



**First Congregational Church of Ashfield ❖ United Church of Christ
Creating Community, Welcoming All**

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Rev. David Jones, Minister

Two Ashfield Churches to Launch Sacred Ground, a Study Group on History of Race, Grounded in Faith

Sacred Ground is a film and readings-based dialogue series on race, grounded in faith. Small groups are invited to walk through chapters of America's history of race and racism, while weaving in threads of family story, economic class, and political and regional identity.

The 10-part series is built around a powerful online curriculum of documentary films and readings that focus on Indigenous, Black, Latino, and Asian/Pacific American histories as they intersect with European American histories.

This series is free and open to all in both churches, though participation is necessarily limited to six from UCC and six from St. John's. The series is especially designed to help white people talk with other white people. Participants are invited to peel away the layers that have contributed to the challenges and divides of the present day – all while grounded in our call to faith, hope and love. **Registration will open on January 24th. Read details about the series and curriculum below. Watch a video message about Sacred Ground from Episcopal Presiding Bishop Michael Curry at https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=t_KFbPMwoig.**

Sacred Ground

“Sacred Ground is a brilliant eleven-week program of readings and videos, designed to open our hearts, minds, and souls to the legacy of racism that we all own. For me it was deeply humbling and truly life-changing.”

Susan Bagg Todd

“I learned about the origins of white supremacy and the ways it has impacted non-white communities over the centuries. I also learned about the Christian church's role in the oppression of non-whites. Being with other pilgrims like myself made the readings and films deepen my learnings and understanding.”

Annie Cheatham

“Sacred Ground is a spiritual journey where I learned to leave space around that which made me uncomfortable or upset knowing our class time was a safe place to explore and learn.”

Sue Craft

“Life-changing.”

What is Sacred Ground?

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St. John's and First Congregational Church of Ashfield launch Sacred Ground Circle on February 6

Annie Cheatham and the Rev. **Vicki Ix** have experienced Sacred Ground as participants and will facilitate this Ashfield circle. Creating safe, sacred space for uncomfortable truths and the sharing of our lives requires preparation, commitment and norms to which we all will agree. Participation is necessarily limited to six from UCC and six from St. John's. A reminder that this is our first circle and there will be other opportunities in the months ahead. Our circle will be largely focused on "white work" – confronting the sin of white supremacy embedded in our history, in our institutions, and in ourselves. As you prayerfully consider the introductory material here, consider also the commitment of your time. There is no charge for the course material.

Prep for each class will involve watching a video, reading an article, a few chapters of a book – approximately 1 1/2 hour per class will be needed. We understand that a participant may miss a session and will provide a way to "catch up" with the missed experience. **Registration will open in both communities on Monday, January 24th at 12 noon.** The Circle itself will gather on the following Sundays from 5:00 PM – 6:30 PM:

- February 6: Orientation Session for Participants 5 – 6 PM
- February 20: Session 1 5:00 – 6:30 PM
- March 6: Session 2 5:00 – 6:30 PM

- March 20: Session 3 5:00 – 6:30 PM
- April 3: Session 4 5:00 – 6:30 PM
- May 1: Session 5 5:00 – 6:30 PM
- May 15: Session 6 5:00 – 6:30 PM
- June 5: Session 7 5:00 – 6:30 PM
- June 19: Session 8 5:00 – 6:30 PM
- July 10: Session 9 5:00 – 6:30 PM
- July 24: Session 10 5:00 – 6:30 PM

Questions?

Reach out to Annie Cheatham, anniecheatham06@gmail.com or Vicki Ix, communications@diocesewma.org or any of the participants who offered comment on the Sacred Ground experience.

The curriculum, created by Katrina Browne, creator of the documentary, [Traces of the Trade](http://www.tracesofthetrade.org/family/), <http://www.tracesofthetrade.org/family/> includes

- A set of documentary films and short videos, available for free to registered dialogue groups via streaming in a password-protected area on the Episcopal Church website
- A set of readings, also available for free to registered dialogue groups as PDFs in a password-protected area
- Participants will also need to acquire or borrow two assigned books