

Spring 2023 Bishop's Convocation Presenters



Vance Blackfox, an Indigenous theologian and citizen of the Cherokee Nation, serves the churchwide organization of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America (ELCA) as the Director of [Indigenous Ministries and Tribal Relations](#). An alumnus of Texas Lutheran University (TLU) and the Lutheran School of Theology at Chicago (LSTC), Vance has served the ELCA in multiple capacities throughout the years. He is at present the Indigenous Theologian and Coordinating Team Member for the ELCA's Theological Round Table, as well as creator and producer of the Vine Deloria Jr. Theological Symposium hosted at LSTC.

Vance is the founder and director of [Other+Wise](#), a multi-site cultural education and cultural immersion program for youth and student groups from across the country. He has also served as the Director of Communications at the National Native American Boarding School Healing Coalition, as the Director of Communications for Native Americans in Philanthropy, and has held executive director positions at the Haskell Foundation, which supports Haskell Indian Nations University, and the Oaks Indian Mission. Vance has served as the Guest Curator of the Indian Museum at the University of Texas at San Antonio Institute of Texan Cultures, and presently serves as the Indigenous theologian for the Faith-Based Initiative for the City of San Antonio, where he currently resides.

Local Indigenous Elders and Leaders

Jay Bowen - was born into a traditional Upper Skagit family. He was mentored in the responsibility of his God-given gifts. Raised in the Skagit Valley Washington, he received his higher education at Western Washington University, Institute of American Indian Arts, and Rhode Island School of Design.

He practiced art and raised four children while making custom fine jewelry and working in other mediums. His art includes poetry, steel sculpture, glass blowing, fine gold jewelry and oil paintings.

Jay connects to the spiritual world and his own walk as an intimate experience. His paintings are healing and are all meant to be medicine. His sculptures are healing and uniting humanity in a common goal of understanding and concerns for each other's lives. His poetry speaks of the human experience, unspoken. He uses the power color and movement to express the life around us. He has learned to live in two worlds and find common ties. He refers to himself as an artist as an Expressionist.

Jay Julius - is a fisherman, father, and proud Lummi Nation Tribal member who upholds his Xa xalh Xechnging (sacred obligation) by continuing to empower Native leadership, and to advocate for the Salish Sea. Born and raised at Lummi Nation in Bellingham, Washington, Jay spent a number of years in California as a strategist and entrepreneur before returning home to Lummi.

Jay brings a wealth of experience in leadership development, Native legal and economic issues, and motivational speaking. As a leader, Jay is known for his strategic thinking, [his collaborative approach](#), and for his gift in facilitating conflict resolution. He has served as Chair of, and on Council at, Lummi Nation; has organized and executed Tribal, local, regional, and national campaigns; and has working relationships at all levels of government. He is a bridge-builder, using empathy and storytelling to bring people together.

He coaches executives and teams to play to their strengths and to get the work done.

Kay Knott - is an Elder in the Upper Skagit Indian Tribe. She was raised in the Skagit Valley receiving her BA from Western Washington University.

She is a parent and grandparent and served a foster parent for 15 years. She served as the Executive Director of the Inter-tribal Housing Authority, Directed the Big Brothers, Big Sisters, and the Director of Youthnet. She established and ran a Pregnancy and Parenting Teen program. She served on the Indian Child Welfare Advisory Board for ten years and a board member for the National Housing Authority.

She continues to work to celebrate and recover Upper Skagit traditions, relationships, and ways.