

Commission for Land Use History in the Diocese of Vermont

SPONSOR: The Rev. Rachel Field (Mission Farm, Killington, and St. Thomas and Grace, Brandon)

RESOLVED, That the 187th Convention of the Diocese of Vermont recommend and strongly encourage each congregation, and the diocese as a body, to learn the history of our land as a way of understanding and unearthing our complicity in systems that oppress persons of color and afford privilege to white persons in Vermont; and be it further

RESOLVED, That in commitment to this deep work, this Convention ask for a gathering and sharing of stories from our collective research to be shared as a report at our 188th Convention.

EXPLANATION Acknowledging the history of genocide and land seizure that has made it possible for the Episcopal Church to have properties for us to gather in is a step in the process of learning from our history to make healing and racial reconciliation possible. Entire dioceses, like Rhode Island, and individual churches have explored the history of their buildings to understand the relationship between the land and colonialism. We are inviting congregations to trace the history of their buildings, and also the history of their local ecology and the peoples who have called that land home.

Tracing the relationships among peoples (Abenaki, Black, Latino, White) and the land and between wealth and property will help us to learn together what effects from colonization persist, and how our current structures and systems reinforce a colonial system of thought. We encourage this historical retrospective as a step on the road to healing from racism, which harms all people, including white people, in Vermont today.

This resolution is offered in hope. Hope that understanding our history with the land, and how the land informs our spirituality may help us all in this healing; that the door may be further opened to the way that the Spirit moves in our hearts, in the creatures, and in the landscape. This resolution was prayed over and dwelled in the hearts of: Rachel Field, Lisa Ransom, Earl Koopercamp, and Auburn Watersong. As a result of drafting this resolution, Mission Farm is committing to exploring, and in conversation about, officially opening the land for hunting and gathering to the Abenaki. We encourage others to come along with us and explore this path as well.

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