

LAND ACKNOWLEDGMENT – ALL SAINTS ANGLICAN CHURCH, COCHRANE

Creator, you made all people of every land. In the spirit of respect and truth, we honour the ancestral Treaty 7 territory of the Blackfoot Confederacy, including the Siksika, Kainai and Piikani Nations, the Stoney Nakoda, including the Chiniki, Bearspaw and Wesley Nations, and the Tsuu T'ina Nation. We acknowledge the Metis Nation of Alberta, Region Three. In the spirit of reconciliation and because we are all treaty people, we also acknowledge all people who make their homes in the traditional Treaty 7 territory of southern Alberta.

Explanation:

The Anglican Church of All Saints, Cochrane, is situated on the southwest slope of the Big Hill – originally named “Manachaban” in the Stoney language. About 1950 the land was acquired by the Franciscan Brothers residing at the friary of Mount St. Francis, located on the northeast side of the hill. In the 1970s they donated a parcel of land for the site of St. Mary’s Roman Catholic Church. St. Mary’s property was subsequently purchased by the Anglican Diocese of Calgary, and All Saints Anglican Church has occupied the site since 2007.

The Big Hill is a significant geographic feature, with a panoramic view of the Bow River valley, the foothills and the Rocky Mountains. Stoney tradition tells that the land on Manachaban was used as a place to obtain wood for arrows. As well, the Big Hill Springs Creek watershed provided wild game and fish, plants for food and medicine, and pasture for livestock.

Acknowledging our occupation of Indigenous land is a practice meant to recognize the long history of the use of this land by Indigenous peoples, whose paths and marks upon the land left only faint evidence of their presence. Colonization of this land by European settlers has caused infinitely more drastic change, excluding Indigenous people and erasing evidence of their existence upon it. We recognize that the Indigenous people of Canada hold significant values regarding the land itself that settlers do not understand.

The fact of Indigenous presence should force non-Indigenous peoples to confront their own place on these lands....Moving beyond territorial acknowledgments means asking hard questions about what needs to be done once we're aware of Indigenous presence....It requires that we remain uncomfortable, and it means making concrete disruptive changes.... [“Listening to Indigenous Voices”: A Dialogue Guide on Justice and Right Relationships, Jesuit Forum for Social Faith and Justice, Novalis, Toronto: 2021, p. 34]

This acknowledgment is a commitment not only to honour Indigenous memories of this land, but also to learn more about the values that the original peoples hold regarding the land. What did it mean to them to occupy this land, and what does it mean to them now? What does it mean to us?