

**A Simple Liturgy for
Native American Day (Indigenous People's Day)
on the Second Monday of October
or
Native American Heritage Month
in November**

Gathering Prayer

Creator, we give you thanks for all that you are and all that you bring to us within your creation. In Jesus, you placed the Gospel in the Center of the Sacred Circle through which all creation is related. You show us the way to live a generous and compassionate life. Give us your strength to live together with respect and commitment as we grow in your spirit, for you are God, now and forever. **Amen.**

Land Acknowledgment and Thanksgiving

Creator, you made all people of every land. It is our responsibility to give thanks and respect to those who first occupied this land we are upon. We give thanks to _____ (name the traditional people of the Land), the first people of this land. We offer our respect to those ancestors who may be interred in this land. We are also thankful for the gifts of the People of the land. Creator let us be of Good Mind to reconcile the mistreatment of this land and to those who have been displaced. With thankful and respectful hearts we pray in Your name, Your son the Peacemaker and the Sacred Spirit. **Amen.**

Collect of the Day

Creator God, from you every family in heaven and earth takes its name. You have rooted and grounded us in your covenant love, and empowered us by your Spirit to speak the truth in love, and to walk in your way towards justice and wholeness. Mercifully grant that your people, journeying together in partnership, may be strengthened and guided to help one another to grow into the full stature of Christ, who is our light and our life. **Amen.**

Scripture Readings

- Isaiah 40:25-31
- Psalm 19
- Philippians 4:4-9
- John 1:1-18

Reflections

“American society could save itself by listening to tribal people. The land-use philosophy of Indians is so utterly simple that it seems stupid to repeat it: man must live with other forms of life on the land and not destroy it. Interest in the survival of humanity as a species must take precedence over economic interests. In addition to cleaning up streams and rivers and cutting down on air pollution, a total change in land use should be instituted. Increase in oxygen producing plants and organisms should be made first priority. Vast land areas should be reforested and bays should be returned to their natural state. Erosion and destruction of topsoil by wind reduces effectiveness of conservation efforts. To survive, white society must return the land to the Indians in the sense that it restores the land to the condition it was in before the white man came.” *Vine Deloria, Jr. (1933-2005), member of the Standing Rock Sioux Tribe, championed the rights of Native Americans. He was the nephew of anthropologist Ella Deloria and son of Vine Deloria, beloved Episcopal priest and archdeacon of South Dakota. He wrote Custer Died for Your Sins in 1969 and God is Red: A Native View of Religion in 1972.*

“One of the enduring mysteries about Native American tradition is how it understood the variety of people that made up the human family long before contact. Many indigenous people in this hemisphere were not surprised when they encountered Europeans for the first time. Their traditions had told them that human diversity, like all of the diversity in life, came in different colors. The archetypes of black, red, white and yellow symbolized the four directions of human form and beauty. Many Native people welcomed the newcomers because it meant the circle of creation was being made complete. In other words: we needed one another to be whole. We are all the same. I wish this deep spiritual insight had been available to the first explorers before they set sail. I wish it were more present in our world right now.” *Retired Bishop Steven Charleston, Episcopalian, Choctaw Elder. Two of his books are Ladder to the Light: An Indigenous Elder's Meditations on Hope and Courage (2021) and The Four Vision Quests of Jesus (2015).*

Prayers of the People

(Form I)

Holy Creator, in whom all things in heaven and earth have their being, **Have mercy on us.**

Risen Christ, through whom the whole creation is reconciled to God, **Have mercy on us.**

Life-giving Spirit, whose love and truth fills the world and searches the depths of our lives, **Have mercy on us.**

Blessed Trinity, source of both unity and diversity, **Have mercy on us.**

From our failure to recognize and respect the revelation of your truth and love in the First Peoples of this land, **Savior, forgive and heal us.**

From our participation in the systematic oppression of indigenous sovereignty, language, culture and spirituality, **Savior, forgive and heal us.**

From our role in the Indian Residential Schools designed to eliminate the unique society, wisdom and beauty of the indigenous peoples of this land, **Savior, forgive and heal us.**

From our complicit tolerance of the decimation of Indigenous family structures leaving children vulnerable to abuses of every kind, **Savior, forgive and heal us.**

From our continued acceptance of unjust legal, educational, health and social structures that continue to oppress and destroy the lives of many indigenous people, **Savior, forgive and heal us.**

O God, we pray for the gifts of your grace and your love which never gives up on us and is forever faithful. Inspire our minds with a vision of the reconciliation of your kingdom in this time and place. **Hear us, O Christ.**

Touch our eyes, that we may see the sacredness in all creation. **Hear us, O Christ.**

Touch our ears, that we may hear from every mouth of every peoples the hunger for hope and stories of refreshment. **Hear us, O Christ.**

Touch our lips, that we may speak of the beauty of every tongue and dialect proclaiming the wonderful works of God. **Hear us, O Christ.**

Touch our hearts, that we may discern your mission in which you call us to be immersed, particularly in partnership with the First Peoples of this land. **Hear us, O Christ.**

Touch our minds that we may witness to your Good News in our neighborhoods, communities, and all parts of the world. **Hear us, O Christ.**

Touch our hands, that we may forever shun violence and embrace the work you give us to do. **Hear us, O Christ.**

Draw your Church together, O Lord, into one great company of disciples, together following our Lord Jesus Christ into every walk of life, together serving you in your mission in the world, and together witnessing to your love on every continent and island of your creation. We ask this in the name of the Risen Christ in whom we are one. **Amen.**

Or (Form II)

Creator, we long for wholeness in our families, for honest, open communication to say what we need to say in safety and without fear.

Creator, we give thanks for the knowledge you give in all traditions of the world. Help us to honor the gifts of all traditions. **Teach us to know how to love and live.**

We give thanks for new life, for youth, represented by the eastern direction. We give thanks for new learning, for the sun which rises to begin each new day, and for the teachings of the peoples of the east, and yellow-skinned peoples. **Teach us to know how to love and live.**

We give thanks for the south, for the black-skinned peoples of the world, for the growth of the summertime in our lives, the learnings of our adult lives, to be kind and accept ourselves. Teach us as parents to love and respect our children, to care for the elders and those who cannot care for themselves. **Teach us to know how to love and live.**

We give thanks for the west, for the gifts of Aboriginal peoples of the world, for understandings of care of the earth, for teachings about rocks, leaves and trees, for the knowledge we have in our own teachings, all of these given by our Creator. Help us to use our understandings to bring joy and new life to our communities. **Teach us to know how to love and live.**

We give thanks for the northern direction, for the white-skinned peoples of the world, and white-haired peoples in our families and communities. Help us to receive gifts of wisdom from all peoples. Help us to grow our roots deeper through life's journey, that we may grow in kindness to ourselves and each other. **Teach us to know how to love and live.**

Concluding Collect

O great and kind Spirit, you have always been, and before you nothing has been. There is no one to pray to but you. The star nations all over the heavens are yours, and yours are the grasses of the earth. You are older than all need, older than all pain and prayer.

O great and kind Spirit, all over the world the faces of living ones are alike. With tenderness have they come out of the earth from which you give us food. Look on your children. With children in their arms, they face the wind and walk the red road to the day of quiet.

O great and kind Spirit, fill me with light. Give me strength to understand and eyes to see deeply. Teach me to walk on soft earth as relatives to all that live. Help me! Without you, I am nothing.

Make our spirits one with yours, Great Spirit. Help us to know, like the soaring eagle, the heights of knowledge. From the Four Directions, fill us with the four virtues of fortitude, generosity, respect, and wisdom; so that we will be able to help our people walk in the path of understanding and peace. Finally, great and kind Spirit, help us always to return our thanks to you. **Amen.**

Final Blessing

God is before us.

God is behind us.

God is above us.

God is below us.

God's words shall come from our mouths.

For we are all God's essence, a sign of God's love.

All is finished in beauty.

All is finished in beauty.

Music:

- Red Lake Mass (Ojibway) in *Enriching Our Music 1* (pages 46 - 53 - also found in WLP as #813 & #855 (sanctus))
- Hymnal 1982 #385 (Many and Great (Dakota))
- Wonder, Love and Praise # 783 (Alleluia (Muscogee/Creek))
- Wonder, Love and Praise # 791 (Peace Before Us (Navajo))
- Wonder, Love and Praise # 813 (Way, way, way (Ojibway))
- WLP #826, 830 & 831 (Taizé Chants with Native Hawaiian Lyrics)
- Voices Found # 52 (Come Great Creator)
- Voices Found # 150 (Declare his glory)

Sources:

- Gathering Prayer – *The Disciples Prayer Book, The Indigenous Theological Training Institute*
- Land Acknowledgment – *adapted from All Saint's Church, Minneapolis, MN*
- Collect of the Day – *adapted from All Saint's Church, Minneapolis, MN*
- Reflections – *from Vine Deloria, Jr. (We Talk, You Listen: New Tribes, New Turf (New York: Macmillan, 1970)) and from Bishop Steven Charleston's Facebook Page (April 19)*
- Prayers of the People (Form I) - *A Litany for the Healing and Restoration of our Church, from the Anglican Diocese of Rupert's Land, 2017*
- Prayers of the People (form II) - *The Dancing Sun, Volume VII, a United Church of Canada/Anglican Church of Canada resource for First Nations Communities*
- Concluding Prayer – *A Lakota Prayer from the United Church of Christ (1982)*
- Final Blessing – *Navajo Prayer Tradition*