

## Considerations for Land Acknowledgments at Jubilee Mennonite Church

October 2017

As people who are part of the work of reconciliation in the world, we want to find ways to name our relationships with others with whom we share this land. We want to make room within our worship to acknowledge our relationships with others, even our relationships that have not always been held in the way that they should. This grows out of the specific recommendations of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission (2015) of efforts churches can make in working at reconciliation, and more so out of the conviction of those in our congregation moved to make this acknowledgement a priority.

Land recognitions have grown to be common in many public venues. The form and language recognitions use serve the time and place they are employed. In the context of worship, we desire that our recognitions be along the lines of and meaning of what we are gathered to be a part of: worship. As such, land recognitions should be a theological confession (declaring theological truth) more than a political declaration. Give consideration not just to the human relationships that we are tending here, but also to the God relationship we are always pointing to as well.

Sensitivity to timing and frequency is appreciated. We want these words to come at the right times for us to be reminded of the work of reconciliation and our place within it, and not be solely a rote recitation of words that must be said. Any ritual, no matter how well intended, can become something we take for granted. We want these words to remain impactful and appropriate to our place and time. As you consider an land recognition, think over the last several services. Perhaps if this has been a common element of the last several services, a break can be appropriate. Perhaps it is something we must take up again. Consider the themes and moment in worship and how recognition fits. Consult with the pastor if you wish guidance on this. Our goal would be for this to be something we do roughly once a month.

Finding the right place in the service to connect this to the broader movement of the liturgy is also important. Perhaps this is part of a welcome. Maybe this is a confessional or response element. Sometimes it could be something we use as part of sharing, prompting us to prayer. Hold these possibilities with creativity.

These guidelines are offered to worship leaders as a help. This is a point that brings up powerful feelings for many in the congregation and community. We want to treat this with the care and respect it deserves. We want to empower you as leaders to make free choices in how you lead us in worship. Please note these considerations while trusting the Spirit to guide you in your leading.

A sample of this language and thought could be along the lines of:

*The Earth is the Lord's and everything within it.*

*God has placed all of people here to share the creation and to be know God within it.*

*We confess that we have not lived up to these ideals, and not loved our neighbours as ourselves, especially those who came here before us.*

*We commit ourselves to the real relationships of being treaty people in this place of Treaty 1, the traditional land of the Anishnaabe, Cree and Dakota People and the homeland of the Metis Nation.*