

## Interactive lesson



picture from [https://www.resourceumc.org/-/media/umc-media/2023/02/23/17/23/2023\\_NAMS\\_SM\\_Acts\\_2\\_39\\_1200x628](https://www.resourceumc.org/-/media/umc-media/2023/02/23/17/23/2023_NAMS_SM_Acts_2_39_1200x628)

Today is Native American Ministries Sunday.

What does that mean to you?

The official UMC goal statement is, “On Native American Ministries Sunday, we partner with other UMC congregations in a special offering to support the ministries of First Americans who integrate their culture and tradition with United Methodist theology.

Our special offering today equips and empowers Native American pastors, congregations and seminary students to do what only they can do: authentically worship and serve Jesus with the fullness of their culture and heritage.

Half of our gifts stay with local ministries in this conference and half support the work of Native American United Methodist ministries nationally.”

Do you think this is necessary? Why/why not?

Previously, we spoke about how the space where we prayerfully gather today used to under the care of the Oneida (Haudenosaunee/Iroquois) peoples, and about how Methodists participated in the trauma inflicted by boarding schools aimed at destroying the language and culture of Native Americans.

Do you think oppression of Native Americans has ended

yet? Why or why not?

There is an awareness movement underway to address issues of missing and murdered Indigenous women. Do you know how widespread the problem is?

According to Native American International Caucus<sup>1</sup>:

- 84% of Native women and girls experience violence in their lifetimes
- 86% of sexual assaults against Native women and girls are by non-Native men
- Native women are murdered at a rate 10 times the national average



*pictures from*

<https://www.naicumc.com/mmiw-awareness--resources.html>

In 2019, Rev. Wilson posted an article on the umcjustice.org webpage titled, “The Crisis of Murdered and Missing Indigenous Women.”

What percent of those cases do you think were logged into the Department of Justice’s nationwide database?

What do you think are some of the reasons why not every single murdered or missing Native American woman was listed in it?

An article posted by The Criminal Law Practitioner (publication by the American University Washington College of Law)<sup>2</sup> in 2021 cited some reasons:

-bad relations between law enforcement and Indigenous

<sup>1</sup> [https://www.naicumc.com/uploads/9/0/9/9/9099638/justice\\_for\\_mmiw\\_5x7\\_card.pdf](https://www.naicumc.com/uploads/9/0/9/9/9099638/justice_for_mmiw_5x7_card.pdf), accessed 4/21/2023

<sup>2</sup> <https://www.crimlawpractitioner.org/post/missing-and-murdered-indigenous-women-a-silent-epidemic>, accessed 4/21/2023

populations;  
-poor recordkeeping;  
-jurisdictional barriers to justice;  
-racial bias in the media; and  
-a lack of ties between the media and indigenous communities.

As an example, in Wyoming, 76% of missing white people were publicized compared to only 42% of missing Indigenous people; of those, none of the white but over half of the Indigenous people were only reported on after they were found dead.

What do you think Jesus might suggest we do about this issue? How can we help today?

May 5 is the National Day of Awareness for Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women, Girls, and Two-Spirit People (MMIWG2S). I may not mention it then since I am mentioning it now, but I encourage you to help raise awareness of and address factors enabling this terrible exploitation of vulnerable people.

Let us on this Native American Ministries Sunday (and ever onward) look toward nurturing positive cultural ties with Indigenous people everywhere, that all may flourish in the love of Christ.

### **Gospel lesson**

We skip over to Luke today for another story of discovery after Jesus rose from the dead.



picture screencaptured from  
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=BNbaiT8m2M4>

## Luke 24:13-35

NRSV

<sup>13</sup> Now on that same day two of them were going to a village called Emmaus, about seven miles from Jerusalem,

<sup>14</sup> and talking with each other about all these things that had happened.

<sup>15</sup> While they were talking and discussing, Jesus himself came near and went with them,

<sup>16</sup> but their eyes were kept from recognizing him.

<sup>17</sup> And he said to them, "What are you discussing with each other while you walk along?" They stood still, looking sad.

<sup>18</sup> Then one of them, whose name was Cleopas, answered him, "Are you the only stranger in Jerusalem who does not know the things that have taken place there in these days?"

<sup>19</sup> He asked them, "What things?" They replied, "The things about Jesus of Nazareth, who was a prophet mighty in deed and word before God and all the people,

<sup>20</sup> and how our chief priests and leaders handed him over to be condemned to death and crucified him.

<sup>21</sup> But we had hoped that he was the one to redeem Israel. Yes, and besides all this, it is now the third day since these things took place.

<sup>22</sup> Moreover, some women of our group astounded us. They were at the tomb early this morning,

<sup>23</sup> and when they did not find his body there, they came back and told us that they had indeed seen a vision of angels who said that he was alive.

<sup>24</sup> Some of those who were with us went to the tomb and found it just as the women had said; but they did not see him."

<sup>25</sup> Then he said to them, "Oh, how foolish you are, and how slow of heart to believe all that the prophets have declared!

<sup>26</sup> Was it not necessary that the Messiah should suffer these things and then enter into his glory?"

<sup>27</sup> Then beginning with Moses and all the prophets, he interpreted to them the things about himself in all the scriptures.

<sup>28</sup> As they came near the village to which they were going, he walked ahead as if he were going on.

<sup>29</sup> But they urged him strongly, saying, "Stay with us, because it is almost evening and the day is now nearly over." So he went in to stay with them.

<sup>30</sup> When he was at the table with them, he took bread, blessed and broke it, and gave it to them.

<sup>31</sup> Then their eyes were opened, and they recognized him; and he vanished from their sight.

<sup>32</sup> They said to each other, "Were not our hearts burning within us while he was talking to us on the road, while he was opening the scriptures to us?"

<sup>33</sup> That same hour they got up and returned to Jerusalem; and they found the eleven and their companions gathered together.

<sup>34</sup> They were saying, "The Lord has risen indeed, and he has appeared to Simon!"

<sup>35</sup> Then they told what had happened on the road, and how he had been made known to them in the breaking of the bread.

*The word of God for the people of God*

<Hymn "On the Day of Resurrection">

UMH #309

## Message: Loosening the Bonds



picture from

<https://www.umcdiscipleship.org/worship-planning/a-living-hope/second-sunday-of-easter-year-a-lectionary-planning-notes/second-sunday-of-easter-year-a-graphics>

Please pray with me?

Almighty Savior who loosed our bonds from sin,  
as we take time now to further consider today's  
scriptures, please

- speak Your words through my mouth,

- open our ears to hear Your message, and
- abide in our hearts,

That we may joyfully share the news of Your incredible grace in word and demonstrations of caring with all whom we encounter. Amen.

We continue celebrating “A Living Hope” this Easter season with “Loosening the Bonds”:

“Today is a day for testimony. We need to remind ourselves and one another that we have indeed been set free. [T]he simple fact of freedom is what we focus on today.”



*picture from MMMS collection*

I volunteered many years on the ambulance in Sherburne, getting up when the pager went off in the night to go help whoever needed medical attention. Sometimes I felt like a superhero, going to help people in need. Other times, I wondered why they had waited until the wee hours of the morning to call for a non-emergency ride to the ER instead of going when issues first started, during daylight hours.

I was tied down on my assigned nights for decades. I had to stay in town so that I could get to the station quickly if the pager went off. Vacations required seeking out coverage, something that got more difficult as membership dwindled over the years.

As I got older and the call volume increased, I began to struggle with lack of sleep. I could not take anything to ensure my sleep when on call, because I had to be alert when responding if the pager went off. And if I had not gotten enough sleep the night prior to being on call, the weariness compounded.

I did not realize how much it wore on me until I stopped doing it.

Retiring after thirty-five years of EMS gave me freedom: freedom to go out or commit to something different on what had been my call nights; freedom to take medicine that could make me drowsy on those nights; freedom from the pager disrupting sleep by going off even on nights when I was not on call; freedom from continuing EMS education when I needed to focus on pastoral education instead; freedom to enjoy time with family on the first Saturday in June instead of working the Band Pageant first aid tent.



*picture from*

<https://www.umcdiscipleship.org/worship-planning/a-living-hope/second-sunday-of-easter-year-a-lectionary-planning-notes/second-sunday-of-easter-year-a-graphics>

In this season of Easter, we focus on how Christ gave us freedom from sin:

- † The psalmist talked about having distress and suffering because worries about death ensnared him;



Jesus freed us from that worry by showing that we could have life eternal.

- † The epistle of 1 Peter describes how the Chosen people were “ransomed from the futile ways inherited from [their] ancestors,” where they kept falling short of what the law required; Christ gave us an everlasting way of living within God’s grace, freedom from the demand of perfection.
- † In Acts, we hear Peter telling the crowd about how they crucified the Messiah of God, and they started to spiritually panic, asking what they should do. Peter had a clear answer, repent and be baptized! Jesus gave us freedom to repent and live even after we have done the worst possible actions – not free from repercussions, but with hope for picking up the pieces and moving forward in a better direction than sin left us. God isn’t finished with us yet!

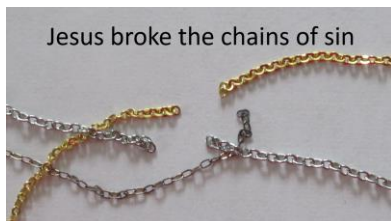


picture from <https://www.freebibleimages.org/photos/Lumo-emmaus/>

- † On the walk to Emmaus, the disciples were so tied up in their grief and loss that they did not even recognize Jesus. He walked with them through that grief, helping them to understand that God had had everything in hand throughout all of those trials, that they could trust in their Lord, that God was with them even when they did not know it.

Jesus freed us from hopelessness and doubt, showing that God walks with us every step of our lives even when we are blind to the divine presence with us.

Jesus freed us from looking at life through a lens of material gains to looking at life through a lens of love for others. We are freed from the rat race, from fear of missing out, from fighting to have or be more than other people have or are.



*picture from MMMS collection*

In Christ, we have been freed from living only in the repression of sin and are free to step into healthier living in God's love: Now we can focus on helping others step out of hate, out of poverty, out of hopelessness, and out of historical repression, to live healthier, more affirmed and productive lives – and everyone can benefit from more shared blessings.

Again, on this Native American Ministries Sunday, let us look toward nurturing positive cultural ties with people everywhere, that all may flourish in the love of Christ.