

Native American Newsletter

Volume 21, Issue 2

November, 2013

Call Sarah Sanchez at 803 788-2925 to add your name to this mailing list if you do not have an email address. For email newsletter: edcons@bellsouth.net For information, call Tracy Pender, Chairperson of the Native American Committee, at 803 905-5672.

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Chair's Corner

by Z. Tracy Pender

Rocky Swamp: What a Journey!

Over the years, I have written on several different perspectives with my chair's corner. With this article, I wanted to write about an incredible, challenging journey that I have been on. This journey has made me grow as a person, in my faith, in my commitment, in my ability to help others, and in my knowledge. In December 2009, I was asked by the Bishop and Connectional Ministries to become the supply pastor for Rocky Swamp, an outreach Native American ministry located in Neeses, South Carolina.

Rocky Swamp is a Native American outreach ministry where a congregation meets on Sunday reflecting American Indians from various heritages. Many call themselves mixed bloods. Their Indian heritage includes Cherokee, Muskogean Creek, Lakota and others. Their normal attendance ranges from 10 to 30. Keith Hiott is the group's Native spiritual leader, similar to a medicine man, and he leads them in the Lakota traditions that were taught to him, reflecting Lakota sacred ceremonies. They are all Christians, but come from many denominational backgrounds such as Pentecostal, Baptist, Catholic, non-denominational and more. There are people who just pass through and visit for a Sunday or two. There have been pastors and ministers from other faiths who have come and participated from time to time. It is very unique to watch this occur.

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**November is Native
American Heritage
Month**

Look for the Facebook page for Native American Indian Film and Video Festival of the Southeast. Films will be shown at the Nickelodeon Theatre on Main Street in Columbia on November 4-5.

Columbia College is offering an interfaith course on November 17 that introduces people to Native American spirituality, from 4 to 6:30 at the Breed Leadership Building.

The Native American Cherokee River Walk Festival is set for Nov. 9 at the Historical Cayce Museum, 1800 12th St., Cayce.
<http://500nations.com/South Carolina Events.asp>

The church itself is United Methodist property. The church was part of the Springfield charge and in discontinued status. As a result, repairs were needed in order to reopen. Ironically, when initially opened, one of the walls was literally flowing with honey, as there was a large bee's nest in the wall.

A typical Sunday morning at Rocky Swamp requires explanation. The congregation worships in a very Native manner. You can find a large cross, mounted at the front of the church with a sacred circle reflecting the four colors of the medicine wheel. The Native drum is in the center of the church with the pews arranged in a circle around the drum. The congregation begins to arrive usually around 11:30. The person with the shortest drive is at least 20 minutes away. Thus, they communicate with each other via cell phone about when everyone will arrive. As a result, service may start somewhere between 11:45 and 12:30. There is a definite social exchange with members as they arrive and wait for everyone, much like an extended passing of the peace.

Once everyone is called to gather for worship, service is started with a discussion involving a spiritual topic, the Bible, a Bible verse, a Christian act, a Native issue, etc. It is similar to having Sunday school and the pastor's message rolled into one. Yet, nobody stands up to preach per say. Everyone is free to share and jump into the conversation. Again, this would reflect traditional Native culture, with each person listening to what another one is sharing and waiting to add their thoughts if desired. To me, it embraces the "talking stick." Time is not an issue. When it is done, it is done. The service is never rushed.

After the discussion, they may take a short break. Then they gather at the drum. The male drummers take their place at the drum and the drum is blessed with prayer. Women gather around the drum to sing or rattle. Yet, one can remain in a pew, seated, if desired. The Native drum is the centerpiece

of Native worship. It represents Mother Earth and the circular shape represents our connection to the Great Spirit and Christ. Its voice calls for the Holy of Holies to join the worship, lifts our prayers to Creator and then offers a thank you for time and consideration of all that was done during the service. The drum music usually starts with Christian praise songs. Then Keith leads the congregation in the sacred, ceremonial Lakota songs.

Afterwards, the congregation usually eats together. This involves someone cooking at the church or some bringing dishes. After eating, there is more time for fellowship among the members. Again, time is never an issue. When it is over, it is over. I admit that my wife and I are usually some of the first to leave around 3 or 3:30pm. Yet, nobody looks down on anyone if they need to leave early or only can stay 30 minutes. They are thankful that you simply made it to church. Additionally, their motto is, "Come as you are." They live by that. It was an adjustment for me to wear jeans to church. Regardless, everyone is welcome.

This journey has had some incredible lows and some even more incredible highs. Yes, it has been difficult and not easy at times. At first, my wife and I were outsiders. We represented "them" in the "them vs. us" mentality. Today, I am very pleased to say that my wife and I are accepted as part of their family - a tiyospaye (extended family). One of the unique things about this congregation is that you become part of their tiyospaye. There are hugs and welcomes every single Sunday. This acceptance did not occur over night; it took many trials and tribulations to build their trust. Their greatest fear was that United Methodist church would simply come in and take over, forcing them to change their Native ways without even taking the opportunity to learn who they are and how they do things. Yes, it is a reflection on the old "missionary" style approach. It is one of the reasons that we call Rocky Swamp an outreach ministry instead of a mission. However, rest assured that nothing

that they do violates any of our principles as United Methodist.

I learned more about my faith and United Methodism than I would have ever imagined. I have been United Methodist all my life. Now, I faced a challenge of how to explain what it means to be Methodist to a group of people, some of whom have never been Methodist. What are our practices, principles, rituals, and routines? Are we rigid or flexible? Is tithing mandatory? Do you receive a bill in the mail for this? What does it mean when we say, as Methodists, that we treasure our “connectionalism” as a denomination? Why do you say “Holy Catholic Church” in your Apostle’s Creed? “I didn’t think you were Catholic.” And the list goes on. I found myself having to do research and exploring my own faith and denomination. I read The Book of Discipline more than ever! I was surprised that Keith had already read that book, had a great understanding of it, and actually approved of what was written in it.

The key to building the relationship was trust. I was open and honest. I didn’t always agree with either side. Yes, at times I felt stuck in the middle between our conference and their congregation. Over time, I learned to resolve and balance this position.

Today, the relationship between Rocky Swamp and our conference is stronger than ever. We are on the right path, the Good Red Road, in walking together as two peoples learning from one another and becoming one - a tiyospaye.

The church has been broken into several times. Even after placing

a deadbolt on the back door, someone kicked in the door. On one occasion, someone stole the stove. The stove was vital as it was used to cook meals for the congregation on Sunday. Rev. Mary Green and her adult senior group adopted Rocky Swamp as a project. They were able to replace the stove and the broken refrigerator along with other repairs and painting. With tears in their eyes, Rocky Swamp members recounted the arrival of the stove and fridge. They said nobody had ever done such a thing like this for them before. The appliances were brand new and not previously used. The congregation is largely a congregation of limited means. The days that the United Methodist adult group spent with Rocky Swamp were an incredible relationship-building experience for all. The project ended with a meal and a traditional Native worship service on a Wednesday evening.

This past weekend, Pinopolis United Methodist Church partnered with Rocky Swamp. Rocky Swamp had a definite need for an industrial weed eater to maintain the cemetery. They had damaged three lawn mowers. However, they did not have the money to purchase one. Pinopolis wanted to experience a Native Drum as part of their Native American Ministries Sunday celebration. As a result, Rocky Swamp agreed to drum and Pinopolis made a significant contribution towards the purchase of the weed eater. For the Rocky Swamp people, it was their first time participating in a worship service within the United Methodist church. They felt warmly welcomed and appreciated. You can be Indian and Christian inside of the church with Native music,

prayers, and focus being honored by all. We asked that all of our brothers and sisters, regardless of race, join us in the sacred circle. The church valued the experience as well.

On November 17th, Sara White (SC Conference Director of Congregational Development) and the Native American Committee members have been invited to participate in a worship service at Rocky Swamp.

Thanks to all of these efforts, the willingness to continue regardless of the circumstances, and the determination to overcome our barriers, we are moving forward with our relationship. We are in discussions about how to move forward with Rocky Swamp becoming a true United Methodist Native American Ministry (Mission) Church. We are talking about long-term plans including a local pastor. After everything that has happened, I cannot tell you how well it does my heart to see where we are at today. The progress has moved forward on a level that has never occurred before. It is just so great to see. Although I had my doubts, I am very privileged to be a part of this effort. I'll say this again and again, when it comes to the United Methodist Church and Native peoples, there have truly been open hearts and open minds leading to new open doors. You can be Indian and Christian at the same time!

The Catawba Indian Nation by: Beckee Garris

The Catawba Cultural Center is off to a good start with its After-School Program for about 30 children attending.

We are in the process of cataloging books for our new children's library; thanks to a grant we have been able to purchase more books. The children are already taking advantage of resource books, Native history as well as books to read just for pleasure.

The Summer Cultural Day Camp Kic-A-Wah was a huge success also. The Children got

to take field trips plus learning the pottery traditions of the tribe.

Renowned Catawba potter Caroleen Sanders is the Artist In Residence at the Native American Studies Center at 119 S. Main St. Lancaster, SC. She will be there each Saturday through December 17th. For a real treat of watching Caroleen create her pieces and to hear her tell the history of the Catawba and our pottery, and to just be entertained by some of her tales, come visit. Plus come see the new exhibits showing the SC Tribal flags and lots of other SC Indian history. The NASC is open Tuesday-Saturday, 10am-5:00pm and Sunday 1:00pm-5:00pm. (Sunday openings are scheduled only until December 18, 2013. After that NASC will be closed on Sunday.)

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Elder Basket Ministry: Christmas Project of the Native American Committee By Cathy Nelson

Please contact Cathy Nelson at 843 835-8589 if you would like to participate in the eleventh annual Elder Basket Christmas project. The Native American Committee collects baskets filled with household supplies and personal products and delivers them to American Indian Elders who live in substandard conditions across the state. Many thanks to the churches and groups who have helped in this project in the past!

Native American Ministries Sunday: Schedule Your Date in Advance!

by Z. Tracy Pender

In accordance with *The Discipline*, paragraph 816(6), "Native American Ministries Sunday shall be observed with an offering, preferably on the Third Sunday of Easter." As a result, Native American Ministries Sunday is traditionally the second Sunday after Easter. This is one of the special Sundays designated in *The Discipline*. The Native American Committee (NAC) provides speakers for Native American Ministries Sunday; thus, making this date the most requested date. With limited number of speakers, this date books sometimes a year in advance. As a result, NAC conducts Native American Ministries Sunday throughout the entire year. Thus, pastors or Native American Representatives simply have to call and set up a date that matches both the church's schedule and our speakers. The NAC is asking that you place this special Sunday on your church calendar and observe this Sunday. Please remember we are part of this conference and not an outside agency requesting something special.

The purpose of Native American Ministries Sunday is to provide education about American Indian tradition, culture, spirituality and inclusion in our conference. Even today, American Indians are often questioned if we worship the same God or if we are going to do something "strange" if we come and speak at your church. Thus, we address these myths and stereotypes. We explore American Indians history. We address Native spirituality. We identify the obstacles facing American Indians today. We advise on what the Native American Committee does within the conference and the outreach it provides to the tribes of South Carolina and beyond. All of these are answered when a church has its first Native American Ministries conducted by our committee.

One of John Wesley's major missions was outreach to American Indians. He went where others would not go. Native American Ministries Sunday offering nurtures outreach to Native Americans and provides scholarships for United Methodist Native American seminarians. It provides support for urban outreach ministries and provides connection across the conference. Half of the monies raised stay in this state. It provides a means to maintain and reestablish cultural traditions, regalia, and other needs for the tribes. It provides for worship outreach. It provides for medical needs and services. Thus, the monies are greatly needed. Many of our native peoples in this state live in substandard conditions. There is a great need within our own state.

The NAC is here to help and assist you with this special worship Sunday. There is no cost for this, but assistance with mileage costs or honorariums are always appreciated. We will come regardless! We are willing to work with a church to schedule this Sunday any time during the year. November is also a good month since it is Native American Heritage month for the United States.

For that first presentation at your church by our committee, our chairperson typically provides the message for the worship service. The message covers myths and stereotypes about American Indians from past to present, Native American spirituality, the role of the Native American Committee, and the connection with our conference. We have brochures and a display presentation. We can also provide worship materials. Some speakers are evening willing to do the children's message with a traditional story. After the message, many congregations have been surprised about what they learned. We also honor our native tradition of gift giving when we come to your church. All churches receive this first core message to ensure all have the same foundation for subsequent visits.

From the second year and any subsequent year, message options include traditional story-telling, the potter's clay story, the challenge of being Indian and Christian, histories of Catawba, Pee Dee and other South Carolina tribes, and flute and hand drum music. We can work with your desires.

We also offer the option of having a Native Drum come to your church and provide praise drumming as the message for the service. Three different native drum groups can be scheduled to drum. Each drum has at least one United Methodist member. Yet, since each drum has a minimum of 2 to 6 drummers and most are not committee members, there is a cost to the church with this one specific request only. Through 2013, the cost is \$150 for the drum plus .24 cents per mile mileage with a maximum of two cars per drum. In 2014, the mileage will increase to .50 cents per mile. If the distance is great enough that the drums have an overnight stay, the church would have to make arrangements or cover the overnight cost. Again, this can only be requested after a church has its first official Sunday presented by our committee. We recommend this special request for the third or fourth Native American Ministries Sunday for a church. Priority is given to churches where this is their third or fourth year due to limited availability of the drums.

The NAC also provides Native American Ministries Sunday offering envelopes. These can be obtained at no cost by contacting Gail Corn at the Conference Office. These offering envelopes explain how the money is being used by our committee and within our conference. GCFA also provides offering envelopes and you may obtain them too at no cost. However, this offering envelope gives instructions on making online donations. While our conference is required to send 50% from any offering collected in our conference, 100% of the online donation goes directly to GCFA. GCFA doesn't provide that 50% split. Our conference doesn't get any of these funds. Thus, we highly recommend that each church use our offering envelopes.

As an important reminder, all speakers arranged by our committee are approved by the conference. However, a church may elect to get their own American Indian speaker. **If he or she is not a United Methodist pastor or certified lay speaker by this conference, you must obtain permission from your district superintendent for this person to speak.** Also, all offering monies are sent directly to the conference office, attention Gail Corn.

Native American Ministries Sunday is important to our conference and domination. Let's live by open hearts, open minds, and open doors. We are asking you to have a Native American Ministries Sunday and provide that outreach and nurture to the native peoples. Our primary mission is, "To Make the Invisible, Visible." Please help us with this mission. **To arrange a Native American Ministries Sunday, please contact Z. Tracy Pender, Native American Chair, 803 905-5672.**

Just who are you to certify my Art?

By Waccamaw Chief Harold “Buster” Hatcher

“I happen to be an award winning artist. I have a master’s degree and have taught art for years. I am very good at it and I don’t recognize your right to certify me. Just who do you think you are?”?

A very valid question and argument, and one I’ve heard in various forms many times over the past several years.

Public Law 101-644 (Indian Arts and Crafts Board) was enacted by Congress in 1935. This public law is supposed to be a truth in advertising law and it states in part that: *“It is illegal to offer or display for sale, or sell any art or craft product in a manner that falsely suggests it is Indian produced, an Indian product, or the product of a particular Indian or Indian Tribe or Indian arts and crafts organization, resident within the United States”.*

It goes on to list the punishments that could be imposed *“For a first time violation of the Act, an individual can face civil or criminal penalties up to a \$250,000 fine or a 5-year prison term, or both. If a business violates the Act, it can face civil penalties or can be prosecuted and fined up to \$1,000,000”.*

No other American ethnic group faces such a law, or restriction. As a matter of fact, no other ethnic group has ever been so separated for the general populace of this country.

However, the law goes even further and states plainly: *the term ‘Indian’ means any individual who is a member of an Indian tribe; or for the purposes of this section is certified as an Indian artisan by an Indian tribe.*

Please understand that our artists are certified because the government makes it necessary, not because we are arrogant and trying to control our people’s artist’s expression.

American Indian Scouting Association

The AISA annual seminar was held July 20-24, 2013 at Wind River Reservation in Riverton, WY. We were hosted by the Eastern Shoshone tribe. All workshops and meals were held at the Arapahoe School. We toured the entire reservation by bus. Our tour included St. Stephen’s Mission and St. Michael’s Mission. We visited Chief Washakie and Sacajawea Cemeteries. We received a very warm welcome from the tribes. Our traditional meal was held at the Eastern Shoshone Business Council. We had interesting workshops and participation was great.

Our next seminar is being planned for the Duck Valley Reservation in Owyhee, NV. This is the home of the Shoshone-Paiute tribes. We will stay in Boise, ID for the program. We visit the tribe for a day. When plans are confirmed, I will get the word out so our Scout troops can register to join us.

We would like to see a delegation of SC Girl Scouts and Boy Scouts with us. This is a very educational experience for both youth and adults. The networking opportunities are very important. Lasting friendships are formed as well.

Please encourage the Scouts in your congregation to get involved with AISA. -Charlotte Barker, AISA

2013 SEJANAM Summer Conference an experience to repeat

Participation in SEJANAM’s 25th Annual Native American Summer Conference the last weekend in June was not only an answer to prayer, but also an open door to learning about and experiencing Native American culture. I returned home with a deeper understanding of these words: “Who we are is God’s gift to us. What we become is our gift to God.”

With the tremendous blessing of a scholarship from the SC Conference Native American Committee, I was able to complete the registration process and make plans for my very first visit to Lake Junaluska. Being the Native American Representative from Platt Springs UMC, I had been intrigued by learning that such a conference existed. And, from a purely personal perspective of knowing that I do have Native American heritage, I selfishly prayed asking God to please help me find a way to attend this conference. I sincerely believed that the conference material would help me discover areas in which my congregation could become involved in Native American ministries.

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Native American Representative Training

We are pleased to announce that we once again have our annual Native American Representative Training.

The Discipline requires that all churches within the conference by nomination and election a minimum of one person per charge (without regard to race or ethnic origin) or designated member of an established church committee to represent the need for better awareness and given to the conference committee on Native American ministries. In our conference, we include a space with your report for annual conference. If your church has not appointed someone, please do.

The job of the representative is to be a contact person between the local church and our committee, secure a calendar date for the church to observe Native American Ministries Sunday, encourage awareness and appreciation of Native American history, traditions, and spirituality, advocate for inclusion of Native Americans within the conference, provide reports to the local church, and be aware of the Native American Comprehensive Plan.

Our committee provides training for this representative. **Please mark your calendars.** The training will be held on **Saturday, February 1st**, at Platt Springs UMC in West Columbia. The church address is 3215 Platt Springs Road, West Columbia. Registration will start at 9am with the training starting at 9:30. The training features historical information about American Indians, especially the Natives of South Carolina, myths and stereotypes, Native American spirituality, information on the Native American committee, and your role as the Native American Representatives. After lunch, we provide an orientation into a traditional worship service for American Indians which may include drumming, singing, and flute playing.

Although the primary purpose is for Native American Representatives, the training is open for any member of a church to attend. Lunch is provided. All representatives will receive a Representative manual. **There is a \$10 registration fee. If you are planning to attend, please contact Beckee Garris, 803 325-4194 or beckeeg@yahoo.com. Registration deadline is January 13th.**

(Continued from page 6)

The NAC members warmly welcomed me in the beautiful Lambuth Inn. I met and instantly felt as though I were family with the other attendees. Each delicious meal in the dining room was a fresh opportunity to spend time getting to know the heart of several other persons. Indeed, God did provide the way for me to meet Native Americans from different areas of the country, as well as several from “right down the road” from my home. He also gave me leisurely conversations with other NA Reps and Pastors. God did provide the path for me to start discovering ways my congregation can be better informed and involved.

The information presented in the seminars and worship services helped me to have a clearer understanding of the challenges that continue to be faced by Natives following the heartbreaking history of America. Jonathan Maracle’s message and music spoke deeply to my spirit. We must recognize the gifts that are within each person. When we honor God with our hearts *then* we can be who He created us to be rather than allow others to “re-create” us. Passing this information on to congregations and local communities will help everyone to understand, honor, and respect Native customs and the Native way of life. God had a purpose by placing each cultural group at different locations around the earth.

The conference gave to me a greater perspective of the importance of social justice and the environments vital for healing. God returned me home safely and instilled within me a desire to support the NAC. I am extremely grateful for the scholarship that helped to make this experience possible for me and will be a strong advocate for NAC funding. I’m looking forward to the 2014 Summer Conference that I’m already saving for. –Susan Busby, NA Representative, Platt Springs UMC, West Columbia, SC

SCHOLARSHIPS FOR NATIVE AMERICANS

Finding sufficient funding to be able to afford to go to college is challenging. The University of North Carolina at Pembroke has published on its website a helpful list of scholarship opportunities for Native Americans. The web address is as follows:

<http://www.uncp.edu/fa/AmericanIndianScholarshipListing.pdf>

You can also find this by going to the website for Pembroke, <http://www.uncp.edu> and then choosing “financial aid” and then “scholarship opportunities” on the right side of the page.

....*Making the
invisible
visible*

Native American Committee: Z. Tracy Pender, Chair, Revonda Hardesty, Secretary, Charlotte Barker, Carolyn Chavis Bolton, Beckee Garris, Cathy Nelson, Russell Christopher Weik, Mary Louise Worthy, Susan Hayes-Hatcher, Zachary McMillan (youth representative), Rev. Tim McClendon (Cabinet Representative), Sandy Nesbit, electronic newsletter, Sarah Sanchez, newsletter editor, Native American Conveners: Rev. Cheryl Toothe, Rev. Mary Green, James Porter

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