

Bible Study on Reparations (for leaders)

Handout for participants is pages 3 & 4

Introduction

Hi - My name is _____ and I am a member of the Hamline Church Sacred Reckonings & Reparations Group. Welcome to this Bible study on reparations. I/We are glad you are here.

As we begin, I invite you to How many of you are familiar with our Hamline Church Land Acknowledgment Statement? You may have heard it read in worship or at another event at the Church. In just a moment, we will do a responsive reading based on that statement, but first, I invite you to:

- put both feet on the floor and find a comfortable sitting position
- Breathe normally
- What sensations arise in your body?
- What is your body telling you? Are there any places in your body that are tense or in pain? Just take a moment to notice what you feel.

Thank you. We do this practice to bring ourselves into this present moment. In religious terms, we do this so that God might speak to us. If we are not here, we cannot receive a message from God or from the Holy Spirit. So again, welcome!

If you will, let's find the responsive reading based on our Hamline Church Land Acknowledgment. There should be copies on your table. Let's read this together - you will read the sections in bold - and see if you can continue to sense your breath and pay attention to the messages you may get from your feet, your shoulders, your throat.

Do the Responsive Reading based on the Land Acknowledgment Statement

Were you able to continue to focus on your breath and physical sensations? What did you notice?

Our Sacred Reckonings and Reparations Group came together to help the church follow through on the commitments we make in that land acknowledgment statement - Commitments to work toward repairing the harms that, sadly, continue to this day. How do we go about repairing the harm? How do we heal relationships among the people that live in Minnesota? How do we bring our lives and activities more in line with the Kingdom (or Kin-dom) of God? What is our role as Christians? And as a congregation of the United Methodist Church?

Our team has been guided by a workbook called: *Sacred Reckonings*. If you will, please take a look at the Reparatory Eco Map on the opposite side of the page from the land acknowledgment. The authors of this workbook describe the work of reparations as five different practices that overlap and connect: Truth Telling, Spiritual Practice, Relationship, Political Solidarity, and Wealth Return. Keep these five interlocking circles in mind as we read Luke 19:1-10. Is there a volunteer that would like to read for us?

Scripture Reading: Luke 19:1-10

Discussion Questions

- Why do you think the crowd grumbled that Zacchaeus was a sinner? What complaints did they have against him? Do you think he was doing anything illegal?
- Looking at the Reparatory Eco Map - What does Jesus do to help repair the fractures in this community?
- What commitments does Zacchaeus make to repair any real or perceived harm that he has caused? Do you think he will continue to be a tax collector? Why or why not?
- What do you think Jesus meant when he said, “today salvation has come to this house?” What is the meaning of salvation in this context? What does salvation look like, feel like?
- Stop for a moment and notice any sensations in your body. How does talking about reparations make you feel? Remember that you can come back to noticing your breathing at any time.
- What are some ways to repair relationships that do not require any financial transactions?
- Should a financial commitment be part of our work as a congregation to repair harm? Why or why not?
- In our time, there is a movement calling for reparations to Black and Indigenous communities. What does “reparations” mean to you?
- As we begin to consider reparations as a congregation, what questions or concerns do you have?

Closing prayer (from Henrietta Mann, shortened and modified)

Creator, God. You, who are known by many names,
With humility, I ask you to encircle each of us with all that is good,
especially with respect, compassion, understanding, and joy.
Guide our hearts with compassionate and wise spiritual direction—
So that we can think love and be love. So that we can think peace and be peace. Amen.

Responsive Reading from the Hamline Church Land Acknowledgment

We gather today at Hamline Church, centering ourselves in the land where we stand: Mni Sota Makoce

We gather on the land where the waters reflect the skies, homeland of the Dakota people

We gather near Bdote, the confluence of the Mississippi and Minnesota Rivers. For the Dakota, the center of the earth and the place of creation,
a sacred place of ceremony and prayer.

We gather on land ceded by the Dakota to the United States in 1837. But the terms of this treaty were not fair. U.S. government officials and prominent fur traders set up a system intended to drive the Dakota into debt, forcing them to sell their land at very low prices, depriving the Dakota of their livelihoods, communities, homelands, and sacred places.

The treaty makes our presence on this land legal, but it does not make it just.

This “treacherous cruelty” was fueled by the Christian Doctrine of Discovery – a doctrine justifying the conquest, colonization and enslavement of all non-Christians. We lament that Christian individuals and institutions participated in the unjust removal of native peoples from this land.

We confess our moral responsibility as Christians and, as a congregation, we commit to repair harm.

In our care for God’s creation, on this land and in this building where we gather, we engage in the ongoing work of Sacred Reckoning:

We tell the truth about our histories.

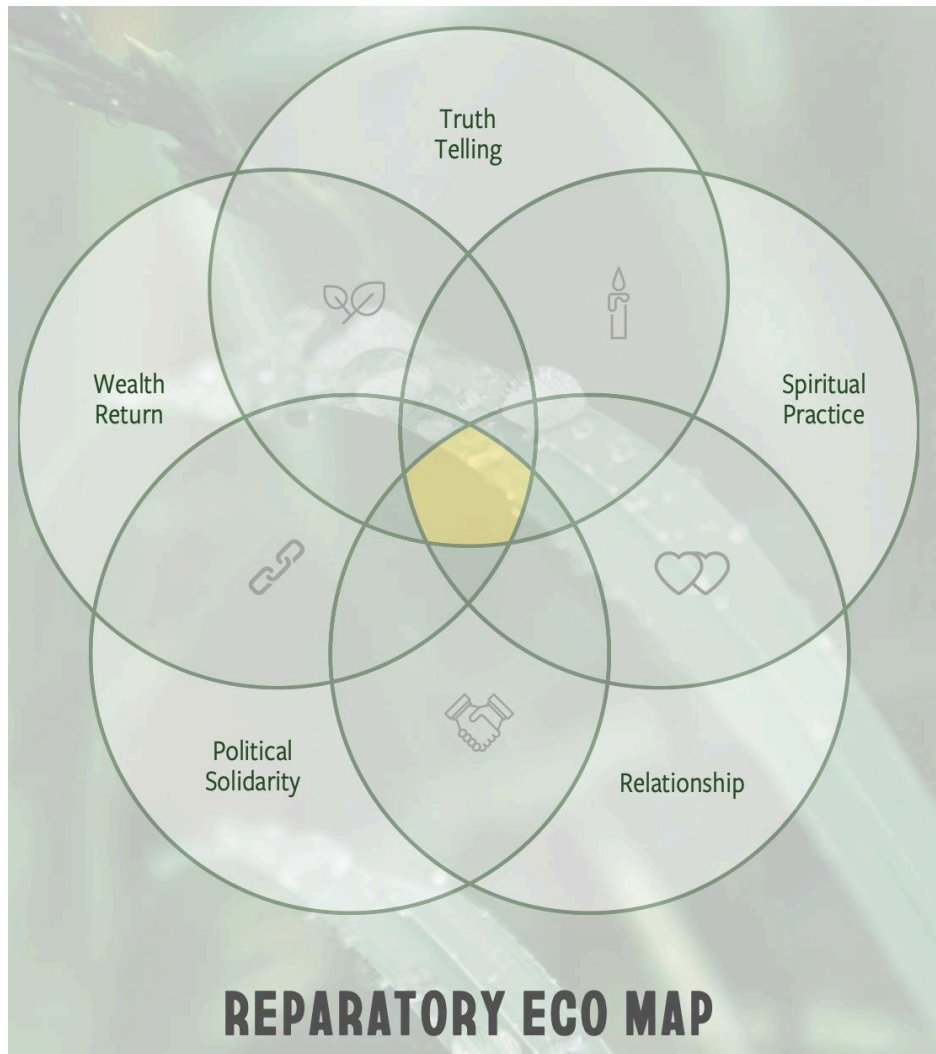
We strive to reduce our footprint and use resources in a good way.

We build relationships in solidarity with our indigenous neighbors.

We seek to repair harm and return wealth to indigenous inhabitants of this land.

And we deepen our spiritual practice to support ourselves and each other in this work.

Read full land acknowledgment here: https://bit.ly/Hamline_Land_Acknowledgement



Scripture Reading: Luke 19:1-10

Jesus entered Jericho and was passing through it. A man was there named Zacchaeus; he was a chief tax collector and was rich. He was trying to see who Jesus was, but on account of the crowd he could not, because he was short in stature. So he ran ahead and climbed a sycamore tree to see him, because he was going to pass that way. When Jesus came to the place, he looked up and said to him, "Zacchaeus, hurry and come down, for I must stay at your house today." So he hurried down and was happy to welcome him. All who saw it began to grumble and said, "He has gone to be the guest of one who is a sinner." Zacchaeus stood there and said to the Lord, "Look, half of my possessions, Lord, I will give to the poor, and if I have defrauded anyone of anything, I will pay back four times as much." Then Jesus said to him, "Today salvation has come to this house, because he, too, is a son of Abraham. For the Son of Man came to seek out and to save the lost."

- Why do you think the crowd grumbled that Zacchaeus was a sinner? What complaints did they have against him? Do you think he was doing anything illegal?

- Looking at the Reparatory Eco Map - What does Jesus do to help repair the fractures in this community?

- What commitments does Zacchaeus make to repair any real or perceived harm that he has caused? Do you think he will continue to be a tax collector? Why or why not?

- What do you think Jesus meant when he said, “today salvation has come to this house?” What is the meaning of salvation in this context? What does salvation look like, feel like?

- Stop for a moment and notice any sensations in your body. How does talking about reparations make you feel? Remember that you can come back to noticing your breathing at any time.

- What are some ways to repair relationships that do not require any financial transactions?

- Should a financial commitment be part of our work to repair harm? Why or why not?

- In our time, there is a movement calling for reparations to Black and Indigenous communities. What does “reparations” mean to you?

- As we begin to consider reparations as a congregation, what questions or concerns do you have?