



# **Native American Sunday**

A Liturgy for Worship

Northern Great Lakes Synod

Marquette, Michigan

2024



## ~A Welcome from Bishop Katherine Finegan~

I commend to you this resource provided by the Walking With Our Indigenous Neighbor's Task Force of the Northern Great Lakes Synod.

You are invited to use it, in full or part, in observance of a Native American Sunday on or near Indigenous People's Day, or at any time in the worship life of your congregation. Feel free to substitute scripture texts or hymns that are appropriate for the liturgical calendar.

As we worship in the cadence and language of our Indigenous neighbors, we will have greater awareness of a different spiritual perspective that can enrich our relationship with the earth and its Creator, and provide mutual understanding on which to build future relationships. I hope this liturgy will be a blessing to you as we worship in a different language of faith.

You invited to take a special offering to benefit the American Indian and Alaska Native Ministries of the ELCA. This designated offering can be sent to the Northern Great Lakes Synod at:

The Northern Great Lakes Synod, ELCA  
1029 North Third St. Suite A  
Marquette, MI 49855

### NOTES FOR THE SERVICE

This Indigenous People's Liturgical Celebration was created by Kelly Sherman-Conroy who is a member of the Oglala Sioux Tribe in Pine Ridge South Dakota. Kelly is a Doctoral student at Luther Seminary and is an active member of the American Indian/Alaska Native Lutheran Association Inc board of directors. Kelly worked closely with her mentor and Professor Dirk Lange (Luther Seminary), musician David Livingston, and conferred with Bishop Guy Erwin, Bishop Jessica Crist and Native members and Clergy of the American Indian/Alaska Native Lutheran Association Inc.

Contributors of the Cree, Sioux, Stockbridge-Munsee, Cherokee, Ojibwe, Navajo, Nez Perce, and Osage Nations participated in the creation of this Liturgy. This liturgy has been put together in a very meaningful way to integrate Native culture, spirituality and mindset, and keeping some boundaries of the Lutheran Christian traditions. The result is a profound and deeply spiritual experience that has been created for all involved in not just the worship practices but their relationship with God and the other.

This liturgy was created to respect both Lutheran and Native traditions. The American Indian/Alaska Native Lutheran Association Inc wishes to emphasize Native participation in the liturgical Celebration as much as possible with the help of the liaison from the Association.



# Gathering

## Nature's Song

(Please listen to the sounds of creation; birds chirping, papers rustling, children chattering, the sounds around you.)

## Land Acknowledgement

*A Land Acknowledgment is a brief statement clearly acknowledging that the land we occupy was originally occupied by others, the "first nations" or indigenous people that lived here first.<sup>1</sup> Please incorporate this acknowledgment and thanksgiving as a prayer.*

Creator, we thank You for the creation of all living things: the four-legged, the winged, the land, the sea, the sky, the vegetation, and the people.

We acknowledge and honor the Anishinaabeg, the original peoples, and the Menominee tribe, upon whose ancestral homelands we live and work, who have cared for and continue to care for this place and call it their home. We respect the rich history and ongoing relationship Indigenous peoples have with this land and the many contributions they have made. We continue to acknowledge the need for healing and reconciliation around the harmful legacy of colonization.

Ever mindful of the gifts You have provided to us all, Creator God, we give You thanks and praise. **Amen.**

## Gathering Song (All stand.)

## Many and Great, O God

(see suggestions on page 10)

## Call to Worship

PRESIDER: The Spirit of God be with you.

**ALL: And also with you. Come, let us worship the Creator with hearts open to all peoples, where pride and prejudice once dwelt.**

PRESIDER: Let us worship Creator with minds open to the wisdom of Native peoples, where listening and respect once had no place. Let us honor the One who freely gives by showing honor to those who were once and still remain oppressed.

PRESIDER: Let us worship the God of diversity, who made the world in colors, in seasons, in endless variety; who created the diversity of the earth's peoples in His image.

**ALL: We were created to honor one another and, in so doing, we honor the Creator. Let us honor the Creator today, by reflecting in our worship and in life, the Creator's image of love. Amen.**

## **Smudging** (if appropriate) (Please stand.)

PRESIDER: The smudging ceremony is like a prayer of confession, as we purify our minds and hearts. Reach out for the smoke and draw it into your heart. Sage will be burned during the Four Directions prayer.

## **Prayer to the Four Directions** (Please stand.)

READER: Creator, the strength of the people, we honor You. Listen to the thoughts of Your people. We respect the truth of Your Spirit world and care for Your Creations to the east, to the south, to the west, and to the north. We honor You by deeds and not words. We live by the ways You have entrusted to us within the circle of life.

**ALL: Come, Great Spirit, as we gather in Your name.**

(We turn our bodies to the Four Directions as we pray the following prayers. Begin by turning toward the East and continue to turn, with each prayer, in a clockwise direction.)

READER: We face East: To Your symbol color gold. The place of dawning; there is beauty in the morning; there the Seeker finds new visions as each sacred day is born. All who honor life around them, all who honor life within, shall shine with light and glory when the morning comes again. And we pray,

**ALL: Come, Holy Creator's Spirit, Come.**

READER: We turn to the South: To Your symbol color red. In the South, the place of growing, there is wisdom in the earth; both the painful song of dying and joyful song of birth. The earth gives up Her lifeblood so Her children's hearts may beat. We give back to Her our reverence for the holy ground beneath our feet. And we pray,

**ALL: Come, Holy Creator's Spirit, Come.**

READER: We turn to the West: To Your symbol color black. The place of seeing; there is born a vision of the servant of the servants who proclaimed The Gospel to us. Guide us at the end of each day and fill us with Your peace. And we pray,

**ALL: Come, Holy Creator's Spirit, Come.**

READER: We turn to the North: To Your symbol color white. We look to God our Creator who cleanses our earth with snow, wind, and rain. To Jesus who fills us with the wideness of mercy and grace, and lovingly embraces all the people. And the Holy Spirit who comes to inspire us. And we pray,

**ALL: Come, Holy Creator's Spirit, Come.**

PRESIDER: (Remain standing.) Creator, You bent the earth like a bow until it was one round, shining planet. At Your word the land was drawn into mountains and deserts, forests and plains; the waters were gathered together into rivers, lakes and seas.

Many times, when people crossed these seas from other lands, they broke the circle of Your creation by their greed and violence, and they shattered the lives of others.

Creator, renew the circle of the earth, and turn the hearts of all people to one another; that they and all the earth may live and be drawn toward You;

Through the power of Your Son, who lives with You and the Holy Spirit, in the circle of the Trinity, forever One. Amen.

## **Gathering Prayer** (Remain standing.)

**ALL: Creator, to You we give thanks in all You bring, and ask for Your guidance as we prepare to open our hearts and minds. Within this sacred circle, Jesus Christ is our center in all we do. Help us to speak with honor and respect to all people and be open to the teachings we are given.**

**As we walk this sacred journey together with our relations, open our eyes to understanding, and the strength to truly see the way to live with compassion, love, and grace; for with Your Spirit can we face the winds together. Amen.**

(Please be seated.)

# The Word

## **Reading**

A reading from Isaiah 40:25-31 (or other appropriate reading)

(After the reading)

The Word of the Lord. **Thanks be to God.**

## **Psalm 19** (or another appropriate Psalm)

## **The Gospel Reading** (Please stand.)

The Holy Gospel of Our Lord Jesus Christ, according to John 17:20-23 (or other appropriate gospel)

**ALL: Glory to You, Lord Christ.**

(After the Gospel has been proclaimed)

Reader: The Gospel of the Lord.

**ALL: Praise to You, Lord Christ.**

(Please be seated.)

## **The Word Now or Homily**

## **Hymn**

**We Are One in the Spirit**

(see suggestions on page 10)

## **Creed Statement** (Please stand.)

**ALL: We believe in Creator, Father-Mother Spirit, who called the world and all that is in it, into being, who spoke the creative-forming word, and all came forth who created women and men and set them free to live in love, in obedience to the will of supreme love and in community with all.**

**We believe in Creator, Son and Brother, who, because of love beyond our understanding, love for creation, entered the world to share our humanity, to rejoice and to despair; to set before us the paths of life and death, and walk them with us; to be rejected and die, but finally to conquer death and bind the world to Himself for all time.**

**We believe in Creator, In-Dwelling Spirit, who invites us into community, that we may through faith and that community of oneness, experience uplifting and sustaining grace; that we may fulfill our human responsibility to reach out to our neighbor, whoever that may be; that we may rejoice in the constant nature of creation and the wondrous joy of life itself.**

(cont. next page)

## **Creed Statement** (cont.)

**We believe in Creator, whose word teaches us that all things grow together, the Circle of Life; that the paths of life and death, good and evil, too often come together, that choices are not clearly defined; but that we confidently and responsibly tread the path we choose and only the true One can be our judge.**

**We believe in Creator, who is present and working in this world through all creation. Amen.**

## **Repentance**

PRESIDER: Creator and Redeemer, as we approach You in prayer, make us walk in beauty and balance. Make us open our hearts and minds. Make us speak the truth.

We pray first for Your Community, the Church, The Body of Christ. We pray for all our relatives in the circle of life throughout all Creation; for those chosen to be our leaders; in peace, we pray to You, Lord God:

VOICE 1 (Native, if possible): An excerpt from the Repudiation of the Doctrine of Discovery from the ELCA Churchwide Assembly in 2016. "To repudiate explicitly and clearly the European-derived Doctrine of Discovery as an example of the "improper mixing of the power of the church and the power of the sword", and to acknowledge and repent from this church's complicity in the evils of colonialism in the Americas, which continue to harm tribal governments and individual tribal members.

VOICE 2 (Non-Native): Christians have often focused on what separated them from Native people rather than looking for what united them. Their failures to find a uniting front resulted in the deaths of hundreds of thousands of Native people and the forced assimilation of people. We deeply regret the decisions that resulted in these atrocities. Following the 2016 Resolution we affirm that our congregation and the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America will eliminate the Doctrine of Discovery from its contemporary rhetoric and programs, electing to practice accompaniment with native peoples instead of a missionary endeavor to them, allowing these partnerships to mutually enrich Indigenous communities and the ministries of the ELCA.

PRESIDER: Let us pray (moment of silence)

**ALL: O God of mercy, we lament that even good actions of reform and renewal had often unintended negative consequences.**

PRESIDER: We bring before You the burdens of the guilt of the past when our forbearers did not follow Your will that all be one in the truth of the gospel.

**ALL: Teach us and show us the way.**

PRESIDER: We confess our own ways of thinking and acting that perpetuate the divisions of the past. As communities and as individuals, we build many walls around us: mental, spiritual, physical, and political walls that result in discrimination and violence. Forgive us, Lord.

**ALL: Teach us and show us the way.**

PRESIDER: Christ is the way, the truth and the life. He is our peace, who breaks down the walls that divide, who gives us, through the Holy Spirit, ever-new beginnings.

**ALL: Teach us and show us the way.**

PRESIDER: In Christ, we receive forgiveness and we are strengthened for a faithful and common witness in our time.

**ALL: Teach us and show us the way.**

PRESIDER: We pause now to add our own prayers, either silently or aloud.

PRESIDER: Creator, You made the world and declared it to be good: The beauty of the trees, the softness of the air, the fragrance of the grass speaks to us.  
The summit of the mountains, the thunder of the sky, the rhythm of the lakes speak to us.  
The faintness of the stars, the freshness of the morning, the dewdrops on the flower speak to us.  
But above all, our heart soars, for You speak to us. In Your Son, Jesus Christ, in whose name we offer these prayers.

**ALL: Amen.**

## **The Peace**

PRESIDER: As a community, let us embrace the ongoing work of being reconciled.

**ALL: God makes peace within us. Let us claim it. God makes peace between us. Let us share it.**

PRESIDER: Let us greet each other as a sign of God's peace, love, forgiveness, and grace. The peace of our Creator be with you in all things.

**ALL: We give thanks to our Creator.**

PRESIDER: You are invited to share peace with your neighbor.

(We exchange peace with one another. Say "Peace be with you")

## **The Offering**

**The Offertory/Preparation Hymn** (Please stand.)

(see suggestions on pg. 10)

## **THE GREAT THANKSGIVING**

PRESIDER: The Spirit of God be with you.

**ALL: And also with you.**

PRESIDER: Lift up your hearts.

**ALL: We lift them up to the Lord.**

PRESIDER: Let us give thanks to the Lord our God.

**ALL: It is right to give God thanks and praise.**

PRESIDER: Great Spirit, our Creator, from the depths of our hearts we give You thanks. We say thank You, now and forever. From the place of the rising sun in the East, to the South where the warm winds blow, from the West where the soft rain comes, to the coldness of the North.

We unite with all creation from the four directions to join in the everlasting thanksgiving and praise for the gift of Your Son, Jesus Christ. With hearts lifted, we join with the angels, the guardian spirits, the saints, and all our ancestors as we sing:

**ALL: Holy, holy, holy Lord, God of power and might, Heaven and earth are full of Your glory. Hosanna in the highest, Blessed is He who comes in the name of the Lord. Hosanna in the highest.**

PRESIDER: Creator God, You have called us to honor the presence of Your Son in this feast of sacred food and drink. We are honored also by Your invitation and we wish to bring the gift of ourselves to You in joy.

**ALL: Blessed are you, Lord, in heaven and earth.**

PRESIDER: In mercy for our fallen world, You gave Your only Son, that all those who believe in Him should not perish, but have eternal life. We give You thanks for the salvation You have prepared for us. Accept our praises, Creator God, for Jesus Christ, the one Perfect offering for the world, who

In the night that He was betrayed, took bread, and when he Had given thanks,  
Broke it, gave it to His disciples and said:

“Take, eat, this is My body given for you, do this to remember Me.”

After supper He took the cup, and when He had given thanks,  
He gave it to them and said:

“Drink this, all of you. This is My blood of the new Covenant which is shed for you and for many, to forgive sin. Do this as often as you drink it, to remember Me.”

Bread and wine, Body and Blood, the gifts of God for the people of God.

Send Your Spirit upon these gifts of Your people. Gather into one all who share this bread and wine. Fill us with Your Holy Spirit to establish our faith in truth that we may praise and glorify You through Your Son Jesus Christ; through whom all glory and honor are Yours, Almighty Creator, with the Holy Spirit, in Your holy church, both now and forever. **Amen.**

## **The Lord’s Prayer**

PRESIDER: And now let us say the Nez Perce version of the Lord’s Prayer:

**ALL: Oh Great Spirit,**

**You are our Shepherd Chief,**

**In the most high place whose home is everywhere, Even beyond the stars and moon.**

**Whatever You want done let it be done everywhere.**

**Give us Your gift of bread day by day.**

**Forgive our wrongs as we forgive those who wrong us. Take us away from wrong doings.**

**Free us from all evil,**

**For everything belongs to You.**

**Let Your power and glory shine forever. Amen.**

(Written by Hattie Corbett Enos -Nez Perce Elder)

PRESIDER: In Ezekiel 38:23, “I will magnify Myself, sanctify Myself, and make Myself known in the sight of many nations; and they will know that I am the LORD.” As we come together in unity to praise You, God our Creator, let us pray each in our own language as Jesus has taught us...

(Lord’s prayer will be spoken together as people speak it in their own language)

**ALL: Our Father, who art in heaven, hallowed be Thy Name, Thy kingdom come, Thy will be done, on earth as it is in heaven.**

**Give us this day our daily bread. And forgive us our trespasses, as we forgive those who trespass against us. And lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil.**

**For thine is the kingdom, and the power, and the glory, forever and ever. Amen.**

## **Communion of the People**

PRESIDER: So, come to this table, You who have much faith and you who would like to have more. You who have been to this sacrament often, and you who have not been for a long time. You who have tried to follow Jesus, and you who have failed. Come. It is Christ who invites us to meet Him here. These are the gifts of God for the people of God.



## Distribution

(appropriate communion hymns may be sung)

## Post-communion Prayer

**ALL:** Jesus Christ, our leader, You are the Son of the Creator. Today we became Your children. Today we became Your grandchildren. We will live as You have taught us. We will follow Your commandments. Watch over us. Speak to us from the trees, from the grass and herbs, from the breeze, from the passing rain, from the passing thunder and the deep waters. Before us there is beauty, behind us there is beauty. Allow us to walk a long life in happiness, completed in beauty. Amen.

## Blessing

**PRESIDER:** Great Spirit, our Creator God, look upon these faces gathered in holy community together and send them anywhere You would have them go. Walk with them so that they may face the winds of change and walk the good road. Enlighten them. Sustain them. May God our Creator be with you this day and always.

**ALL: Amen.**

## Hymn

## Dismissal

**PRESIDER:** We have honored Christ our Brother and Chief. All my relatives, go in peace.

**ALL: Thanks be to God.**

## Postlude

Thank you for sharing in this service today. *There are many ways to walk alongside our indigenous neighbors. Part of our role as a task force is to create an awareness and provide educational opportunities for synod folks to learn about the Anishinaabe culture. It stands to reason that it takes getting to know someone if you'd like to have a relationship.*\* We pray this service provides this opportunity to you.

\*2022 Annual Report. Walking With Our Indigenous Neighbors Task Force. <https://nglsynod.org/dataarchive/ngls/assembly2023/PreAssemblyReportPart2.pdf>

<sup>1</sup>Land Acknowledgement. Walking With Our Indigenous Neighbors Task Force. 2024. Also, Synod Assembly 2024.

### **For additional resources, please visit:**

Walking with Our Indigenous Neighbors Resources.

<https://nglsynod.org/northland-lutheran/>

Anti-Racism & Walking with Our Indigenous Neighbors Resources

<https://nglsynod.org/anti-racism-resources/>

Indigenous Ministries and Tribal Relations - Evangelical Lutheran Church in America (elca.org)

<https://www.elca.org/indigenous>

Association of American Indians and Alaska Natives of the ELCA

<https://www.elca.org/Our-Work/Congregations-and-Synods/Ethnic-Specific-and-Multicultural-Ministries/Indigenous-Ministries-and-Tribal-Relations/association>

## Additional Notes

Within the 574 federally recognized Tribes in the United States, traditional worship elements vary much like within our congregations. For instance, some tribal members hold tobacco, a sacred herb, in their left hand (closest to their heart) when praying. Some bow their heads in reverence while others raise their head and hands towards Father Sky.

Many Indigenous People use the term *Creator* when talking about *God*. It does not disrespect or minimize the power of the *Holy One*. One doesn't have to go far in the Bible to make the connection that God *is* Creator (Genesis). Likewise, many Indigenous People use the term, *Brother Jesus*, acknowledging a close, personal relationship with our Lord.

If you are unsure of a particular tradition, please feel free to reach out to a member of the Task Force.

Thank you for sharing this Native American Sunday service with your congregation!

## Hymn Suggestions

ELW - Evangelical Lutheran Worship	LBW - Lutheran Book of Worship	WOV - With One Voice
All Are Welcome	ELW #641	
Canticle of the Turning	ELW #723	
Christ, Be Our Light	ELW #715	
Creating God, Your Fingers Trace	ELW #684	WOV #757
Gather Us In	ELW #532	WOV #718
Hallelujah (Heleluyan)	ELW #171	WOV #609
In Christ There Is No East or West	ELW #650	LBW #359
Let All Things Now Living	ELW #881	LBW #557
Let Justice Flow Like Streams	ELW #717	WOV #763
Let Streams of Living Justice	ELW #710	
Light Dawns on a Weary World	ELW #726	
Lord, Let My Heart Be Good Soil		WOV #713
Many and Great, O God, Are Your Works	ELW #837	WOV #794
Mothering God, You Gave Me Birth	ELW #735	WOV #769
O God of Every Nation	ELW #713	LBW #416
Praise the One Who Breaks the Darkness	ELW #843	
Praise to You, O God of Mercy	ELW #208	WOV #790
This Is My Song	ELW #887	
'Twas in the Moon of Wintertime	ELW #284	LBW #72

We Are One in the Spirit

All My Relatives by Dakota Road <https://dakotaroadmusic.com/>

Praise to You by Dakota Road <https://dakotaroadmusic.com/>

# A Native American Prayer

O Great Spirit whose voice I hear in the winds  
and whose breath gives life to the entire world,  
hear me!

I am small and weak, and I need your strength and  
wisdom.

Let me walk in beauty and make my eyes ever behold  
the red and purple sunset.

Make my hands respect the things you have made  
and my ears sharp to hear your voice.

Make me wise so that I may understand the things you  
have taught my people.

Let me learn the lessons you have hidden in every leaf  
and rock.

I seek strength, not to be greater than my brother,  
but to fight my greatest enemy—myself.

Make me always ready to come to you with clean hands  
and straight eyes,

so when life fades, as the fading sunset,  
my spirit may come to you without shame.

A-ho!

## Thoughts from Ohiyesa

(Dr. Charles Alexander Eastman,  
born to the Santee people of the  
Dakota Nation in 1858)

*We first Americans have always been clear thinkers  
within the scope of our understanding, but cause and  
effect have not formed the basis for our thinking. We  
do not chart and measure the vast field of nature or  
express her wonders in the terms of science; on the  
contrary, we see miracles on every hand—the miracle of  
life in seed and egg, the miracle of death in a lightning flash  
and in the swelling deep!*

*Nothing of the marvelous can astonish us—a beast  
could speak or the sun stand still. The virgin birth seems  
scarcely more miraculous than is the birth of every child  
that comes into the world, and the miracle of loaves  
and fishes excites no greater wonder than the harvest  
that springs from a single ear of corn.*

*Let us not forget that even for the most contemporary  
thinker, who sees a majesty and grandeur in natural*

# Healer's Prayer

Out of our own sorrows and joys  
Out of our own losses and gains  
Out of our own knowledge of ease and disease  
Out of our own store of wealth and poverty  
Out of our own efforts to walk  
through the darkness of disappointment and grief  
We here in this place join hands and heart.

Knowing that life isn't always easy  
Knowing the rewards aren't always tangible  
Knowing that this Earth walk takes courage and support,  
Dignity and faith,  
In unity, leaning on each other,  
We reach out to those in need  
And wrap them, with gentle gossamer strands of love  
light,  
In a healing embrace, in a sacred healing embrace,  
And whisper words of encouragement.

Because we are all one on this planet,  
We and the Earth...all one.  
Every human, every animal...one.  
Every winged, finned, creepy-crawly creature.  
Every plant. Every stone.  
All who have come before us and will come after us  
One sacred circle of life.

And we commit ourselves to the stewardship  
of this sacred circle  
And to this sacred planet, Earth.  
And ask that our efforts be blessed  
with grace and approval.

We must succeed in this endeavor!  
There is no other way, but love.  
There is nobody else, but us.

As we heal ourselves, we heal each other.  
As we heal each other, we heal the world.  
So be it.

## Thoughts (cont.)

*law, science cannot explain everything. We all still  
have to face the ultimate miracle—the origin and  
principle of life. This is the supreme mystery that is the  
essence of worship and without which there can be no  
religion. In the presence of this mystery all peoples  
must take an attitude much like that of the Indigenous  
People, who behold with awe the Divine in all creation.*

***The earth is the Lord's and the fullness thereof...*** (Psalm 24.1, KJV)

***We believe that being earth-keepers is foundational to our Christian vocation and should be integral to the full life and mission of the ELCA.***

(from the 1993 ELCA social statement *Caring for Creation: Vision, Hope, & Justice.*)

Christian concern for the environment is shaped by the Word of God spoken in creation, the Love of God hanging on a cross, the Breath of God daily renewing the face of the earth. As members of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America, this congregation, the Northern Great Lakes Synod, and of society, we are deeply concerned about the environment, locally and globally. Even as we join the political, economic, and scientific discussion, we know care for the earth is a profoundly spiritual matter.

**We believe** we are grounded in a biblical vision of God's intention for the healing and wholeness of creation. **We believe** our hope is rooted in God's faithfulness to the creation from which humans emerge and depend on for sustaining life.

**We believe** we have a role to serve in creation—to pursue justice for creation through active participation, solidarity, sufficiency and sustainability, pursuing wholeness for creation. These commitments are expressed through individual and community action, worship, learning, moral deliberation and advocacy.

In 2017, the Lutheran Church commemorated 500 years. We find ourselves at another Reformation moment in which the bold, creative freedom of the reformers is called for as expressed in the theme that looks back in time, at the present day, and toward our future:

**Not for Sale: Salvation**

**Not for Sale: Human Beings**

**Not for Sale: Creation**

We state with bold conviction that creation is seamless. Humans are not, and cannot be, autonomous and independent. Earth-keeping is our calling.

Lutheran theologian and ethicist Larry Rasmussen writes: "Lutherans are uniquely positioned to offer leadership in the movement to restore creation, based on a strong theology of creation, a sacramental theology that discerns the active presence of God in all of life, a theology of the cross that leads us to identify with the most vulnerable, a situational ethic that enables us to respond creatively to new challenges, an ecclesiology which says that the church exists for the sake of the world, a tradition of commitment to social ministry and public advocacy for justice, an understanding of justification that empowers us to act out of gratitude and grace, and our affirmation of a future that is in God's hands."

