

March 16, 2021

We, the First People of the United Methodist Church, rejoice with loud shouts of joy and praise to the One and Only for the appointment and confirmation of the Honorable Debra Haaland as the first Native human being to serve as Secretary of the United States Department of the Interior and as the head of any U.S. Cabinet office. Especially, we celebrate and recognize the role and powerful traditions of Indigenous Women as leaders and truth bearers during this month commending Women's History. The historic political and righteous nature of this appointment brings not only a sign of great hope for this country and all its people, but a recognition of the sovereign right of Native tribes to self-determination and the long over-due wisdom and insight that Native people have to contribute to the right relationship of people to people and to the land which supports and nourishes all of us no matter our political, racial, religious or economic backgrounds.

As the indigenous people of this Turtle Island, we have known for far too long, the disregard, the disrespect and the very real genocidal efforts of the US Government toward our Native Tribes and Communities. With Secretary Haaland's leadership, we can trust that our voices will once again be heard and our presence and gifts might once again be recognized.

We pledge our ongoing support of Secretary Haaland's continued commitment to serve all the people of this land (human and others) as she relies on the truth and power of our traditional teachings for the benefit of all. We will commit to keeping her in dedicated prayer and stand ready to assist in whatever ways we can to work for the benefit of the seven generations.

With gratitude for this momentous appointment and to our Creator for this season of service,

The Members of the Native American International Caucus of the United Methodist Church
Cherokee, Dine, Inupiac, Kiowa, Lakota, Lenni Lenape, Lumbee, Nanticoke, Yakima and all our relatives