

ELC Adult Study: Knowing our Neighbors: Unsettling History, Hopeful Future

Session 3 Questions for Reflection and Discussion

1. Reflecting on the Focus Scripture: Micah 6:8 (NRSV):

“He has told you, O mortal, what is good; and what does the Lord require of you but to do justice, and to love kindness, and to walk humbly with your God?”

Question: Why are the principles of “justice” and “humility” important for us as Christians, as we confront difficult chapters from our history?

2. The three goals for this study experience are:

- To build greater awareness of ELCA initiatives in the realm of diversity
- To reimagine Ho-Chunk history in light of recent ELCA initiatives
- To reflect on our role as “purveyors of hope and healing” within our community

Question: I added “and healing” to that 3rd goal this week – what areas in our community and/or larger society need healing right now? What role can we play in that as Christians?

3. The following statement by Little Elk was made during the treaty negotiations at Prairie du Chien in 1829 (the first of the land cession treaties).

“You ask us to sell all our country and wander off into the boundless regions of the West. We do not own that country, and the deer, the elk, the beaver, the buffalo, and the otter now there, belong not to us, and we have no right to kill them. Our wives and our children now seated behind us, are dear to us, and so is our country, where rest in peace the bones of our ancestors. Fathers! Pity a people, few in number, who are poor and helpless. Do you want our country? Yours is larger than ours. Do you want our wigwams? You live in palaces. Do you want our horses? Yours are larger and better than ours . . . Why, Fathers, what can be your motive?”

Question: What stands out to you from Little Elk’s commentary?

4. What is the most surprising or troubling thing you learned in session 3?

5. I shared this prayer with you at the end of the session (from Yellow Lark, Lakota). Take some time this week to reflect on this prayer.

Oh, Great Spirit,

Whose voice I hear in the winds, whose breath gives life to the world, hear me. I come to you as one of your many children. I am small and weak. I need your strength and wisdom. May I walk in beauty. Make my eyes ever behold the red and purple sunset. Make my hands respect the things you have made, and my ears sharp to your voice. Make me wise so that I may know the things you have taught your children, the lessons you have written in every leaf and rock. Make me strong! Not to be superior to my brothers, but to fight my greatest enemy....myself. Make me ever ready to come to you with straight eyes, so that when life fades as the fading sunset, may my spirit come to you without shame. Amen.