

# Beloved Community Initiative Report 2025

Submitted by Canon Eric McIntosh and Shahnaz Deninger

## BCI/Commission on Race and Reconciliation

- Bishop Barbara Harris/Absalom Jones service was held on Feb. 8<sup>th</sup>. Rev. Canon Eric McIntosh preached on behalf of Rev. Valerie Mayo, Strategic Consultant for Sacred Ground for TEC. Valerie got sick with a virus.
- CORR is building a check list to work throughout the year to ensure efficient planning for the commemoration services in the future.
- Planning anti-racism training for the diocese for May 2025.
- Met with Social Justice Committee and Stephen Bloomberg to finalize diocesan policy on undocumented immigrants, being a sanctuary parish for same and parish response to ICE/warrants etc.
- Collaborative meetings have begun with the Social Justice Committee. We have agreed that the intersectionality is too strong to continue to operate in silos. For now, CORR will concentrate on education and racism within the diocese. SJC has more flexibility on what it wants to do. We have agreed that the intersectionality is too strong to continue to operate in silos. For now CORR will concentrate on education and racism within the diocese. SJC has more flexibility on what it wants to do.
- CORR has formed a committee to build and work on a check list for our future commemoration services.
- Met with President of PIIN (Pennsylvania Interfaith impact network) to explore vehicles of more intentional advocacy for those of our diocese that are interested and/or discerning what is next with their own development in anti-racism work.
- Continued planning anti-racism training: We will increase training and be more aggressive in advising our parishes that it is mandatory for leaders to take the training. As such we will offer training in a myriad of ways with more diverse opportunities to fulfil the requirement.
- Bishop Solak has appointed Marilynne Mulvihill (member of SJC) and Rev. Charles Fischer as new members of CORR.
- Planning for Absalom Jones/Babara Harris and MLK Jr. Services has begun. SJC will collaborate in the planning.
- CORR/SJC collaborative will be shared in a book study of *7 Deadly Sins of White Christian Nationalism... written by Carter Heyward, one of the Philadelphia 11.*
- Collecting and Creating "Did You Know?" articles for publishing in "Grace Happens." Both SJC and CORR members are participating.

- Taught one of four sessions to Episcopal Diocese of San Diego for their “Toward a fuller Gospel” series.
- Continued planning anti-racism training: We will increase training and be more aggressive in advising our parishes that it is mandatory for leaders to take the training. As such we will offer training in a myriad of ways with more diverse opportunities to fulfil the requirement.
- Refreshing BCI Theory of change document to include logic model for future work in Racial justice and reconciliation to include measurable outcomes.
- Met with BCI Parish liaisons inviting updating them on activities with BCI. Inviting them to encourage parishioners to consider joining CORR and SJC.
- Working with Dave Wacaster (Diocese of Washington) as Co-Coordinator of Anti-racism work for Province III. We are investigating ways to offer anti-racism training and offering alternatives that suffice for the requirement to be a leader in our respective Dioceses.
- Developed an Episcopal Social Justice Survey to be introduced to the diocese to ascertain how far we have come, social justice interests of parishioners, how social justice impacts faith and formation, appetite for engagement and action, understanding of how social justice impacts theology and dialogue, and community and church leadership.
- Developed covenants for both CORR and SJC to provide accountability for members to move participation beyond just meeting to actual engagement and work.
- Considering creating and/or adopting a racial justice tool kit catered for the Diocese of Pittsburgh parishes.
- Investigating participation in a Reparations training hosted by Christian Associates. The workshop is “Reparations for Social Justice,” offered by *Sacred Reckonings*. The Sacred Reckonings model is based on a “reparatory eco-map” that makes clear that reparation has many aspects: truth-telling, spiritual practices, relationship, political solidarity, and wealth return.
- Creating “The Advocacy Corner” with the SJC. This will be an auxiliary program led by the SJC. The program will serve as a meeting platform to offer parishioners of our diocese to meet and discuss issues that might be worth organizing to advocate. The criteria that I developed for the AC considers: Theological grounding, Community impact, strategic opportunity, moral clarity, accountability and evaluation. Our first gathering is in October.
- Also, ground rules for dialogue were developed which consisted of centering the gospel of liberation, speaking from “I,” assuming good intent yet naming harm, staying curious and not defensive, holding complexity and respecting time and process, maintaining confidentiality and consent, practicing accountability and committing to ongoing formation.
- Continued working on how we provide antiracism training in other creative ways. Discussing how we engage the diocese on a monthly or bi-monthly basis through town hall style meetings with action planning

- Completed covenants for both respectively. Each voted to adopt them in our respective August meetings. The covenants should serve to strengthen our relationships and commitment to the work that we meet to do.
- Offered anti-racism training “Seeing the Face of God October 10<sup>th</sup> – 11<sup>th</sup>.”

### **Scared Ground Sessions and Updates:**

Level 1 Sessions will resume in the new year at St. Thomas, and then two other locations during the 2025-2026 calendar year.

- First Sacred Ground Level 1 Session for the new year will start at St. Thomas in mid January 2026 to March 2026.
- We are looking for other parishes who would feel comfortable to host another series of sessions preferably after Easter.
- We will do a Level 2 "Deeper Dive" set of sessions in February through March.
- Grace Happens will publish the details of the location, exact dates, and times.

There is continued partnership with different organizations and young adult groups for panel discussions in each Sacred Ground set of sessions. (Islamic Center, Synagogues, college students, Latinex community, Asian Community, NAACP, Three Rivers Tribal Council, etc).

- We will be partnering with two local schools to introduce "Beloved Community". WT has already started ground work with students by inviting adults to speak and dialogue on various topics/ initiatives that "Beloved Community is grounded in.
- We are presently working with a Connecticut church interested in getting help with deepening their Sacred Ground experience through additional programing. Especially in light of the national Church updating their material. Much of the feedback we received from participants coincided with feedback nationally.
- We are actively assisting the National Church on rewriting/ updating the Sacred Ground to be used in the upcoming year. The updates will include shorter readings, more discussion time, more up to date content, easier access to content, and shorter videos. The national church will be adding more current content and taking away content that may be redundant or already discussed through different receivables.
- We are actively participating in Sacred Ground feedback sessions and curriculum writing opportunities in person and online.
- MOST IMPORTANTLY, possible participants do not feel as safe as they had hoped they would during the turbulent climate of our nation. We are hoping that the adjustments/ rewriting of curriculum and the deeper dive opportunities allow for more participation and alleviate the fear or hesitation to fully engage in Sacred Ground sessions.