

Minutes for Sacred Ground Working Group meeting  
December 6, 2022, at Saint Luke's Episcopal Church

Present: Skip Jones, Marjy Jones, Susan Webber, Chris McFarlane, George Omohundro, Tom Stallman, Cathleen Lewis, Becky Littlepage, Tom Hargrove

Skip convened the meeting at 7:20 p.m. and read Isaiah 50: 10-11:

Who among you fears the Lord and obeys the voice of his servant,  
who walks in darkness and has no light,  
yet trusts in the name of the Lord and relies upon his God?  
But all of you are kindlers of fire, lighters of firebrands.  
Walk in the flame of your fire, and among the brands that you have kindled!  
This is what you shall have from my hand: you shall lie down in torment.

General discussion as to the verses' application to Sacred Ground. "To me that says you know what you should do, it will be hard, but you should still do it," Skip suggested.

1. Skip reported the Sacred Ground group has been asked to make a presentation at the adult forum on February 12. (Tom S. suggested playing the video of our **remembrances** of what was learned plus the video of Bishop Michael Curry's message about Sacred Ground. Chris suggested using this forum as a means to promote interest in a second Sacred Ground circle. George suggested starting the forum with a provocative statement, something like: "After the Civil Rights movement: Are we done?" He offered to research news items in this vein. The four EFM members will **consider how to structure a theological reflection to be used during the adult forum** and circulate **ideas** to the whole committee.
2. Susan offered to contact the Church office to update Sacred Ground tab at the Saint Luke's website with calendar events and other items of interest from Sacred Ground. Susan is familiar with the Square Space web interface and has a personal logon.
3. Becky reported on the October meeting of Venture In Community (VIC) which she termed "eye opening." The Franconia area has the highest eviction rate in Fairfax County. One-third of students at the Franconia school "turn over" each year. About 750 students are homeless countywide. Asians are the fastest growing demographic. Walt Whitman Junior High is on verge of losing accreditation because of poor test scores. Concerns there are not enough discussions about mental wellbeing at public schools. Less than 10 percent of students who graduate have work experience in Fairfax County. Fifty percent of students live in poverty at Walt Whitman. Chris said Whitman is in "our backyard" and we shouldn't let that happen. George asked if Eagles Wings or some similar program would be available. Becky said she'd contact Walt Whitman to discuss volunteer opportunities.
4. Skip gave a plug for the Food Insecurity discussion meeting at Martha Washington Public Library on Dec. 7, a meeting organized by Anne Hargrove.

5. General discussion about feasibility of getting Sacred Ground videos on the TV monitor in Narthex. Chris suggested using still photos slides as an alternative and said he'd investigate with the Church office how to input items into the monitor.
6. General discussion for a new Cultural Day so that Saint Luker's can mingle with the Ghanaian congregation. Hargrove will try to schedule a meeting with Nick and Skip to discuss another Cultural Day program.
7. Commun1ty Plus has had discussions focusing on needs in two **Census tracts** on the Route 1 corridor (**two of the three poorest Census tracts in Fairfax County**). Skip suggested bringing in someone from United Community. Sue Bentley has been scheduling adult forums. Tom S. agreed to discuss with Sue on looping United Community into an Adult Forum meeting on immigrant needs along Route 1 corridor. Skip has Community Plus contacts and will make them available to **Tom and the office**.
8. Skip presented at Nov. 15 Vestry to support two African American music programs as part of church's commitment to reparations. The music director at Alfred Street Church has suggested a local musician named Samantha Williams who gives concerts in African American music and explains the historical context. Chris agreed to contact Samantha to consider a special evening at St. Luke's.
9. Skip has been asked to be the church Representative to Boy Scout Troop 654. He will become counselor for Citizenship in Society merit badge which has Sacred Ground relevance.
10. George reported on Diocese of Virginia's recent convention with Bishop Sutton of Maryland on Sacred Ground issues. "I'm going to make everyone uncomfortable," the Bishop started the meeting by saying. This was one of the first steps to getting a diocesan discussion of reparations started. The goal is to raise \$10 million raised within 5 years to support reparations for slavery. Cathy agreed to work with George to research the history of what has happened, historically, on the grounds of Saint Luke's. "You will know there were once slaves working at River Farm, and to research Indigenous persons prior," she said. They will contact Tammy Manarino who has given local history discussions. George also suggested creating a special Collect for reparations to be read during worship services.
11. George recommended everyone see Henry Lewis Gates presentation called Reconstruction on PBS.
12. Next meeting scheduled for February 21, 2023 at 7:15 p.m. at St. Luke's.
13. Skip closed in prayer 8:28 p.m.