

Sacred Ground

Thank you for your interest in *Sacred Ground*! We are excited to make this a part of Grace Church's adult formation offerings and to take this spiritual journey with you.

Sacred Ground is a films and readings-based dialogue series and is a part of *Becoming Beloved Community*, The Episcopal Church's long-term commitment to racial healing, reconciliation, and justice in our personal lives, our ministries, and our society. This program is a means by which participants come together with a shared purpose of learning and spiritual growth. Together, and with God's help, we'll create compassionate and truthful spaces for engaging in transformative conversations around issues of race and racism.



Here are some details:

- We ask for a commitment to 10 sessions, with two 1.5-2 hour sessions per month and approximately 2-3 hours of viewing/reading/reflection time in preparation for each session.
- *Sacred Ground* invites participants to walk back through history in order to peel away the layers that brought us to today, reflecting on family histories and stories, as well as important narratives that shape the collective American story.
- The intent is to create safe and honest spaces to ask difficult questions, share points of view in response to the materials, practice empathetic listening and imagination, and offer personal stories, all with an openness to transformation of ourselves and our community.
- This series, framed as a spiritual journey, is grounded in the Christian faith – in the example of Jesus Christ and the power of scripture, prayer, God's grace, and the Holy Spirit to help us step closer to the dream of beloved community.
- There is no "liberal" or "conservative" agenda in *Sacred Ground*. This is about shared learning and humility, with hope for the cultivation and deepening of relationships and understanding.
- The curriculum was designed and written by a white woman in consultation with colleagues and church leaders of color. Rather than perpetuate the assumption that the authenticity of racial dialogue requires that people of color be present to do the "heavy lifting," *Sacred Ground* encourages developing white people's competency in conversations about race. Interracial groups are very possible, but not necessary.
- Dialogue circles are led by facilitators, (clergy and other church leaders), who will also provide ongoing support for reflection and processing. Participants are

encouraged to make connections in the dialogue circles and to create opportunities for continued conversations and the strengthening of relationships with one another. Maintaining connection and intent is critical. It's also conducive to allowing for authenticity in our responses and actions.

- There is no financial cost to you. Most of the materials are available online via The Episcopal Church, and Grace Church will provide the two books that are part of the curriculum. Donations can be made to our Adult Formation fund to help cover the costs of the books, if folks would like to and are able to do so.
- *Sacred Ground* is open to persons who are not Grace Church members or friends. Please feel free to invite others who are seeking and would like to share in this experience.

We hope that you might also receive this invitation as a call to faithful action – to making room within ourselves for the story, experience, and reality of the “other.” The Holy Spirit will be present on this journey, helping us lament one another’s pain, as we also work to discern what it looks like to support one another’s flourishing.

Registration is now open, and we plan to have an initial gathering of all participants in the week of September 13th with the first session taking place the week of September 20th. Once you register you will receive a survey which will help us put the groups together. Register with an email to Amber Maples, Grace’s Assistant for Spiritual Formation at sfdirector@graceepiscopalholland.org.

If you have questions, feel free to contact Amber or Rev. Jen.