

Indigenous Justice Action Framework

Since 2021 the Indigenous Justice Working Group has engaged with other sectors of First Parish to provide Witness, Education, Action, Relationship, and Support. Highlights have included:

- Summer worship “*Toward Indigenous Justice: Questions and Explorations*”
- *We Still Live Here: Âs Nutayuneân* - documentary screening and discussion with Wampanoag educator Tracy Kelley
- *Braiding Sweetgrass* - 3-session reading and discussion group with spiritual practice
- Collaborating with UU Mass Action Indigenous Solidarity Team supporting the MA Indigenous Legislative Agenda
- Indigenous People’s Weekend worship with Narragansett speaker Lorén Spears and Indigenous Foods potluck
- One Room Religious Education program about Indigenous ways of caring for the Earth
- Intergenerational Art Project, “*Turtle Island is Our Home*” led by Mashpee Wampanoag Art Educator Aimeé Ledwell
- Presentation and Q&A with Danielle DeLuca of Cultural Survival
- Co-hosted Alliance Program on “*Indigenous Women and the Struggle for Climate Justice*” with Mahtowin Munro, co-leader of United American Indians of New England
- Virtual program with the Founders and Directors of Lakota YouthStay (LYS) and their South Dakota partner, One Spirit Lakota

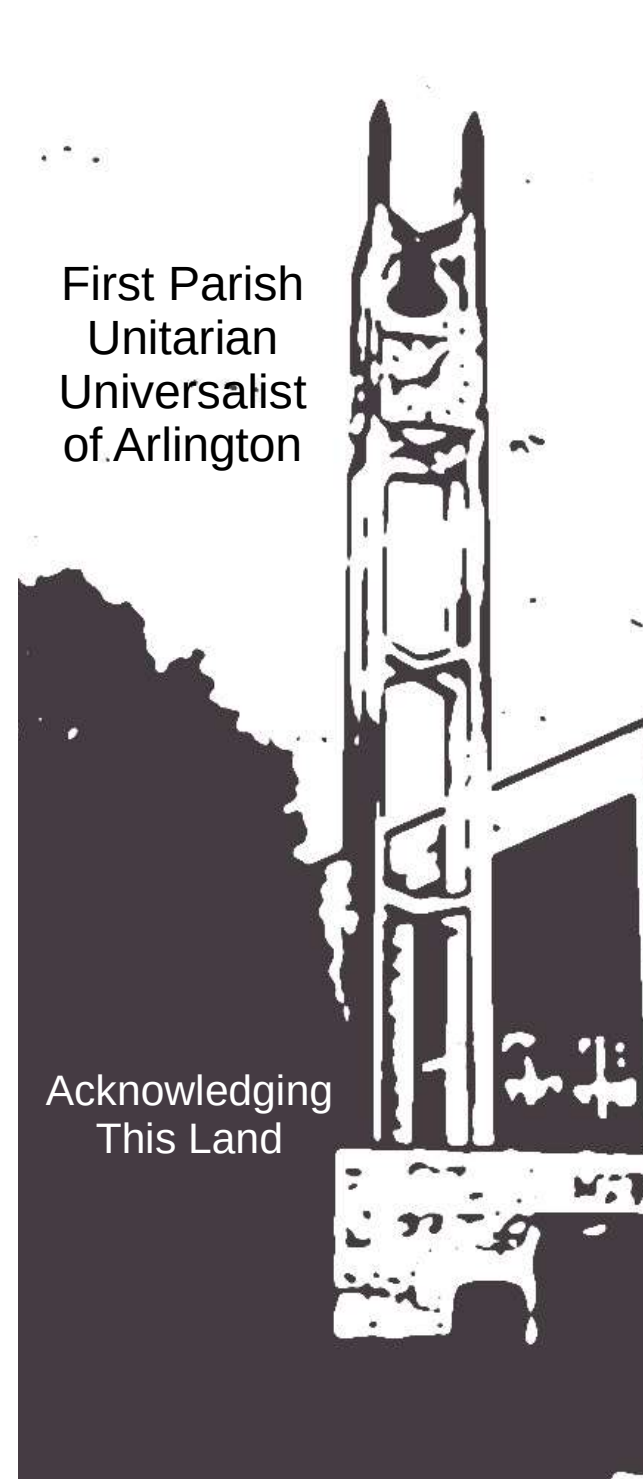
Giving First for Indigenous Justice

Since 2021 the Giving First program has selected organizations that are Indigenous-led and/or focused on issues of need and concern for Indigenous communities, including:

- **Wôpanâak Language Reclamation Project:** working to return language fluency to the Wampanoag Nation as a principal means of expression.
- **North American Indian Center of Boston:** empowering and investing in the Native American community of Massachusetts for over 45 years.
- **Planned Parenthood of Sioux Falls:** providing sexual and reproductive health care services to a diverse community including the largest reservation in North America.
- **Cultural Survival:** advocating for Indigenous Peoples' rights and supporting Indigenous communities' self-determination, cultures and political resilience.
- **Massachusetts Center for Native American Awareness:** providing opportunities and assistance to Native American residents and working for racial equality across the region.
- **Lakota Youth Stay/One Spirit Lakota:** helping the Oglala Lakota tribe to achieve happier, healthier lives and offering a transformative experience helping Lakota youth build sustainable relationships outside their community.

First Parish
Unitarian
Universalist
of Arlington

Acknowledging
This Land



Grounding in Our Faith

In 2020 the General Assembly of the Unitarian Universalist Association, our national body, passed an Action of Immediate Witness calling on all Unitarian Universalist congregations to Address 400 Years of White Supremacist Colonialism. The efforts of the First Parish Indigenous Justice Working Group are grounded in this action and in the principles that we affirm.

Why a Land Acknowledgment

"Acknowledgment is a simple, powerful way of showing respect and a step toward correcting the stories and practices that erase Indigenous people's history and culture and toward inviting and honoring the truth [...]

Acknowledgment is a critical public intervention, a necessary step toward honoring Native communities and enacting the much larger project of decolonization and reconciliation. Join us in adopting, calling for, and spreading this practice."

U.S. Department of Arts & Culture

"Non-Indigenous people should do [tribal land acknowledgments] in an effort to acknowledge the attempted genocide of Indigenous people, take ownership of being visitors on someone else's territory, potentially introduce current events, and most importantly, to unerase the Indigenous voices, experiences, examples, history, and contributions, while dismantling oppression and stereotypes."

Embracing Equity

Proposed Acknowledgment

unanimously endorsed by ParCom
April 2024

The First Parish meetinghouse is located on the ancestral lands of the Massachusett people, whose name was appropriated by this Commonwealth. The European colonists who took land from its inhabitants through coercion and violence also subjected Indigenous people to forced labor, relocation, and genocide. Our faith calls us to acknowledge the truth of our history, to name the ongoing harms of settler colonialism, and to work toward repair. We resolve to be in right relationship with the Massachusett and other Indigenous peoples, particularly the federally recognized Wampanoag nations of Mashpee and Aquinnah. We commit to finding meaningful ways to offer our support as we work in solidarity to build a more sustainable future for us all.

We Need Your Support

We hope to go beyond offering acknowledgment at worship and other events to adopting a formal statement by congregational vote. The Indigenous Justice Working Group encourages you to **attend the First Parish Annual Meeting on Sunday, May 19th** to discuss and vote to adopt this statement.

Please join us! Your support is essential!

How did we get here?

In 2021 the Social Justice Committee established the Land Acknowledgment Working Group, charged with undertaking this process. We quickly realized that a statement was only part of a larger process of education, engagement, and action and changed our name to the Indigenous Justice Working Group (IJWG). We encouraged our worship leaders to incorporate land acknowledgments as a regular part of our liturgy, to spark conversation and raise awareness of this process.

In 2022 we worked with Lorén Spears and Silvermoon LaRose from the Tomaquag Museum to lead a two-part Land Acknowledgment Development Workshop with members of the congregation. We explored whom we can acknowledge, how we can make it more than a performance, creation of an action plan, and how to use a Land Acknowledgment moving forward. Key learnings included the importance of acknowledging federally recognized tribes and of grounding our statement both in our faith and in concrete action.

In 2023 we drafted a Land Acknowledgment based on our learning to date and solicited input from our consultants and other representatives of local tribes and organizations, as well as from our own ministers and member of the Social Justice Committee.

In 2024 we have held three listening sessions and met with the Parish Committee to finalize the wording of the proposed statement. On April 16th ParCom voted unanimously to bring the Proposed Acknowledgment to a congregational vote at our Annual Meeting on May 19th and to recommend that First Parish adopt this statement as our Land Acknowledgment.