

Resolution #9 – Indigenous Justice in Maine

Resolution Title: Indigenous Justice in Maine

Subtitle: Reaffirming and Continuing the Work

- 1 RESOLVED that the 206th Annual Convention of the Episcopal Diocese of Maine affirms that
- 2 the Committee on Indian Relations has played a leadership role in the 34 years since its creation
- 3 in the state, the nation, and globally in seeking improved settler-Indigenous relations, and be it
- 4 further
- 5 RESOLVED that the 206th Annual Convention of the Episcopal Diocese of Maine recommits to
- 6 continuing to advocate for tribal sovereignty, to fully recognizing and welcoming Indigenous
- 7 people into congregational life, and to developing educational Indigenous ministry resources for
- 8 churches in the diocese, and be it further
- 9 RESOLVED that Indigenous ministry in the Diocese of Maine will be formally included in the
- 10 work of Maine Episcopal Public Policy Network.

Brief Explanation

Maine Episcopal Public Policy Network (MEPPN) is an established network of the Episcopal Diocese of Maine which invites Episcopalians, and all others who are committed to working toward justice and peace for all people and public policies that respect the dignity of every human being, both in the State of Maine, the United States, and the world. Members of this group work, with God's help, to affirm the essential relationship between what we believe and how we live. In addition to Indigenous ministry, MEPPN carries on the advocacy for all councils, committees, and commissions that work in the areas of social justice such as domestic poverty, peace, racial justice, creation care, LGBTQ+ ministry, and migration ministry.

MEPPN takes the lead on positions based on decisions of the General Convention of The Episcopal Church. MEPPN reports to the Diocesan Council periodically as they require. They will make public their work through the communications vectors of the diocese at least semi-annually, with the aim of producing materials for the parishes of the diocese outlining the possibilities offered by these discussions.

Regarding Indigenous ministry, MEPPN will focus the diocese on advocating for tribal sovereignty and working towards truth and reconciliation. Tribal sovereignty is the right of tribes to govern themselves, support of which was approved by the 203rd Annual Convention of the Diocese of Maine in 2022. Under the U.S. Constitution, federally recognized tribes generally have the same powers, with a few exceptions, as federal and state governments with respect to the regulation of affairs on tribal land. This includes the inherent right to sustain their traditional cultural values and practices, establish their own form of government, determine citizenship requirements, enact legislation, and establish law enforcement and court systems. Federally recognized tribes are still subject to federal statutes and court decisions that are generally applicable to tribes and their citizens.

As an institution, The Episcopal Church recognizes and repents of its harmful treatment of Native Americans. In 1997, the church signed a new covenant of faith and reconciliation almost 400 years after Jamestown colonization, apologizing for its past actions and launching a decade of "remembrance, recognition and reconciliation." In 2009, the church's General Convention passed a resolution repudiating the 15th century-based Doctrine of Discovery, which "held that Christian sovereigns and their representative explorers could assert dominion and title over non-Christian lands with the full blessing and sanction of the Church."

In 2021, Presiding Bishop Michael B. Curry and House of Deputies President Gay Jennings issued a statement in response to the discoveries of mass graves of Indigenous children on the grounds of former boarding schools in Canada, condemning such practices and committing to "the work of truth and reconciliation with Indigenous communities in our church."

The vital work of remembrance, recognition, and reconciliation in connection with our Indigenous siblings continues.

Supporting website links (if any): NA

Submitting individual or organization: Matt Dunlap and John Hennessy

Contact person: John Hennessy

Email address: jhennessy@episcopalmaine.org

Phone number: 207-400-6619

Submission Questionnaire

Do you have an individual or organization co-sponsoring this resolution? No

Does this resolution have any budgetary impacts to the Episcopal Diocese of Maine (EDOM) Annual Budget? No

Apart from financial impact to the diocese, would implementing this resolution have any financial impact to our congregations? No

Does the action proposed by this resolution fall under the charge of an established diocesan committee, commission, council, or ministry? The Maine Episcopal Public Policy Network (MEPPN)

Who will be responsible to present and address questions regarding the resolution at town halls and at the convention? John Hennessy

Email address: jhennessy@episcopalmaine.org

Phone number: 207-400-6619

Assuming passage, who is responsible for completing the action being resolved by this resolution? The Bishop's staff

If the resolution is adopted, how long do you plan on the action(s) being in effect? This is a permanent change.

Reporting on an adopted resolution's progress is required at the 2026 Convention. Who will be responsible for performing this task: John Hennessy

If you have documents that support your resolution, please attach them here: NA