

On November 12, 2023, St. Mark's Evangelical Lutheran Church, Birdsboro, PA, held their annual Native American worship service in honor of November being Native American Heritage Month. I attended the worship service and wanted to share my experience with you.

St. Mark's Lutheran Church has a partnership with the Oglala Sioux Nation of Native Americans in Pine Ridge Reservation, South Dakota, one of the poorest communities in the United States, and has been supporting them in many ways with their giving and their prayers.

In the worship service, the English translations used for the liturgy were:

Creator as the name used for God  
Creator-Sets-Free as the name used for Jesus  
The Chosen One as the name used for Christ  
The Great Spirit as the name used for the Holy Spirit

The music for the worship service had a Native American vibe, words, and theme involving the sacredness of nature and life.

Copal incense from Central and Southwestern North America was used during the service as Native Americans used for sacred services.

Pr. Jim Farnsworth's message was dedicated to Native Americans and how they were treated by the new immigrants to America. He asked that we remember and honor those who have gone before us -- the original inhabitants of this land. He also asked that we have a right relationship with God and with each other, and that we have a responsibility to repair relations. We reconcile by learning the truth, having love for each other, and breaking down barriers with others. He suggested that we learn the history of our area by looking through the eyes of our neighbors, and that we are called to be good neighbors.

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