

Minutes of the Called Meeting of the Presbytery of Baltimore
11:00 am, Thursday, April 26, 2022
Via Zoom Electronic Meeting Platform

Stated Clerk, Mary Gaut, instructed those gathered that voting would be through the raised hand function. She announced a quorum was present and turned the meeting over to the Moderator.

Moderator Sue Lowcock Harris called the meeting of the Presbytery of Baltimore to order at 11:02 AM, reading the business of the meeting which was called at the request of Lisa Beacham, Ruling Elder, Govans Bob Stepling, Ruling Elder, Springfield Presbyterian Marty Clayton, Ruling Elder, Woods Memorial Chrystie Adams, Ruling Elder, Brown Memorial Park Avenue Roger Rice (HR), Teaching Elder, Retired Barbara Renton (HR), Teaching Elder, Karen Brown, Teaching Elder, Hope Presbyterian Church, for the purpose of concurring with a GA overture from the Northwest Coast Presbytery, *Apologies and Reparations for the Racist Closure of the Memorial Presbyterian Church in Juneau, Alaska*. She invited silent remembrance of the indigenous people who originally occupied the land on which our churches are situated and the former enslaved peoples who labored here. She then opened the meeting with prayer.

TE Karen Brown, chair of the Commission on Reconciliation was recognized. On behalf of the Commission, she moved that the Presbytery concur with the overture from Northwest Coast Presbytery (Appendix B). The motion did not require a second.

Following two comments in support of the motion the moderator called for a vote. The motion **PASSED**.

There being no other business, the meeting was closed with prayer by the Moderator and adjourned at 11:14AM.

Respectfully submitted
Mary Gaut, Stated Clerk

APPENDIX A: ATTENDANCE DETAIL

Teaching Elders: Michele Ward (Brown), Laura Batten-Carbaugh (Covenant), Essie Koenig-Reinke (Dickey Memorial), Doris Cowan (HR), Edwin Lacy (Fallston), Sue Lowcock Harris (First of Howard Co.), Andrew Kort (First Annapolis), Melissa Lopez (First Bel Air), Matthew Glasgow (First Westminster), Tom Harris (Govans), Emma Horn (Harundale), Ray Meute (Highland), Karen Brown (Hope), Deborah McEachran (Hunting Ridge), Janna VanderWoude (Northminster), Jennifer Barchi (Presbytery), Mary Gaut (HR), Mark Hanna (Roland Park), Randall Clayton (Second), Amy Carlson (Second), Jennifer DiFrancesco (Havenwood/Slate), Roger Rice (HR)

Ruling Elders: Brad Norris (Brown), Bonnie Jones (Churchville), Lisa Hayes (Dickey Memorial), Cecil Phillips (Dickey Memorial, Vice Moderator), Audrey Trapp (Faith), Betsy Stewart (First Annapolis), James Stickler (First Cumberland), William Starke (Good Shepherd), Karen Ceanfaglione (Govans), Michael

Kahn (Granite), David Yensan (Grove), Janice Howard (Hamilton), Linwood Means (Harundale), Susan Bond (Havenwood), Patricia Allingham (Havre de Grace), Rachel Ayers (Highland), Johnnie Summers (Hunting Ridge), Charese Jordan Moore (Knox), Carol Mason (Maryland), Bill McWhirter (Prince of Peace), Robert Stepling (Springfield), Sharron Pappas (Springfield), Guy Moody (St John United), Susan Moody (St. John United), Lillian McGraw (Woods).

APPENDIX B: OVERTURE

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Overture

On Directing the Office of the General Assembly to Issue Apologies and Reparations for the Racist Closure of the Memorial Presbyterian Church, Juneau, Alaska

APPROVED BY COUNCIL OF NORTHERN LIGHT UNITED CHURCH FOR SUBMISSION TO THE NORTHWEST COAST PRESBYTERY

Recommendations

The Presbytery of the Northwest Coast, in unity with and support of the Northern Light United Church (“NLUC”) and its Native Ministries Committee, overtures the 225th General Assembly (2022) of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A) (“PC(USA)”), to work to eliminate all forms of White supremacy and racism in its institutions and, specifically, **to meaningfully address the wounds inflicted on Alaska Natives**, who were directly impacted by the sin of the unwarranted 1963 closure of the Memorial Presbyterian Church,¹ a thriving, multiethnic, intercultural church in Juneau, Alaska, by taking the following actions directly and through the Office of the General

19 Assembly:

20

21 1. In keeping with the spirit to ‘confess complicity and repudiate the Doctrine of
22 Discovery’ as

23 called for in “The Doctrine of Discovery: A Review of Its Origins and Implications
24 for

25 Congregations in the PC(USA) and Support for Native American Sovereignty
26 (2018),”

27 adopted by the 223rd General Assembly, acknowledge and apologize for the harms
28 inflicted

29 by:

30

31 a. Acknowledging culpability and silence regarding the closure of the Memorial
32 Presbyterian Church and the resulting harm to the community.²

33

34 b. Acknowledging and confessing that the Alaska Presbytery’s stated
35 justification for

36 closure – to halt segregation by establishing a “strong and united church of all
37 races

38 and classes” – merely substituted assimilationist racism for the previous
39 practice of

40 segregationist racism. While the Memorial Church was established to serve
41 the

42 Tlingit community, it had evolved under Dr. Soboleff’s leadership into a
43 multiethnic,

44 intercultural church whose members were callously and ironically directed by
45 the

¹ Members of the Memorial Presbyterian Church most often referred to their church as the “Memorial Church,” which is how it is also most commonly referred to now.

² https://www.presbyterianmission.org/wp-content/uploads/Doctrine-of-Discovery-Report-to-the-223rd-GA-2018-FINALIZED-COPY_As-Approved.pdf

1 Alaska Presbytery³ to join the virtually all-White Northern Light Presbyterian Church
2 (“NLPC”).
3

- 4 c. Acknowledging that the cessation of National Mission Board funding for the
5 Memorial Church – funding that was still being provided for other predominantly
6 White Presbyterian churches in Southeast Alaska – left the Memorial Church
7 congregation without viable options for continuance.
8
- 9 d. Offering posthumous apology, acknowledgement, and confession in public ceremony,
10 attended by national and regional church officials, to the late Rev. Dr. Soboleff, Sr.,
11 who served as the Memorial Church’s pastor for twenty-two years, for the act of
12 spiritual abuse committed by the Presbyterian Church’s decision of closure, which
13 was sadly aligned with nationwide racism toward Alaska Natives, Native Americans,
14 and other people of color.
15
- 16 e. Offering further apology for closing the Memorial Church without national church
17 leaders offering ceremonial protocols, expressions of regret, or formal
18 acknowledgements of the thriving nature of the Memorial Church. Dr. Soboleff was
19 left by himself to announce the closure of the Memorial Church; a closure that had
20 been engineered by the Board of Missions and the Alaska Presbytery.
21
- 22 f. In similar vein, providing written apology to Dr. Soboleff’s family, the Memorial
23 Church’s members and their descendants, and the Alaska Native communities
24 profoundly impacted by the ministry and outreach of the Memorial Church through
25 communications directed to the family members, the member churches of the Alaska
26 Presbytery in 1963 (or their successors), the Grand Camp of the Alaska Native
27 Brotherhood and Sisterhood, the federally recognized tribes in Southeast Alaska, and
28 the Alaska Federation of Natives. The positive role the Memorial Church played in
29 Juneau and throughout the region extended far beyond the formal membership of the
30 Memorial Church congregation.
31
- 32 g. In addition to these public ceremonies and written communications, calling upon
33 national and regional church representatives to hold private meetings with the family
34 of Dr. Soboleff and the Alaska Native members of NLUC, along with Native leaders
35 in the larger Juneau community.
36
- 37 h. Taking each of the actions identified in close collaboration with NLUC Native
38 Ministries Committee and other Native leaders to assure that they are carried out in
39 accordance with Tlingit protocol.
40
41

³ The Alaska Presbytery, a predecessor to the Northwest Coast Presbytery, served all the Presbyterian churches in Southeast Alaska, which included NLPC.

- 1 2. Demonstrate repentance through meaningful reparative actions, without which words of
2 apology ring hollow, including the following:
3
- 4 a. Increase available resources and opportunities for Alaska Natives and other
5 Indigenous people to pursue ministry in the PC(USA) and other positions of church
6 leadership, including providing scholarship funds and mentorship for these
7 individuals, and
8
 - 9 b. Uphold “primarily people of color congregations” in the PC(USA) that, to this day,
10 continue to be “marginalized by a structure that is not responding to the voices of its
11 people of color for inclusion and equity,” by adopting the Racial Equity Advocacy
12 Committee’s “A Resolution Addressing the Lack of Installed Pastoral Leadership in
13 People of Color Congregations in the PC(USA).”⁴
14
 - 15 c. In keeping with the Native American Coordinating Council’s proclamation of “The
16 Decade of Confession and Repentance” in which the PC(USA) “turns around and
17 walks in the other direction” from the Doctrine of Discovery, direct the Presbyterian
18 Mission Agency to donate, in the name of Memorial Presbyterian Church, \$100,000
19 to the Sealaska Heritage Institute for Indigenous language revitalization efforts.⁵
20
 - 21 d. Direct the Presbyterian Mission Agency to donate \$200,000, in the name of the
22 Memorial Presbyterian Church, to the Presbyterian Foundation *Native American*
23 *Church Property Fund*, and urge the presbyteries and congregations of the PC(USA)
24 also to donate in the name of the Memorial Presbyterian Church or present and past
25 churches of other Native Americans and other people of color important to them.
26
 - 27 e. Encourage, and take active measures, to renew the collective commitments of the
28 PC(USA), including presbyteries and congregations, to:
29
 - 30 i. dismantle systemic racism;
 - 31
 - 32 ii. amplify the voices of clergy and lay members of churches “primarily people
33 of color congregations;” and
34
 - 35

⁴ <https://www.pc-biz.org/#/search/3000584>

⁵ Native American Coordinating Council Report to GA 224, Recommendation 4.g.: “Invest in the revitalization of Indigenous languages by committing resources to support tribal efforts to revitalize Indigenous languages as they see fit.”

1 iii. develop and enhance models of engagement and accountability for the
2 national church and presbyteries in their interactions with churches of
3 “primarily people of color congregations” so that difficult decisions about
4 support and funding are made in a spirit that recognizes the importance and
5 contributions of these congregations to the PC(USA), which outweigh
6 superficial considerations of their membership numbers or perceived lack of
7 financial resources.

8
9 f. Provide financial resources to, and engage with, the City and Borough of Juneau,
10 directly or through the Northwest Coast Presbytery and NLUC, for a highly visible
11 recognition of the Memorial Presbyterian Church to be placed at the Memorial
12 Presbyterian Church’s former location. This recognition would be conceived and
13 approved by the Native Ministries Committee of NLUC, in collaboration with local
14 partners, to encourage recognition of the vitality of the Memorial Church and the
15 harm caused by its closure.

16

1 **Rationale**

2

3 **Introduction**

4

5 In 1963, the Alaska Presbytery, with the concurrence of the Presbyterian Church’s Board of
6 National Missions, closed the Memorial Presbyterian Church in Juneau, Alaska. The forced
7 closure of this thriving, multiethnic, intercultural church was an egregious act of spiritual abuse
8 committed in alignment with the prevailing White racist treatment of Alaska Natives, statewide,
9 and of Native Americans, nationwide.

10

11 Juneau and virtually all of Southeast Alaska is Lingit Aani, the homeland of the Tlingit. The
12 Tlingit people’s connection to the land is sacred, with an individual’s identity being tied to their
13 clan’s ancestral lands. Disrespecting the Tlingit people and their communal ownership of land,
14 Russians, English and Americans explored, occupied, assumed individual ownership under
15 Western law, and extracted riches from Lingit Aani. European-American history in Lingit Aani
16 is a “history of theft.”⁶ The Presbyterian Church participated in this settler-colonial history in
17 Alaska, as elsewhere: “To Christianize is to Americanize, and to Americanize is to
18 Christianize.”⁷ The closing of Memorial Presbyterian Church, and the subsequent sale of its
19 property, furthered the consequences of White encroachment, as both land and spiritual well-
20 being were lost.

21

22 In response to these disruptive events and their continuing effects, Indigenous communities,
23 including Christians and non-Christians, continue to seek justice, which must include repair and
24 equity in Southeast Alaska and beyond. As the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of
25 Indigenous Peoples affirms, humanity is faced with an

26

27 urgent need to respect and promote the inherent rights of Indigenous peoples
28 which derive from their political, economic, and social structures and from their
29 cultures, spiritual traditions, histories and philosophies, and especially their rights
30 to their lands, territories and resources.⁸

31

⁶ Statement by Clarence “Butch” Laiti, President of Douglas Indian Association, a federally recognized Indian tribe in Juneau, Alaska, during a “Juneau Voices” interview.

⁷ In the documentary, “Blest Be the Tie That Binds, Presbyterian Missions in Southeast Alaska, and retired Teaching Elder Janice Stamper used this phrase attributable to Os Guinness, *The Last Christian on Earth: Uncover the Enemy’s Plot to Undermine the Church*, Baker Books, 2010. See also Mauro, Hayes Peter. *Messianic Fulfillments: Staging Indigenous Salvation in America*, University of Nebraska Press, 2019.

⁸ United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples, <https://undocs.org/A/RES/61/295>.

1 To date, the full extent of the damage inflicted on Indigenous communities has yet to be repaired
2 by Presbyterians. The Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) (PC(USA)) must acknowledge its errors and
3 recognize the Alaska Native and Native American values it trampled. One step in this process is
4 to offer apology and reparations for the forced closure of Memorial Presbyterian Church.⁹
5

6 **History of the Presbyterian Mission Churches in Juneau with Emphasis on the 7 Memorial**

8 **Presbyterian Church ¹⁰ and its Closure**

9 In 1881, Presbyterian missionaries began evangelism efforts in Juneau at Auk Village, a former
10 summer village of the A'akw Kwáan of the Tlingit Nation. White miners had converged in 1879
11 at the summer village in their quest for gold. The initial evangelistic revival attracted both miners
12 and Natives, but the church's mission work soon segregated; by the end of the decade, two
13 churches were established, one for Natives and another for Whites. The emphasis at the White
14 church¹¹ was to minimize the debauched behavior of the miners. The focus of the Native
15 (Tlingit) church, (the congregation that became the Memorial Presbyterian Church), founded in
16 1887 in the A'akw Village, now known as the Juneau Indian Village, was the same as that of all
17 missionary activity among Indigenous inhabitants of the continent – to “Christianize and civilize
18 the Indians.” (Minutes, UPCUSA, 1875, Part I, p. 541.)
19

20 The ministry and witness of the Presbyterian church in Juneau remained segregated for the next
21 fifty years; minutes and papers from the White and Tlingit congregations make scant mention of
22 each other. The only direct reference to the possibility of cooperative work was in 1905 during
23 Northern Light Presbyterian Church (NLPC - the White church) pastorate of James Kirk, when
24 “a proposal was made to unite all White and native [*sic*] work in Douglas and Juneau under one

⁹ In 1991, the Alaska Presbytery adopted a resolution that stated “we deeply regret the church’s part in the destruction of native artifacts and the church’s part in the loss of native languages.” It made no mention of the closing of Memorial Presbyterian, and it offered no reparations. The following year, a resolution was presented at the Presbytery’s annual meeting that declared that the church’s ministry had brought “many positive results to the Native American communities...” In subsequent years, both resolutions were posted on the Alaska Presbytery website. It is unclear what ongoing impact either resolution may have had on the Presbytery's life and work.”

¹⁰ When established, the church was called the “Tlingit Presbyterian Church” or “Tlingit Native Presbyterian Church” with variant spellings of “Tlingit.” In 1933, it was renamed “First Presbyterian Church,” and in 1940 “Memorial Presbyterian Church.” It was sometimes also referred to as the “Juneau Indian Village Church, or the “Tlingit Church.” These names are interspersed in this Rationale to correspond to the historical events being discussed. After adopting this last name, it was commonly referred to as “Memorial Church.”¹¹ When established, this church was called the “Log Cabin Church.” By 1899, it had been renamed the “Northern Light Presbyterian Church.” After it was united with the Juneau United Methodist Church, it was renamed “Northern Light United Church.” Throughout this Rationale, we use “NLPC” for Northern Light Presbyterian Church.

1 minister. The NLPC session, however, decided that ‘consolidation was not for the best interests
2 of the church and therefore inexpedient.’¹²

3

4 The missionaries’ “Christianizing and civilizing” efforts among Indigenous populations in
5 Alaska as well as elsewhere were accomplished through suppressing Native languages, forcing
6 converts to cease cultural observances and traditional practices, and requiring Native people to
7 adopt European names and customs.¹³ In Juneau, Presbyterians touted their success in so doing,
8 citing “progress...to eradicate the elements of evil from deep-seated pagan tradition and putting
9 in their places the laws of love and brotherhood of man.” The missionaries not only proclaimed
10 Christ; they also preached White ways, and the rejection of Tlingit culture. “No more moccasins,
11 no more canoes, and no more totem poles...the Alaskan native [*sic*] has made more rapid
12 transition from the primitive state to civilization than any other people in our history.”¹⁴

13

14 The missionaries assumed they were being “successful” in eradicating Tlingit culture and
15 practice. In reality, Tlingit people proved resilient and translated their values and traditions into
16 the Christian forms that had been thrust upon them. Within the forced segregation of Native
17 church life, Native Christians infused Christian practices with Native wisdom. Their Christian
18 faith continues to be steeped in and blended with Native cultural values that were later codified
19 in a list of “Southeast Traditional Tribal Values”¹⁵ that were developed by Tribal Elders and
20 based largely upon the work of Dr. Walter Soboleff.

¹² Mayberry, Genevieve. *Northern Light Presbyterian Church: A Brief Historical Narrative*, circa 1941, p.
14.

¹³ Mission and ministry with Native American Peoples: *A Historical Survey of the Last Three Centuries*,
p. 6.

¹⁴ Mayberry, Genevieve. *Diamond Jubilee, Memorial Presbyterian Church*, 1962, p.4.

¹⁵ Southeast Traditional Tribal Values - Our Way of Life:

*Discipline and Obedience to the Traditions of Our Ancestors; Respect
for Self, Elders and Others; Respect for Nature and Property;
Patience; Pride in Family, Clan and Tradition is found in Love, Loyalty
and Generosity; Be Strong in Mind, Body and Spirit; Humor; Hold
Each Other Up; Listen Well and with Respect; Speak with Care; We
are Stewards of the Air, Land and Sea; Reverence for Our Creator;
Live in Peace and Harmony; Be Strong and Have Courage.*

1

2 Despite rampant and pervasive racism and discrimination in Juneau, on a personal level,
3 kindnesses were shared among Native church members and the White missionaries, and
4 community life grew within the church. Tlingit elder Lillian Collier was baptized in the Juneau
5 Indian Village Presbyterian Church, and she recalls being invited along with other village youth
6 to the missionaries David and Mary Waggoner's home and being served blueberry juice and
7 other refreshments.

8

9 Tlingit elder Marie Olson also has fond memories of the Waggoners relaying that "they were
10 really beautiful people with the Natives." Ms. Olson went on to explain that the Waggoners
11 were a loving couple and very welcoming.¹⁶ They were glad to see Alaska Natives coming to
12 the church. They shared good food with the church community and given the context of the
13 depression years, the sharing of food was particularly appreciated. Ms. Olson added that the
14 Russian Orthodox, the Salvation Army, and the Memorial Presbyterian churches were multi-
15 racial and the three denominations intermixed with no animosity among them. The Memorial
16 Church was also the meeting place for the local Alaska Native Brotherhood and the Alaska
17 Native Sisterhood in their early years.

18

19 On the systemic level, however, early Presbyterian missionaries sought to replace traditional
20 Tlingit practices with customs that mirrored their own White Presbyterian lifestyles. Consider
21 the words of David Waggoner:

22

23 The missionaries have been tearing down the old social life and traditions of the
24 people for years. The time has come when we must give them a new social life,
25 one in harmony with Christianity.¹⁷

26

27 Carrie Willard, another missionary affiliated with the Juneau mission, in an interview with the
28 Home Mission Monthly, reported that the missionaries needed to sponsor frequent meetings to
29 keep the Natives from back-sliding, to instruct them in hygiene, as well as love and marriage,
30 and to teach them what "a true home is." In order to keep them focused on newly imposed
31 Christian ways, Willard acknowledged that they needed to "afford them such social pleasure as

¹⁶ The positive experiences of Ms. Collier and Ms. Olson at the Tlingit Church stand in marked contrast to the hostile reception a Native man subsequently received at NLPC referenced in footnote 24. In addition, although these encounters with the Waggoners are fondly remembered and are rightly affirmed, their individual actions did not diminish the systemic racism practiced by dominant culture structures in both church and society. Ms. Collier's and Ms. Olson's quotes originate from telephone conversations with Lillian Petershoare.

¹⁷ Home Mission Monthly, PHS, 1907 as cited in Alison Ruth Parry's "Their works do follow them: Tlingit women and Presbyterian missions." 1997.

1 might compensate for the loss of their old-time feasts and friends.”¹⁸ Despite the missionaries’
2 attempts to extinguish traditional ways, Native parishioners infused church life with the Tlingit
3 value of respect. Many Tlingit families privately maintained Tlingit spirituality values enabling,
4 generations later, a revitalization of the Tlingit culture and a restoration of the traditional
5 practices.
6

7 The importance of the Tlingit Church grew even larger when the church, newly renamed
8 “Memorial Presbyterian Church”, moved to a new site at 8th and E (now Glacier Ave.) Streets¹⁹
9 (where Juneau’s downtown fire station currently sits), and called in 1940 its first (and only)
10 Native pastor, the Rev. Dr. Walter Soboleff, Sr.²⁰ During Dr. Soboleff’s twenty-two-year
11 pastorate, congregational life flourished. Under his leadership, the Memorial Church grew to be a
12 vibrant congregation, not only ministering to its members, but serving the whole Native
13 community. Dr. Soboleff conducted numerous baptisms and marriage ceremonies. He supported
14 a vital youth ministry. Living Memorial Church members and descendants describe the
15 Memorial Church as hosting a variety of activities for youths.
16

17 The influence of the Memorial Church also extended throughout the whole city of Juneau, and
18 notably, the congregation began attracting non-Native as well as Native members,²¹ even as it
19 continued to be a vital hub for the Native Community. Dr. Soboleff was an active participant in
20 church and community life throughout the region. His pastoral presence and community
21 leadership were keys to this growth both within and beyond the Native community.²²
22

23 By the 1950s, the national Presbyterian Church appeared to be trying to catch up with the
24 inclusive ministry of the Memorial Presbyterian Church, albeit with no recognition of the work
25 of the Memorial Church. In 1955, the General Assembly officially renounced segregation, called
26 on formerly segregated presbyteries and synods to merge, and urged congregations to open their

¹⁸ Home Mission Monthly, PHS, 1883 as cited in Alison Ruth Parry’s “Their works do follow them: Tlingit women and Presbyterian missions.” 1997.

¹⁹ The Board of Missions purchased the property for \$1600 in 1938 from Mrs. Matilda Madsen Streed. Memorial Church member, Mrs. Marie Oswald, and her siblings also donated a portion of their adjacent parcel in order to enlarge the church site.

²⁰ In 1952, Dr. Soboleff received a Doctorate of Divinity from the University of Dubuque; he was also granted a Doctorate of Humanities by the University of Alaska in 1968.

²¹ Mayberry, *Diamond Jubilee*, p. 8.

²² See the section of this rationale, “Legacy of Rev. Dr. Walter Soboleff, Sr.” for more on Dr. Soboleff’s positive impacts.

1 doors to people of all races.²³ The General Assembly's directives were resisted by many White
2 congregations including Juneau's NLPC. A Tlingit elder relayed a painful instance of
3 discrimination to local Juneau historian Kathy Kolkhorst Ruddy. The man was praying one day
4 in the NLPC sanctuary, and when the pastor saw him there, the pastor told him to go pray at the
5 Tlingit church.²⁴
6

7 Even in the face of NLPC resistance, the Alaska Presbytery responded to the national church call
8 for integration by proposing the creation of a "strong and united church of all races and
9 classes"²⁵ in Juneau. But instead of featuring the Memorial Church as a model of an already
10 integrated church, the Alaska Presbytery pursued a White supremacist, assimilationist response
11 to integration by increasing support for the ministry of NLPC and withdrawing support from the
12 Memorial Church. In 1959 in response to a proposal from NPLC,²⁶ it recommended that the
13 NLPC and Memorial Presbyterian Church congregations "be encouraged to continue cooperative
14 efforts and to hold common meetings and combined enterprises, so that mutual understanding
15 and respect and good will may be nurtured."²⁷
16

17 The Memorial Church congregation was wary of this recommendation²⁸ because simultaneously,
18 the Alaska Presbytery, over the objection of the Memorial Church session,²⁹ granted permission
19 for NPLC to sell its extant building and move into the same neighborhood as the Memorial

²³ Efforts at the judicatory level were led by the Committee on Segregated Synods and Presbyteries. The efforts were not welcomed by some due to the White supremacist assumptions about how integration should proceed. The Dakota Presbytery, "reorganized in the 1880s as a Native American presbytery, independent of geographic boundaries" (<https://www.history.pcusa.org/collections/research-tools/guides-archival-collections/rg-375>, accessed 1/20/2021), resisted efforts to be joined to the Black Hills Presbytery, citing "lack of active efforts on the part of White churches and presbyteries toward understanding..." See 1955 Minutes of the General Assembly of the Presbyterian Church in the United States of America, pp. 105-7, and follow up reports by the Committee on Segregated Synods and Presbyteries to succeeding GAs through 1962.

²⁴ Interview with the late Kathy Kolkhorst Ruddy, <https://www.aanyatxu.org/kathy-rudy>; accessed 12/30/2020.

²⁵ Letter from the Alaska Presbytery to presbyters, November 24, 1962.

²⁶ Minutes of the Alaska Presbytery, September 18, 1958.

²⁷ Minutes of the Alaska Presbytery, April 13, 1959.

²⁸ The Memorial Presbyterian Church Session expressed its disinterest in the presbytery's merger proposal as it rightly viewed it as a precursor to withdrawing support for the Memorial Church and privileging Northern Light. In January 1959, the Memorial congregation voted to oppose merger with NLPC, Memorial Presbyterian Church Congregational Meeting minutes, January 7, 1959.

²⁹ Minutes of the Memorial Presbyterian Church Session, April 3, 1958.

1 Presbyterian Church.³⁰ These actions boosted momentum for the Memorial Church's eventual
2 closure.

3

4 During the same time that the national denomination was lending NLPC over \$200,000³¹ for its
5 new building, it was reducing mission support for the Memorial Church and pressing it toward
6 self-sufficiency. In 1962, despite Memorial Church's efforts to increase financial support from
7 congregants, and in the midst of its celebration of 75 years of ministry, the Presbyterian Board of
8 National Missions announced that it would cease funding the Memorial Presbyterian Church.
9 Further, the Alaska Presbytery recommended the closure of the Memorial Presbyterian Church
10 and urged Memorial Church members to join NLPC parishioners in their new building, built
11 with presbytery approval just up the street from the Memorial Church facility. (NLPC was a
12 predecessor of what is now Northern Light United Church, a PC(USA)/United Methodist Church
13 union congregation). The recommendation to close came despite the growth of the Memorial
14 Church congregation. During the same time period when White church officials were deciding to
15 dissolve the congregation, the Memorial Church was adding fourteen pews to its sanctuary,
16 confirming six young people, and receiving nine additional new members.³² This was not a
17 congregation in decline. Nevertheless, neither Dr. Soboleff nor the Memorial Church Session
18 had an opportunity to negotiate funding options with the Board of National Missions, nor was
19 there consideration given to alternatives to the Memorial Presbyterian Church's closure.³³

20

21 Instead of dissolution, parishioners had every reason to anticipate a robust future for the
22 Memorial Presbyterian Church guided by the "rare and consecrated leadership of Dr.
23 Soboleff."³⁴ Their expectations were given voice through Memorial Church session members
24 who were quoted in the Memorial Church history prepared for the congregation's 75th
25 Anniversary observance only a few months before the closure plans were revealed:

26

³⁰ Minutes of the Alaska Presbytery, April 15-21, 1958, September 18, 1958, April 13, 1959.

³¹ Minutes of the Alaska Presbytery, November 8, 1960. Initial plans called for a bigger facility from the one built. The congregation failed to raise sufficient money, so the building was scaled back.

³² Memorial Presbyterian Church Presbyterian Session minutes, March 6, and April 20, 1962.

³³ At a called meeting of the Memorial Church congregation on December 2, 1962, members expressed their displeasure with the presbytery's intent to close the church, and the way it was being handled: "While some members were against any move to discontinue this congregation, the unanimous feeling was that no matter what happened, it should not be done with so little notice and without consulting...our wishes." The Memorial Presbyterian Church's elder delegate was directed to inform the presbytery that the Memorial Presbyterian Church rejects the proposal for dissolution. (Congregational meeting minutes, 12/2/1962.)

³⁴ Mayberry, *Diamond Jubilee*, p. 9

1 We, as members of the session, greatly appreciate the services and spirit of our
2 pastor throughout this and past years, especially as evidenced by the growth and
3 spiritual life of the church. All members are urged to pray that such conditions
4 will continue.³⁵
5

6 But the prayers and expectations of the parishioners were for naught.
7

8 The offense of the Memorial Presbyterian Church's closure was compounded by how it was
9 handled. In prior years, national and regional church leaders were known to visit the Memorial
10 Church, but when Dr. Soboleff announced at a called congregation meeting in December, 1962,
11 that a Presbytery meeting had been called to vote on closing the church, no national or regional
12 leaders were present to explain the rationale, to express their sorrow for the closure, or to
13 acknowledge through ceremony the profound role the church had played in the lives of its
14 thriving congregation.
15

16 Adding further confusion and consternation to the situation, the Presbytery's announcement of
17 Memorial's closure proposal was accompanied by the news that it was issuing a call to Dr.
18 Soboleff to serve as "Evangelist-at-Large" in the Presbytery. His responsibilities would include
19 serving the churches and logging camps of Southeast Alaska and coordinating ministry in
20 congregations without pastors.³⁶ The funding for the position came from the Board of National
21 Missions – the same entity that cut funding from the Memorial Presbyterian Church.
22

23 The timing of these two announcements prompted some church members, and the public in
24 general, to assume that the Memorial Church was closed due to Dr. Soboleff's acceptance of the
25 new job with the presbytery. In fact, Dr. Soboleff was not seeking a new position. The callous
26 way in which the National Church and the Alaska Presbytery engineered the demise of the
27 Memorial Presbyterian Church was a traumatic affront to a people who value mutual respect,
28 acknowledgment, and dignity in relationships. Tlingit culture is steeped in the protocols of
29 ceremony, and the abrupt closure without ceremony demonstrated both a lack of awareness of,
30 and disrespect for, Alaska Native norms and practices.
31

32 The Alaska Presbytery's intent to close the Memorial Presbyterian Church was not made public
33 until early in 1963. Memorial Church elders had resisted the December proposal which resulted
34 in a delay in its implementation. The departure of Dr. Soboleff, their beloved pastor, demoralized
35 the congregation, leaving many members disillusioned with or outraged toward the Presbyterian
36 Church. But the Memorial Church session members remained advocates for their church, and the
37 continuance of its ministry.

³⁵ Ibid.

³⁶ *Daily Alaska Empire*, December 12, 1962, p. 1.

1

2 After Dr. Soboleff began his new position in January 1963, the Alaska Presbytery appointed
3 Edward Holborow, the newly called pastor of NLPC, to moderate the Memorial Church session.
4 The ending of the Memorial Presbyterian Church's ministry was increasingly viewed as
5 inevitable, and discussion was held during the congregation's January 16, 1963, Annual Meeting
6 about merging with NLPC rather than acquiescing to the presbytery's plan to dissolve the
7 congregation. No decision was made to support the merger, but the meeting minutes noted that it
8 would nonetheless be an unlikely outcome because a motion to dissolve the Memorial
9 Presbyterian Church was expected to pass at the presbytery's spring meeting.³⁷ At a subsequent
10 congregational meeting, the Memorial Church session introduced a motion of support for the
11 presbytery's closing of the Memorial Presbyterian Church, and an accompanying
12 recommendation that Memorial Church members unite with NLPC, but many in the
13 congregation opposed this; the motions narrowly passed, 17 to 14.³⁸ Subsequently, the Memorial
14 Presbyterian Church's closure was euphemistically described as a union with NLPC,³⁹ but in
15 actuality, the institutional life of the Memorial Presbyterian Church was terminated when the
16 presbytery dissolved its session and sent the congregation's records to the Presbyterian Historical
17 Society.⁴⁰

18

19 The Alaska Presbytery could have approached the quest for a "strong and united church of all
20 races and classes" in Juneau differently. Instead of summarily closing the Memorial Presbyterian
21 Church, it could have:

22

- 23 • acknowledged that the Memorial Church was already a multiethnic, intercultural church
- 24 from which the whole presbytery could learn about intercultural ministry;
- 25 • consulted with the Memorial Church Session to explore various possibilities for its
- 26 future;
- 27 • proposed merging Memorial Presbyterian Church and NLPC as a union of equals;⁴¹ or
- 28 • considered closing either NLPC or the Memorial Church, and publicly assessing the pros
- 29 and cons of each closure.

³⁷ Memorial Presbyterian Church Annual Meeting minutes, January 16, 1963.

³⁸ Memorial Presbyterian Church Congregational Meeting minutes, February 10, 1963.

³⁹ *Daily Alaska Empire*, "Two Churches Unite," February 14, 1963.

⁴⁰ Minutes of the Alaska Presbytery, April 1963.

⁴¹ A decade later, NLPC institutionally merged with the "White" Juneau United Methodist Church. A joint committee from the congregations met for months to negotiate terms of a merger of equals. The churches formally united in 1974 and adopted a new name, Northern Light United Church. Records of both Northern Light Presbyterian Church and Juneau United Methodist Church remain in the possession of Northern Light United Church.

1
2 But instead of doing any of these things, the Alaska Presbytery closed the Memorial Presbyterian
3 Church and told its members to join NLPC; nearly half of the membership refused to do so,
4 citing bitterness regarding the closure of the Memorial Church and/or not being comfortable
5 attending the previously all-White church. At the end of 1962, the Memorial Church had 196
6 members⁴² of whom only 100 transferred to NLPC; five years later only 48 former Memorial
7 Church members remained on the NLPC roll. The Presbytery's actions failed to produce the
8 strong and united Presbyterian witness in Juneau that it claimed to have sought.

9
10 The closing of the Memorial Presbyterian Church occurred because of White supremacist racism
11 under the guise of the ostensibly noble pursuit of integration. The devastation it wrought on the
12 Alaska Native community in Juneau and throughout Southeast Alaska reverberates to this day. It
13 has caused enduring trauma and anger for Memorial Church members and their descendants, and
14 for Juneau's Native community. The forced closure removed a place of spiritual and communal
15 refuge for scores of members and friends in a climate of local and national exclusion and
16 marginalization. It deeply wounded Native believers, as well as Memorial Church's members of
17 Asian and Pacific Islander, and European descent. It cut off a spiritual lifeline to souls of all ages
18 and ethnicities that extended throughout Southeast Alaska.

19
20 The enduring pain caused by the closure of the Memorial Presbyterian Church coexists,
21 sometimes uneasily, with the positive influences and cherished memories of the congregation's
22 ministry. Dr. Soboleff's adult children have shared that even though

23
24 many of the elders and members of the church have gone on...family ties of
25 membership in the Memorial Church still exist. The hurt has undoubtedly been
26 passed on to our present generation. People still speak of Dr. Soboleff's amazing
27 pastoral work by telling stories about 'when our family went to Memorial Church,
28 we...' Everyone's story is positive and genuine. Dr. Soboleff and the Memorial
29 Presbyterian Church [are] still vivid in our minds.⁴³

30
31 The heartfelt recollections underscore the continuing sense of loss and betrayal experienced by
32 Memorial Church families. The disrespectful, disingenuous, and obfuscated manner in which the
33 unilateral closure decisions were made and presented not only devastated Memorial Church
34 members; they sowed confusion and fostered silence within the NLPC congregation, and in the
35 community at large. White church leaders either fundamentally misunderstood what the
36 Memorial Presbyterian Church meant to the Native community, or they were willfully ignorant.
37 There was no attempt to explore how Native experience and values could be carried forward into
38 a new multiethnic, intercultural church. White church leaders thought that since they had
39 imposed European Christianity on Native Christians, the Memorial Church members would

⁴² Memorial Presbyterian Church 1962 Annual Report.

⁴³ Correspondence with Janet Soboleff Burke, December 4, 2020.

1 welcome the end of segregation and be glad for the chance to worship with European Christians
2 at NLPC. This racist reasoning is even more egregious in light of the fact that the Memorial
3 Presbyterian Church had already become a multiethnic, intercultural church.
4

5 Several years after the congregation's dissolution, the Memorial Presbyterian Church building
6 was razed as a part of Juneau's urban renewal; this spatial loss extended the spiritual harm
7 caused by the Memorial Church's closure as once again, Native land was appropriated for White
8 dominant culture use.
9

10 The lack of transparency about incidents such as the closing of the Memorial Presbyterian
11 Church continues to impede contemporary efforts to embrace multiethnic, intercultural church
12 life at national, regional, and local levels. The decades of avoidance of the truth about the closure
13 of the Memorial Church, and the complicity of the local White NLPC, the Board of National
14 Missions, and the Alaska Presbytery regarding the closure, has deeply hampered relationships
15 between Native and non-Native members. Dr. Soboleff is fondly remembered in the national
16 church, the Alaska Presbytery, and throughout Southeast Alaska, but the wrong of removing him
17 from the Memorial Church pastorate has gone largely unacknowledged. Northern Light United
18 Church claims the Memorial Church as one of its predecessor congregations and supports the
19 work of its own Native Ministries Committee, but it has struggled to this day to confess and
20 address the devastating actions of NLPC, its White predecessor Presbyterian congregation, and
21 its namesake. NLUC has not publicly acknowledged and addressed the manner in which the
22 Presbytery approved NLPC's move into the Memorial Church's neighborhood and closed the
23 Memorial Presbyterian Church. The claim that the Memorial Church is a predecessor of NLUC
24 belies the fact that there was no Memorial Presbyterian Church left with which NLPC could have
25 merged. Not facing the racism embedded in the closure decision has hindered the development
26 of authentic multiethnic, intercultural church life at NLUC. "The deafening silence of White
27 Presbyterian leaders and congregants regarding the abrupt closure of the Memorial Church is a
28 disruptive force to Tlingit spiritual wellbeing as well as a barrier to living in harmony with White
29 Presbyterians."⁴⁴ Despite recent efforts at investigating and telling the story of the Memorial
30 Church, including its support for this Overture to the PC(USA), NLUC's legacy as a community
31 of faith and justice has been marred by decades of inaction regarding the closing of the Memorial
32 Presbyterian Church. These institutional failures inhibit NLUC's ability to live out its stated
33 mission and have tarnished its local Christian witness in the community at large.
34

35 Without a full accounting of the racist, White supremacist ecclesial history that led to actions
36 such as the closing of the Memorial Church, and without understanding the enormity of what the
37 loss of centers of Native church life such as the Memorial Church meant and means for the
38 Native community, Native contributions remain tangential rather than central to current day

⁴⁴ NLUC Native Ministries Committee member and Overture coauthor Lillian Petershoare, February 7, 2021. Other Overture coauthors are: Maxine Richert, Myra Munson, Tim Lash, and Phil Campbell, consultant.

1 church life and leadership. This Overture is a step both toward addressing the festering wound
2 caused by the closing of the Memorial Presbyterian Church, and to a renewed commitment to a
3 multiethnic, intercultural future for the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) at the national, regional,
4 and local levels.⁴⁵
5

6 **Legacy of Rev. Dr. Walter Soboleff, Sr.**

7

8 Walter Soboleff, born to a Tlingit woman and a father of Russian and German descent in
9 Killisnoo, Alaska, received a scholarship to the Presbyterian related University of Dubuque to
10 study for the ministry. After completing degrees in the undergraduate college and graduate
11 theological seminary, he returned to Alaska in 1940 to assume the pastorate of Juneau’s
12 Memorial Presbyterian Church. Soboleff, the second ordained Alaska Native Presbyterian
13 Minister⁴⁶ in Southeast Alaska, was the first and only Native pastor of the Memorial Church.
14

15 Due to official and unofficial segregation, the Memorial Presbyterian Church was considered the
16 “Native” Church, as Natives were not welcomed in many “White” churches, including Northern
17 Light Presbyterian Church. Under Soboleff’s leadership, the Memorial Church quickly grew.
18 And in a remarkable witness against the segregation of the time, Soboleff asked the membership
19 of the church to consider inviting other people besides Natives to participate, and they readily
20 agreed. As non-Natives started to join, the Memorial Church became one of the few
21 desegregated churches in Juneau.
22

23 Dr. Soboleff’s ministry was the first to travel to the airwaves, allowing Natives and non-Natives
24 throughout Southeast Alaska and as far away as the Yukon Territory to hear his Sunday sermon
25 in Tlingit and English. Even when the Memorial Church budget was tight, the congregation
26 supported this ministry citing the importance of the fishermen out on their boats being able to
27 attend worship. He also provided the radio station’s newscasts in Tlingit. The daily newspaper
28 in Juneau featured ads inviting men to the weekly Prayer Luncheon, and women to the Women’s
29 Church Society activities. The youth met monthly with Dr. Soboleff (hot dogs served), with
30 Catholic youth from the surrounding neighborhood also attending at times.
31

32 Dr. Soboleff built and maintained relationships and extensive networks of support in Juneau, and
33 throughout Alaska. He served on the board of directors of the American Red Cross, chaplain
34 with the Territorial Legislature, and in various positions with the Alaska Presbytery. In 1951 he

⁴⁵For a listing of steps being taken at presbytery and local levels that accompany the actions called for in this Overture’s Recommendation, see the Conclusion section of the Rationale.

⁴⁶To date, very few Alaska Natives have been ordained. In Southeast Alaska, in addition to Dr. Soboleff, Edward Marsden, Tsimshian, was ordained in 1898, George Betts, Tlingit, was ordained in 1943, and Henry Fawcett, Tsimshian, was ordained in 1963. The dearth of Alaska Native ministerial leadership is an ongoing challenge for the PC(USA). The need to support Alaska Natives preparing for ministry and other church leadership roles is addressed in the Overture’s Recommendation, reparative action 2.a.

1 began a 20-year term as the Alaska National Guard Chaplain, serving as chaplain and officer.
2 Like him, many Alaska Natives from the villages served in the Alaska National Guard. He was a
3 Mason and belonged to the Lions Club. He helped the Lions establish the annual Gold Medal
4 Basketball Tournament that continues to bring 20 plus teams and hundreds of fans from the
5 villages to Juneau for a week of play. Monies raised went for college scholarships, and the
6 church housed some of the teams. A Girl Scout troop met weekly at Memorial. Dr. Soboleff's
7 long involvement in the Alaska Native Brotherhood/Sisterhood (the Native civil rights
8 organization), from its early years to his terms as Grand Secretary and Grand President, helped
9 this organization achieve its goals of furthering the social and economic development of Native
10 people.

11

12 For Dr. Soboleff, community involvement was an expression both of his Christian faith and his
13 Tlingit spiritual practices; for him there was no contradiction between being Christian and
14 Tlingit. Throughout his life, he lived the Tlingit value of *Haa Shuká*, the honoring of and feeling
15 connected to the ancestors, and recognizing one's responsibility to future generations. As Chair
16 of the Sealaska Heritage Board of Trustees, he guided the institute's staff in the development of
17 programs and curricula that celebrate Alaska Native ancestors, perpetuate Native languages, and
18 inspire the revitalization of Southeast Alaska Indigenous cultures. Native youth throughout
19 Southeast are making regalia, dancing traditional dances, and singing clan songs in Tlingit. Dr.
20 Soboleff was a wise, gentle, and humble leader whose grasp and promotion of traditional Tlingit
21 culture was inspiring.

22

23 After accepting the direction from the Alaska Presbytery to leave Memorial Church even in the
24 midst of its closure, Dr. Soboleff served as Evangelist-at-Large in the Alaska Presbytery,
25 providing pastoral leadership for small churches in small communities throughout Southeast
26 Alaska. In 1970, he moved to Fairbanks, Alaska where he served as the first director of the
27 University of Alaska Fairbanks Native Studies Program. After retiring from that position, he
28 returned to Southeast (dividing his time between Juneau and Tenakee Springs) where he
29 provided leadership in the Native community, and actively participated in church and community
30 life.

31

32 Also, during this time period, he was named Pastor Emeritus of NLUC where he remained an
33 active participant, and where his wise counsel was sought by Native and non-Native members
34 alike. He preached on many occasions, regularly participated in worship and other church
35 activities, and he encouraged others to get involved.

36

37 Dr. Soboleff received numerous honors including being named Alaska Federation of Natives
38 Citizen of the Year in 1989, and in 1999 being designated Alaska Native Brotherhood Grand
39 Camp President Emeritus. Numerous facilities have been named for him including the Angoon
40 Airport, and a University of Alaska Southeast classroom building that houses the School of Arts

1 and Sciences.⁴⁷ After his death, the Sealaska Heritage Institute named its stunning heritage
2 center the Walter Soboleff Building (“WSB”) in recognition of Dr. Soboleff’s life-long
3 contributions to perpetuating Tlingit culture. The WSB is “a physical manifestation of *Haa*
4 *Shuká* and all the ideals he held dear.”⁴⁸

5
6 Even with these widespread accolades and recognitions, however, the forced closure of his
7 beloved Memorial Presbyterian Church remained an unresolved sadness for Dr. Soboleff. A
8 cruel irony of the closure is that Dr. Soboleff was well known in the community at large as a
9 “culture broker”⁴⁹ or an intermediary who could bring understanding between the Native and
10 non-Native societies. What the world recognized, however, remained oblivious to the church.
11 The immeasurable value of the ministry of the Memorial Church under Dr. Soboleff’s leadership
12 was unacknowledged, whether out of ignorance or willfulness, by denominational leaders.

13
14 Neither the displaced members of the Memorial Presbyterian Church nor Rev. Dr. Soboleff, who
15 remained a figure of dignity and peace amid systemic racism and indignity, received an apology
16 nor any form of restitution from the Presbyterian Church before Rev. Dr. Soboleff “walked into
17 the forest” on May 22, 2011, at age 102.

18 19 **Investigation into the Closure of the Memorial Presbyterian Church**

20
21 In March 2011, two months before Dr. Soboleff’s death, then-NLUC pastor Phil Campbell talked
22 with him about the closing of the Memorial Church. Pastor Campbell was struck by how pained
23 Dr. Soboleff was about the closure – almost 50 years after it happened. It was obvious the
24 wound had not been healed, nor had the injustice been addressed. With the support of the Native
25 Ministries Committee and the Church Council, Pastor Campbell began scouring the historical
26 records of the Alaska Presbytery, the Board of National Missions, NLPC, and the Memorial
27 Church to learn more about the circumstances that led to the closure of the Memorial
28 Presbyterian Church. He presented preliminary findings at Sealaska’s Walter Soboleff Day
29 observance in 2015,⁵⁰ and he began talking with the NLUC Church Council about how to repair
30 the damage caused by the Memorial Church’s closing.

31
⁴⁷The impact and significance of Dr. Soboleff’s life and ministry have been widely attested. See “A
Century of Soboleff,” *First Alaskans Magazine*, February/March 2011 as an example.

⁴⁸“A Retrospective View of Dr. Walter Soboleff,” Sealaska Heritage Institute,
<https://vimeo.com/146973605>, November 13, 2015.

⁴⁹ Correspondence with Dr. Rosita Worl, President, Sealaska Heritage Institute, February 4, 2021.

⁵⁰ “A Retrospective View of Dr. Walter Soboleff,” Sealaska Heritage Institute.

1 In 2017, the NLUC congregation engaged in visioning exercises; identifying appropriate ways to
2 address Memorial Church's closure was one of the topics discussed. In reviewing the vision
3 plan, one of the groups⁵¹ recommended pursuing hand-carved Tlingit house posts for the church
4 lobby. In the August 2017 Council minutes, the Council went on record supporting the house
5 posts idea and reported that Pastor Campbell expanded the idea to include official reconciliation
6 over the closure of the Memorial Presbyterian Church.

7
8 With Council's support for the house posts, the Native Ministries Committee decided to further
9 investigate the closure of the Memorial Presbyterian Church, realizing that learning this history
10 would pave the way for developing pertinent themes for the house posts, including the story of
11 the Memorial Church. Joaquin Estus, Tlingit, a nationally recognized journalist, a reporter for
12 *Indian Country Today*, and a former member of NLUC was recruited to interview Memorial
13 Church members. Native Ministries directed Ms. Estus to ask members about their
14 remembrances of the Memorial Church and the circumstances surrounding its closure. Ms. Estus
15 wrote an article, "Segregation of Faith," for the Alaska Federation of Natives Annual Meeting
16 edition of *First Alaskans Magazine* (October 2019) that summarizes her and Phil Campbell's
17 research on the closure of the Memorial Presbyterian Church and speaks to the resulting pain
18 experienced by the many families who attended the Memorial Church.

19
20 Native Ministries also funded Pastor Campbell's travel to the Presbyterian Historical Society in
21 Philadelphia to access the Alaska Presbytery and Memorial Presbyterian Church records. He
22 summarized his research on the Memorial Church closure in the March 2018 NLUC newsletter.

23
24 Current NLUC Pastor Faith McClellan, upon reviewing Ms. Estus's article about Dr. Soboleff
25 and the Memorial Presbyterian Church, consulted with the Northwest Coast Presbytery
26 Executive, Dr. Corey Schlosser-Hall, about submitting a formal Overture regarding the closure
27 of the Memorial Presbyterian Church. Native Ministries met with Dr. Schlosser-Hall about
28 writing an Overture, and he wholeheartedly supported the idea. Native Ministries Liaison and
29 Council Member Lillian Petershare recommended that Council support the Native Ministries
30 Committee's recommendation to prepare an Overture to address the closure of the Memorial
31 Presbyterian Church. The NLUC Council voted unanimously to back a Native Ministries
32 Committee recommendation to seek reparative action, through an Overture requesting an
33 apology and other reparations, from the national Presbyterian Church for the closure of the
34 Memorial Presbyterian Church.

35 36 **Additional Context**

37
38 In Juneau, the 1960s were particularly challenging times for the local Tlingit Community. The
39 White man's legacy of encroachment on Indigenous lands exhibited itself in numerous ways in

⁵¹ NLUC 2014 - 2018 Visioning Work Plan, Native Ministries and Purple Group additions, Activity 1.1, May 9, 2017.

1 the capital city and Douglas (which later became incorporated in the Borough of Juneau).
2 Consider:

- 3
- 4 ● The condemnation and burning of houses in the Douglas Indian Village beginning on
5 May 4, 1962. The Douglas Indian Village had been working with the Corps of Engineers
6 and the Bureau of Indian Affairs to obtain a village harbor until the City of Douglas
7 intervened by clearing the land of homes for purposes of constructing a city harbor.
8
- 9 ● On February 1, 1962, the State of Alaska and the City as plaintiffs successfully brought
10 to the U.S. District Court an action to quiet title to the tidelands of the Juneau Indian
11 Village.
12
- 13 ● The Forest Service in 1964 established a campground on A'akw Kwáan burial sites.
14
- 15 ● In the mid-1960s and early 1970s, the City of Juneau implemented President Lyndon
16 Johnson's "Great Society" program and began an urban renewal effort that focused on
17 twenty-three acres of filled tidelands which included 140 homes (130 were considered
18 "sub-standard"), owned for many years primarily by Alaska Native and Filipino/Native
19 families. This neighborhood on 7th, 8th and 9th Streets and beyond surrounded the
20 Memorial Church that was located on 8th Street. Many in the neighborhood attended the
21 church prior to its closure in 1963. Despite protests by the Alaska Native Brotherhood
22 and Sisterhood, the homes were razed (the Memorial Presbyterian Church building was
23 also razed and the land sold). Although owners were compensated, it wasn't enough for
24 some who had to move in with relatives or others who had to move out the road in trailers
25 which necessitated buying an auto. Urban renewal essentially displaced a tightly knit
26 ethnic neighborhood along with their church, which was closed earlier.⁵²
27

28 Concurrently, local, state and federal governments in Juneau were appropriating Lingit Aani, and
29 disrespecting sacred burial grounds in the process. The federal district court stripped the
30 tidelands from the Juneau Indian Village for community development and private purposes. At a
31 time when Juneau Tlingits were suffering monumental assaults on their ancestors' graves sites
32 and property losses that hugely impacted their livelihoods and subsistence way of life, the
33 comforting and encouraging words of their pastor might have helped them cope, were it not for
34 the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) choosing to close the Memorial Presbyterian Church in the
35 midst of all this profound loss. It is hard to overstate the devastating impact of the Memorial
36 Church's closure. Surely the presence of its ministry would have made a positive contribution to
37 Native life, and to Juneau as a whole during the era of devastating social change and upheaval in
38 the 1960s and beyond.
39

⁵² Kimberly L. Metcalf, ed., *In Sisterhood: The History of Camp 2 of the Alaska Native Sisterhood*, 2008.

1 **Theological, Spiritual, and Social Justice Imperatives**

2
3 In his book, *Stamped from the Beginning*,⁵³ Ibram Kendi documents the historical evolution of
4 racist and anti-racist ideas and actions. He identifies the existence of two types of racism –
5 segregationist racism and assimilationist racism. In the practice of segregationist racism, the
6 dominant class separates itself from those it deems inferior. The distance serves to ensure that
7 dominant White systems and structures are not exposed to or compromised by social contact
8 with Black and Indigenous people and groups. Assimilationist racists believe that Black and
9 Indigenous people of color can “evolve” into full humanity by becoming like White people and
10 adopting White ways. Anti-racism affirms the inherent worth of all people, culture and systems,
11 does not establish separate structures, and does not believe in the inferiority or superiority of any
12 group of people. An examination of the history of Presbyterian Church missionary practices
13 reveals that the first practice was segregationist racism. In Juneau, this led to the establishment of
14 two congregations – one for Whites and one for Natives.

15
16 In the 1950s when the national Presbyterian Church repented of segregation, it did not embrace
17 anti-racism. Instead, it instituted assimilationist racism with the accompanying assumption of the
18 superiority of White Christianity. Thus, when segregation ended, the Presbyterian Church
19 dissolved the congregation originally established to minister to Natives so that Native
20 Presbyterians could go to the White church and learn White church ways. In 1963, the Memorial
21 Presbyterian Church was closed for the same reason it was established by Presbyterian
22 Missionaries 76 years earlier: White supremacist racism. The congregation was opened by racist
23 White supremacy expressed through segregation; it was closed by racist White supremacist
24 assimilationist racism operating under the guise of integration.

25
26 The Presbytery’s and the Mission Board’s theological reflection on their actions was notably
27 shallow. They rushed to embrace an integrationist goal of establishing in Juneau a “strong and
28 united church of all races and classes,” without seriously addressing the damage wrought by
29 centuries of forced segregation. White church leaders failed to heed the warning of the prophet
30 Jeremiah who spoke out against those who seek to sweep under the rug the trauma caused by the
31 history of discrimination:

32
33 ¹⁴They have treated the wound of my people carelessly, saying, “All is well,”
34 when all is not well. ¹⁵They acted shamefully, they committed abomination; yet
35 they were not ashamed, they did not know how to blush... (Jeremiah 6: 14-15a).

36
37 In treating the wound without proper care, national and regional church leaders did not embrace
38 the church’s calling as the Body of Christ. As the Body of Christ, “every action the church takes
39 in the world must be as representatives of our Lord, Jesus Christ. Racism is a sin and is not only
40 a life-negating offense against humanity; it is also an affront to God and goes against the life-

⁵³ Kendi, Ibram X. *Stamped from the Beginning: The Definitive History of Racist Ideas in America*, Bold Type Books, 2016.

1 affirming, inclusive ministry of Jesus Christ.”⁵⁴ It is a denial of the radically egalitarian vision
2 that the Apostle Paul offered the church in Galatia:
3

4 ²⁶ You are all God’s children through faith in Christ Jesus. ²⁷ All of you who were
5 baptized into Christ have clothed yourselves with Christ. ²⁸ There is neither Jew
6 nor Greek; there is neither slave nor free; nor is there male and female, for you are
7 all one in Christ Jesus. ²⁹ Now if you belong to Christ, then indeed you are
8 Abraham’s descendants, heirs according to the promise” (Galatians 3: 26-29,
9 CEB)
10

11 The vision of Galatians was already operative at the Memorial Church, but the lenses of White
12 church leaders were clouded by White supremacy that kept them from seeing this truth.
13

14 Thankfully, the church has not stood still. Four years after the closure of the Memorial
15 Presbyterian Church, the General Assembly adopted the Confession of 1967 that furthered the
16 church’s commitment to racial justice, to ending discrimination, and to seeking reconciliation:
17

18 God has created the peoples of the earth to be one universal family. In his
19 reconciling love, God overcomes the barriers between sisters and brothers and
20 breaks down every form of discrimination based on racial or ethnic difference,
21 real or imaginary. The church is called to bring all people to receive and uphold
22 one another as persons in all relationships of life: in employment, housing,
23 education, leisure, marriage, family, church, and the exercise of political rights.
24 Therefore, the church labors for the abolition of all racial discrimination and
25 ministers to those injured by it. Congregations, individuals, or groups of
26 Christians who exclude, dominate, or patronize others, however subtly, resist the
27 Spirit of God and bring contempt on the faith which they profess.⁵⁵
28

29 In the spirit of the Confession of 1967, this Overture provides redress for the domination and
30 patronization of the Memorial Presbyterian Church that brought contempt on the faith that
31 church leaders espoused.
32

⁵⁴ Correspondence with NLUC Pastor Faith McClellan, February 9, 2021. Rev. McClellan recommended that the Overture include the theological affirmation of the church as the Body of Christ, noting also that the church’s true vocation is “with the guidance of the Holy Spirit, to proclaim God’s justice, mercy, forgiveness, and reconciliation to a broken world.”

⁵⁵ The Confession of 1967— Inclusive Language Version, Office of Theology and Worship, Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.), 2002, 9.44a.

1 The Confession of 1967 also provides guidance for the church’s missionary endeavors. It
2 acknowledges that the

3

4 Christian religion [is]...distinct from God’s self-revelation, [and] has been shaped
5 throughout its history by the cultural forms of its environment.” It further declares
6 that “Christians find parallels between other religions and their own and must
7 approach all religions with openness and respect. Repeatedly God has used the
8 insight of non-Christians to challenge the church to renewal.⁵⁶

9

10 The cultural humility called for by the Confession of 1967 was absent from the church’s
11 missionary encounters with Tlingit people, as it has been across the globe throughout the history
12 of church life. Non-European cultures and worldviews are vibrant and profound; they are not
13 devoid of spiritual depth and understanding. In the case of the Memorial Church and the Juneau
14 community, Tlingit values and spiritual insights contributed invaluablely to the Memorial
15 Presbyterian Church’s life. Key Tlingit spirituality concepts are explicated by Lillian
16 Petershoare:

17

18 Our Tlingit elders and culture bearers teach us that everything has spirit, both the
19 inanimate and animate, with all things being worthy of respect. From a young
20 age, we are taught to live in harmony, maintaining social and spiritual balance
21 between eagles and ravens.⁵⁷ Coastal Tlingits belong to either moiety based on
22 their maternal lineage, while inland Tlingits belong to the wolf or crow moiety.

23

24 As Tlingits, we practice *Haa Shuká* knowing that we are connected to our
25 ancestors and future generations.⁵⁸ Our traditional values instill in us a
26 responsibility to ensure that our descendants know what it means to be a Tlingit
27 and to “imitate their ancestors” (embrace Tlingit lifeways).

28

29 We believe our ancestors’ spirits are among us. In ceremonies to remove the grief
30 of those who have lost a loved one, we speak of our ancestors as being with us—
31 comforting and healing our sorrow. For example, Jessie Dalton of Hoonah in one
32 of the finest recorded oratories, cried out, “Yes how very much it is as if they’re
33 [the ancestors] revealing their faces.”⁵⁹ Later in the same speech, she refers to the

⁵⁶ The Confession of 1967— Inclusive Language Version, Office of Theology and Worship, Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.), 2002, 9.41, 9.42.

⁵⁷ Correspondence with Dr. Rosita Worl, February 4, 2021.

⁵⁸ Nora Marks Dauenhauer and Richard Dauenhauer. *Haa Shuká, Our Ancestors*, pp. 28, 29.

⁵⁹ Jessie Dalton, Hoonah. 1968. as translated in Dauenhauers’ *Haa Tuwunáagu Yís, for Healing Our Spirit*, p. 245.

1 mourners' father's sisters (ancestors for whom the clan crest is the Tern) as being
2 terns flying over those who are grieving, letting their down fall like snow
3 (bringing peace and comfort) and taking the grief back to their nests.⁶⁰ Another
4 example of reinforcing our ancestors' presence: Elder Dorothy Peters Coronell
5 shared in a recorded interview, "We never lose them; they are all here in our
6 hearts."⁶¹

7
8 Because we carry our ancestors (*Haa Shuká*) in our hearts, and believe that their
9 spirits are among us, Dr. Soboleff's heartbreak over the closure of the Memorial
10 Church is a pain that remains and reverberates deeply within us. It is an offense
11 that yet remains unresolved. As we speak of the closure, our pain is
12 communicated in our choice of words and in the passion behind the words.
13

14 Our understanding of God is enhanced when we are able to view the creator through the lens of
15 all cultures. During the segregation era, and later during the assimilation push, White church
16 leaders and missionaries failed to recognize the profound cultural contributions of the Tlingits.
17 Tlingit and other Indigenous spiritualities contribute to authentic multiethnic, intercultural church
18 life.

19
20 Only in recent years has the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) begun to articulate a commitment to
21 antiracism as it seeks to embrace the future as a multiethnic, intercultural communion. With
22 regard to how this commitment addresses PC(USA) history and relationships with Native
23 Americans, Alaska Natives, and Native Hawaiians, in 2016, the General Assembly offered a
24 general apology for its complicity in the promotion of the Doctrine of Discovery and its
25 participation in systemic racism against Indigenous peoples, stating:

26
27 We know that apology is only a first step in the larger hope of repentance and
28 reconciliation. We seek the guidance of relationships ... as we seek to identify and
29 act on restorative practices and policies at the relational, communal, and national
30 level.⁶²

31
32 The redress for the closure of the Memorial Presbyterian Church called for in this Overture is
33 one step of repentance and restorative practice that will demonstrate the General Assembly's
34 commitment to repairing damage caused by White supremacy, and to the pursuit of ongoing

⁶⁰ Ibid., p. 251.

⁶¹ Dorothy Peters Coronell James. Interview conducted by the late David Katzeek, Sealaska Heritage Institute, for the Latseen Leadership Training Program.

⁶² Offering an Apology to Native Americans, Alaska Natives, and Native Hawaiians, <https://www.pc-biz.org/#/search/6350>.

1 healing and reconciliation within church and society. Without reparative actions, the words of
2 apology ring hollow. The response called for in the recommendation section of this Overture will
3 provide demonstrable, national commitment to the church’s antiracist posture with regard to
4 relationships with Native people in Juneau and Southeast Alaska.
5

6 **Actions by NLUC and the Presbytery of the Northwest Coast**

7

8 The efforts of the Office of the General Assembly and the Presbyterian Mission Agency will join
9 local and regional efforts undertaken by the Northern Light congregation and the Northwest
10 Coast Presbytery.
11

12 The Congregation of the Northern Light United Church (“NLUC”), the successor to the Northern
13 Light Presbyterian Church, recommended by the NLUC Council, has adopted the attached
14 Resolution 2021-01, Regarding Acknowledgment, Apology, and Reparations to demonstrate its
15 repentance and intent to pursue healing and reconciliation within our church, community, and
16 society.
17

18 *NLUC understands that the NWCP Executive Board is working on this and trusts it will insert*
19 *below whatever is most appropriate. It is NLUC’s profound belief that that we must each,*
20 *individually and collectively, take action and that the best advocacy at the General Assembly for*
21 *passage of this Overture will be proof that this isn’t a request being made only for someone else*
22 *to take action, but rather a request that the General Assembly join us all in taking this action.*
23

24 Actions taken by the Northwest Coast Presbytery, as a successor body of the Alaska Presbytery
25 for PC(USA) congregations in Southeast Alaska, to acknowledge its culpability and silence
26 regarding the closure are
27

- 28 a. Supporting the efforts of the NLUC as referenced above;
- 29 b. Supporting the Alaska Cluster of churches in Southeast Alaska in their efforts
30 to remain viable, to welcome members from all cultures, especially Alaska
31 Native cultures, and to encourage and train lay leaders, accordingly;
- 32 c. Taking affirmative, transparent and open steps to assure that, when the
33 Presbytery considers difficult decisions about the future of local
34 congregations, the Presbytery’s resources will not be allocated in ways that
35 favor predominantly White churches or disfavor primarily People of Color
36 congregations; and

1 d. Using the proceeds of the sale of the Sitka Presbyterian Church building* to
2 fund a Native Resource Center for Southeast Alaska, consistent with the
3 Native American Coordinating Council's recent recommendations.⁶³
4

5 **Conclusion**

6
7 Actions always speak more loudly than words. This Overture is a plea that the General
8 Assembly join NLUC and the Northwest Coast Presbytery in their tangible actions to provide
9 reparative justice.
10

11 In proposing this Overture, members of the NLUC Native Ministries Committee
12 have sought to heal our ancestors, heal ourselves, and heal the land on which the
13 Presbyterian missionaries, the Board of Missions, and the Alaska Presbytery
14 committed the offenses outlined herein, with special focus on the Memorial
15 Church closure.⁶⁴
16

17 Now is the time for all parties to deal honestly with the past, and together to undertake the
18 obligation and opportunity to improve the future.

*Net proceeds from the sale was \$280,542.27

⁶³ Native American Coordinating Council Report to GA 224, Recommendation 4.c.: "Encourage mid councils to disburse a portion of the proceeds to Native American ministries when buildings or property are sold, symbolic of good stewardship"; and Recommendation 5.e.: "Creation of Native American centers, programs, and resources outside of reservations."

⁶⁴ Lillian Petershoare, February 7, 2021.

1 **Resolution 2021-01**

2 **Regarding Acknowledgment, Apology, and Reparations**

3 **ADOPTED AT A CONGREGATIONAL MEETING HELD AUGUST 29, 2021**

4
5 *A resolution of the Northern Light United Church (NLUC) congregation of Juneau, Alaska,*
6 *recommended by the NLUC Council, authorizing the use of church resources to acknowledge,*
7 *apologize, and make reparations for the wrongful and forcible closure in 1963 of the Memorial*
8 *Presbyterian Church of Juneau by the Alaska Presbytery with concurrence of the Presbyterian*
9 *Board of National Missions.*

10 **Whereas** the forced closure of Memorial Presbyterian Church was an egregious act of spiritual
11 abuse committed in alignment with nationwide explicit and implicit racism toward Alaska
12 Natives, Native Americans, and other people of color; and

13 **Whereas** the closure caused direct harm and pain to the members of Memorial Presbyterian
14 Church, to the Reverend Dr. Walter Soboleff, and to Alaska Natives and American Indians
15 throughout Southeast Alaska; and

16 **Whereas** the consequences of the closure of the thriving, multicultural Memorial Presbyterian
17 Church reverberate to this day; and

18 **Whereas** Northern Light United Church is calling upon the Presbytery of the Northwest Coast,
19 the successor to the Alaska Presbytery, to overture the 225th General Assembly (2022) to
20 acknowledge, apologize, and make reparations for the egregious actions of the Presbyterian
21 Church (U.S.A.) that led to the unwarranted closure of the Memorial Presbyterian Church; and

22 **Whereas** Northern Light United Church, as the successor to the Northern Light Presbyterian
23 Church, has benefited from the closure of Memorial Presbyterian Church; and

24 **Whereas** our youth have called upon us to "let justice roll down as waters, and righteousness as
25 a mighty stream" (Amos 5:24) by recognizing that we continue to benefit from the land and soil
26 on which we worship, and by surrendering ill-gotten gains; and

27 **Whereas** we acknowledge our conscious and unconscious biases, and our participation in the
28 systems that maintain pervasive racism and institutionalized white supremacy, we commit to
29 taking action to unlearn these destructive attitudes and behaviors and to raise awareness within
30 our community to eliminate racism; and

31 **Whereas** we believe, as disciples of Jesus Christ, that the call of discipleship means shifting
32 from a scarcity mindset to one of abundance. The miracles of the loaves and fishes described in
33 each of the Gospels stir our hearts and souls to be generous and to believe that in Christ there is
34 always enough; and

35 **Whereas** we believe that Jesus Christ calls us, as a church and as individuals, to mend the
36 wrongs we have done to others and to strive for justice, reconciliation, and renewal; and

1 **Whereas** we believe that Jesus Christ calls us to strive against racism and any form of injustice
2 within our congregation, our church denominations, and our community;

3 **Now therefore be it RESOLVED** that

- 4 1. We confess and repent for the harm caused and will offer a formal apology according to
5 traditional Tlingit custom and practice within 90 days of the adoption of this resolution or
6 another date recommended by the Native Ministries Committee.
- 7 2. We will rename the church to include a Tlingit name and an English name to honor the
8 Alaska Native people on whose traditional lands the church stands, the members and
9 families who experienced pain and loss as a result of the historic and institutional racism
10 in our denominations, and the vibrant ministry and faith of the Memorial Presbyterian
11 Church. The Council will invite (1) the Native Ministries Committee to identify a Tlingit
12 name to recommend and (2) all congregation members to consider and comment on the
13 combination of the recommended Tlingit name and one or more options for the English
14 name proposed by Council. The comment period will be no shorter than two weeks after
15 which Council will review all options and select the new name for our church. We will
16 conclude this process at the earliest reasonable time.
- 17 3. We will begin all worship services and other events at the church with a formal
18 acknowledgment recognizing the traditional and historic stewards of the land on which
19 the church stands, as recommended by the Native Ministries Committee.
- 20 4. We will celebrate the ministry and contributions of the Reverend Dr. Walter Soboleff on
21 the second Sunday of November of each year to commemorate the birthday of Dr.
22 Soboleff on November 14.
- 23 5. We will dedicate the fellowship hall as the Reverend Dr. Walter Soboleff Memorial Hall
24 at the January 2022 Annual Congregational Meeting.
- 25 6. We will expand the use of Tlingit-language prayers, hymns, music, and other resources
26 during weekly worship services, and invite Alaska Native ministers and lay leaders to
27 preach when possible.
- 28 7. We will invest in efforts, including the Vital Congregations Revitalization Initiative, that
29 support meaningful invitation and welcome to Alaska Native people to worship with our
30 church, serve in leadership roles, and minister to our church and community and make
31 efforts to further expand to be the kind of welcoming multicultural and intercultural
32 church that Dr. Soboleff pastored.
- 33 8. We will commission, within 90 days of the adoption of this resolution, story boards for
34 permanent display in the church that tell
 - 35 a. the joyful history of the Memorial Presbyterian Church and Dr. Soboleff's
36 ministry;
 - 37 b. the racism and pain of its closure; and
 - 38 c. the renewal these actions are intended to help us all achieve.

- 1 9. We will commission, within 180 days of the adoption of this resolution, screens, house
2 posts or a totem pole, or other significant art or sculpture created by Alaska Native artists
3 or others, as approved by the Native Ministries Committee, to commemorate the
4 contributions of Memorial Presbyterian Church and Alaska Native members of our
5 community of faith, to be installed in the church or on church grounds.
- 6 10. We will establish a curriculum development committee comprised of NLUC clergy and
7 members experienced in Christian Education to lead development, in collaboration with
8 the Native Ministries Committee, of curriculum for adults, youth and children, regarding
9 the events described in the Overture to teach the history of the Memorial Presbyterian
10 Church and its closure, to be delivered at least once each calendar year.
- 11 11. We will collect, preserve, and share the oral histories from people affected by the closure
12 of Memorial Presbyterian Church, as well as Tlingit elders in the church and community,
13 to increase our understanding of the consequences of the closure and to inform our
14 communal journey of faith.
- 15 12. We will provide scholarships or grants, directly or through appropriate organizations
16 approved by Council,
- 17 a. to Alaska Native children and youth who seek to participate in
- 18 i. traditional art, dance, and culture programs sponsored by Tlingit tribal and
19 heritage organizations;
- 20 ii. Tlingit language programs; and/or
- 21 iii. church-affiliated camps, retreats, mission trips, and other activities.
- 22 b. for Alaska Native students from Juneau and other Southeast Alaska communities
23 who seek to attend:
- 24 i. college or seminary to study for Christian ministry, or
- 25 ii. other post-secondary education programs identified by the Native
26 Ministries Committee.
- 27 13. We will provide sponsorships
- 28 a. annually of Tlingit-language programs offered by the Juneau School District, and
29 b. of early childhood Tlingit language and culture resources for community
30 childcare, preschool, and Head Start programs.
- 31 14. We will request, and provide financial support for, the City and Borough of Juneau to
32 install an acknowledgment at the historic site of Memorial Presbyterian Church.
- 33 15. We will provide financial and volunteer resources to Central Council of Tlingit & Haida
34 Indian Tribes of Alaska re-entry programs focused on supporting people returning to the
35 community after incarceration.

- 1 16. We will work closely with Sealaska Heritage Institute, as applicable, with regard to
2 certain of the reparations described in this resolution.
- 3 17. We will engage, if invited, with other historically Alaska Native churches in
4 Southeast
5 Alaska, to honor and amplify their ministries.
- 6 18. We will continue to seek and listen to the wisdom of our Alaska Native members to
7 guide
8 our ongoing reconciliation and reparations efforts.
- 9 19. We will reserve, within 90 days of the adoption of this resolution, not less than
10 \$350,000.00, which may be allocated in an amount of no less than \$50,000 per
11 year, from
12 the General Fund Investments as restricted funds to be used for reparations. Any
13 donations made specifically to support the church's reparations efforts will be added
14 to
15 these restricted funds. The restricted funds for reparations may be used over a
16 period of
17 years, as needed, to implement the reparations described in this resolution, and
18 others as
19 may be determined in the future.
- 20 20. We will commit ourselves to sharing with the community, within our
21 denominations, and
22 with other churches the story of the closure of the Memorial Presbyterian Church
23 and the
24 efforts we are making to acknowledge the closure, apologize, and make reparations.
- 25 21. We will review and revise, as appropriate, this Resolution to ensure that the
26 monetary
27 reparations of the Northern Light United Church are supplementary to, and not
28 duplicative of commitments, if any, that may be made by the Presbytery of the
29 Northwest
30 Coast and PC(USA) General Assembly.
- 31 22. Deadlines in this resolution may be extended by formal action of the Council upon
32 request of the Native Ministries Committee or after consultation with the Native
33 Ministries Committee. In the event the COVID-19 pandemic prevents in-person
34 gatherings, any dates for events most appropriately held in person may be delayed.

35 **Recommended by the Council of Northern Light United Church on August 12, 2021.**

36 **Approved by a majority of the congregation present in person or virtually at a
37 specially
38 called meeting on August 29, 2021.**

39 ,

40