



Opening of Monday Session
2020 Virtual Michigan Annual Conference
Monday, July 27, 2020
Nichea VerVeer Guy

I am Nichea VerVeer Guy, Chair of the Commission on Annual Conference, Laity, GR Trinity.

As we begin our time together, I encourage us to celebrate the diverse pathways and legacies of the people of the Michigan Conference. These beautiful peninsulas have sustained and nurtured us, they have given us the resources to live and play. We are grateful that time and place has put us here to live into God's call for justice.

In our commitment to live into the Acts of Repentance to Native and Indigenous Peoples,

I would like to take the time to honor the First Peoples of this area for caring for this abundant place. As early as 796 AD, the Council of the Three Fires has been coming together at Michilimackinac. The Anishinaabe member nations are the Ojibwe; the Keepers of Faith, the Odawa; the Keepers of Trade and the Potawatomi; Keepers of the Fire. These First Peoples have worked to overcome colonization in order to sustain this land for our future together.

The harvest of these Great Lakes and their fertile lands would go on to nourish expanding cultures. Immigrants would come to these shores fleeing famine and poverty. This place would become the final passage of an Underground Railroad to freedom for the African slaves and the cities would become the peace-filled homes to Vietnamese, Guatemalan and Middle Eastern refugees of violence.

As the people of Michigan struggle to find equity together so to this conference struggles to understand how it's privilege has impacted it's call from God. We continue to find the ways to honor one another and serve God's call in this place.

Even when injustice stripped away the wealth of soul and land of the Anishinaabe peoples they persevered and never lost dignity. They never lost their respect to the Creator and all that was endowed to them.

The slaves that found freedom in this place, stood firm for their rights even when they were beaten and treated unjustly. The refugees who left the violence of war to seek the peace of acceptance, continue to conquer barriers of hate.

To all of our siblings, we apologize for the past atrocities that were inflicted upon you out of racism and doctrinal abuse. At this time when we come together as Michigan United Methodists, we humbly ask forgiveness. We honor you.

I ask for a moment of silence for you to lift to the Creator your words of repentance, peace and thanksgiving.