into mainstream American culture. He traces the history of American colonialism, buttressed by the Christian story, in the genocidal killing, displacement and marginalization of Indian nations, while calling for a radical reimagining of theology and public life. You may not agree with everything he says, but you will come away from reading with a new perspective.

[Tuesday, May 03, 2011 \(nemnsynod.org\)](https://www.nemnsynod.org)

Father Jacque Marquette and the return of his remains. This video, produced cooperatively by the Cedar Tree Institute in Marquette and the Museum of Ojibwa Culture in St Ignace, describes the story of Fr Marquette's life and mission, as well as the complicated history of his burial and the removal of his remains on two separate occasions, before his bones were finally laid to rest in a native ceremony at St Ignace during the summer of this year. The story of Christian mission to native Americans is indeed a complicated one. While faith in the Triune God was passed on to Indian people, it was a colonized sort of faith, that denied native people of central elements of their life and culture. A mixed blessing, for sure, and more and more indigenous people, especially young people, are decrying the destructive character of missionary activity. Yet, much good was accomplished, too, through groups like the Jesuits, who took seriously what it meant to walk with native people. What are your thoughts about all of this? Is there a path forward for the Church in its relationship with Indian nations? If so, what is it?

[The Return on Vimeo](#)

And finally:

Would you like to be part of an ELCA initiative to understand more fully how we as Lutherans participated in the Boarding School tragedy and can embrace being part of the healing process of discovering and telling the truth about it? Here is an opportunity to be engaged!

[Truth and Healing - Evangelical Lutheran Church in America \(elca.org\)](https://www.elca.org)

Day Six

Catch up, reflection, and/or conversation with your Zoom group

Day Seven

Catch up, reflection, and/or conversation with your Zoom group