

Resolution 004 for the 154th Convention
Of the Diocese of Central Pennsylvania
Encouraging Parish Commitment to Racial Healing, Reconciliation, and Justice
in their Personal Lives, Ministries, and Society by
Sponsoring Sacred Ground Talking Circles

Be it RESOLVED by the 154th Convention of the Diocese of Central Pennsylvania that all parishes within the Diocese strive to achieve the vision of the Beloved Community in which all are given respect and dignity as Children of God by sponsoring Sacred Ground Talking Circles which are designed to:

Promote respectful, faith-centered dialogue around race and racism; educate through small groups that meet regularly to discuss assigned videos and readings that walk participants back through history and then invite them to consider how this history has brought us to today; encourage greater understanding of systemic challenges that have contributed to the trials and divides of the present day – all while grounded in our call to faith, hope, and love; and engage parishioners and individuals to take action towards social justice work.

Sponsor: The Rev. Dn. Michael Nailor, The Rev. Rebecca Myers, Cn. Anthony Alexander, and Ms. Sharon England

EXPLANATION:

Sacred Ground is an eleven-week curriculum designed to promote respectful, faith-centered dialogue around race and racism. Small groups meet regularly to go through assigned videos and readings that walk participants back through history and then invite them to consider how this history has brought us to today. The vision behind *Sacred Ground* is that of the Beloved Community in which all are given respect and dignity as Children of God. It is sponsored by The Episcopal Church.

In April 2022, on the anniversary of the third year since the inception of Sacred Ground, the Episcopal Church in collaboration with the Union of Black Episcopalians and Indígena Consulting, LLC. issued a report on the effectiveness of Sacred Ground

This report concluded that *Sacred Ground*: Appears to have a powerful impact on those who take part, with 61% of People of Color and 66% of White people indicating that they were “very” or “extremely” transformed. The numbers were even higher when people were asked about specific internal shifts in knowledge, emotions, and attitudes—12 out of the 15 areas of change received “agree/strongly agree” answers in the 73%-94% range. More than 90% of participants took at least one action step, and nearly 70% took one to five action steps. The report concluded that after participating in *Sacred Ground* there is strong motivation to act, as well as interest in tools to support taking even more profound action steps.

In 2023, the Bishop Nathan Baxter Chapter of the Union of Black Episcopalians, The Stevenson School for Ministry, and the Dismantling Racism Commission united to promote the expansion of Sacred Ground Talking Circles in the Diocese including the provision of online groups.