

August 16th, 2024

The Anti-Racism Resource Team shared several copies of Rev. Dr. Yvonne Delk's book *Afro-Christian Convention: The Fifth Stream of the United Church of Christ* at Annual Meeting in 2023. Our hope is that it inspired more people in the Maine Conference to learn more about the richness of Afro-Christian Convention history and traditions. With recent efforts on the national level of the United Church of Christ to recognize the Afro-Christian Convention as a distinct religious and cultural stream within the UCC, it seems to be a good time for our Conference to learn more about it.

We have been and plan to continue to use our budget to financially support congregations and associations in hosting anti-racism programming. We did not have any congregations approach us this year, but the Midcoast Association did. They hosted a presentation by Vice Chief Richard Siliboy of the Micmac Tribal Nation at the Midcoast Association meeting on June 9th. The Midcoast Association and the Anti-Racism Resource Team worked together to cover an honorarium and travel reimbursement.

We hope that other associations and individual churches may want to host Wabanaki Alliance speakers and would be happy to work with leadership to help arrange a presentation. If your church or association would be interested, here are some important things to note:

- The Wabanaki Alliance speakers are all in active leadership in their own nations. Their schedules are particularly full during the legislative session.
- Given the time constraints of possible speakers as well as church and association schedules, we recommend starting planning at least two months out. And, it will be important to be as flexible as possible given the leadership roles of these speakers. Much of their schedules are subject to unexpected changes.
- Please be prepared to offer an honorarium (we recommend at least \$175-225) and mileage reimbursement.
- The speakers will often be available for presentations and conversations over zoom. Having remote meeting options will help secure a speaker who may not be able to make a long drive.

The Anti-Racism Resource team was heartened to learn that both Pilgrim Lodge and the Maine Conference have voted to join the Wabanaki Alliance Tribal Coalition. We were in the process of requesting a meeting with the Board to suggest joining the Coalition when we learned that it had already been done. We are grateful to those who took the initiative to join. A couple Maine Conference congregations have voted to join as well. If you would be interested in suggesting your church join, please contact a member of the ARRT and we can point you to resources to do so and connect you with other congregations that have done so.

As Tribal Coalition members, we will be publicly identified as supporters of the Wabanaki Alliance and invited to endorse individual actions and priority legislation as opportunities arise. Beyond these basic commitments, as coalition members, we can encourage individual UCC members and churches within the Conference to participate in sovereignty-supporting activities, contributing how and what they can in the form of time, talent, and financial contributions. UCC members will have the opportunity to participate in Alliance activities in a variety of ways, such as:

- Calling/Emailing Legislators to Ask for Support of Tribal Sovereignty Bills

- Meeting with Legislators
- Providing Written and/or Oral (in-person or virtual) Testimony for Tribal Sovereignty Bills at Public Hearings
- Writing Letters to the Editor
- Attending Rallies
- Providing Financial Support to the Wabanaki Alliance to Make Tribal Sovereignty a Reality

There will also be opportunities for members of our churches to actively participate in the Wabanaki Alliance Tribal Coalition working groups, which meet regularly. Currently we have two UCC members who are active participants at Alliance Coalition meetings. As previously mentioned, other UCC members have been dedicated to working with the Alliance in advocating for the Wabanaki Nation's inherent right of sovereignty, often by organizing in their home churches and home communities. If you'd like to know more about the Coalition meetings, Rich Stuart has volunteered to be the representative for the Maine Conference. He has been attending the meetings for a while now and is happy to share what they are like.

The Anti-Racism Resource Team believes that joining the Coalition will help us build useful and fruitful relationships with people of good will who support tribal sovereignty. We can learn from the good work of our neighbors, empower our local churches, and participate in meaningful actions to help the place where we live be more just and loving.

And, finally, as we look to what has already been a contentious election season, we on the ARRT are wondering about what ways we can empower people in the Maine Conference to faithfully engage with electoral politics. We are looking into the UCC's Vote With Love campaign to see if that would be of use to us in the Maine Conference, and may be sharing opportunities with the broader conference in the coming months.

Report respectfully submitted by Rev. Christina Cataldo, co-chair  
Current Anti-Racism Resource Team members:

- Revs. Chrissy Cataldo and Linette George, co-chairs
- Claudia Hatch, Geneve Hoffman, Rev. Debbie Duval, Rev. Sarah Pringle-Lewis, Rev. Allison Smith, Rich Stuart, Rev. Alyssa Lodewick