

We Remember
A Liturgy for Missing and Murdered
Indigenous People

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St. Brendan's Episcopal Church
Juneau, Alaska
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*Adapted from "We Remember – A Liturgy for Missing and Murdered Indigenous
People", written by The Rev. Shirley Lee, Episcopal Diocese of Alaska*

We Remember – A Liturgy for Missing and Murdered Indigenous People

Leader: We gather on the land that remembers every step taken before us.

Response: The rivers remember. The mountains remember. The ancestors remember.

All: We come together so no one is forgotten.

Leader: Creator, hear us as we gather in love and grief. We stand for those who cannot stand here today.

Response: Hold their spirits close. Hold their families close.

All: Let truth walk among us.

Meditation I - What Then Shall We Say

Leader: What then shall we say, when silence covered the stories of our people, when voices went unheard through long winters of waiting?

Response: We will speak the names that must not be forgotten.

Leader: When fear asks us to be quiet

All: We choose courage. We choose remembrance.

Remembrance & Name Reading

Leader: We remember all those who have left us, suddenly and unexpectedly, we remember in our hearts those who were taken from their lives, we remember the families left behind, we acknowledge the pain and suffering and extend love where it is needed. The names of all the victims are etched in our hearts.

Each name is a life.

Each name is loved.

Each name returns to us now.

I invite you now to say out loud or silently names of those lost from Juneau.

Leader rings bell after each name is read.

All:

Junior Siufanua, missing since 2026

Benjamin Stepetin, missing since 2025

Tracy Day, missing since 2019

Christopher Edward Orcutt, missing since 2016

Loridee June Wilson, missing since 2016

Gabriel Adams Demmert, missing since 2008

David Post George, missing since 2005

Richard Wilson Wright Jr., missing since 2000

Martin Ebona III, missing since 1993

Leader: Invite you now to say out loud or silently the names of any others lost to us. *(rings bell after each name)*

Response: We remember you. You are not forgotten.

Meditation II - What Then Shall We See

Leader: What then shall we see, when eyes grow tired from searching, when families wait through nights that feel without ending?

Response: Help us see with care for one another.

Leader: As dawn rises over tundra, river, forest, and town—

All: May we see every life as sacred.

Moment of Silence

Leader: We remember now with a moment of silence.

Participants observe silence.

Meditation III - What Then Shall We Hear

Leader: What then shall we hear, when the world's noise tries to bury truth, when stories struggle to be believed?

Response:
Quiet our spirits so we may listen.

Leader:
In wind across water, in snow beneath our feet

All: We hear the voices of our ancestors calling us to stand together.

Leader: For those missing, I invite you to bring forward red ribbons, candles, photos, or other tributes.

Response: We remember.

Leader: For those taken

Response: We remember.

Leader: For the families still waiting

All: We stand with you.

IV - Commitment

Leader: What then shall we know, when grief and love walk side by side?

Response: That remembrance is action.

Leader: What then shall we do?

All:

We protect one another.

We speak when silence harms.

We carry forward the strength of our ancestors.

We work for justice so future generations may live without fear.

V - Closing Blessing

Leader: May the Creator guide those still missing.

Response: May healing come to every family.

Leader: May courage rise in our communities.

All:

No one is forgotten.

No one walks alone.

We remember. We remember. We remember.

Closing:

Participants may remain in church to pray as needed, leave in respectful silence.

MISSING AND MURDERED INDIGENOUS PERSONS AWARENESS DAY

National Missing and Murdered Indigenous Persons (MMIP) Awareness Day is observed on May 5th to honor victims and their families, and to raise awareness of the crisis of violence against indigenous people, particularly women and girls. The date coincides with the birthday of Hannah Harris, a Northern Cheyenne woman who went missing in 2013. In 2021, President Joseph Biden officially proclaimed May 5th as MMIP Awareness Day in the U.S.



In 2024, the FBI received 10,248 missing Indigenous persons reports. More than half of the missing Indigenous persons were women, and most of the women reported missing were under the age of 18. In 2025, Alaska was one of the ten states with the highest rate of Indigenous missing persons. MMIP Awareness Day calls for improved tribal, federal and state responses, increased resources, and changes to laws and protocols. Many people wear red or display the image of a red palm print on this day to show support and raise awareness.

The Rev. Shirley Lee has written a powerful remembrance liturgy for use on this day. A link to the liturgy is posted on the home page of The Episcopal Diocese of Alaska website.

“Hope has two beautiful daughters.

Their names are anger and courage --

anger at the way things are, and

courage to see that they do not

remain the way they are.”

(Attributed to Augustine of Hippo)

This post copied from the Episcopal Diocese of Alaska Facebook page, submitted By The Rt. Rev. Mark Lattime, VIIIth Bishop of Alaska

"Missing and Murdered Indigenous Persons Day: Our Faith Compels Us to Seek Justice and the Dignity of Every Human Being"

We, the Alaska leaders from the Episcopal Church, the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America (ELCA), the Presbyterian Church (USA), and the United Methodist Church, write with heavy hearts following the tragic discovery of nineteen-year-old Kelly Hunt's body in a Spenard neighborhood in Anchorage; yet another beloved child of God who had been missing for months and whose life ended too soon. This loss underscores the ongoing crisis of violence against Indigenous women, girls, and Two-Spirit people in Alaska and across the United States.

As we approach May 5, the National Day of Awareness for Missing and Murdered Indigenous Persons (MMIP) we call for justice, action, and steadfast solidarity.

Kelly Hunt, a young woman from Shaktoolik, is one of far too many Alaska Native women whose life was ended too soon. In Fairbanks, Sophie Sergie, a 19-year-old whose life was taken violently in 1993, and whose murder remained unsolved for over 30 years, remains a lasting reminder of our moral obligation to seek justice and respect for the dignity of every human being, and the moral crisis that abides in our communities. Native women face murder rates up to ten times the national average. In Alaska, these cases are part of a pattern of unresolved disappearances and deaths.

This crisis stems from centuries of systemic violence, forced removals, racism, and land seizures, legacies our faith compels us to confront. We urge individuals and organizations to amplify Indigenous voices, honor the missing, and dismantle structures of injustice, echoing God's call to "do justice, love mercy, and walk humbly" (Micah 6:8).

The May 5th observance of Missing and Murdered Indigenous Persons, established in 2017 after Hanna Harris's murder on the Northern Cheyenne Reservation, has grown into a national movement of marches, education, and demands for accountability. We call on all faith communities to participate in acts of prayer and remembrance this May 5—in Fairbanks there will be a gathering at the Golden Heart Plaza at noon May 5th. Furthermore, we urge Alaskan political leaders, religious leaders, police, and all residents to advocate for and prioritize thorough investigations of crimes against Indigenous people, systemic reforms like improved jurisdictional coordination of law enforcement agencies, and support for Indigenous families.

Our churches stand ready to partner in grief support, awareness events, and policy advocacy.

Kelly Hunt's death is not isolated. It is a call to action. Silence perpetuates harm; action honors the divine image in every life. We call all people of faith to lift their voices in prayer and to advocate for justice.

Faithfully,

The Rt. Rev. Mark Lattime, Bishop, Episcopal Diocese of Alaska

The Rev. Kristi McGuire, Conference Superintendent, Alaska Conference of the UMC

The Rev. Tim Oslovich, Bishop, Alaska Synod (ELCA)

The Rev. Elizabeth Schultz, Executive Presbyter, The Presbytery of Yukon (PCUSA)