

Key Points from Sacred Ground Webinar 7/19/22

SACRED GROUND CURRICULUM AND MATERIALS

Participants were reminded how to access the latest (May 2022) version of Becoming Beloved Community Where You Are https://www.episcopalchurch.org/wp-content/uploads/sites/2/2022/05/Becoming-Beloved-Community-Where-You-Are_2022.pdf and the BBC Newsletter <https://us17.campaign-archive.com/?u=840ae7a94a40d12c3d9ccf73f&id=3204bb23f1>. If you don't already receive the newsletter, there is a link at the top to sign up.

Jayne Osgood (josgood@episcopalnetworks.org), who worked on curriculum revision committee, introduced this topic. She noted the overlap between the curriculum changes and the theology behind resolutions in this year's General Convention. She noted the Curricular Changes (which have been previously circulated to the St. Luke's Circle) can be find at <https://www.episcopalchurch.org/wp-content/uploads/sites/2/2022/05/Sacred-Ground-Curricular-Changes-April-2022.v.pdf>. Jayne then went through Sessions 9, 10 and 11, which had been significantly revised or newly created. She also noted that the curriculum revision committee is creating more resources for facilitators. They are looking to establish a "train the trainers" program. Anyone interested in becoming a trainer for Sacred Ground facilitators should contact the Sacred Ground team. Also, there is a new Sacred Ground Facilitators of Color Support Network.

Session 9 – Legacies: Racism's Long Life

- Jayne noted the connection of this session to the BBC theme of Truth Telling and its connection to Resolution A125.
- This session in particular focuses on the multigenerational legacy of racism.
- There is a new film: "Native Voices Speaking to the Church and to the World" which deals with the Indigenous Boarding Schools issue. It ends on a note about resilience.
- She noted the General Convention passage of Resolution A127, which will be discussed below.
- Victoria Mason: added in the Chat that it sounds like a good time to mention the ministry of David Pendleton Oakerhater to prevent Cheyenne children from being sent to these schools

Session 10: Grief, Reckoning and Repentance

- Jayne noted the connection of this session to the BBC theme of Healing the Breach
- She pointed to the two main sections of the facilitator notes on Sitting with Pain and Grief and Moving from Grief to Repentance.
- The purpose is for participants to listen to what has happened to them emotionally and spiritually throughout the curriculum, BEFORE THEY MOVE TO ACTION.
- This is driven home in a new article by Tricia de Boer "The Place of Grief in Spiritual Life". One has to grieve before moving to reconciliation.
- There is also a new podcast by Resmaa Menakem entitled "Notice the Rage; Notice the Silence"
- Jayne encouraged facilitators to consider lengthening this session to 2-3 hours or break it into two sub-sections.

Session 11: Walk On: The Journey After Sacred Ground

- This is about the transformational impact of Sacred Ground. The facilitators' notes talk about using this session to more powerfully launch Circles into action, engagement and formation.

- The purpose of this session is discernment, how is God inviting us to live into our Baptismal Covenant and help become a Beloved Community.
- She stressed the usefulness of the pre-session activity – The Discernment Handout.
- Howard Thurman’s final chapter on Love was moved to this session, fits perfectly.
- Jayne encouraged facilitators also to consider lengthening this session to 2-3 hours/have 2 sessions.

Several ideas were offered in the Chat about how Circles have handled Sessions 10 and 11 in particular:

- Mary Simpson: Those that had done SG already on our dismantling racism team did a 1 day update. Session 10 in am and 11 in pm.
- Stephanie Spellers: That is a WONDERFUL idea, Mary. We hope groups will consider doing a retreat day with Sessions 10 and 11.
- Karen Royce: We're having a Sacred Ground “reunion” in October to work on Session 11. Will now consider making it a longer meeting or multi-sessions and include Session 9 and 10 for those who had finished a SG circle before the curriculum changes.

Additional Resource Materials – participants were encouraged to provide ideas for additional materials that could be added to the curriculum or deep dive resources.

- Claire Milligam: highly recommend this video...SHOULD BE REQUIRED IN CURRICULUM Brothers in the Beloved Community (4/6/22) <https://youtu.be/r28aSz5QE7c>
- Sophie Hume: I highly recommend Rev Stephanie Spellers' Book - *The Church Cracked Open* - as an incremental reading to our SG resources. This book is also terrific for folks who don't have the time to engage in the lengthy SG curriculum
- Kirsten Sherk: Has there been any thought to create a Sacred Ground curriculum for church youth groups?
- Joanne Jenkins: I hope and pray that everyone on this call will read *Black and Episcopalian, The Struggle for Inclusion* by Gayle Fisher-Stewart. Our story. Our stuff. Our truth.

WIDENING THE CIRCLE

Several ideas were put forward in the Chat on how to widen the Circles beyond the 25,000 or so who have already participated.

- **Episcopalians**: Peggy Woolley: We are proposing that those who have completed our circle pair up and start new groups in order to help spread this more quickly
- **Methodists**: Joyce Hollingsworth - I am representing the UMC. Has anyone else done Sacred Ground in their Methodist Church? If so who, and how can I connect with you. I am Joyce Hollingsworth at jhollingsworth@rofum.org. Cell 312-330-7632
- Stephanie Spellers: You can simply invite your neighbors of faith or no faith at all to join.
- **Lutherans**: Barbara Scoville: We have done 5 circles at St Clare's. I am inviting folks from Lutheran churches to join us. Is there a way find info on Lutheran involvement in this.
- Phoebe Chatfield: That is a fantastic invitation, Barbara! The 2021 Sacred Ground Evaluation Survey Report found that many Lutheran congregations have participated in Sacred Ground. Let me know if there is more specific information you are looking for!

PANEL DISCUSSION ON GENERAL CONVENTION ISSUES TOUCHING ON RACE/RACISM

Canon John Kitagawa, Co-Chair of the Working Group on Truth Telling, Reckoning & Healing

- Grass-roots enthusiasm inspired us to create the Episcopal Coalition for Racial Equity & Justice (ECREJ). See Resolution A125
- Strong support for the Report of the Working Group on Truth Telling, Reckoning & Healing (WG)
- Really talking about systemic issues: e.g., church structure, language of liturgy, where our resources come from, history of indigenous boarding schools.
- Resolution D004 – Continued funding for Becoming Beloved Community (BBC)
- WG report has 240-odd suggestions/recommendations for action at all levels (national church, provinces, dioceses, parishes, seminaries/schools). No need to wait for ECREJ to get up & running to start acting on these recommendations.
- Historic move on elected leadership – elected two women of color
- Remarkable discussion on A127 – Indigenous Boarding Schools, we would up wrapping D033 – Recommendations from Navajoland into A127 before passage.

Canon Cornelia Eaton, Navajoland, active in Indigenous Boarding School work

- Resolution A127 – Indigenous Boarding Schools was birthed out of holy listening, God’s voice among the peoples.
- Ministry of Truth Telling, Reckoning & Healing → help find a path to reconciliation
 - We are all baptized into this ministry
 - Goal: Being restored as one holy people of God
- What happened was a form of genocide: removing children from their people, their language, their culture, their land.
- \$2.5 million to cover the next biennium; just a start
- Look at histories in our dioceses. Land acknowledgement helps healing for Indigenous Peoples. Restore our relations with Mother Earth.
 - A127 will be a huge wave of peeling away the history. Need to move slowly through this process, building levels of safety & trust thru pastoral care.

Bishop Ian Douglas, Working Group on Truth-Telling, Reckoning & Healing, Legislative Comm.

- Volunteerism represented in this webinar is at the heart of the vision of the ECREJ
- WG focused on listening in the first instance, to support Truth Telling, Reckoning & Healing
- Our Church has benefitted & continues to benefit from White supremacy, which affects the structures of the Church.
- Can we imagine another way forward, free from this legacy of White supremacy that our institutional structures & budgets reflect? Setting up the ECREJ reflects three primary concerns.
 - 1) This is life-long work to which we are called as followers of Jesus
 - 2) The Current Presiding Officers & staff are committed, but there is no guarantee of future commitment.
 - 3) Establish an independent, voluntary structure (ECREJ) to continue the work independent of leadership change.
- We therefore proposed a voluntary society where individuals, parishes, dioceses, etc. can all come together to share resources, support one another & extend the work beyond what any one entity could accomplish alone.
- Will be funded by the income from 10% of the Church’s holdings; guaranteed pre-budget money.
- This will be a multiplier of BBC, alongside, but not formally part of that effort.
- This is like the ESCRU (Episcopal Society for Cultural & Racial Unity), a voluntary initiative that pushed the Episcopal Church to take an active position in support of Civil Rights.

- A Constituting Group has been established to legally set up the ECREJ. As soon as its work is finished, the Coalition can start its work. However, nothing is stopping provinces, dioceses, congregations or seminaries/schools from already diving in on the recommendations outlined in the WG report.

Canon Stephanie Spellers, Sacred Ground

- Noted that Sacred Ground Circles or whole parishes could join the ECREJ to become involved in its ministry.

Additional points raised in the Chat:

Working Group on Truth Telling, Reckoning and Healing

- Final report of the Presiding Officers' Working Group on Truth-telling, Reckoning, and Healing: <https://extranet.generalconvention.org/staff/files/download/31499> Note: I previously forwarded this report to the Sacred Ground Circle and then forwarded my summary of that WG report.
- Stephanie Spellers: Read this story about the Working Group and the action and commitment they inspired at General Convention: <https://www.episcopalchurch.org/publicaffairs/working-group-calls-episcopalians-to-address-harms-of-white-supremacy-legacies-of-colonialism-and-imperialism/>

Resolutions

- Stephanie Spellers: you'll be able to read these and many other race-related resolutions in this month's Beloved Community newsletter. <https://us17.campaign-archive.com/?u=840ae7a94a40d12c3d9ccf73f&id=3204bb23f1>
- Phoebe Chatfield: This is a list of the Racial Justice, Healing and Reconciliation-related Legislation: <https://www.episcopalchurch.org/racialreconciliation/successful-racial-justice-healing-and-reconciliation-related-legislation/> Note: She found more resolutions that touch on racial justice than I reported on in my e-mail of 6/19/22. These are all hyperlinked, so you can get directly to the resolution in question.

Examples of Actions taken in Response

- Diocese of New York Reparations Committee: <https://dioceseny.org/mission-and-outreach/social-concerns/reparations-for-slavery/>

INDIGENOUS BOARDING SCHOOLS

(See the summary of the discussion by panelist Canon Cornelia Eaton, on page 3 above)

- Stephanie Spellers: A127: Indigenous Boarding Schools Reckoning
- Carl C Anthony: Where can we hear the A127 commentaries, please?
Melanie Mullen: Carl - you might want to dive into the recordings here: <https://media.episcopalchurch.org/video/>
- Katrina Browne: Carl: I have the timecode for when these resolutions came to the floor of each House - we'll include in follow up email
- Nick Gordon: Check out an ENS article on the A127 testimony here: <https://www.episcopalnewsservice.org/2022/07/08/deputies-engage-in-holy-listening-begin-process-toward-healing-by-passing-racial-equity-resolutions/>
- Martha Gardner: And a second land acknowledgement resolution - <https://www.vbinder.net/resolutions/171?house=HD&lang=en>

- Stephanie Green: In the truth-telling and reckoning around the indigenous experience of boarding schools, will there be simultaneous reckoning of the ongoing formation of whiteness and cultural suppression of non-white students, staff, and faculty in Episcopal schools and preschools? I am aware that NAES promotes diversity, equity and inclusion through workshops, conferences, and working groups — but will there also be a reckoning about how ongoing cultural suppression is also related to and extension of the program of cultural genocide in the boarding schools?
- Amy Cook: Uncovering and lifting up the indigenous history within our own diocese is so important. We know that the truth of what happened in US history is not being taught many places. But even for those wishing to teach a lot of history has been forgotten or buried and it needs to be brought to the light so that we understand what happened here before 1600.
- Peg Coleman: Great local resource from upstate NY: *And Grandma Said: Iroquois Teachings as Passed Down through Oral Tradition*, Tom Porter, Bear Clan Elder of the Mohawk Nation

NEXT WEBINAR MEETING

- Thursday, Sept 15 from 1 – 2:30 pm Eastern time. Bishop Curry’s vision for Sacred Ground. Please invite people to attend, even if they have not yet taken part in a Sacred Ground Circle.