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INDIAN BOARDING SCHOOLS & THE CHURCH

—Brenda Blackhawk, Congregational Organizer for Racial Justice for the Minneapolis Area Synod

My great-great grandmother was born in 1896 in a wigwam in Nebraska. She died peacefully in her sleep in 1999, at the age of 103. I was 11 years old when she passed. Though she lived to an exceptional age, she never suffered the loss of her mental faculties. I never got spend much time with Minnie Gray Wolf Littlebear, but the times I did made an impression.

She was revered by her family and tribal nation. She still knew and practiced many of the old traditions of our people and was a wealth of knowledge when so much had been lost. She gave me and most of her other grandchildren their Winnebago/Ho-Chunk names. The tribe threw her a huge birthday party when she turned 100 and people came from all over to appreciate her.

One thing I remember about Gaga (grandmother) Minnie was that I never heard her speak English. It wasn't until I was much older that I learned about Indian Boarding Schools – and that Gaga Minnie attended one.

The purpose of Indian Boarding Schools was simple: *“Kill the Indian, save the man.”* Indigenous children were kidnapped and often sent hundreds of miles away from their homes. At the schools they were forced to assimilate; they weren't allowed to wear traditional clothing, practice traditional religions, wear their hair in a traditional manner, or speak their native languages. They suffered physical, emotional, and sexual abuse. Disease often ran rampant in these schools, killing thousands.

For more than 100 years, the U.S. government instituted these policies of forced assimilation. Of the 300 or more schools, 73 of them were operated by the Church. No one knows exactly how many children attended boarding schools, because the government kept poor records and many children went missing. But, according to the [National Native American Boarding School Healing Coalition](#), church institutions kept better records with a total of 239,169 children attending over the course of their operation.

Gaga Minnie didn't start attending at five years old the way the government preferred. Her family hid her away, and it wasn't until she was older that she was discovered and taken 120 miles away to Genoa U.S. Indian Industrial School. Genoa was a federal facility and was operated like a military camp.

I don't know a lot about Gaga Minnie's experiences there. I know that she labored in the kitchens and became good at making bread. I know that when her mother was allowed to visit her, they shared the same bed. I know she said they were mean, that they would hit the children if they spoke anything but English. And I know that is why my great-great-grandmother never spoke English again.

(cont. in next column)

SECOND SUNDAY OF EASTER

READINGS

Acts 4:32-35; Psalm 133;
1 John 1:1—2:2; John 20:19-31

ADULT FORUM

Login at zoom.us or call 312-626-6799 or click [here](#)
Meeting ID: 858 5687 1594 / Password: 317879

SUNDAYS, 9:30 A.M.

APRIL 11 “The Enbridge Line 3 Pipeline”
Nina Berglund, Emma Harrison, and
Members of Holy Trinity

Nina Berglund is an indigenous youth leader, public speaker, and climate activist fighting on behalf of her people, the lands, and water. Emma Harrison is a divestment organizer who has spent the past four months on the frontlines of the resistance. Presenters will briefly update you on the history and current status of the pipeline, and efforts at the local, regional, and national level to stop Line 3. We invite you to learn more about how churches and young activists are involved in this struggle and find an action you can take to honor treaties, protect our remaining clean water, and work against rapidly advancing climate change.

APRIL 18 Jeremy Schroeder, Holy Trinity Member
& Minneapolis City Council Member

More information coming next week.

(*Indian Boarding Schools, cont.*) As difficult as it may be to recognize that the Christian Church we love and belong to played a role in this cultural genocide, we must acknowledge it and work toward healing—healing for ourselves and the relationship we have with Indigenous communities.

In 2 Timothy 1:7, Paul writes, “For God did not give us a spirit of cowardice, but rather a spirit of power and of love and of self-discipline.” It will be hard for us to confront the difficult truths of this subject, but I invite you to be brave and to use the power and love and self-discipline our faith provides as we begin this healing work.

We are fortunate to have an opportunity next month to learn more about the Church's involvement in Indian Boarding Schools and the legacy that system has left with many families. Vance Blackfox of the National Native American Boarding School Healing Coalition will lead [a joint workshop for the Minneapolis Area Synod and the Saint Paul Area Synod](#) on April 17.

PARISH INFORMATION

GETTING TO KNOW THE HOLY TRINITY STAFF

Beginning next week, we will be printing articles written by Holy Trinity staff, in order to get to know more about them. Are you curious about Nolan's children and grandchild? Do you wonder about Ann's escapades as a child? Or maybe you want to learn about Ingrid's "fascination" with squirrels? All that and more will be revealed.

MN INTERFAITH POWER & LIGHT INVITES YOU UP NORTH

Join a pre-planned gathering day with MNIPL at the Water Protectors Welcome Center in Palisade, Minnesota. The purpose of these gatherings is to respond to the request from Indigenous leaders to join them in prayer at the river, in order to build people power that is visible and grounded in our deepest values of moving toward a hopeful future.

We need all of us to stop this pipeline, and now is the time to show up in solidarity.

It is a 3-hour drive from the metro, and we'll plan to spend a few hours learning, witnessing, and connecting. Join HT member Kathy Hollander in a COVID safe car caravan driving there.

- **Friday, April 9:** Arrive around 11:00 a.m., wrap up by 3:00 p.m. With teach-in "Media Coverage of Line 3" workshop.
- **Saturday, April 10:** Arrive around 11:00 a.m., wrap up by 3:00 p.m. With First Congregational Church Minneapolis.

RSVP to Kathy at Kath_holl@yahoo.com if you are interested in seeing this camp along the scenic, meandering Mississippi.

BIKES NEEDED

If you have a used bike sitting around collecting dust, The Hub Bike Coop would like to get it back on the road! As The Hub heads into their typically busiest time of year, they've been left with a sparse inventory of bikes because of an early, busy spring rush.

Please help spread the word among friends and family that The Hub is in urgent need of used bikes that they can refurbish and sell. This is an important aspect of their mission and vision.

Bikes can be donated, or The Hub can offer some trade-in value. Learn more at <https://www.thehubbikecoop.org/>



IN CASE YOU MISSED IT

Holy Week worship services can be viewed here:

[Maundy Thursday, April 1](#)

[Good Friday, April 2](#)

[Easter Vigil, April 3](#)

[Easter Sunday, April 4](#)

BECOME A MEMBER OF HOLY TRINITY

We at Holy Trinity believe that community is integral to faith, which is why we invite interested persons to consider membership in this congregation. If you or someone you know is interested in formalizing your relationship with this community, please let one of the pastors know, or contact the office (office@htlcmpls.org). The Spirit works in amazing ways, even during this period of physical separation.

MINNEAPOLIS AREA SYNOD ASSEMBLY (VIRTUAL)

Friday, April 23, 6:00–9:00 p.m.

Saturday, April 24, 9:00 a.m.–1:00 p.m.

The Minneapolis Area Synod gathers annually to conduct business in the Synod Assembly, which is the synod's highest legislative authority. More than 600 participants attend the Synod Assembly each year, including representatives from each congregation and all active rostered leaders. The gathering is filled with worship, inspiration, presentations, and necessary business. Under the theme "Jubilee Reclaimed: Opening the Way," synod assembly participants will explore Biblical insights into the general welfare of the community. Can we imagine together ways to explore opportunities for the Church to be the leading edge of caring for the vulnerable in our world?

Holy Trinity seeks three people to attend as our representatives. Please talk to a pastor if you are interested.

SWAHILI WORDS FOR TODAY

Another quarantine opportunity: Learn some Swahili words! Pastor Andrea will teach us some common Swahili words and phrases.

Church: [Kanisa](#)

Lutheran: [Kilutheri](#)

Congregation: [mikusanyiko](#)
