**Second St. Luke’s Sacred Ground Circle**

**Notes from Session 2**

**Oct 29, 2023**

The Second St. Luke’s Sacred Ground Circle met for the third time on Sunday, Oct 29 at the home of Susan Harris and George Coviello.

The opening Scripture reading was Romans 8:24-27, which expresses hope in the power of the Holy Spirit to bring about changes in peoples’ hearts and lives. Participants reflected that, despite the achievement focus of our society, we needed to trust that God is at work, “in God’s time.” We found the thought comforting that the Holy Spirit intercedes for us even when we do not know what to pray. To begin this session, we reached back to Psalm 51 and asked the Holy Spirit to create in us clean hearts with the strength and courage to see the God in people we meet.

On the basis of a video *The* *Myth of Race Debunked in 3 Minutes*, we discussed the concept of race as a human construction with no basis in biology. There was a sense that humans have long sought to categorize and classify things in the world around them, going all the way back to categories of races in ancient Greece based on the “four humors” (sanguine, bilious, choleric, melancholic). The noted the increased tendency of younger generations to resist being typecast into one racial category and wondered whether the collection of data by racial categories by governments at various levels, however well-intentioned, was actually perpetuating harm. Interesting in that regard is a recent Washington Post article that reported on a movement by genetic scientists to have the government account for harms caused by “race,” but without resorting to debunked categories that suggest it is biological <https://www.washingtonpost.com/dc-md-va/2023/10/16/census-race-eliminate-race-box/>.

We then turned to reflecting on our ancestral roots, how and why our people had come to this country, what cultural beliefs and traditions they had brought with them, and how those beliefs and traditions had survived in the “melting pot” experience. We also reflected on our families’ or communities’ history of involvement in or experience with enslavement and racism in America. In that regard, we also considered how issues surrounding race intersect with other social phenomena, particularly with class.

Next, we thought about how religion relates to racial issues in America. We reflected on the findings of demographer Robert Putnam that, in general, churches have tended to be followers of trends in attitudes towards race in America rather than prophetic voices for change. As one participant put it, when it comes to race it seems like 50% of people are motivated by love and 50% by fear, and when people come to religion, they could be looking for reinforcement of either perspective. In this regard, we welcomed the Episcopal Church’s current strong voice in support of Becoming Beloved Community.

To close the meeting, we joined together in reciting the *Prayer for Those Who Influence Public Opinion* (Prayer # 39 in the Book of Common Prayer).