

CONSIDERING THE NAME OF THE PRESBYTERY Announcing a Season of Discernment

Following the recommendation from the Land and Name Acknowledgement Task Team (LANA) to the May 13 Presbytery Assembly, the members of Blackhawk Presbytery have entered into a “Season of Discernment” to consider the name of our Presbytery.

The LANA team has been at work since the fall of 2023 - seeking knowledge and awareness of the pre-colonial history of the land encompassed by the presbytery, and of the past and present significance of the person whose name we have been using, the Sac leader, Black Hawk. Resources are available on the LANA page of the Presbytery’s website, (blackhawkpresbytery.org/land-and-name-acknowledgement/). They include a guide to indigenous sites to visit in Illinois and a presentation, “What’s in a Name?” highlighting the history of this land and it’s people. Knowledge and awareness brings us to the challenge of taking action to recognize and repair past injustice.

Believing that any action should come out of relationship, the LANA group introduced April Holder, member of Black Hawk’s tribe, the Sac and Fox Nation at the May Assembly meeting. She is a seventh generation descendant of Black Hawk and shared the impact Black Hawk’s legacy still holds with his people today. Her gracious message to us stressed the particular importance of forming allyships with marginalized people and then taking action to support each other and elevate all voices. Most impactful was her emotional sharing of her native name, the names of her ancestors and the immense spiritual gravity inherent in the practice and traditions of naming in her community.

It is from this point that we invite you to join us as we seek the guidance of the Holy Spirit in discerning a path forward. The attached flyer outlines a variety of opportunities to learn, hear all voices, and discern. We hope you will join us!