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Indigenous Peoples' Justice Project Presentation

McFarland, WI- A presentation by Mark Charles, national indigenous author and speaker will be hosted by the McFarland United Church of Christ (UCC) on Saturday, November 18, 2023, from 6:30-8:30 p.m. at Waubesa Intermediate School, 5605 Red Oak Trail, McFarland. This presentation is envisioned to be an impetus to building meaningful collaboration and justice work around the "Doctrine of Discovery" and healing past injustices with the Ho-Chunk Nation and other Wisconsin Indigenous Nations.

"Many people are unaware of the Doctrine of Discovery, what it is, and the need for acknowledging the oppression of Indigenous Peoples within its context. Relearning a truthful past and facing the truth about the "Doctrine of Discovery" may be hard for many individuals or groups to acknowledge. We want to promote greater awareness of Indigenous Peoples' injustice. Together with community partners and other churches we are committed to relearning our part in the history of Indigenous Peoples. We want a light shone on justice for Native Peoples," said Rachel Saladis, Chair of Racial Justice Ministries,

The Indigenous Peoples' Justice Project begins with Mark Charles' presentation during the weekend of November 18-20. Several learning opportunities are planned. Saturday evening, November 18th the presentation and reception 6:30-8:30pm is open to all. It will be aired via Zoom and recorded. Mr. Charles will provide his message during a 10:00 Sunday service at the McFarland UCC, 5710 Anthony Street. Monday Mark Charles will speak with students at the McFarland High School.

The UCC Racial Justice Ministries through the Justice Project will continue working in a collaborative partnership with the McFarland Village Board, School District, McFarland Equity Project and the Indigenous Solidarity Collective. Other project partners include: The Wisconsin Council of Churches, Wisconsin Conference on Racial Justice Task Force, Ho-Chunk Nation, and local congregations. The McFarland community worked with the Ho-Chunk Nation to create a formal Land Acknowledgement which recognizes the history of their ancestral land and a relationship with the Ho-Chunk Nation has been formed. A well-attended ceremony celebrated this land acknowledgement.

"This growing partnership is seen as ongoing, proactive, and responsive. The Justice Project will bring everyone together. These efforts within McFarland and with surrounding communities will have a ripple effect. I've been inspired. We can dedicate to working and commit to healing with the Ho-Chunk and other Tribal Nations," said Araceli Wehr, leader in justice work of McFarland UCC.

Pastor Bryan Sirchio said, "Relearning a truthful past and facing the truth about the "Doctrine of Discovery" and oppression of Indigenous People is difficult for the church, individuals and groups to acknowledge. Our congregation along with other UCC churches and aligned partners will discern the church's role in confronting **all** racism. Each of us will be encouraged to rethink how can we become involved, how can we take meaningful action toward reconciling and healing with Indigenous Peoples."

Invitation: Community members are welcome to attend these learning opportunities during November 18-19, 2023. Zoom access will be provided with a registration link.

When: 6:30 to 8:30 p.m. on Saturday, November 18, 2023

Where: Waubesa Intermediate School, 5605 Red Oak Trail, McFarland, WI 53558