

Unity of Kalamazoo Land & Labor Acknowledgement

The Bodewadmi (Potawatomi), Odawa (Ottawa), and Ojibwe (Chippewa) nations formed the Council of Three Fires. Unity of Kalamazoo honors them as the original stewards of the land on which we live and work. From 1821-1827, this location was part of a reservation carved out of millions of acres ceded to the government for little or no compensation. In accordance with the Indian Removal Act of 1830, many of the indigenous people were removed from this area by armed soldiers on what is now known as the Trail of Death as one in ten died on that journey.

The ancestors of today's people of African descent were forcibly removed from their land and separated from their families through kidnapping and enslavement. Unity of Kalamazoo acknowledges that slavery existed in Michigan until at least 1820 and free blacks who settled in this area were regarded as undesirables. Despite being free, Black people were confronted with economic barriers and racist obstacles on a daily basis. We acknowledge the success of early settlers like Enoch and Deborah Harris who were among the first pioneers here in 1830. Over time, the Harris family developed a 200 acre farm less than three miles from our building and we honor Harris's twenty years of active participation in the Underground Railroad.

Our spiritual community pays reverence and respect to all Black, Indigenous and People of Color for contributing to our country's growth, infrastructure, and economy with minimal compensation and no reparations to date.

Unity of Kalamazoo acknowledges the cruel history of slavery and colonialism and recognizes that systemic practices of economic, social, and political oppression persist today. We pledge to actively dismantle racism, discrimination, inequity, and oppression in any form. We do this by

- Participating in courageous conversations to increase our own knowledge and awareness.
- Sponsoring events and workshops to promote multi-cultural understanding and activism.
- Tithing to and partnering with those organizations actively working to heal the discrimination and inequity.
- Establishing policies, procedures, and practices aligned with our goal to create a community founded on respect and equity for everyone.

As a spiritual community and organization, Unity of Kalamazoo strives to create a world that works for all.