

THE FLAG OF THE MOHAWKS OF THE BAY OF QUINTE

St. George's Cathedral has a special relationship with the Mohawks (Kanyen'kehà:ka) of the Bay of Quinte. These Mohawks inhabit a territory they call Tyendinaga. That was the name of Joseph Brant (Thayendanega), a Mohawk statesman and warrior. Before coming to Canada, John Stuart, who founded St. George's, was missionary to the Mohawks in what is now New York State. Later, Mohawk matriarch Mary or Molly Brant (Konwatsi'tsyayén:ni or Tekonwatoni) was the only woman among those who signed the original charter of St. George's. Joseph Brant was her brother.

Continuing the long association between the Mohawks of the Bay of Quinte and St. George's, on 6 October 2019 the Cathedral received a new flag from the Mohawks. The Most Rev. Mark MacDonald, the Anglican Church's National Indigenous Archbishop attended to mark the importance of the event.

The Mohawk flag has a simple design. It is purple with two white symbols and a third that is silver. The purple and white colours were used in wampum belts. Purple came from quahog shells while white came from whelk shells. The use of the colour purple means that the flag is important. White reflects goodness, peace and purity. The silver chain is described below. The three symbols are rich in meaning.

The central symbol on the flag is a white Eagle (A:kweks). The Eagle, messenger to the creator and Protector of the Peace, is otherwise traditionally shown on the top of the Great Tree of Peace (an Eastern White Pine) from which it can see far and warn of approaching danger.

Surrounding the Eagle on the flag is a silver covenant chain. It binds Mohawks and Europeans together. The silver chain needs constant polishing and attention as does the relationship it represents. The chain is pure, strong and untarnished. It is in a circular shape to reflect the Great Peace and the Great Law (Kaianere'ko:wa) that is the

Iroquois (Haudenosaunee) constitution. The Mohawks are members of the Iroquois Confederacy.

Surrounding the chain and Eagle is a circular white border symbolizing unity, strength and the cycles of life.

The new flag replaces an older one that has been on display on the north side of the Cathedral nave since about 1984. It is immediately above a plaque honouring Molly Brant.

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