

Dear Brothers and Sisters in Christ,

Yesterday, I attended the W-ELCA La Crosse Area Synod Convention with Louise Buchholz (St. Paul's W-ELCA Representative and voting member). The event was held at Trinity Lutheran Church in Cashton. It was to have been held last year, but COVID-19 delayed it until now.

A worship service was held, with Pastor Libby Howe, Assistant to the Bishop of the La Crosse Area Synod, preaching. Pastor Amanda Schultz Garcia of the Cashton Three-Point Parish, presided. The other pastors who were there, participated in various parts of the service, as well.

In the afternoon, elections were held for new W-ELCA La Crosse Area Synod Board Members. Louise Buchholz was elected as the new Representative at Large. She will serve from July 2021 - April 2022. Congratulations, Louise! (See photo.)

The keynote speaker for the event, was Pastor Ben Morris, of Lutheran Campus Ministry in La Crosse. Pastor Ben spoke on the topic of indigenous tribes in the United States. I must admit, it was an eye-opening presentation. While I was aware of some of the exploitation of indigenous persons that occurred in the historical past, I learned even more, yesterday.

Pastor Ben asked us three questions (which I will pose to you now)--

1. How many tribes are there in the United States?
2. How many treaties were signed with these tribes?
3. How many treaties were honored?

In response to question number 1, the answer is 574 tribes. (This was far more than I had guessed.) In response to question number 2, the answer is 368 treaties. (This too, was more than I had guessed.) In response to question number 3, the answer is 0, Zero, None! Not a single treaty that was signed with the Native American tribes in the United States was carried out! How sad.

Along with this, there were Christian persons who thought that since the Native Americans weren't Christians, the Christians could do whatever they wanted with creation. This too is a sad commentary on the history of our relationships with indigenous people, and the lack of creation-care.

While we can't undo the past, we can look to the future, and try to do what is good, and right, and true for the indigenous people today. May we look for ways that we can help, and look to Jesus as our model of justice, peace, and love.

Peace,
Pastor Cathy