

**ITEM C.200
FOR INFORMATION**

**Native American Leadership Institute
Focuses on leading in times of change**

Any national gathering of Native Americans is a time of renewing friendships, making new friends and sharing stories of mutual ministry. Members of more than 13 Native tribes from seven states gathered in Greensboro, N.C., in October for leadership training, to share best practices of ministry and leadership and to learn more about leadership and service opportunities in the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.)

Leaders of Native American congregations are determined to do what it takes to ensure the future of Native American Presbyterian congregations is strong as both church and society experience rapid change. Leaders attending the event participated in sessions on youth ministry, spiritual formation, Presbyterian polity as well as budget and finance. A panel discussion addressed questions about the state of the Native American church. Participants also learned some of the basic skills of funds development and fund raising, which many believe they will find helpful as they continue to serve small congregations with limited resources.

There are 95 Native American congregations in the PC (USA). Several are more than 100 years old, and many were mission sites beginning with the Shinnecock Presbyterian Church on Long Island, N.Y., in 1741. Most Native American congregations are located on reservations or in communities deeply impacted by poverty and unemployment.

“This event was a great way for Native American church leaders to meet one another and to meet national staff,” said the Rev. Ron McKinney, an ordained teaching elder who led a session on spiritual formation. “It is important that we use this opportunity to stay in touch with one another and to share what is working in our churches. We can learn from one another and encourage one another going forward.”

The Native American Congregational Support Office and the Racial Ethnic Leadership Development Office sponsored the Native American Leadership Institute. The event was one of three major conferences held by offices in Racial Ethnic & Women's Ministries last week. The Racial Ethnic & New Immigrant Coaches Training Event and the Women of Color Consultation, which followed the Native American Leadership Institute, were also held in Greensboro.

The Native American Congregational Support Office provides leadership development and networking opportunities for teaching elders, ruling elders, commissioned ruling elders, Native American men and women, the American Indian Youth Council and other leaders in the church. The office also inspires and encourages the development and redevelopment of Native American churches and equips leaders with new ways to share their faith in Jesus Christ.

More information on the leadership development work in Racial Ethnic & Women's Ministries can be found at <http://www.presbyterianmission.org/ministries/racial-ethnic-womens-ministries/>. You can contribute to the leadership development work of Racial Ethnic & Women's Ministries by contributing to the Racial Ethnic Leadership Development Fund at presbyterianmission.org/donate/E051484.