

From Friends Meeting Cambridge: A land acknowledgement and their discernment documents:

A Land Acknowledgment is a beginning step, an opening to help us begin to seek Spirit's guidance in facing the truth of our history as a community and our present-day responsibilities for reconciliation and repair. We offer the following suggested queries for your preparation for our joint discernment on the Land Acknowledgment:

Indigenous caretakers lived on, learned from and loved this place for more than 10,000 years before newly arrived colonists defined land as real estate and claimed it as their own by virtue of "discovering" it.

--Have we learned from the descendants of those Indigenous Peoples how to humbly and respectfully live in relationship to this place, gratefully sharing it rather than arrogantly viewing ourselves as exclusive owners? What might "learning to live in reciprocity" with the land where we seek Spirit together look like?

--Are we open to Spirit's leading to repair and build the relationship with our Indigenous neighbors? Do we understand the pain of the loss they suffered and continue to contend with under colonization? Do we honor their resilience and knowledge as they continue among us?

Please note that New England Yearly Meeting (NEYM) recently approved a Letter of Apology to Native Americans and has begun the process of discerning how to deliver this to tribes throughout New England. This is a separate, but complementary, process to developing a Land Acknowledgment. We will be providing more information on this process once NEYM completes their discernment about process.

If you have responses or questions you would like to share, please feel free to email Friends for Racial Justice at [forj@fmcquaker.org](mailto:forj@fmcquaker.org)

Preamble:

Why do a land acknowledgement at FMC?

When offering a land acknowledgement statement, we need to ask ourselves: What is our intent? What is the ultimate outcome? How is this intent reflected in our actions?

A land acknowledgement statement serves to educate while challenging us to carry these understandings into our broader work. It is not a quick "check the box" statement before our real work but an important grounding of our work historically and culturally.

The purpose of a land acknowledgement statement is to...

- Offer a statement of respect and recognition
- Engage with the complicated history of removal and erasure of Indigenous peoples
- Educate ourselves about the ancestral lands where we live and worship
- Serve as one step toward building relationships and partnering with Indigenous Peoples on healing the spiritual scar of colonialism

## The Land Acknowledgement:

We acknowledge that we meet today on the land of the Massachusett people. This living cultural landscape near the banks of the Quinobequin (sometimes called the Charles River) is also dear to the Wampanoag and Nipmuc peoples. It has been a place of travel, trade and gathering for many other Algonquin people from time immemorial through today.

We acknowledge that our material sustenance and prosperity is derived from stolen lands, lands from which Indigenous peoples, who have been caretakers of these lands for hundreds of generations, were removed by uninvited European colonists. We sadly acknowledge that the disrespect and attempted cultural erasure that accompanied this removal continue to this day.

We value and honor the wisdom of the Indigenous peoples who have loved and learned from this land, living in harmony with its gifts and needs. We commit to learning to live in reciprocity with this precious place and to listen closely to its rightful caretakers.

We know that this land acknowledgment is but a small, first step towards reconciling our histories. We commit to learning more about the Indigenous peoples where Friends Meeting Cambridge community members live, work and worship. We will seek Spirit's guidance and follow the leadership of Indigenous teachers as we work diligently to undo the harms of the past and present. We pledge our time and resources to work for healing the wounds of colonialism, advancing Indigenous self-determination and working for equity and right relationship.