

Acknowledgment of Traditional Territories

Elora & Bethany United Churches

From times beyond memory, Indigenous peoples have walked on this land. Their relationship with the land is at the centre of their lives and spirituality.

Here's some of their story.

Their neighbours called them "Attawandaron." French explorers called them "Neutrals." We don't know what they called themselves. By the late 1600s they were gone, casualties of disease, hunger and warfare. Many artifacts unearthed in this area speak silently of them for whom this land was home.

Northward lived the Wyandot Confederacy, or Huron nations. They lived and hunted throughout these lands, from Lake Ontario to Georgian Bay

The Wyandot formed alliances with French fur traders. This brought wealth but, fatally, contact with European illnesses against which they had little immunity. In the 1630s, the Wyandot were devastated by pandemic. Between a half and two-thirds of them died. They became easy targets of their enemies. By 1650 the remaining Wyandot had moved from here. Their descendants still live in Quebec and the American Midwest.

As they were leaving, a new nation was gradually moving southward from the shores of Lakes Huron and Superior. They were an Anishinaabe people, the Mississauga. Their lands were to the north and west of Lake Ontario, and along the Niagara frontier.

After the American Revolution, the British crown began making treaties with the Mississauga, opening lands for British settlers, especially those fleeing the United States. The Mississaugas of the Credit River made treaties covering some 4 million acres. One was the "Between the Lakes Treaty" of 1792, which

covered these lands upon which we now live. It's because of this treaty that we can be here. We are treaty people. (The Credit River community later moved southwest to near Brantford, where Mississaugas of the New Credit live today.)

Finally, came the Haudenosaunee (Iroquois, Six Nations). These lands had been part of their traditional hunting territories for centuries. A large group of them, led by Joseph Brant, made an alliance with the British during the American Revolution. After this alliance's defeat, Brant's people came north. Grateful for their friendship and sacrifice, in 1793 the Crown granted to them land along the Grand River (the Haldimand land grant).

Later, Brant sold parts of it . . . though what actually happened, and how legitimate these sales were is very much disputed these days! Nonetheless, into these parcels came new settlers along the Grand River. They began the communities in which we live today. We share this land.

**We live in the traditional places of the
Attawandaron, Wyandot, Mississauga, and Haudenosaunee First Nations.**

**These are treaty lands and territory of the Mississaugas of the Credit,
which we share through the Between the Lakes Treaty.**

**These lands are also part of the crown grant to the Six Nations,
the Haldemand grant, which stretches along the Grand River.**

**We are grateful for their stewardship of these places.
We humbly seek to live together in pursuit of justice and right relations.**

As settlers and treaty people upon this land, we have much to do. Help us, O God.

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