

Tom Thomson, “Northern Lights” (public domain)

A LAND ACKNOWLEDGEMENT REFLECTION

Welcome… Bien Venue… Pjila’si

We come together this evening situated on the ancestral and unceded territory of Indigenous Peoples. Oral histories, supported by written evidence and artifacts, tell us that Indigenous Peoples have occupied this territory for over 13,000 years. The land is covered by the Peace and Friendship Treaties which were signed with the British Crown by the Mi’kmaq, Wolastoqey and Passamaquoddy Nations in the 1700s. These treaties did not implicate or affirm surrender or transfer of lands and resources to the British, but recognized their Indigenous title, and set the rules for what was to be a long-standing relationship between nations, initially preventing war and facilitating trade. For the Indigenous Peoples, these treaties are revered as legal covenants. These sacred pacts are the foundation of Indigenous/Euro-Canadian government relations, and therefore, as treaty people, we must recognize and appreciate their legitimacy, if we are to truly acknowledge, with dignity, respect and justice, the presence of Indigenous Peoples.

This land acknowledgement needs to be a commitment upon which to build, as such statements are empty without genuine and meaningful actions that lead toward reconciliation. Through a process of reflection and learning, it is our responsibility to educate ourselves in the legacies of colonialism, now and moving forward, with an unbiased and concrete understanding of our shared history and the culture and traditions of the First Peoples of this land.
The true spirit of reconciliation is in relationships. We all have an obligation to nurture that spirit. Msit no'kmaq is a Mi'kmaw term meaning, "all my relations". It signifies a respect for the interconnectedness that exists among ourselves, with our surrounding environment and with the sacredness of Mother Earth and all the gifts of Creator. (extracted and adapted from an evaluation document entitled, "Every One. Every Day." With the permission of author, Tammy Mudge)

May we, as CLC Atlantic, move into the future, with hearts and minds open to an increased level of consciousness, supported by the Spirit's lead and the use of our CLC tools, such as social analysis, reading the signs of the time and seeking our appropriate responses through prayerful communal discernment. Amen

Submitted by Sandra Mudge

NOTE: I used this at our Atlantic ExCo meeting, and will use it for a session we are holding in our parish to honour Sept. 30th. I adapted it from something my daughter developed through her work this summer. I liked how it made the connection between the importance of the land acknowledgement and our **relationship with all** of creation, and connecting, as well, with Truth and Reconciliation.