



WBUUC Land Acknowledgment Statement

The White Bear Unitarian Universalist Church is present on the homeland of the Dakota. Mni Sota Makoce is the land where the Dakota people were created, and they are related to the lands of Minnesota. The lives of the Dakota are intertwined in the rhythm of the plants and animals of Minnesota; their stories and culture connected to the places of Minnesota.

We acknowledge that the US and territorial governments sought to break this relationship between the Dakota and their homeland as a means of ending their culture. Through a mix of misunderstanding, ignorance, greed, and deceit, a series of 19th century treaties removed the Dakota from all but a thin sliver of land along the Minnesota River. The US Government's failure to fulfill treaty payments precipitated the Dakota-US War in 1862. Although only some Dakota participated in the war, the Federal Dakota Removal Act of 1863 forcibly exiled almost all Dakota people from Minnesota. We acknowledge that, although this unjust law remains in place, the Dakota have remained an integral part of the Minnesota community. Today we seek to elevate the Dakota story not as a story of loss set in the past, but of resilience and perseverance through the present.

The Dakota strive to honor, protect, and reconnect to their homelands. We acknowledge that many of us are uninvited inhabitants on this land, that although the Dakota may have been willing to share the land they never thought they owned, our ancestors instead sought to remove and exclude them from their homeland. We recognize that our covenant and principles call us to seek the truth in this story and work to repair this trauma.

We acknowledge that this statement is only a start. We recognize that, although the actions required to fully address the injustices against the Dakota people will likely be difficult, unpopular, and uncomfortable, the Unitarian Universalist principles do not limit the goal of justice to instances where it is easy. We vow to elevate the stories of the Dakota and other indigenous peoples while rejecting our colonial thinking and commit ourselves to practices and actions that atone for the injustices from which our congregation benefits.

May this statement guide our actions, and our actions shape this statement.

