

In 2020 during the awakening awareness of the need to examine the country's past treatment of racial minorities, a group began seeking information about the local Indigenous Peoples of the California San Francisco Bay Area. We learned of the Ohlone tribe seeking to stop an open pit mine being constructed in a sacred area south of San Jose and offered members of the First Congregational Church of Palo Alto suggestions of how to assist the tribe in objecting to the granting of permission for the open pit mine by the county planning commission.

We scheduled monthly gatherings to examine areas of historical injustice to the Ohlone Peoples and alerted a mailing list of 40 interested people to the topics of our open Zoom meetings. We watched videos and read histories of Indian Boarding Schools. We followed news reports revealing graveyards of Indigenous children at boarding schools.

Almost two years after our first discussions of the Ohlone Peoples, we are planning a forum on May 29 to discuss a proposed Land Acknowledgement for the First Congregational Church of Palo Alto recognizing the injustices of the past which have preceded our church's establishment. We plan to enter phase 3 of our Learn, Lament, and Listen of the Ohlone Justice Project with responses to Indigenous requests. We are honored to be asked to support the H.R. 5444 / S. 2907, the Truth and Healing Commission on Indian Boarding School Policies in the US Act to bring to light the experiences of the past and present growing out of the Indian Boarding Schools.

Members of the Ohlone Justice Project of the Peace and Justice Task Force of First Congregational Church of Palo Alto (United Church of Christ).