

January 2026 Indigenous Rights Update

Edina Community Lutheran Church

Reflect on the journey

Read this [opinion piece](#) from Native News Online. Wonder about this question: what is it about human nature that seems to find ways to dehumanize others? How have you seen this tendency to dehumanize others at work in you? In your life? How have you managed it? Throughout his ministry, Jesus insisted on the full humanity of every person (and if he were around with today's sensibilities, he also would have included the creation as intrinsically of value). How do you center this commitment in your life of faith and in your civic life?

History

The Minneapolis Park Board decided to [remove Henry Sibley's name](#) from the park at 1900 East 40th Street in Minneapolis. Read more about Henry Sibley [here](#).

Wounded Knee wasn't the only one. [This](#) remembers the Marias River Massacre in Montana, on January 23, 1870, also known as the Bear River Massacre.

News

- [January 11](#): Native American community members share resources and support amid ICE operations.
- [January 18](#): AIM patrols are back on the street

Advocacy Opportunities

State

Minnesota's 2026 legislative session will begin on February 17, kicking off with a Rise and Repair rally (sign up [here](#)) from 10:30 – 12:30 to welcome legislators back to St. Paul. The lobbying effort will be later this year, probably in March.

The advocacy focus in 2026 will again be wild rice (lead by Leeana Goose) with four emphases:

1. A clarification about "inherent rights" language, which does not mean personhood per se.
2. Wild Rice risk justification: a bill to support scientific studies to clarify what wild rice needs and requiring those who seek to exploit wild rice environments to respond to risks.
3. Pesticide provisions that address the use of neonicotinoids and other chemicals, including those being used to manage invasive species.
4. Boating restrictions: prevent boating through wild rice beds—as we would never allow cars to drive through farm fields. Indigenous foods sources deserve the same respect.

You can track the progress of bills [here](#), thanks to Rise and Repair.

Federal

Boarding Schools

A bill to establish a Truth and Healing Commission was introduced in the House in 2021 and continues to languish there. The Senate passed a bill previously and reintroduced something similar in February of 2025, which passed through the Indian Affairs Committee to advance it in the legislative process. ***Truth and Healing Commission on Indian Boarding School Policies Act of 2025*** (S.761, introduced in the Senate by Sen. Murkowski)

More information from the National Native American Boarding School Coalition is [here](#).

Learning opportunities

ELCA

ELCA Indigenous Ministries and Tribal Relations continues to provide learning opportunities as a part of the [Truth and Healing Movement](#). Scroll down to find links to online classes.

Coalition to Dismantle the Doctrine of Discovery

The Coalition offers two basic classes for those of us getting started with systems change. Taught on Zoom, each class includes two sessions.

2026 Fundamentals Training and Registration

- Moving Toward Right Relations
- Decolonization and Organizing for Systems Change

ECLC

30+ ECLCers gathered after church on January 25 to watch [Sugarcane](#), a new, award-winning documentary that explores the tremendous courage and compassion required to heal from the atrocities of the boarding school era. It was a powerful afternoon. You can [stream](#) it on Disney+ and Hulu.

Get yourself a copy of the little book, [Serviceberry: Abundance and Reciprocity in the Natural World](#), by Robin Wall Kimmerer. On March 18 before Lenten worship, EcoFaith and Indigenous Rights will meet to discuss. Join us!

Walker

[Dyani White Hawk exhibition](#) at the Walker. More about the exhibition from MPR [here](#).

Makoce Ikikcupi (Minnesota Repair Communities)

Dr. Dawn Nothwehr, Professor Emerita of Theological Ethics at Catholic Theological Union in Chicago, is teaching "The Doctrine of Discovery: Ethics of Power, Justice, Moral Luck, & Race." This is a six-session online course, with sessions running 6:30 – 8:00 PM.

SESSION 1	February 10, 2026	The Doctrine of Discovery – Background and Brief
SESSION 2	February 24, 2026	Creation and Relations – Earth, Human, & Divine
SESSION 3	March 10, 2026	Christology
SESSION 4	March 24, 2026	Theological Anthropology, Sin & Ethics

SESSION 5 April 7, 2026 Land, Eschatology, and Afterword
SESSION 6 April 28, 2026 Implications for Christian Mission

There is a suggested donation of \$50 (less than \$10 per session).

Required books

[American Indian Liberation: A Theology of Sovereignty](#), by George E. Tinker
[A Native American Theology](#), by [Clara Sue Kidwell](#), [Homer Noley](#), and [George E. Tinker](#)
[Native American Catholic Studies Reader: History and Theology](#), David J. Endress (editor)

February 3 is the deadline to register. Send your name and email address to John Stoesz (johnstoesz1@gmail.com).

Capri Theater

Tuesday, February 5, The Capri will be showing [Acts of Reparation](#), a film about two film-making friends, one black and one white, who together explored their roots in slavery in the south. Though this is not directly about the Indigenous experience, it certainly explores what it means to choose to be reparative.

What we're reading

[Becoming Kin: An Indigenous Call to Unforgetting the Past and Reimagining Our Future](#), by Patty Krawec.

You can access past email updates on ECLC's website: www.eclc.org/indigenous-rights.

We acknowledge that Edina Community Lutheran Church is located on the traditional, ancestral, and contemporary lands of the Dakhóta Oyáte, the Dakota nation. Treaties developed through exploitation and violence were broken. Tribes were forced to exist on ever smaller amounts of land.

Acknowledging this painful history, we as a congregation confess our complicity in the theft of Native land and acknowledge that we have not yet honored our treaties. We further confess that Christians and Christian churches have benefited from this land theft. We commit to being active advocates for justice for Native People and to truth telling that leads to healing.

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