

LAND AND TERRITORIAL ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

Anglican Diocese of Niagara

Acknowledging the land is the process of deliberately naming the location in which we are situated as Indigenous land, and the fact that Indigenous people have rights to this land. It is through their generosity and good hearts that we are able to gather in peace.

Acknowledging the territory and the First Nations, Inuit or Métis peoples who have cared for the land, allows us to reflect on our relationship with it, and the continuous process of colonization that deeply impacts the possibility of right relationship with Indigenous people. It also demonstrates the commitment of the Anglican Church of Canada to the Truth and Reconciliation Commission's Calls to Action and the United Nations Declaration of Rights for Indigenous Peoples.

TREATY FACTS

In order to undertake an acknowledgement with integrity, it is important to have a basic understanding of colonial history, especially when it comes to treaty-making.

Find out about the treaties in your area here, or Treaties and Agreements and from KAIROS, here.

YOUR RELATIONSHIP TO THE LAND

A land acknowledgement goes beyond the historical facts of the First Nations peoples or treaties. This is an opportunity for non-Indigenous people to reflect on their own relationship to the land. Have you taken it for granted or are you conscious of the gift from the Creator? Share an experience of being connected to the land and what it means to you.

PROCLAIM IT ALOUD

While a formal territorial land acknowledgement may be posted at entranceways, on bulletin boards, and projected onto screens, it is essential to offer an oral land acknowledgement to begin a liturgical service or parish gathering.

This can include the facts of the peoples and treaties in which you live or serve, as well as a brief personal reflection on one's relationship to the land as a settler, immigrant, or refugee.

LAND ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS AND WHY THEY MATTER

Narrated by Bruce Weaver, a member of Church of the Apostles, Guelph, Firekeeper and Indigenous Educator, this video was created by the University of Guelph to remind viewers that Land Acknowledgements are not just a symbol of recognition but are a platform where meaningful steps towards reconciliation can be taken. Click here or on the picture below for the video link.



THE 4 COMPONENTS

1. Name which Indigenous territories you are currently on. Be sure to practice the pronunciation.
2. Explain why you are acknowledging the land.
3. Address the relevance of Indigenous rights to the subject matter of your service, event, meeting, or to you in a personal way.
4. Put the answers for the above questions together as a statement.

RESOURCES

The following resources can be used to create a Territorial Land Acknowledgement reflecting your unique context. Should you not feel ready to craft your own at this point, you will find examples to use on the following page.

- [Native Land Digital](#)
- [KAIROS](#)
- [Reconciliation Toolkit, Anglican Church of Canada](#)
- [Amnesty International](#)
- [Listening to Indigenous Voices](#)

"Land contains the languages, the stories, and the histories of the peoples. It provides water, air, shelter, and food. Land participates in the ceremonies and songs. And land is home." --Thomas King

FOR MORE INFORMATION

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Sample Land and Territorial Acknowledgements

Creativity is encouraged as you develop or employ an acknowledgement for your particular context. What follows are several examples that have been drawn or adapted from a number of sources.

GENERAL

1) For thousands of years, Indigenous peoples have walked on this land; their relationship with the land is at the centre of their lives and spirituality. We are gathered on the traditional territory of several Indigenous peoples, including the Neutrals, the Mississauga, the Anishnaabe and the Haudenosaunee. We acknowledge their continuing stewardship of this land.

2) We acknowledge with respect the history, spirituality, and culture of the Indigenous peoples with whom the Upper Canada Treaties were signed and the territory wherein our church resides, and our responsibility as Treaty members. We also honour the heritage and gifts of Métis people. May our actions be guided by our commitment to reconciliation.

3) Welcome to this service of worship. We begin by acknowledging the traditional territory upon which we gather this morning. For many thousands of years, the (name the nation or nations) have sought to walk gently on this land. They offered assistance to the first European travellers to this territory and shared their knowledge for survival in what was at times a harsh climate. We seek a new relationship with the Original Peoples of this land, one based in honour and deep respect.

4) We acknowledge our presence on the ancestral lands governed by the Dish With One Spoon Wampum between the Haudenosaunee Confederacy and the Anishinaabe Nation, an agreement to peaceably share and care for the lands and resources around the Great Lakes. In a spirit of reconciliation, may we always seek to respect the history, spirituality, and culture of Indigenous Peoples and uphold our continuing responsibility as treaty people.

AREA SPECIFIC

5) **Hamilton:** We would like to begin this service/event/meeting by acknowledging that the land on which we gather is the traditional territory of the Haudenosaunee and Anishinaabe. This territory is covered by the Upper Canada Treaties and directly adjacent to Haldimand Treaty territory.

6) **Halton:** From the lands of the Anishinaabe to the Attawandaron, the Haudenosaunee and the Métis, the lands surrounding the Great Lakes are steeped with Indigenous history. We acknowledge and thank the Mississaugas of the New Credit First Nation for being stewards of this territory.

7) **Guelph:** We acknowledge that we are on land that, at the time of contact, was held by the Attawandaron as an area of trade and ceremony by the two rivers. At various times the land was occupied by both Haudenosaunee from the south and Anishnaabe from the north. In more recent times the Huron Treaty gave rights to the Mississaugas of New Credit. May we who dwell on, or visit this land also be good stewards and honour those who came before us.

8) **St. Catharines:** We would like to begin this service/event/meeting by acknowledging that the land we gather on is the traditional territory of Anishinaabe and Haudenosaunee people.



VIRTUAL MEETINGS

9) Before we begin this important conversation, it is essential to ground it in the acknowledgement that, from wherever we are joining, for those of us who are non-Indigenous, we are settlers, and we are guests on this land.

The city in which I stand today, is situated upon the ancestral Anishinaabe and Haudenosaunee Confederacy land as determined by the Dish with One Spoon Wampum Agreement. It is also an area with longstanding relationships with the Mississaugas of the Credit First Nation and the Six Nations of the Grand River. All of us are somewhere on Turtle Island today. If you know the traditional name of the territory in which you are located, please enter it in the chat.

We are grateful to the Indigenous peoples of Turtle Island who have cared for these lands since time immemorial. We hold our hands up to their amazing resistance, resilience, and strength in the face of ongoing dispossession and colonial violence.

To acknowledge these lands is to take one step in demonstrating our commitment to beginning the process of dismantling the ongoing legacies of settler colonialism. May we bring that same commitment and spirit of truth-seeking and reconciliation to our conversation today. And so be it.

FOR MORE INFORMATION

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