

The background features a gradient from light green at the top to dark blue at the bottom. It is decorated with various circular and semi-circular patterns, including dashed lines, solid lines, and arrows, suggesting a process or cycle. A large, faint scale with numerical markings (140, 150, 160, 170, 180, 190, 200, 210, 220, 230, 240, 250, 260) is visible on the left side.

RESTORATIVE JUSTICE COMMITTEE CIRCLE PROJECT

HOLY TRINITY CATHOLIC CHURCH

SOCIAL JUSTICE

WHAT WE'LL COVER

- WHO IS HOLY TRINITY?
- HOW DID RESTORATIVE JUSTICE START?
- AFTER STUDYING, WHERE TO START?
- WHAT'S HAPPENING NOW?

WHO IS HOLY TRINITY?

Jesuit Based Catholic Church – 1792 – first in DC

Recently Celebrated 225 years in operation

~3500 households

7 Weekend Worship Services – 3 are normally at capacity

Holy Trinity School – Blue Ribbon Award Winner – Gavigan Scholarship Program

Variety of Ministries with very active Social Justice Programs and Tithing

Intentional Congregation – NOVA, MD and DC

Parish is not diverse in population

HOW DID RESTORATIVE JUSTICE BEGIN AT HOLY TRINITY?

- Parishioner gathered a group active in the Social Justice Ministry to learn about Restorative Justice and Circle Processes (2015)
- Met for about 2 years of monthly study – discussing what is Restorative Justice, discussions, meeting with other known practitioners (out of towners by Zoom)
- Developed a vision for our part of the Social Justice ministry
- Determined to be successful and of true service to parish community, we needed some formal training in the RJ tool, Circles
- November 2017, 9 parishioners and staff (plus others from Catholic University and other organizations) had 3 – day Circle training with Kay Pranis, one of the preeminent practitioners / trainers in RJ (we had a personal connection with her)
- Established as a committee, regular monthly meetings with discussion of Restorative Justice processes
- Continued different trainings and working with Social Justice, explored ways to work and use RJ tools within our parish

AFTER STUDYING... WHERE TO HELP?

Sexual Abuse Crisis - “Season of Discernment” after PA AG/McCarrick reports:

First, to get feelings of parishioners, led listening circles,
gathered information and collated by topic, distributed to all

Groups register by topic: Five difference major themes of change
Gave first probing questions to participations; they determined
questions going forward

Engaged Parish Pastoral Council in Circle: (lay advisory board)

How can we stay strong among this chaos?

Have we done enough with leading the “Season of Discernment” ?

How else can we help our fellow parishioners to discern their
“church”?

...AND MORE...

Social Justice ministry 2-year series on “Toolkit for Social Justice” –

Topics included: homelessness, environment, hunger, racism, climate change

Small circles to work through feelings and learnings about the topics

Recognize what can be done locally and within current limitations of each person

Everyone left with a personal planned action to help

Invited to hold circle conversation with faculty at a local catholic high school as they struggled as faculty on how to deal with the abuse crisis for themselves and their students

Left each faculty member with a notecard affirming their good efforts in supporting their students

...NOW WHAT?...

Late Fall of 2019:

Coming to the Table * Joint Ventures * Returning Citizens * Education for Incarcerated *
History of the Parish * Opioid Abuse in West Virginia

Winter/Spring 2020

Is our beloved Holy Trinity really closed? A session of circles dealing with the raw emotional fears as a result of COVID while dealing with the loss of a safe worship space and celebration of our faith and face to face community calmed and reassured many parishioners.

With the climate of racism being more and more violent, our brothers and sisters need our support. Our church respected the problems and felt the need for a comprehensive program to educate, combat systemic racism and its roots. We joined with the larger Social Justice effort as a team to put together a step by step program encompassing speakers, books, movies, and... a process of circles to work to recognize racism, create inclusiveness and welcome to all. [ongoing]

Circle Project Begins June	Circles One – Three July - August	Circle Four – Six August - September	Circle Seven – Nine October - November
<p>Time slots for Circles, discuss and determine 'common' reading materials</p>	<p>Entire RJ Group meets to select 3 circle questions (1.5 hours)</p>	<p>RJ Group meets – circles are going in a different direction. One more towards education; one towards engagement</p>	<p><i>Circles will meet Fri/Sat; Engagement circle: Guest and topic – 'Segregated by Design'</i></p>
<p>Advertise opportunity and invite participants</p>	<p>Email to Circle participants confirming time and sending some material to review</p>	<p>RJ Group Zooms and discusses what to do – determined organic growth would be best; remain as two circles</p>	<p><i>Study circle: Five Pillars of Systemic Racism</i></p>
<p>Confirm circle times and participants First determine a starting point, first question</p>	<p>Circle – lasts 1.5 hours</p>	<p>Outreach to neighboring parish for joint project, other circle taking on research into racism</p>	<p><i>Engagement Circle: will have joint projects and then joint circles creating inclusiveness. Study circle: moving toward engagement</i></p>
	<p>RJ Group meets and reviews direction the circle and looks for new articles, books, TedTalks (1 hour)</p>	<p>Will still determine questions to ensure smoothness and participation, guest from HR coming to join us</p>	<p><i>These circles will be ongoing until at least November – will probably be beyond.</i></p>

... IDEAS ABOUT CIRCLES WE HAVE LEARNED ...

<i>The Good Things</i>	<i>The Challenges</i>
Participants feel HEARD, their opinions and ideas are listened to actively	Some will always view this process as a light, social process rather than a powerful tool for restorative justice and reform
Participants feel respected, their opinions are respected	Time consuming both before and after the circle discussions
Multi faceted approach to both decision making and mediation	Some participants do not respect time, ramble a bit
There is great connection between participants	Turning “control” over to the circle, its growth must be organic, not predestined
As the circle proceeds, many Wow and Ah Ha moments; Progress!	

... IDEAS WE LEFT YOU WITH ...

Circles are so useful & important

How to take advantage of targets of opportunity

What it takes to do circles successfully or on an ongoing basis

Thank you!

Bob Stump Ellen Toups

Holy Trinity Catholic Church
Restorative Justice Committee