

## Brave Church/Hard Topics, 11/17: What's Next?

This is the chat log of the discussion. Names and identifiable information have been removed for privacy.

There were no slides for this session. Background information and discussion questions can be found on the [Brave Church-Hard Topics web page](#).

Additional information added after the discussion are identified with "NOTE:"

### Discussion Topics:

#### **(1) What lessons did you pick up from this fall's sessions? What worked? What would you like to see us do differently?**

Liked being able get the book on Kindle rather than having to buy a hard copy.

**NOTE:** We were fortunate to find a book (Brave Church) that could launch this group of sessions. For topics not included in the book, we tried to find easy-to-access/easy-to-read articles, videos, or information to provide the background needed to spark a discussion.

Appreciate looking at issues outside of just the church and the Bible. look at what's going on in the world "out there."

We were able to explore the challenge of listening to, befriending others.

Liked the point that this class was about how to listen - that it's not about "convincing" others to adopt our views but listening and forming friendships that will eventually be more powerful at changing minds.

Listening keeps us from immediately stereotyping

Recognizing that many of us at Grace currently are missing diversity in those who we socialize with.

Grace's neighborhood is very diverse - though many of us live in less diverse neighborhoods.

Presbyterian Church USA and Grace are not particularly diverse.

By going outdoors for worship and other activities (something COVID sparked), we are more visible in our neighborhood. This gives us a chance to talk with our neighbors, get to know them, invite them in. We need to be willing to be visible.

#### **Is anyone inspired to have a "hard conversation" outside of this class as a result of this class?**

I had the opportunity to talk with 2 friends, sit and listen. One was so passionate on the topic that we couldn't get far in discussing it. That was a tough conversation. The 2nd conversation, as soon as I challenged a point, the person got quiet. It was also a tough discussion to have.

This inspired a swapping book club with my Dad. We will read each other's books, talk about it. That's the first time we've tried that.

Giving me ways to talk about things we haven't typically talked about.

This class allows for "mild courteous conflict"

Lack of confidence in ability to defend point beyond your emotions. Hard to put my toe in the water when I'm not sure that response is going to be something other than emotions - which is not productive conversation.

**(2) Do you want to go for another round after the first of the year?**

Would love to continue but recognizing it is asking work of others to prepare

Diversity of opinion really sparked good conversation

Question about whether we'll have a specific "action plan" but has been a personal growth to be able to have a place to talk safely about our opinions

Appreciated being comfortable expressing opinions without fear of alienation/isolation

**(3) If so, what topics would you like to see us discuss?**

**NOTE: We used Zoom Whiteboard to capture topics. The result is pictured below:**

**What topics would you like to see us discuss (or revisit in depth)?**

Talking to diverse people is a challenge. Talking to people you disagree with would be useful.

<b>Social/Political Topics</b>	<b>Church Topics</b>
Abortion--a sensitive topic	
Abortion--look at what the Bible says about it.	Lack of diversity in the congregation. Why are we unable to attract more people of color?
Women's choice vs fetus vs pro-life.	
Revisit the question of sexuality	The name of the church that you grew up in is important--and we tend to stay there. It's better than finding another group. The neighborhood has changed and they are not interested in our church.
Be more specific about sexuality--gender identity, the rising generation being more open to sexual differences. Can help get more young people into the church.	
Immigration--looking at political, social, and religious perspectives.	Why are fewer people identifying as Christians compared to decades ago and what does that mean?
	Discussion with people of other faiths.
Social justice using the Sermon on the Mount as an outline.	Explore the difference between Grace and an evangelical church and a mega church.
Social justice in the penal system.	
Issues related to poverty--decision making, causes, contrast between the different views on supporting those in need.	Different house of religion--arrange to visit. Hindu, Vietmese, Buddhist, mosques, synagogues, etc.
We are in a world war. We need to discuss war.	
Use of violence and what Christianity has to say about it in various settings.	What would our intention be?
Judeo-Christian values vs values of our founding fathers.	
Family in the context of Christianity. Women's role in marriage.	
Climate change and environmental issues.	

**NOTE:** There's a wide range of topics. If anyone is interested in helping facilitate a discussion on any of these topics, let us know (that will move it up the list). Many of these are likely multi-week discussions. Stay tuned.

#### **(4) What day(s) of the week (evenings) work best for you?**

After we decided on Thursday evenings for the fall, the choir announced they would resume weekly practices at the same time. We're exploring other evening options. Here's what we gleaned from this evening:

Sunday – not a good evening for parents (getting kids ready for school), those who work. Also family time.

Monday – Bells practice every Monday (starting back up)

Tuesday – some committee meetings, mostly monthly or bi-weekly; potential conflicts for one facilitator

Wednesday – some committee meetings, mostly monthly or bi-weekly; potential conflicts for one facilitator

Thursday – Choir practices every week

Bottom line: No single evening is going to be clear every week. We'll weigh the night of least impact.