Committee on Native American Ministries (CoNAM)

This Committee worked with the Conference on setting up an Act of Repentance Service at the 2014 Annual Conference. The Indigenous Welcome was given by Mr. Mark Gould, the Chief of the Lenni Lenape Tribe which is part of the Nanticoke Lenni Lenape Confederation. The 2015 Indigenous Welcome was given by Rev. Roy Bundy, the pastor of St. John’s UMC in Fordville. This church is designated as a Native American Methodist Church and has been in existence 175 years. We hope to see this welcome continue as a part of our Annual Conferences.

We continue to work with the Lenni Lenape Tribe by:

- Supporting their Youth Camp and assisting youth with Peg Leg Flamingo participation.
- At one of CoNAM meetings, we shared with people about a trip to the historical site of the Carlisle Indian School some of the members attending. Some of the Lenape people were interested in attending as well. On June 4, 2015, forty five (45) people went on the trip. We plan to do a trip for Conference members.
- Rev. Doug Mackey from the Upper NY Conference came to St. John’s UMC as a part of his seminary course. He shared how a Native American Ministries Sunday (NAMS) training could be as he shared resources from their Act of Repentance Service. With this type of training, the CoNAM will do a training for the Conference during Regional Day of Learning conferences in 2017.
- The history of the relationship between the Tribe and St. John’s UMC needs to be recorded and the Archive Center at Drew University is working with the Tribe and the church to record this history.
- St. John’s UMC is a part of the eight week Bridgeton Summer Program. It was held for two weeks at each church from June 29-August 21, 2015. A total of 120 children were in attendance, with 38 attending at St. John’s UMC. St. John’s used an in-house Native American immersion curriculum and explored how the culture and Christianity partner together to glorify the Creator. From that program, more Tribal youth are attending church and a youth program is being established by the church.

We want to develop a working relationship with the other two Tribes in the conference, they are the Powhatan Tribe in Burlington County in Central New Jersey and the Ramapough Lunaape Tribe in the Northwest corner of New Jersey in the Hunterdon County area. We will be working the District Superintendents in those areas to look at ways to open up a dialogue.

We are aware that many Native people from the state and from other places are attending colleges in New Jersey. While they are in the state, the Committee would like to be supportive of them. We are working with the Reform Church of America on a Welcome Center at the Rutgers University in New Brunswick. As we develop a plan to work with Rutgers, we will see how this activity can be presented at other schools.

The Committee continue to see how native people and issues can be included into the life and work of the Conference.

Cynthia Kent, Chair
Conference Committee on Native American Ministries (CoNAM)