Minutes for Sacred Ground Working Group meeting

June 6, 2023, at Saint Luke’s Episcopal Church Library

Present: Skip Jones, Marjy Jones, Tom Stallman, Tom Hargrove, and Cathleen Lewis.

**Skip convened the meeting at 7:12 p.m. with the following Scripture from** 1 Cor. 12:13-31

**13**For we were all baptized by[[a](https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=1%20Corinthians%2012%3A13-31&version=NIV#fen-NIV-28648a)] one Spirit so as to form one body—whether Jews or Gentiles, slave or free—and we were all given the one Spirit to drink. **14**Even so the body is not made up of one part but of many.

**15**Now if the foot should say, “Because I am not a hand, I do not belong to the body,” it would not for that reason stop being part of the body. **16**And if the ear should say, “Because I am not an eye, I do not belong to the body,” it would not for that reason stop being part of the body. **17**If the whole body were an eye, where would the sense of hearing be? If the whole body were an ear, where would the sense of smell be? **18**But in fact God has placed the parts in the body, every one of them, just as he wanted them to be. **19**If they were all one part, where would the body be? **20**As it is, there are many parts, but one body.

**21**The eye cannot say to the hand, “I don’t need you!” And the head cannot say to the feet, “I don’t need you!” **22**On the contrary, those parts of the body that seem to be weaker are indispensable, **23**and the parts that we think are less honorable we treat with special honor. And the parts that are unpresentable are treated with special modesty, **24**while our presentable parts need no special treatment. But God has put the body together, giving greater honor to the parts that lacked it, **25**so that there should be no division in the body, but that its parts should have equal concern for each other. **26**If one part suffers, every part suffers with it; if one part is honored, every part rejoices with it.

**27**Now you are the body of Christ, and each one of you is a part of it. **28**And God has placed in the church first of all apostles, second prophets, third teachers, then miracles, then gifts of healing, of helping, of guidance, and of different kinds of tongues. **29**Are all apostles? Are all prophets? Are all teachers? Do all work miracles? **30**Do all have gifts of healing? Do all speak in tongues[[b](https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=1%20Corinthians%2012%3A13-31&version=NIV#fen-NIV-28665b)]? Do all interpret? **31**Now eagerly desire the greater gifts. And yet I will show you the most excellent way.

**Opening Prayer** - Prayer of Thanksgiving for the Diversity of Races and Cultures

O God, who created all peoples in your image, we thank you for the wonderful diversity of races and cultures in this world. Enrich our lives by ever-widening circles of fellowship, and show us your presence in those who differ most from us, until our knowledge of your love is made perfect in our love for all your children, through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

**Report of Sub-Committees**

1. **Engaging the Parish**
2. Report to Parish – Had a “booth” at the Ministry Fair. Will make an announcement soon for organizing the next circle.
3. Website – Talked with Stephanie in church office. She advised creating some shorter material to drive interest to the more detailed content we have up there about the meetings of the first Circle. Marjy promised to work with Skip to tighten new content for Web displays.
4. New Sacred Ground Circle – Sacred Ground table at Ministry Fair yielded one or two potential participants. Skip will draft a message to all those who have expressed potential interest and put a blurb in the weekly newsletter. Plan organizational meetings on June 11 and Sept 10.
5. Prayer Rug exhibit at the Textile Museum and “Spirit in the Dark” exhibit at the National Museum of African American Culture: Cathy is working to put together a tour groups for each before end of summer.
6. **Engaging the Community** Tom Hargrove and Skip Jones
7. Engaging with the Ghanaian Congregation – Joint Worship service on Pentecost Sunday, followed by love feast, was a big success. What can we do now to build community with our Ghanaian sisters and brothers? Tom H. said he worried the worship service was too Episcopal and not enough Ghanaian. Marjy suggested next time we should do a “flip” with Ghanaians running service and St. Lukers running the food. Cathy suggested this should be an annual event. Skip suggested asking the Ghanaians to offer suggestions of other opportunities to build Christian community between the two distinct parishes. Tom H. said he’d reach out to his contacts in the Ghanaians to get their feedback on the Pentecost service and how the two parishes could combine on other activities.
8. Outreach to VIC – Several things to report:
   * **October VIC meeting –** Sue Webber agreed that the follow-up to identified opportunities for helping at Walt Whitman Middle School (through donations of clothing or helping with the food distribution one day a week) would best be coordinated through the Outreach Committee. Are there Sacred Ground Circle members who wish to pursue this opportunity?

Cheryl Fellenz has opportunities for tutoring of students in her program to improve the reading skills of students in Charles County, but the logistics of that are unclear.

* + **Future VIC meetings**: Tom H. promised to reach out to Nicole Freewalt and Ivana Escobar at United Community to make Adult Forum presentations about Progreso Literacy, the Citizenship Center and the Community+ Initiative.
  + **MKL Day:** Anne Hargrove is seeking to identify local black leadership to direct future tributes for Dr. King. She will reach out to retired pastor Abe Smith of First A.M.E. Church of Alexandria to select future leadership.

1. Free-will Offering in Thanksgiving for Spiritual Music – Scholarship for a student of color at Duke Ellington School for the Performing Arts is on track. Skip was given a new contact person for this and he’s left messages. Checking with Assistant Principal Isaac Daniel whether they would like someone from St. Luke’s to attend graduation and present the scholarship award to the recipient graduating student.
2. Potential concert by Samantha Williams – Chris is still trying to connect with her to establish a possible time for a St. Luke’s concert.
3. Potential interest in forming an interfaith Sacred Ground Circle – There is potential interest among members of the interfaith group that Marjy and Skip have been attending to form one or more Sacred Ground circles. We have Baptist, Unitarian, Baha’i, Latter Day Saint and Muslim participants in the interfaith group.
4. **Engaging the Youth and their Parents** Martha Beckford and Marjy Jones

We have talked to Nick and to the Healys (Youth Mentors). There is an intent to structure a racial awareness/racial justice segment for the youth in the Fall. Marjy willing to continue to work with Nick and the Healys to structure the content of such a segment. “This can’t wait too long,” Skip said. Marjy promised to speak with the Healys.

**Racial Issues at General Convention**

1. Marjy and Skip will be attending **“It’s All About Love,”** a churchwide festival of **worship, learning, community, and action** for the “Episcopal branch of the Jesus Movement”, to be held Sunday, July 9 through Wednesday, July 12, at the Baltimore Convention Center. [Register here.](https://allaboutlove.sched.com/)

“It’s All About Love” is organized around three Jesus Movement festival “tents”: **Evangelism, Racial Reconciliation,** and **Creation Care**. We will also be attending a pre-revival meeting the day before where Sacred Ground alums can share experiences.

1. Marjy and Skip have signed up for the first Diocesan Racial Justice and Healing Pilgrimage in October. This 5-day trip will entail visits to Civil Rights sites in Memphis, Birmingham and Montgomery, accompanied by prayer and reflection at each stop. We plan to journal about our experience and share thoughts with the parish through the weekly newsletter.

**Date of Next Meeting – September 5 at 7 p.m.**

**Closing Prayer** Prayer for the Human Family

O God, you made us in your own image and redeemed us through Jesus your Son: Look with compassion on the whole human family; take away the arrogance and hatred which infect our hearts; break down the walls that separate us; unite us in bonds of love; and work through our struggle and  
confusion to accomplish your purposes on earth; that, in your good time, all nations and races may serve you in harmony around your heavenly throne; through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

The meeting was adjourned at 8:10 p.m.