

Invitation to a congregational TALKING CIRCLE:

Over the last few months, we have experienced within our community a collision of opinions and conflicting perspectives. These experiences have left some scarred and less involved in our collective activities. And we have lost some cherished members. There is a need for a collective community listening experience. Our Pastoral Care ministry at its core is an extension of just such an activity. With that in mind, we have scheduled a community wide Talking Circle to be held on Saturday, June 4th from 9am to noon, in our sanctuary. During that time, we will offer qualitative listening around the topic “what does our congregation do to either ‘enhance’ or ‘diminish’ the manifestation of a **Blessed Community?**”

It is our hope that as many of our congregation that wish to express their thoughts & feelings will attend. A talking circle is not an opportunity to debate but rather to hear our many perspectives in a respectful and wholesome way.

Talking circles, also called “peacemaking circles,” come from the traditions of indigenous people of North America. Circle processes are based upon equality between participants and the principle of sharing power with each other instead of having power over one another.

Talking Circles are a foundational approach to community understanding & collective decision making. This model encourages dialogue, respect, the co-creation of a common understanding and social discourse. The nuance of subtle energy created from using this respectful approach to talking with others provides a sense of communion and interconnectedness that is not often present in the common methods of communicating in groups. When everyone has their turn to speak, when all voices are heard in a respectful and attentive way, the atmosphere becomes a rich source of information, identity, interaction, and healing.



This process is used to ensure that all voices are heard without interruption. Usually, a circle leader would initiate the conversation with other members responding and sharing their perceptions and opinions on the topic under discussion. Several varied objects are used by different First Nations peoples to facilitate the talking circle. Some people use a talking stick, others a talking feather. The main point of using a sacred object is that whoever is holding the object in their hand is the one speaking while all others are listening deeply to understand without judgement. The circle itself is considered sacred. The circle is a pervasive symbol in nature and has come to represent wholeness, completion, and the cycles of life (including the cycle of human communication).

We hope you will take advantage of this opportunity and be here to both share and hear the voices of one another. If you have any questions, please give me a call.

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