

A Resolution Toward Understanding the Sacred Stories of our Land

Whereas...

- in his inaugural sermon in Luke 4, Jesus invokes the Jubilee tradition in which God affirms “the land is mine; for you are strangers and sojourners with me,” (Leviticus 25:23) inviting us to return to a relationship with land as a sacred, living gift rather than as commodity, and
- **Whereas** the ELCA Churchwide Assembly repudiated the Doctrine of Discovery in 2016, resulting in the establishment of the Office of Indigenous Ministries and Tribal Relations, and The ELCA’s Truth and Healing Movement, and
- **Whereas** the 2022 ELCA Churchwide Assembly overwhelmingly passed a Memorial initially brought by the Oregon Synod and shaped in collaboration with other synods, that encouraged every land-holding Lutheran body to learn about the past and present reality of Native American peoples with relationship to their land, and to consider returning that land to Native tribes or organizations, and
- **Whereas** the process for creating a Sacred Land Story, which includes praying with and for the land, engaging research and discernment around the history of the congregation’s land, and producing a story centered on the land has been developed, designed and supported by multiple cohorts (Reckoning with Racism, Land and Housing, and Climate Resilience) within the Synod-supported Sacred Organizing Coalition, and
- **Whereas** over 25% of our Synod body covering congregations from Astoria to Klamath Falls to Corvallis to La Grande have engaged in the Sacred Land Story process already; whether by receiving a road trip from the Synod Road Trip team or by committing leaders to a cohort process through Oregon Synod sponsored initiatives, and
- **Whereas** five ecumenical bodies in Oregon (Lutheran, Presbyterian, Methodist, Episcopalian and United Church of Christ) have established Land Liberation teams to expand the work of the Sacred Land Story process, and
- **Whereas** the Oregon Synod Council is currently utilizing a Sacred Land Story in its process of discernment about the future of a church’s land and

property - a process that congregations who will be discerning Holy Closure might also find helpful, and,

- **Whereas** we as an Oregon Synod have been faithful in our commitment to this work and have demonstrated our deep commitment to right and reparative relationship with our land and the people who have called it home,

Therefore, be it

- **Resolved** that the Bishop's Office staff of the Oregon Synod make available the already written resources for completing a Sacred Land Story via the Oregon Synod website. And be it further
- **Resolved** that the Bishop's Office staff of the Oregon Synod will be responsible for ensuring that all ministry leaders and transition facilitators have the opportunity to be mentored in supporting ministries through the Sacred Land Story process. And be it further
- **Resolved** that every congregation in the Oregon Synod is invited and encouraged to engage in the process of creating a Sacred Land Story in the next three years prior to the next in-person assembly. And be it further
- **Resolved** that the Sacred Land Story process be integrated into all discernment work included in transition processes, including new clergy, holy closure, new partnerships or location, and discernment of mission. And be it further
- **Resolved** that each congregation be invited and encouraged to share that Sacred Land Story with their wider community and neighbors beyond the walls of their church.

Prayerfully submitted by:

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