Gracious and Courageous Conversations: Deepening understanding about race, community, and country

Washington National Cathedral, October 15 and 16 2017

Welcome to Gracious and Courageous Conversations: Deepening understanding about race, community, and country. The purpose of this program is to provide a gracious space to have constructive conversations about our nation’s long struggle with race and racism. The purpose of dialogue is to bring together people with diverse backgrounds, viewpoints and experiences to have meaningful conversation on a common subject.

Agenda

Gather with food and song

Welcome

Introductory session

Dialogue in 3 rounds

Next steps and commitments

Closing song
SUNDAY (repeated)

In the Lord I'll be ever thankful. In the Lord I will rejoice. Look to God, do not be afraid, lift up your voices, the Lord is near; lift up your voices, the Lord is near.

MONDAY (repeat twice)

Open your ears, O faithful people, open your ears and hear God's word.

Open your hearts, O faithful people, God has come to you.

God has spoken to the people, Hallelujah!

And these words are words of wisdom, Hallelujah! Hallelujah!

God has spoken to the people, Hallelujah!

And these words are words of wisdom Hallelujah!
We invite you to enter into a time of dialogue remembering that:

- Dialogue does not force anyone to change. It is not a debate in which we try to convince others that we are right. It is about mutual understanding.
- Dialogue is NOT about finger pointing, demonizing or punishing individuals or groups. Truth dialogue invites each one of us to commit to sharing his or her truth while being willing to listen deeply to another’s truth.
- Dialogue does not avoid our history and present differences, pretending that everything is okay. Dialogue acknowledges our history and our present differences. By sharing our different experiences, we can achieve greater understanding of the issue and move toward potential reconciliation fostering constructive change in our community.

Respectful Communication Guidelines

R = take Responsibility for what you say and feel without blaming others
E = use Empathetic listening
S = be Sensitive to differences in communication styles
P = Ponder what you hear and feel before you speak
E = Examine your own assumptions and perceptions
C = keep Confidentiality
T = Trust ambiguity because we are not here to debate who is right or wrong

(from The Bush Was Blazing but Not Consumed by Eric H. F. Law)

I agree to uphold these guidelines for the time we have together.

Signature ___________________________ Date ___________________________
Mutual Invitation

In order to ensure that everyone who wants to share has the opportunity to speak, we will proceed in the following way:

The leader or a designated person shares first. After that person has spoken, he or she then invites another to share. (Who you invite does not need to be the person next to you.) After the next person has spoken, that person is given the privilege to invite another to share.

If you are not ready to share, say "I pass for now" and we will invite you to share later on. If you don’t want to say anything at all, simply say "pass" and proceed to invite another to share. We will do this until everyone has been invited.

We invite you to listen and not to respond to someone’s sharing immediately. There will be time to respond and to ask clarifying questions after everyone has had an opportunity to share.

(from *The Wolf Shall Dwell With the Lamb* by Eric H. F. Law)
We will have three rounds of dialogue today. At the beginning of each round, you will have an opportunity to reflect on the questions for that round.

**Round 1:**

My name is . . .  
My ministry/my relationship with the Cathedral is . . .

One thing I appreciate most about the Sacred Space at the Cathedral . . .

The artifact or space at the Cathedral that makes me feel like I belong is . . .

**Round 2:**

As I listen to the story of the windows, I . . .

When I recall/heard about the Lee windows, a story or experience connected with race relations that came to my mind is . . .

How does the removal of the windows impact me personally and/or my ministry?

(Round 3 on next page)
Round 3:

As a result of this dialogue, what is God calling me to do, be, or change regarding race relations?

What is God calling us to do be or change regarding race relations?

My hopes and concerns as we move forward are …

Notes/commitments