

Kelly Sherman-Conroy

NATIVE AMERICAN THEOLOGIAN,
EDUCATOR, SPEAKER, HEALER AND ACTIVIST



Dr. Kelly Sherman-Conroy , Mato Wašté Winyan, or Good Bear Woman, is a member of the Oglala Lakota Nation. She has a passion for social justice, racial reparations, healing, and storytelling that has been felt across the globe. As the very first Native Woman Theologian with a P.hD. in the ELCA, she's passionately pursued her calling to challenge the traditional conventions of theology. Her work primarily focuses on systemic theology, with a unique approach to Lakota Spirituality and how it can inform Christianity and instill healing.

She's not only a trailblazer in her field, but her perspectives and insights have gained her recognition and admiration both nationally and internationally. Her incredible contributions to racial reparations and advocacy for marginalized communities have changed the minds and hearts of many.

Kelly is a woman who walks alongside people of all cultures, providing a ministry that delves into the intersections of identity, personal narratives, and faith. With over two decades of experience teaching and leading in ministry, Kelly's involvement in various organizations, such as the Minnesota Council of Churches and the American Indian Alaska Native Lutheran Association, highlights her passion for cultural activism. She keeps busy as an adjunct Professor, the Director for MYLE- Multicultural Youth Leadership Event, serving on the Board of Directors for the ELCA Youth Ministry Network and Minnesota Council of Churches, and the Director of Public Ministry at Nativity Lutheran Church, Minneapolis, and Convenor of the Twin Cities Interfaith Movement Chaplains. Her commitment to diversity and inclusion is evident in all aspects of her life as she actively works towards creating a more inclusive world.

Kelly's ability to speak the truth in love from a Native perspective coupled with her humility and humor makes for a powerful reception of truth in the hearts of Natives and non-Natives alike.



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LIFE EXPERIENCE



Kelly is a devoted mother and friend. Her young son, Ciaran, means the world to her, and she wants nothing more than to see him grow up happy and healthy. Kelly loves spending time with her family and friends, and enjoys learning new things and you will often find her writing, reading, listening to music, and visiting art museums. She is an intelligent woman with a kind heart who cares deeply about others.



Kelly has led a fascinating life. She was a part of the ELCA Young Adult in Global Mission program and served in the inner city of Birmingham, UK, for over six years developing interfaith programs and relationships. There, she learned about different cultures and customs from all over the world. This experience helped her develop a deeper understanding of interfaith and multicultural relationships.



Kelly also served with Habitat International Romania, helping to build homes for families in need. Additionally, she led youth pilgrimages to Taize, France - an interfaith spiritual community whose mission is to promote peace and reconciliation through prayer and music. Most recently, Kelly convened the Twin Cities Interfaith Movement Chaplains during the early unrest after the murder of George Floyd. She trained over 400 chaplains in various mental health and safe practices, teaching them what it means to be in public ministry.

With a heart full of compassion and a passion for storytelling, Kelly comes from a family dedicated to uplifting and advocating their Native community's voices. She is the embodiment of a teacher who opens hearts and minds through conversations. She may sit on committees and boards within the ELCA and beyond that promote diversity, equity, and inclusion in the church and invites countless conversations, but Kelly truly shines as a prose writer. She has composed heartwarming liturgies for prestigious events such as the Week of Christian Unity by the World Council of Churches and the renowned Festival of Homiletics.