



June 16, 2021

To: The Bishops of the United Methodist Church  
c/o Bishop Cynthia Fierro Harvey  
President, Council of Bishops  
100 Maryland Ave NE  
Washington D.C. 20002

**Eastern Pennsylvania United  
Methodist Conference  
Committee on  
Native American Ministries**

**PO Box 820  
Valley Forge, PA 19482-0820**

Sandi Cianciulli and Sherry Wack  
Co-Chairs

Verna Colliver  
Secretary

Robert Hinderliter  
Ex-Officio

Joy Frazier  
Treasurer

Rev Dr Suzanne Duchesne

Rev Dr Sarah Fernsler

Bill Seybold

Ron Williams

With the discovery of the bodies of 215 Indian children buried at the Kamloops Indian Industrial School in British Columbia, the intergenerational trauma caused by the cultural genocide programs of Indian boarding schools has been reignited among all the indigenous nations in North America. This history and the pain that lives on in survivors and their descendants needs to be acknowledged and steps for healing need to be initiated. The Methodist Church was complicit in the cultural genocide program of the US government. It seems that historical Methodists believed that one had to adopt European culture in order to receive Christ. But even that belief does not justify the brutal treatment inflicted on children in the name of Christ. The consequences of the boarding school experience live on in Indian communities, devastating families still today; the pain they experience is not going to just go away. And we who are descendants of those who perpetrated these sins also need healing. Our righteous Savior is waiting for us to live up to our claim of following Him; He is waiting for the genuine fruit of repentance; He is waiting for us to act.

We of the Eastern Pennsylvania Committee on Native American Ministries call upon the Council of Bishops to lead our people in restorative justice. We need a forum where boarding school survivors and their descendants can tell their stories; we need to listen to them and weep with them as the horror of this holocaust is broadcast for all the world to bear witness. Only then can healing begin.

We support the statement of the Native American International Caucus asking the bishops to listen to the Indian voices crying out from graves and from their communities and to take concrete action to fulfill their vows. Now.