



Acknowledging Holy Ground

The **Strengthen the Church Offering** supports the work of our conference and the national United Church of Christ to become a multi-racial/multi-cultural church, accessible to all. The offering funds leadership development, youth and young adult ministries, and new and renewing congregations.

What does it mean for us to become a multi-racial/multi-cultural church? United Church Camps, Inc., an outdoor ministry related to the Wisconsin Conference UCC, took this question to heart. It renamed its oldest outdoor ministry site as the Daycholah Center, incorporating the Ho-Chunk name for Green Lake, chosen to honor the Ho-Chunk people who were the original keepers of this land.

The process began at the 2019 annual meeting of the Wisconsin Conference UCC. The conference adopted a resolution repudiating the Doctrine of Discovery. The Doctrine was used to justify the seizure of land from indigenous people. Conversation between Ho-Chunk UCC members and

Outdoor ministry leadership identified that a retreat center with “Pilgrim” in it could be offensive and a barrier to living out the camp mission.

The Alliance for Justice, a justice initiative started from the Ho-Chunk UCC in Black River Falls with funding from the national UCC, facilitated a process of deep spiritual work. The multi-year process offered UCCI the gift of a name: Daycholah Center.

People gathered to rededicate the center on Indigenous Peoples' Day, Oct. 11. There were speakers, a fire circle and a shared meal. Karena Thundercloud, vice president of the Ho-Chunk Nation, captured the essence of the day and of Outdoor Ministry when she asked us to “think about the life of this lake, (how it) brought us together, and will continue to connect us in our greatest identity as a community.”

The compassionate and generous spirit of the Ho-Chunk people filled the air. They gave us gifts of blankets and star quilts, leather pouches containing passages of Scripture on small scrolls, fragrant cedar pouches and a hand-carved walking stick. They performed traditional smudging and presented UCCI with a Ho-Chunk Nation flag that will fly over Daycholah's welcome center.

**Through the Strengthen the Church Offering,
we help support the work of conferences and the
national setting as we become a multi-racial/
multi-cultural church.**

