



On Thursday, October 6, 2022, a group of twenty-five United Methodists from across the Minnesota Annual Conference went on a pilgrimage to the Mille Lacs Band of Ojibwe Reservation in Onamia, Minnesota. The Minnesota Annual Conference Committee on Native American Ministry coordinated the pilgrimage and the Minnesota Annual Conference Social Justice Organizer, Dana Neuhauser.

The initial part of the day was spent at the Mille Lacs Indian Museum, learning about how the Ojibwe arrived in Central Minnesota and the way the Ojibwe people of the Mille Lacs Band of Ojibwe lived in Central Minnesota before Europeans moved into the area.

The 1991 Kitchen at Grand Casino Mille Lacs provided a delicious lunch of turkey sandwich and chicken wild rice soup. Lunch offered a brief time of fellowship in small groups.

Following lunch, the group traveled a mile south to Vineland Cemetery. This is the cemetery on the reservation. While at the cemetery, the group stood among the children's shoes. These shoes represented the children who went to boarding school and never returned home to their homeland and community.

The group continued to learn about generational trauma and the residual negative impacts on Native American people today, resulting from the boarding schools.

Finally, they heard of the United Methodist Churches' participation in many of the atrocities committed against Native American people. The United Methodist Church operated boarding schools in the Northwest part of the United States. This resulted in 54,743 Indigenous children attending United Methodist-run boarding schools, according to the National Native American Boarding School Healing Coalition.

Purpose of this pilgrimage was to offer an opportunity for Minnesota United Methodists to come together for a fully immersive experience. As a part of this experience, an information packet was provided to each participant. This information packet included United Methodist history around the Mille Lacs Band of Ojibwe Reservation and other local histories.



The next question is, what do we do with the information we have received? How do we go out into the world to be a healing force in the name of Jesus Christ? The day ended by singing the Ojibwe Traveling Song with a parting prayer.

An informal Zoom meeting of the twenty-five participants will occur the following week. This will be an opportunity to process together everything that was learned.