

# THE TAU CROSS

## Sacred Ground: A Film-Based Dialogue Series on Race & Faith

As a part of the Episcopal Church’s long-term commitment to racial healing, reconciliation, and justice, our parish will embark upon a ten-session program titled *Sacred Ground*. The series is designed to invite and support deeper conversations about race within our own faith community by creating a forum for thoughtful reflection and sharing stories. And hopefully through this process, we will make deeper connections with fellow parishioners. To help judge if the series will be of interest to you, previews for some of the videos are provided here: : <https://episcopalchurch.org/sacred-ground/syllabus-preview>.



The series will begin with an initial informational session via Zoom on Wednesday, September 2nd at 6:00 pm. After the initial meeting, we will divide into small groups (8-10 people). We plan to conduct the first four (of the ten) sessions before the end of the year. The initial sessions are scheduled for: September

7th, October 5th, November 2nd, and November 30th.

To register for this series, please email Victoria at the church office. Victoria will then send you a link for the informational Zoom call on September 2nd, as well as the link and

password for all of the course materials for the *Sacred Ground* series. The first assignment of the program will be to watch the film *American*

*Creed* (90 min.) in advance of the first small-group meeting on September 7th.

While the series is largely film-based followed by discussion, there are some readings assigned to each session as well. There are also two core books assigned to the course: *Jesus and the Disinherited* by Howard Thurman, and *Waking Up White, and Finding Myself in the Story of Race* by Debby Irving. The readings are spread out over the length of the course.

As one can discern, this series has quite a bit more substance than our usual adult education

offerings. And while the time commitment is greater—the program provides opportunities for timely conversations about race and faith. It is my hope that a significant number of parishioners will elect to join the *Sacred Ground* conversation.

I look forward to our journey together!

Blessings,

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## Words

In any relationship, communication is key. My Sunday School teacher, Mrs. Violet Harrington, would say, “God gave us two eyes, two ears, and one mouth for good reason.” Mrs. Harrington was a woman of deep faith who valued words. She would read scripture daily from her *Good News Bible* and pray with her *Book of Common Prayer*. She did a lot of listening. She paid attention to the presence of God, and also of her late husband Frank, who communicated “signs” that things would be alright. She missed him dearly. Mrs. Harrington would always remind her students that if folks would do a lot more listening than talking, the world would be a better place. More listening would make room for not only more peace and quiet but also would make room for others to speak up. Even more importantly, it would limit people from saying hurtful words. The listening space can offer us a moment to be mindful of words we say. How many of our people hold the pain in their heart of not being heard? It seems like quite a few of us. Our people bear scars of the words unleashed by others that neither honor nor acknowledge the truth of their being. Words, said or not said, make a difference.



As we grow in the awareness of Christ in our lives, our experience of words can be reframed and take on new meaning. My friend Eric Sandras shared in his book, *Plastic Jesus – Exposing the Hollowness of Comfortable Christianity*:

“Our identities are easily tainted by the words of others, especially by the influential people in our lives. Parents, coaches, teachers, and significant others use their tongues to cut and hack away like swords in the hands of drunken warriors... Yet when we enter a relationship with Jesus, he invites us to live from the whole new reality, one not influenced by others opinions. No, he invites us to live from a

much more stable place, a place where the truthful words of our Creator can be the rock on which we build our lives.

People have opinions; God has truth.

People have attitudes; God has perspective.

People have brokenness; God has wholeness.

People have loud mouths; God has a gentle whisper.”

We have a choice to live faith in action mindfully through words that heal and restore. Our words can build people up or to tear people down. I have noticed lately how edgy my words have been towards my children in this time of social distancing. And I don’t like it. I’ve also noticed the uptick in hurtful words used in social media and even in public. Especially in these time of great isolation, social change, and the quest for downright survival, prepping in our bunkers and cursing the darkness may not offer the wholeness we need for sustainable joy or a healthy well-being. It seems like we need God and each other more than ever.

I’ve been turning to the scriptures even more nowadays, and the words of Jesus help to invite faith, hope, and love to rebalance my being:

Peace I leave with you; my peace I give to you. I do not give to you as the world gives. Do not let your hearts be troubled, and do not let them be afraid. - John 14:27, NRSV.

The circumstances call upon us to continue to communicate and listen in creative ways. In this ever more connected planet, what we say and how we say it forms how others may be in this world. The change we seek comes in the simple ways.

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I learned from Mrs. Harrington how I could always find guiding words within the collects of our *Book of Common Prayer*. Collects are prayers meant to gather the intentions of the people in worship. This collect is offered for the Sunday closest to September 7th (Proper 18):

Grant us, O Lord, to trust in you with all our hearts; for, as you always resist the proud who confide in their own strength, so you never forsake those who make their boast of your mercy; through Jesus Christ our Lord, who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and for ever. Amen.

Words reflect the heart. May the words we share be infused with a faithfulness that honors, encourages and inquires in wonder, love and praise. My friends, THANK YOU for all you do to share the goodness of God’s great love in our world that needs more love.

God bless you!

-Fr. Jay+

### Getting the Broken Pieces to Fit



Music was an essential part of my upbringing in the 1960’s. My grandmother, Mimi, was a concert pianist and my mother, Sallie, played a variety of music all the time, from classical to jazz.

The records were always spinning on the stereo, and I learned that the music that my mother chose matched her mood! My brother and I loved music, too. We would go down to the local record store to get albums from the Beatles, the Rolling Stones, and Cream on their release dates. As time went on, I developed a love of Bruce Springsteen’s music. His ballads of hardship, love and his faith in and love of God resonated with me.

Springsteen’s album “Western Stars” is a collection of thirteen songs released in June of 2019. The song entitled “Drive Fast,” and in particular the line, “Figured maybe together we could get the broken pieces to fit,” spoke to me in many ways. That line reminds me of exactly what Jesus did in his ministry. He wanted to be with the broken people

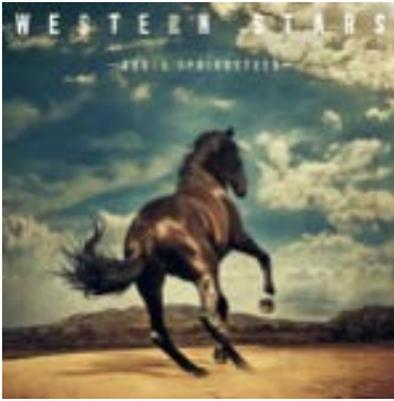
of all walks of life, to help them feel a part of a society that shunned them because they were different. Jesus wanted to heal them from their visible and invisible brokenness.

In Matthew’s Gospel, when Saint Matthew is being called to be a disciple of Jesus, we hear the following:

And as he sat at dinner in the house, many tax-collectors and sinners came and were sitting with him and his disciples. When the Pharisees saw this, they said to his disciples, “Why does your teacher eat with tax-collectors and sinners?” But when he heard this, he said, “Those who are well have no need of a physician, but those who are sick. Go and learn what this means, ‘I desire mercy, not sacrifice.’ For I have come to call not the righteous but sinners.” (Matthew 9:10-13)

I believe that all of us are broken one way or another, but it is through our collective brokenness that we can come before God and ask for healing. It is through our prayers asking for healing that the mercy of God, Jesus, and the Holy Spirit becomes truly evident. The Holy Trinity nourishes us and

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feeds us so that in our brokenness we are able to see even the tiniest of miracles around us.

I encourage you to acknowledge that each of us is doing the best we can. Please have faith that we will get through this time as we work together to create our “new normal.” My prayer for you is to continue to have faith in God, Jesus, and the Holy Spirit to heal our brokenness and to get the broken pieces to fit. Amen.

Peace and love,  
*Deacon Lauren*

### Prayers of the People

During the Prayers of the People portion of the Sunday Service, we ask for God’s redemptive presence in the church, the world, our community, and individual lives. If you would like to add a name to be read during the Prayers of the People at an upcoming Sunday Service, please contact the church office at [office@episcopalstmatthew.org](mailto:office@episcopalstmatthew.org) or 650-342-1481.

### Need Continues for Second Harvest Food Bank

As the COVID-19 crisis continues, the Food Bank is seeing substantial increases in need as community members are furloughed, losing hourly wages, and forced to deplete savings while still providing for their families. If you are able to provide financial support, donations can be made online here:

<https://give.shfb.org/donatenow>



### Contributions and Pledges to St. Matthew’s

Your generous support helps St. Matthew fulfill its mission: to live God’s love, to share the Gospel, and to grow spiritually. Thank you for continuing your giving during these times. Contributions and pledges can be mailed to the church or made online at:

<https://episcopalstmatthew.org/giving/donatenow/>

### You Shop, Amazon Gives amazon smile

If you haven’t already, please consider designating St. Matthew’s as the beneficiary of your Amazon orders. Amazon donates 0.5% of the price of your eligible AmazonSmile purchases to the charitable organization of your choice. AmazonSmile is the same Amazon you are familiar with--the same products, prices, and service. To learn more, go to AboutAmazonSmile. Amazon Smile is now available in the mobile app! Go to Settings in the app to link to your Smile account.

## UTO Ingathering in Pandemic Time

Sunday, October 25th

Dear St. Matthew Sisters and Brothers,

As you know, we had no spring 2020 United Thank Offering (UTO) Ingathering because church was via Facebook Live, and we were unable to meet in person. In canceling the May Ingathering, we hoped to be back in church in person for a single Ingathering in October. However, at this juncture an October full parish service in person seems highly unlikely, so we will have our single 2020 UTO Ingathering via mail and online.



The United Thank Offering is a collection of funds given in thanksgiving for our Lord's many gifts to us, large and small. Even during these challenging, topsy-turvy days, we have many things for which to give God thanks – from the simple, like a perfect rose in my garden or orchids that have never bloomed so prolifically, to the significant, like having a home, an income, education, food, and so much more. For what are you thankful? Will that thankfulness be expressed as a gift to the UTO to carry on its work throughout the whole Anglican communion? Already in 2020 the UTO has given 27 grants to dioceses in Massachusetts, Texas, Tennessee, Wyoming, Haiti, Burundi, Nigeria, and the Philippines, among others. You can read about all these grants in the 2020 Grants brochure: [https://unitedthankoffering.org/wp-content/uploads/2020/06/uto\\_2020\\_grants\\_brochure\\_web.pdf](https://unitedthankoffering.org/wp-content/uploads/2020/06/uto_2020_grants_brochure_web.pdf). Here you can explore the depth and breadth of these awards. Remember, every cent given to UTO goes to grants. When UTO was established over 125 years ago, the women who founded it endowed its administration, so no donated funds go to the UTO organization.

Normally we would ask you to pick up a blue box or an envelope from the back of the church and present it during the Ingathering, but now we are asking that you either:

1. Donate using this link: <https://unitedthankoffering.org/give/> (in the “Diocese” box, put California, and in the “Parish” box, St. Matthew’s); or,
2. Mail your check to St. Matthew’s, made payable to the League for Service, with the memo line labeled “UTO”.

Please make your contribution on or before Sunday, October 25. Thank you for your continued generosity to UTO, and for its ministry to remind us all to be grateful for the many gifts generously given to us.

The United Thank Offering Prayer

*Gracious God, source of all creation, all love, all true joy: accept we pray these outward signs of our profound and continuing thankfulness for all of life. Keep each of us ever thankful for all the blessings of joy and challenge that come our way. Bless those who will benefit from these gifts through the outreach of the United Thank Offering. This we ask through Him who is the greatest gift and blessing of all, Jesus Christ. Amen*

In Christ,

*Albe Larsen*

UTO Coordinator and League Outreach Chairman

## Sunday Service and Morning Prayer Video Archives on the Website

All the Sunday Service and Morning Prayer videos are available on our website for watching without a Facebook account. The direct links are:

- Sunday Service Video Archive:

<https://episcopalstmatthew.org/videos/sunday-service-videos/>

- Morning Prayer Video Archive:

<https://episcopalstmatthew.org/videos/morning-prayers/>

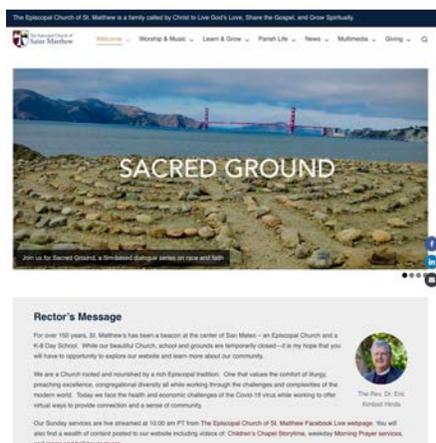
For all video archives including Children's Chapel Storytime and Organ and Bell Tower Music, and Faith Journeys and Coffee Hour Reflection audio stories, they can be found under the "Multimedia" tab at the top of the website. The direct links are:

- Children's Chapel Storytime Video Archive:

<https://episcopalstmatthew.org/videos/childrens-chapel-storytime/>

- Organ and Bell Video Archive:

<https://episcopalstmatthew.org/videos/organ-and-bell-music/>



- Coffee Hour Reflections Audio Archive:

<https://episcopalstmatthew.org/videos/coffee-hour-reflections/>

- Faith Journeys Audio Archive:

<https://episcopalstmatthew.org/videos/faith-journeys/>

The homepage (<https://episcopalstmatthew.org>) also has many links to recent videos. The scrolling large images at the top

of the homepage are clickable and will take you to the related webpage for videos or articles. Additionally, the "News & Updates" and the "Watch Livestream Sunday Services" sections will include the most recent Sunday service and Morning Prayer video links.

Please contact Ming Lacey at [mlacey415@yahoo.com](mailto:mlacey415@yahoo.com) if you have questions about the website.

The Episcopal Church of St. Matthew is  
a family called by Christ . . .

to Live God's Love,  
to Share the Gospel,  
to Grow Spiritually.

**Come Celebrate with Us!**

Sunday Services Livestreamed on Facebook  
at 10:00 am

*The Rev. Dr. Eric Kimball Hinds, Rector*  
*The Rev. Jay Sapaen Watan, Associate Rector*  
*The Rev. Lauren P. McCombs, Deacon*  
*The Rev. Amber Stancliffe Evans, School Chaplain*

**Tau Cross Staff**

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The Tau Cross is the monthly newsletter of the Episcopal Church of St. Matthew. We welcome submissions that have a connection to the parish. Inclusion is at the discretion of the staff and may be edited for space or clarity. The deadline for articles is the 15th of the month and may be sent by email to Beth von Emster at [beth.vonemster@gmail.com](mailto:beth.vonemster@gmail.com). Entries should follow these guidelines: Include title of event or article; 200 word maximum description including when, where, cost and contact information as applicable. Avoid abbreviations and other "insider" lingo. Further guidelines and tips available upon request.

## Upcoming Events

**Monday-Friday** Morning Prayer  
**9:30 am**

**Sundays** Children's Chapel  
**9:30 am** Zoom

**Sundays** Livestream Sunday  
**10:00 am** Service

**Sundays** Zoom Coffee Hour  
**11:00 am**

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