

# INDIGENOUS ALLIES

## What is a Land Acknowledgement?

**Truth-telling** about what happened in our homeland years ago and how it affects the way we live today. **A recognition** of the Indigenous tribal people whose home was the land we now occupy. By doing so we remember them and begin to ask questions about what happened to them and why. **A confession** of how our church contributed to, or was complicit in, the process of colonization of the Indigenous peoples of the Western Hemisphere. **An admission** that while we are not responsible for what our ancestors did in the past, **we are responsible** for what we do today, knowing that the colonization process is still in place, and the effects of it are still felt by Indigenous people. **An invitation to right relationship** with Indigenous tribal people, particularly if the people still reside in the region. **A recognition** that Indigenous people currently live in all areas of this country, even if we do not see them. They are still here. **A call to stand with Indigenous people** in their myriad struggles to recover from the effects of genocide and enforced assimilation into the dominant society. **An honoring of Indigenous people** for their resilience, faithfulness, wisdom, and respect for the Earth and all of creation. A call to us to learn from their example.

## Diocese of Colorado 2023 Land Acknowledgement:

Welcome to The Episcopal Church in Colorado's 136<sup>th</sup> Annual Convention. As we prepare for what the Spirit has for us this weekend, we take a moment to acknowledge that the land on which we live and gather is the traditional territory of the Arapaho, Cheyenne, and Ute Nations. We recognize the Indigenous people who once lived on this land and support the resilience and strength of their descendants living among us today.

We also acknowledge our complicity in the egregious acts of colonization, boarding schools, and genocide that have caused lasting intergenerational trauma. We commit to support the groups which are working toward healing in relationship with Indigenous people. We further commit to learn the truth of the

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past and present, to reckon with our role in the harms caused, and to stand in solidarity with our Indigenous kin as we seek an equitable future together.

## **Why is it important to have one? Why is a commitment part of it?**

For non-Indigenous communities, land acknowledgment is a powerful way of showing respect and honoring the Indigenous Peoples of the land on which we work and live. Acknowledgment is a simple way of resisting the erasure of Indigenous histories and working towards honoring and inviting the truth.

Indigenous Peoples have a special relationship with the land on which they have lived for generations, sometimes for tens of thousands of years. They possess crucial knowledge about how to manage natural resources sustainably and act as guardians or custodians of the land for the next generations.

Our commitment to concrete actions that represent our intentions is especially important in light of the nearly 400 treaties signed by the United States and Native American tribes, virtually all of which were broken. Otherwise a land acknowledgement could be considered empty words by Natives and thus further damage the relationship.

**Who wrote this one?** This land acknowledgement was written by [Indigenous Allies](#) in collaboration with [People of the Sacred Land](#). If you'd like to write your own, [contact Indigenous Allies](#)

**Who can help us write one?** Look at the [Land Acknowledgement Guide](#) Indigenous Allies can walk you through the process. If you'd like to write your own, [contact Indigenous Allies](#)

## **What does the National Church Have to Say about Land Acknowledgements?**

*“Resolved, that The Episcopal Church commits to ensuring that all public gatherings and worship of The Episcopal Church, its boards, commissions,*

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*committees of the same, will, before the 81st General Convention, implement land acknowledgement liturgies and prayers to begin any public meetings or worship held in North America ....* [Land Acknowledgement Guide](#)

### **Why is a Land Acknowledgement NOT enough?** By Rick Williams, [People of the Sacred Land](#)

Words are not enough. It has taken us 160 years to begin the conversation about the reconciliation of past wrongs. Through these years, American Indian people have suffered in every way. The indignity of racism, poverty, poor health, inadequate school systems, and abusive control by the Federal government through the Bureau of Indian Affairs. And at every turn, the average citizen in America has benefited from the dishonorable dealings from land transfers, stolen water rights, theft of minerals, and in Colorado, especially gold. The first step is a commitment to change, to do things differently than in the past. We cannot idly stand by and speak words that have no real commitment to change. The wrongs committed are so blatantly obvious we feel them every day. The Episcopal Church in Colorado can make a difference. I think you SHOULD make a bold commitment to developing a strategic plan with specific details that address each of the issues. It must be comprehensive and should start by holding governmental entities and agencies accountable.

### **What can be done to put action behind the words in our land acknowledgement? Ask this question three times.**

**What can I do?** Nothing without God. Pray, get curious, learn, grow, talk to others, find a friend to share the exploration. Here's a few suggestions.

- Connect with Indigenous people and groups in your area, invite them to speak; go where they are, like the Denver March pow wow.
- Find out who once occupied the land where you were born.

<https://native-land.ca/>

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- There are many small steps one person can take. [Toward Right Relationship – Friends Peace Teams](#) offers a long list of ‘doables’.
- Learn about becoming an Ally  
<https://www.pitzer.edu/academics/wp-content/uploads/sites/38/2019/11/FAC-Parker-Allies7GenFundFinal11-2017.pdf>

**What can my church/community/region do?** Nothing without God and the people who *are* the church. Here’s a few thoughts.

- Write a **land acknowledgement**. See the Episcopal Church guide about how to do this. See [Land Acknowledgement Guide](#).
- **Offer a course** from [Toward Right Relationship – Friends Peace Teams JustFaith](#), or <https://www.nunsandnones.org/land-justice>. Most can be scheduled online, [Contact Indigenous Allies](#) for a warm hand off to these and other organizations that offer educational and action oriented materials.
- Review Resolution A127, Resolution for telling the truth about Episcopal church’s history with Indigenous boarding schools.  
[https://www.episcopalarchives.org/sites/default/files/gc\\_resolutions/2022-A127.pdf](https://www.episcopalarchives.org/sites/default/files/gc_resolutions/2022-A127.pdf)
- Put a **line item in your Budget** to give to an organization working on Indigenous Issues Here’s a few suggestions: Most have mailing lists to keep you informed.
  - People of the Sacred Land <https://peopleofthesacredland.org/>
  - Right Relationship Boulder <https://rightrelationshipboulder.org/>
  - Sand Creek Massacre Foundation  
<https://www.sandcreekmassacrefoundation.org/>
  - Indigenous Allies  
<https://www.saintambrosechurch.org/toward-right-relationship>
  - Native American Rights Fund <https://narf.org/>
  - Spirit of the Sun <https://www.spiritofthesun.org/>
  - Denver Indian Center <https://denverindiancenter.org/>

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- Coalition to Dismantle the the Doctrine of Discovery  
<https://dismantleddiscovery.org/>
- National Native American Boarding School Healing Alliance  
<https://boardingschoolhealing.org/>
- Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women.  
<https://www.nativehope.org/missing-and-murdered-indigenous-women-mmiw>

**What can the diocese do?** Nothing without God, the people, and the churches of the diocese. Here's a few suggestions.

- Create a group to join with Indigenous Allies and People of the Sacred Land to create a healing and conciliation plan for church action statewide. Contact Sarah Hartzell , Marti Dever [m.taylordever@gmail.com](mailto:m.taylordever@gmail.com) , Carol Park [park1557@gmail.com](mailto:park1557@gmail.com) if you are interested.
- Consider Land Justice for Indigenous people when planning property/ investment transactions. Nones and Nuns <https://www.nunsandnones.org/land-justice> has great materials for this.

**Interested, would like to would like to talk:** [Contact Indigenous Allies](#)

**Already Doing Something?** [Tell Us About It!](#)

**Find out what others are doing.** Look at websites, get on mailing lists, get involved.

### In Colorado

Indigenous Allies <https://www.saintambrosechurch.org/toward-right-relationship>  
(this simple web page describes the programs we have offered.)  
People of the Sacred Land <https://peopleofthesacredland.org/>  
Right Relationship Boulder <https://rightrelationshipboulder.org/>  
Native American Rights Fund <https://narf.org/>

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Colorado Commission of Indian Affairs

<https://ccia.colorado.gov/resources/community-resources>

Spirit of the Sun <https://www.spiritofthesun.org/>

Denver Indian Center <https://denverindiancenter.org/>

## Nation Wide

Coalition to Dismantle the Doctrine of Discovery <https://dismantleddiscovery.org/>

Indigenous Ministries of the Episcopal Church

<https://www.episcopalchurch.org/ministries/indigenous-ministries/>

National Native American Boarding School Healing Coalition

<https://boardingschoolhealing.org/>

JustFaith

<https://justfaith.org/the-land-is-not-our-own-seeking-repair-alongside-indigenous-communities/>

Nones and Nuns <https://www.nunsandnones.org/land-justice>

Toward Right Relationship [Toward Right Relationship – Friends Peace Teams](#)

