

CONVENTION HANDBOOK



Members One of Another

236th ANNUAL CONVENTION

NOVEMBER 12-13, 2021

Episcopal Diocese of Massachusetts

“So, we, though many, are one
body in Christ, and individually
members one of another.”

Romans 12:5

CALL TO THE CONVENTION
NOTICE OF THE 236th ANNUAL SESSION OF THE CONVENTION
OF
THE EPISCOPAL DIOCESE OF MASSACHUSETTS

In accordance with Article 3, Section 3 of the Constitution of the Diocese of Massachusetts, I hereby issue the formal call for the two hundred thirty-sixth annual session of the Convention of the Diocese of Massachusetts, which will begin at nine o'clock in the morning on Saturday, November 13, 2021, online via Zoom and livestream.

THE REV. RACHEL WILDMAN
Secretary of Convention

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ORDER OF BUSINESS

- 9:00 a.m.: Zoom Etiquette & Procedural Announcements
CALL TO ORDER OF LEGISLATIVE SESSION
Land Acknowledgement
Opening Prayer
Declaration of Constitutional Quorum
Invitation to Honorary and Special Seats
Permission to Speak
Report from Dispatch of Business
Acceptance of Special Rules of Order
Receiving of 2021 Journal Reports
Report of Qualifications Committee
Introduction of Nominees for Diocesan Election
Mission Strategy Report
Bishop's Address
- 10:45 a.m.: Break
- 11:00 a.m.: Reflections from Healthcare Chaplains
Report of Compensation and Benefits Committee
Racial Justice Commission
Report of Budget Committee
- 12:30 p.m.: Lunch Break
- 1:30 p.m.: Greetings and Good Wishes
Honors and Thanks
Report of the Resolutions Committee
- 2:40 p.m.: Break
- 2:55 p.m.: Introduction of Postulants and Candidates
Introduction of New and Retired Clergy
Report of Task Force for Exploring Common Mission
Report of Election Committee with Election Results
Approval of Commission on Ministry Appointments
Closing Prayers
- 3:40 p.m.: Adjournment

SPECIAL RULES OF ORDER

Due to the COVID-19 pandemic, the Dispatch of Business will move acceptance of the following Special Rules of Order:

MOVED:

1. That the 2021 Annual Convention be convened at a time and place in November 2021 determined by the Bishop, and that clergy and delegates attend remotely except as specifically provided by the Bishop as necessary to carry out the required business of the Convention; and

In order to facilitate discussion and debate on the virtual Convention floor, the Committee on Dispatch of Business will move acceptance of the following Special Rules of Order:

MOVED:

Presenters of resolutions will be limited to three minutes per resolution. During debate of resolutions, constitutional and canonical amendments, and other motions moved for consideration, any person seated and with voice will be allowed to speak for two minutes per motion. Five minutes will be allotted per any amendment to main motions: two-and-one-half minutes for the amendment and two-and-one-half minutes against.

NOMINEES FOR DIOCESAN ELECTIONS

With Results of Uncontested Elections

Nominees for CLERICAL MEMBERS of the STANDING COMMITTEE

(2 nominees, 1 to be elected)



The Rev. Daniel L. Bernier

Church of the Good Shepherd, Wareham

I would be honored to serve our diocese on the Standing Committee. I have been a rector of our diocese, serving the Church of the Good Shepherd in the Cape and Islands Deanery for 11 years. In this time, I have come to appreciate the tremendous ministries of the smaller churches of our diocese, and the contributions churches outside of Boston make to the life of our diocese. I would like to bring to the...

The Rev. Dr. Tara K. Souhers

Church of Our Saviour, Somerset

Ordained for 30 years, I first served on a Standing Committee when I was 15. The Episcopal Church is in a time of necessary transition. Having served the church in a variety of ways, in multiple dioceses, I have experienced many ways to be a “church.” As a theologian and a spiritual director, I am open to the leading of the Spirit as we explore how to be church in this time and place.



Nominees for LAY MEMBER of the STANDING COMMITTEE

(2 nominees, 1 to be elected)



Mr. Kevin D. Miller

Epiphany Church, Walpole

I have served on my parish vestry and on Diocesan Council, and I am currently serving a term on the Cathedral Chapter. I have been a member of The Episcopal Church since 2014, and I love the church’s balance between tradition and inclusion. Serving on the Standing Committee would allow me to help continue to work for that balance, especially as we help to discern future leaders in the church.

Suzanne B. Owayda

Parish of the Epiphany, Winchester

I have served at the Parish of the Epiphany as Search Committee co-chair, vestry member, and now finishing six years as warden (the last two years with an interim rector, then new rector). I have served the diocese as a search consultant for 10 years. This experience gives me insight into the unique issues that all types of parishes (large, small, wealthy, struggling) encounter during the life cycle of a parish.



Nominees for DEPUTIES to PROVINCIAL CONFERENCE

(2 nominees, 2 to be elected – rank order of the election will determine terms)



The Rev. Kathy McAdams

St. John’s Church, Franklin

With a background in not-for-profit leadership, I led *common cathedral* for eight years. In 2018, I became rector of St. John’s in Franklin, and also serve as a hospice chaplain. These experiences have given me a passion for ministry on the margins, with people who are often overlooked and left behind, to give them a voice. This is the gift I hope to bring to provincial and diocesan leadership.

The Rev. Gregory G. Perez

St. Stephen’s Memorial Church, Lynn

I bring 35 years of ordained ministry to the table and to Province I. It is my hope that after diligent listening to the needs of the diocese, I can use my voice towards the common good. As a person of color and a member of the LGBTQ community, I would be honored to serve as a deputy from our diocese to the Provincial Conference of Province I.



Nominees for MEMBERS of the BOARD OF DIRECTORS OF THE BARBARA C. HARRIS CENTER

(4 nominees, 2 to be elected)



The Rev. Jonathan T. Eden
Christ Church, Cambridge

I am excited to run for the Board of the BCH Center, having served previously between 2009-2015, including a term as president. I am the associate rector at Christ Church, Cambridge, am passionate about camp ministry, and the BCH Center as a place of discernment and renewal for people of all ages. During this transitional time, it would be an honor to help discern what God has in store for this wonderful place and community.

Ms. Norma E. Jaynes
St. Paul's Church, Natick

I have had the pleasure of attending and helping to organize and plan my annual parish Women's Lenten Retreat at the Barbara C. Harris Center for 15 years. I would like to be part of this working group to help others have the experience of being a part of this welcoming community that can be a destination for our youth, families and groups for spiritual growth and deepened connections with others.



Linda A. Ouellette, Esquire
St. Michael's Church, Holliston

If elected, this will be my second three-year term on the Board. During my first term, I have parlayed my legal experience as a member of the Governance Committee. I have also served as secretary and a member of the Executive Committee for the past two years. I hope to continue my service on both committees as the Board navigates the pandemic and its impact on BCH and as it reimagines the mission of BCH.



Michael D. Pierce

Bristol Trinity Church, North Easton

I am a lifelong active Episcopalian, having resided in Milton, Boston and Sharon attending local churches. Currently, a member of Bristol Trinity, Easton, I serve as deanery and convention delegate while volunteering with Brigade Youth Program, Grace Chapel, Brockton. Served on vestries, was regional delegate and member of diocesan committees and commissions including Diocesan Council. Direct involvement with youth as a school bus driver plus construction experience would contribute to serving on the camp board.



UNCONTESTED ELECTIONS
The following nominees were unopposed:

Clerical Member of the Standing Committee

The Rev. Deborah A. Phillips, Grace Church, Salem (1-year term)

Clerical Member of the Disciplinary Board

The Rev. Nathan W. Ives, St. Peter's Church/San Pedro, Salem (3-year term)

Lay Member of the Disciplinary Board

Ms. Diane M. Grondin, Christ Church, Quincy (3-year term)

Lay Deputy to the Provincial Conference

Ms. Deborah Gardner Walker, St. Peter's Church, Beverly (3-year term)

Treasurer of the Diocese

Mr. Theodore Y. T. Ts'o, Church of Our Saviour, Arlington (1-year term)

Secretary of the Diocese

The Rev. Rachel P. Wildman, St. Paul's Church, Bedford (1-year term)

Clerical Member of the Cathedral Chapter

The Rev. Kathryn (Kate) A. Bast, Trinity Parish, Melrose (3-year term)

Lay Member of the Cathedral Chapter

Mr. Kevin D. Miller, Epiphany Church, Walpole (3-year term)

Member of the Trustees of Donations

Ms. Elizabeth M. Westvold, St. Peter's Church, Weston (5-year term)

The photos and bios of uncontested election nominees will be listed on the Diocesan Convention Elections page on the virtual event platform.

POSITIONS WITHOUT NOMINEES

Clerical Member of the Disciplinary Board (3-year term)

Lay Member of the Disciplinary Board (2-year term)

Alternates to the Provincial Conference (3-year term; 2-year term; 1-year term)

ELECTION WORKSHEET

THIS IS NOT A BALLOT

Voting for positions to be filled by election will be done electronically, either via the Voatz mobile app or via telephone with the Voatz staff. Voting will be available from 9:30 a.m. until 1:00 p.m. on Saturday, Nov. 13. Clergy and lay delegates are welcome to vote any time during this period.

Listed below are the names of nominees for diocesan elections. Please refer to pages H-5 and H-8 for nominees' descriptive statements. Please fill out the election worksheet, below, to use as a resource for you either when in the Voatz mobile app or on the telephone with Voatz staff. In addition, please note that once in the Voatz app, nominee names will appear in random order for each voter and, therefore, may be in a different order than listed on the worksheet.

Nominees for CLERICAL MEMBERS of the STANDING COMMITTEE

(2 nominees, 1 to be elected)

The Rev. Daniel L. Bernier ()

The Rev. Dr. Tara K. Soughers ()

Nominees for LAY MEMBER of the STANDING COMMITTEE

(2 nominees, 1 to be elected)

Mr. Kevin D. Miller ()

Suzanne B. Owayda ()

Nominees for DEPUTIES to the PROVINCIAL CONFERENCE

(2 nominees, 2 to be elected – *rank order of the election will determine terms*)

The Rev. Kathy McAdams ()

The Rev. Gregory G. Perez ()

Nominees for MEMBERS of the BOARD OF DIRECTORS OF THE BARBARA C. HARRIS CENTER

(4 nominees, 2 to be elected)

The Rev. Jonathan T. Eden ()

Ms. Norma E. Jaynes ()

Linda A. Ouellette ()

Michael D. Pierce ()

REPORT OF THE COMPENSATION AND BENEFITS COMMITTEE

Purpose of Committee

The Clergy Compensation Committee was established by a resolution of the Diocesan Convention of 1980 as a subcommittee of the Commission on Ministry. The present title “Compensation and Benefits Committee” reflects the broader role of the committee as it has evolved since 1980. Oversight of the committee was transferred to the Diocesan Council by a resolution of the Diocesan Convention of 2011.

The role of the committee is to assist the bishop in matters pertaining to the compensation and benefits for clergy and lay employees of the church, which includes establishing guidelines to promote uniform, fair and equitable compensation and benefits for such church employees within the diocese and performing other projects relating to compensation, benefits and personnel matters.

The committee is a resource to lay and ordained congregational leadership as advisors and facilitators in establishing and maintaining compensation and benefits in relation to diocesan guidelines, congregational mission and individual performance objectives. In fulfilling this role, the committee collects and reviews data on compensation and benefits in other Episcopal dioceses and other denominations, as well as in the business, government and academic communities.

Goals for the Committee

The focus of the committee related to compensation and benefits for clergy and lay employees is to:

Attract, retain and support clergy to achieve the mission of the diocese and congregations.

Create an environment that promotes the well-being of clergy through a clear understanding of the relationship between clergy and their congregations and goals that express their mutual ministry.

Allow a reasonable standard of living according to local and/or regional measures.

Recommend that the initial salary in a new clergy placement conforms to the diocesan standard and takes into account differences in range of experience relative to the scope of the position and role.

Promote salary advancement and benefits that reflect personal growth and experience in the role.

Advocate standards for fair and equitable benefits and compensation for lay employees.

Since 2001, the diocese has maintained guidelines for the minimum Total Clergy Compensation (TCC) to be paid to a priest in a parish as recommended annually by the committee and approved by the Diocesan Convention. The minimum TCC is based on various

measures of parish size and on an individual priest's years of service in that parish. A parish may (and is encouraged to) provide additional compensation for special skills, abilities and competencies that may be relevant to its specific needs.

In addition, the committee has promulgated guidelines for benefits for clergy and lay employees, model letters of agreement for clergy, model personnel policies for parishes and standards for priests in campus ministry. Further, it has conducted studies and made recommendations relative to health insurance for church employees, and conducted periodic surveys of compensation, benefits and personnel policies and practices of parishes within the diocese.

Summary of Committee Work in 2021

During this past year, the committee addressed the following matters:

Guidelines Updates

During 2021, the committee posted updated guidelines that include the date of the revision and footnotes identifying the specific changes made. As previously reported, our intention is to maintain guidelines that are consistent, timely and "evergreen." We will continue to post revisions from time to time as needed, while maintaining transparency and accountability for the changes we feel are necessary.

Compensation Survey

Given the significant disruption to normal practices during 2021, the salary survey that typically goes out via email in July was postponed this year. The committee is in the process of simplifying the survey, eliminating questions which provide interesting but not actionable data. Based on feedback we have received, a shorter survey that is easier to answer should improve response rates and our ability to publish compensation information as canonically required in a timelier manner.

Total Clergy Compensation (TCC) Standard

As reported last year, the Compensation and Benefits Committee considered the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic when deciding on its recommendation for the 2021 Compensation Standard. Using our experience following the aftermath of the 2009 mortgage derivatives crisis and recession, the committee followed its own previous example in 2021, and revised its typical recommendation downward from 3% to 1% as it did in 2011.

While the ensuing decade proved the wisdom of the subsequent return to our normative 3% recommendation after 2011, the persistence of COVID and the uncertainty surrounding the duration of this crisis has made this year's discussions especially challenging. It is clear to the committee that the TCC Standard method of deriving a fair compensation standard fails to capture the full range of ministry activities that are compensable. The nature of ministry within the church is changing rapidly, and a standard that was created two decades ago that is based on traditional notions of "what church looks like" is obviously in need of revision. At the same time, the published salary data we review annually has reverted to a near "normal," pre-COVID

pattern. Meanwhile, certain “measurables” such as Average Sunday Attendance clearly do not account for current realities, including the impact of reduced attendance on budgets.

Given the conflicting data and ongoing uncertainty, we ask that the convention accept the recommendation that follows in the spirit of this committee’s attempt to maintain a progressive standard. We are committed to reviewing the compensation practices of peer dioceses and either introducing modifications to the TCC, suggesting a separate method for new types of ministry, or proposing a completely revamped standard to replace it. This will comprise the main work of the committee in 2022.

Health Insurance

The news once again regarding the health benefits offered through the Medical Trust is positive. One of the Medical Trust’s goals is to provide rate increases below 7% whenever possible, and it has done so again for the 2022 plan year, announcing an overall increase of 3.5%. Given local market healthcare trend (which is currently in the 8-9% range) and adjustments some insurers are making as demand for discretionary health services begin to return to normal (often referred to as a “COVID Factor”), we consider the rate action taken by the Medical Trust to be very favorable for the diocese. The committee is pleased to report this outcome, and that there are no changes to the plans being offered for 2022.

As a reminder, it is diocesan policy that the lowest cost comprehensive plan act as our “Base Recommended Plan.” This plan should be provided at no cost to **all** eligible lay and clergy persons, consistent with 2009 General Convention Resolution A177. As in 2020, the Anthem BCBS Blue Card PPO 80 remains the diocese’s base recommended plan. For the PPO 90 and PPO 100 plan options, parishes are permitted to charge the difference between the base plan and the chosen plan. Again, we encourage the open discussion and fair-minded negotiation of any contemplated cost-sharing arrangement, conducted in a spirit of generosity, and considering parish resources and the affected person’s ability to pay. The Anthem Blue Cross Consumer Directed Health Plan/H.S.A. compatible plan remains an option as well. This plan should be offered with *at least* the minimum required Healthcare Savings Account funding as stipulated in our guidelines.

Finally, the committee is aware of the burden that the absolute cost of providing health insurance places on all of our organizations, and that this often affects the compensation packages parishes develop - especially during transition periods. That said, we respectfully ask that Guidelines be adhered to and the actions of General Convention are kept in mind as you consider hiring decisions for *all* types of employees.

MA Paid Family Medical Leave Note

Massachusetts passed the Paid Family Medical Leave Act or “PFML” in 2018. The law provided for *paid* medical leaves (with those benefits commencing on Jan. 1, 2021), and paid family leaves (with those benefits taking effect July 1, 2021). Religious organizations are exempt from participation but may apply to the Department of Family and Medical Leave to participate on a forward basis. The main intent of the law was to provide paid leave to the majority of workers in the Commonwealth who had no income protection in place. A reminder from the committee: The diocese has both short and long-term disability income policies provided via the Church Pension Group. That said, PFML does provide certain benefits that disability insurance policies

typically do not. Parishes are free to explore the pros and cons of requesting coverage via the department and weighing the possible benefits against the payroll contributions required to maintain the coverage.

Clergy Housing Allowance Note

The committee would like to remind parish leadership that a formal vote of the vestry must be taken and recorded prior to the beginning of the 2022 tax year to designate the amount of the Clergy Housing Allowance. This is one of the most important benefits a clergyperson has access to, so please mark your calendars and make sure this action is taken during your December vestry meeting.

Recommended Increase in TCC Standard

Consistent with our goals and objectives, history of promoting a rising standard of living, and survey data gathered each year, the Compensation and Benefits Committee recommends a 3% increase in the Total Clergy Compensation Standard for 2022.

Members of the Committee

The Rev. Megan Holding
Ms. Carol Kingston
The Rev. Dr. Jean Baptiste Ntagengwa
Mr. Fred Ritzau

Ms. Annie Russell
The Rev. Andrew J. Stoessel
Mr. Jeff Tyrakowski, Chair
The Rev. Harry Walton

Adjustments to the Compensation Formulae

Pursuant to our stated goals and objectives, the committee has made an adjustment to the formula for parochial clergy, and presents the following resolution to be voted upon here:

Resolutions on Clergy Compensation and Benefits

Resolved, that the diocesan Total Clergy Compensation (TCC) be defined as the total of cash stipend, utilities allowance, housing, SECA (Self Employment Contribution Act) allowance, if any, and all other cash compensation paid to an individual clergyperson. TCC does not include benefits (e.g. pension, health, or dental insurance, etc.) or reimbursements for job-related expenses as described in the 2021 Guidelines.

Resolved, that the TCC Standard be defined as the minimum TCC for active full-time parochial clergy and, for the calendar year 2022, is determined by the following formula:

$$\text{TCC Standard} = \$76,398 + (161.15 \times \text{Points}) + \$500 \times [\text{years of service}^* \text{ within congregation}]$$

Provided that the minimum TCC Standard for full-time parochial clergy is \$81,233.

Points are determined as the sum of three factors, calculated from data taken from the most recent Parochial Report:

Total Current Operating Revenues (000s)	x .30
+ Number of Current Adult Pledging Units	x .40
+ <u>Average Current Sunday-Attendance</u>	<u>x .30</u>
= Total Points	

The TCC applicable to a full-time rector, vicar, priest-in-charge or interim shall not be less than 100% of the TCC Standard for the congregation.

The TCC applicable to a full-time curate shall not be less than:

$$\text{TCC Standard (curate)} = [\$76,398 + (161.15 \times \text{Points})] \times 0.60$$

The TCC applicable to a full-time assistant rector shall not be less than:

$$\text{TCC Standard (assistant)} = [\$76,398 + (161.15 \times \text{Points})] \times 0.65 \\ + \$350 \times [\text{years of service within the congregation}]$$

The TCC applicable to a full-time associate rector shall not be less than:

$$\text{TCC Standard (associate)} = [\$76,398 + (161.15 \times \text{Points})] \times 0.75 \\ + \$375 \times [\text{years of service within the congregation}]$$

*Provided that in each case no more than 10 years of service will be considered in this calculation.

REPORT OF THE COMMITTEE ON RESOLUTIONS

The committee presents four resolutions, found to be in order in the following form and hereby submitted to the 236th Annual Convention of the Episcopal Diocese of Massachusetts.

1. Resolution to Enter Barbara Clementine Harris, Bishop, to the Calendar of the Church Year

Submitted by:

Delegate Vilma Johnson, St. John St James, Roxbury
The Very Rev. Amy McCreath, Cathedral Church of St. Paul, Boston
The Very Rev. Jep Streit, Cathedral Church of St. Paul, Boston
The Rev. Anoma Abeyaratne, All Saints, Brookline
The Rev. Morgan Allen, Trinity Church, Boston
The Rev. Rospignac Ambroise, St John St. James, Roxbury
Delegate Starr Anderson, St. James's, Groveland
The Rev. Zenetta Armstrong, Church of the Holy Spirit, Mattapan
Diocesan Council Member K. Michael Bent, St. Peter's, Beverly
Delegate William Boyce, Grace Church, New Bedford
The Rev. Richard Burden, All Saints, Brookline
The Rev. Matthew Cadwell, Old North Church, Boston
The Rev. Edward Cardoza, St. Mark's, Foxboro
Delegate Chris Cato, St. Stephen's, Boston
The Rt. Rev. Bud Cederholm, Bishop Suffragan (ret.)
The Rev. Arrington Chambliss, St. Mary's, Dorchester
The Rev. Randall Chase, Grace Church, New Bedford
The Rev. Malia Crawford, Church of Our Saviour, Arlington
The Rev. Timothy Crellin, St. Stephen's, Boston
The Rev. Marya DeCarlyn, All Saints, North Shore
The Rev. Laurel Deery, St. John's, Beverly Farms
Delegate William Durkee, Church of Our Saviour, Arlington
The Rev. Mark Eames, Church of the Advent, Medfield
The Rev. Clyde Elledge, St. Andrew's, Marblehead
The Rev. Manuel Faria III, St. Peter's, Beverly
The Rev. Eric Fialho, St. Gabriel's, Marion
The Rev. Chris Fike, St. Elizabeth's, Wilmington
The Rev. Frank Fornaro, Church of Our Redeemer, Lexington
The Rev. Virgilio Fortuna, BSG, St. Mark's, Foxboro
The Rev. Maggie Geller, St. John's, Franklin
The Rev. James Hornsby, St. Luke's, Fall River
The Rev. Gregory Johnston, St. John's, Charlestown
The Rev. Katherine Lonergan, St. James's, Groveland
The Rev. Kathy McAdams, St. John's, Franklin
The Rev. William Mebane, St. Barnabas's, Falmouth
Delegate Beverly Merz, St. Stephen's, Boston
The Rev. Christopher Morck, Grace Church, New Bedford
The Rev. Carol Morehead, Grace Church, Medford
The Rev. Joseph Mumita, St. Thomas's, Taunton

The Rev. Kelly O'Connell, Diocesan Staff
The Rev. Cynthia Pape, Cathedral Church of St. Paul, Boston
The Rev. Canon William Parnell, Diocesan Staff
The Rev. Gregory Perez, St. Stephen's, Lynn
Standing Committee Member Constance R. Perry, Trinity Church, Boston
The Rev. Deborah Phillips, Grace Church, Salem
The Rev. Canon Edward W. Rodman, Cathedral Church of St. Paul, Boston
The Rev. Susan Russell, Christ Church, Hamilton
The Rev. Paul Shoaf Kozak, Cathedral Church of St. Paul, Boston
The Rev. H. Mark Smith, Diocesan Staff
Delegate Stephen Steadman, Church of the Good Shepherd, Watertown
The Rev. Elizabeth Steinhauser, St. Stephen's, Boston
The Rev. Leslie Sterling, Allston
The Rev. Matthew Stewart, St. James's, Cambridge
The Rev. Andrew Switter-Bentley, St. Elizabeth's, Sudbury
The Rev. Evan Thayer, St. Augustine and St. Martin, Boston
The Rev. Natalie Thomas, St. Barnabas's, Falmouth
The Rev. Tamra Tucker, Cathedral Church of St. Paul, Boston
The Rev. Deborah Warner, Church of the Messiah, Woods Hole
The Rev. Pamela Werntz, Emmanuel Church, Boston
Delegate Kristina Wile, St. Elizabeth's, Sudbury
The Rev. Robert Windsor, St. Peter's, Weston

The Resolution

Resolved, that the 236th Annual Convention of the Diocese of Massachusetts submits the following resolution to the 80th General Convention of the Episcopal Church meeting in 2022:

Resolved, the House of _____ concurring, that the 80th General Convention includes and enters Barbara Clementine Harris, Bishop, to the Calendar of the Church Year to be celebrated on March 13.

Explanation For

When Barbara Harris was confirmed in The Episcopal Church as a young girl, the bishop wore gloves so his hands would not have to touch the heads of the black people he was confirming. In spite of this demeaning and undeniably racist "welcome" to the church, Barbara Harris was undeterred in her commitment to Christ, living her life as a powerful example of faith, both as dedicated and engaged lay woman and as the first woman bishop in the Anglican Communion. Her humble but unrelenting and heroic witness to those on the margins of the church and larger society, her warmth and generous spirit, and her tireless energy and humor made her one of the most beloved and noteworthy bishops in the church, if not the world.

The criterion for inclusion is that: "Before a commemoration is included in the Calendar, proposers must establish that significant, enduring local and regional commemoration in corporate worship exists."

Such local commemorations have occurred in the Diocese of Massachusetts at the Cathedral Church of St. Paul, Boston; St. Elizabeth's, Sudbury; Trinity Church, Boston; St. Peter's, Weston; St. Paul's, Brookline; St. Peter's, Osterville; Grace Church, Newton; Grace Church, New Bedford; St. Elizabeth's, Wilmington; All Saints, Brookline; St. Cyprian's, Boston; St. Andrew's, Marblehead; Boston Chinese Ministry; Emmanuel Church, Boston; St. Stephen's, Boston; St. Mary's, Newton Lower Falls; St. Andrew's, Edgartown; St. Paul's, Hopkinton; St. Mary's, Barnstable; St. Luke's, Scituate; Old North Church, Boston; Christ Church, Plymouth; St. John's, Gloucester; Good Shepherd, Wareham, Our Saviour, Arlington; St. Peter's, Barnstable; Holy Spirit, Orleans; St. Barnabas's, Falmouth; St. Paul's, Nantucket; St. Stephen's, Cohasset; St. James's, Groveland; Church of the Messiah, Woods Hole; Christ Church, Swansea; and Christ Church, Needham.

Commemorations in the wider church include those by Grace Cathedral, San Francisco; All Saints, Hoboken, NJ; St. Luke's, Philadelphia; St. Luke's, New Haven; Christ Church, Glen Ridge, NJ; Christ Church, Rockville, MD; St. John's Memorial Church, Ramsey, NJ; St. John's, Springfield Gardens, NY; St. Paul's, Holyoke, MA; the Diocese of Los Angeles; the Diocese of New York; the national Union of Black Episcopalians; the Diocese of Western Massachusetts; the Diocese of Missouri at the consecration of Deon Johnson as diocesan bishop and subsequently at a blessing of a Barbara Harris icon by the presiding bishop.

By the time of General Convention there will have been another year of local commemorations, here in our diocese and throughout the church.

Statements Against

In good conscience we can think of none.

Implementation Requirements

Any diocese may submit a resolution to General Convention. If it passes, the secretary of Convention sends in the required form.¹ Our diocesan deputies and bishops will shepherd the resolution at the General Convention.

¹ <https://apptest.dfms.org/ResolutionSubmission/default.aspx>

2. Burying the Dead: A Resolution to Encourage Sustainable Christian Death Practices

Submitted by:

Delegate Kevin Miller, Epiphany, Walpole
The Rev. Lise Hildebrandt, St. John's, Gloucester
The Rev. Eric Fialho, St. Gabriel's, Marion

The Resolution

Resolved, that the 236th Convention of the Episcopal Diocese of Massachusetts, responding to our bishops' declaration of a climate emergency, and honoring the goodness of created bodies in the sacred work of burying the dead, encourages everyone to consider the option of natural burial (also known as green burial) and home death care when making end-of-life arrangements; and be it further

Resolved, that the 236th Convention of the Episcopal Diocese of Massachusetts encourages parishes and clergy within the diocese to disseminate to those in their care information regarding natural burial and home body-tending practices; and be it further

Resolved, that the 236th Convention of the Episcopal Diocese of Massachusetts encourages its constituent parishes and missions to advocate in their respective cities, towns and private cemeteries commonly used by parishioners for changes in cemetery regulations to allow for burial of unembalmed bodies in biodegradable containers or shrouds without protective liners or vaults in cemeteries or natural cemetery preserves; and be it further

Resolved, that the 236th Convention of the Episcopal Diocese of Massachusetts shares this resolution with our siblings in Christ in the Diocese of Western Massachusetts, and invites them to join with us in this endeavor.

Explanation For

The way we handle our dead in America is not sustainable: environmentally, emotionally or theologically. The dominant American culture has tended to hide the reality of our mortality away from our everyday lives. In doing so, we harm the environment with the practices of embalming and burial in concrete boxes, and in cremation. Additionally, we are removed from body-tending practices that affirm death as part of life, support active family and community involvement with the body and provide structure for grief.

As Christians, we believe that all of Creation was created good (Genesis 1:31), and that humans, as part of Creation, were created "of dust," and in the normal course of things "to dust you will return" (Genesis 3:19). We also believe that death is not the end, but the time when we will be bodily resurrected and fully united with God, as Jesus was. Therefore, while our mortal bodies are to be treated with love and respect, in death as in life, we should question whether the practices of trying to preserve bodies through embalming, hermetically sealed caskets and

concrete grave liners are consistent with our Christian faith and theology of resurrection.² What we consider “traditional burial” today has only been practiced in the USA and Canada since the Civil War; in most other times and most other places around the world bodies were and are buried without embalming and either in shrouds or wooden caskets, that is, they were/are carried out as green burials.

In addition, for centuries, if not millennia, death care was largely the province of the home, especially of women, until the funeral industry became established in the late 19th century and proliferated in the 20th century. This has increasingly led to fear of death and dead bodies and estrangement of family and friends from final acts of caring for the bodies of loved ones. It has taken away rituals of compassion and closure, and has replaced them with expensive, often unnecessary procedures, with high emotional, spiritual and environmental costs.

According to the Green Burial Council (2014), “By one estimate, we bury each year approximately:

- 4.3 million gallons of embalming fluid;
- 64,500 tons of steel, 2,700 tons of copper and bronze, and 20-plus million board feet of hardwoods, much of it tropical (for caskets); and
- 1.6-plus million tons of reinforced concrete and another 14,000 tons of steel, for burial vaults and foundations”³

Embalming fluid contains formaldehyde, a known carcinogen, and other corrosive and toxic materials, and can seep into ground water or be released into the atmosphere during cremation. According to the EPA, it is one of the 10 most hazardous chemicals⁴ The energy used to create and transport heavy caskets and concrete burial vaults contributes to global warming.

Despite the prevalence of embalming in the United States and the pervasive rationale for it that dead bodies are dangerous and potential vectors for disease transmission, under normal circumstances, bodies do not transmit disease. Most infectious diseases die within a short time of the death of the person. In the case of diseases that could potentially be transmitted through bodies (such as Ebola), embalming is contraindicated, as the process itself may spread more disease than leaving the body intact.⁵

² There may be some pastoral reasons for embalming a body, and there are non-toxic embalming fluids that can be used to reduce environmental and health impacts.

³ “How your death impacts climate change,” [Katrina Spade](https://www.huffpost.com/entry/how-your-death-affects-climate-change), Founder and Director, Urban Death Project, in Huffpost, <https://www.huffpost.com/entry/how-your-death-affects-climate-change>, accessed through GreenBurialCouncil.org³.

⁴ “Everything You Want To Know About Embalming...And Even the Things You Don't,” Funerals360.com, https://www.funerals360.com/blog/burial/the_truth_about_embalming/

⁵ “Dead Bodies and Disease: The “Danger” That Doesn't Exist,” Funeral FAQs | January 30, 2008, Funeral Consumers Alliance, <https://funerals.org/2008/01/30/embalming-myths-facts/>
“Ebola, Embalming, and The Dead: Controlling The Spread of Infectious Diseases,” Tanya D. Marsh, Associate Professor of Law, Wake Forest University School of Law, The Wake Forest Law Review, October, 2014, <http://www.wakeforestlawreview.com/2014/10/ebola-embalming-and-the-dead-controlling-the-spread-of-infectious-diseases/>

And while many people have been led to believe that cremation is a more environmentally friendly option, the evidence shows that this is not the case. According to Green Burial Massachusetts, cremation burns fossil fuels, such as gas, and releases carbon, and has the potential to release mercury and other toxins into the atmosphere. Additionally, cremation destroys everything organic in a human body, so human ashes cannot be used to grow or sustain plant life. In fact, cremated remains tend to be so high in salt that they are deadly to plant life.⁶

Natural or green burial offers traditional methods of caring for and disposition of the bodies of loved ones. The core of green burial is burying the body with minimal environmental impact (without embalming fluid, in biodegradable containers or shrouds without protective liners or vaults) in a cemetery or in a conservation area designated for green burial. In addition, green burial organizations support practices of home body-tending and home vigils or funerals. Home practices may include washing, dressing and caring for the body, holding a vigil with the body (with or without a biodegradable container, often using dry ice or other cooling methods), decorating the container or bier, having the family bring the body to church for the funeral service and/or transporting the body to its final resting place.⁷

Green burial and/or home body-tending practices can easily be incorporated into Episcopal burial and memorial service practices. Some people choose to have a “hybrid” funeral, engaging a funeral home to help with certain aspects of the burial process; there are funeral homes in the diocese with knowledge in the handling of both natural burial and home vigils. For instance, some might wish to have the funeral home refrigerate and transport the body to the church for the burial office or the cemetery for a graveside service. Or the body could be buried soon after the death, with or without the assistance of a funeral home, and a memorial service held in church later, as is often the case with cremation. Or the next-of-kin could provide transportation to the church and/or graveside. There are already Prayers for a Vigil (p. 465) in the Book of Common Prayer, which would be appropriately used in a home vigil. If survivors are few or circumstances dictate (such as during a pandemic or other crisis), the priest could preside over a small funeral held in the home, using the usual Burial Office, followed by interment at the cemetery.

There are currently about 20 cemeteries in the Commonwealth of Massachusetts which offer some form of natural burial, although the rules regarding eligibility for interment vary. Among these cemeteries are the Provincetown Town Cemetery, Rock Ridge Cemetery in Sharon and Mount Auburn Cemetery in Cambridge. Green and natural burial organizations also encourage the combining of conservation efforts with green burial options, allowing burials to occur on conservation land, thus feeding the land and providing wider green burial access. Although there is currently no conservation burial ground in Massachusetts as of yet, some are being explored, especially in the Berkshires and the Connecticut River Valley.⁸

⁶ “Frequently Asked Questions”

<https://greenburialma.org/p/36/Green-Burial-in-Massachusetts-Frequently-Asked-Questions>

⁷ Green Burial Defined, Green Burial Council

https://www.greenburialcouncil.org/green_burial_defined.html

⁸ “Searching for Land”

<https://www.conservationcemeteryma.org/search-for-land.html>

This resolution encourages diocesan and congregational support for green burials and home funerals, which can be used separately or together, and can be combined with professional services for a hybrid funeral. The benefits of green burials and home vigils/funerals include:

- 1) Reducing the amount of toxic chemicals used for the funeral and deposited in the ground
- 2) Reducing the amount of wood, metals and concrete used and permanently buried in the ground
- 3) Reducing the energy required to dispose of bodies and/or to create caskets and grave liners
- 4) Allowing the body to return “dust to dust” and nourish the earth
- 5) Reducing the cost of the funeral
- 6) Allowing family members and friends to more actively tend the body and participate in rituals that ease grief
- 7) Reducing our fear of death and strengthening our faith in resurrection

Statements Against:

1. Natural burial is not available in every location and could cause families additional stress if they have already bought traditional plots and/or cannot bury family members in the local cemetery.
2. Natural burials will not do enough to put a dent in the bigger issue of climate change or environmental stewardship.

Implementation Requirements:

The sponsors of the resolution, in conjunction with the Creation Care Justice Network, the Creation care advisor and the missionary for networking and formation will develop a committee to coordinate the education of people in the diocese and resources to support the work:

--To develop a program for Clergy Day or clergy continuing education to educate the clergy in the diocese about natural death care, engaging speakers familiar with natural burial/natural death care, especially those in the New England area. Education could additionally be done through deanery clericus meetings.

--To develop webinars/workshops for everyone in the diocese regarding natural burial/ natural death care.

--To develop or compile resources for parishes, such as handouts, coffee-hour discussion starters, etc. that talk about green burial practices and also place them in a Christian context. They will create pathways to disseminate the resources. References will include information from the Green Burial Council and the National Home Funeral Alliance.⁹

⁹ Green Burial Council, www.greenburialcouncil.org, many useful educational resources, including sites of cemeteries that accept green or natural burials by state.

Home Funeral Alliance, <https://www.homefuneralalliance.org/what-is-a-home-funeral.html>, resources for body care, paperwork, logistics of caring for a body after death, including having a home funeral.

Money to support these educational offerings (\$2,000-\$3,000) can come from the money already set aside to support Creation care justice work in the diocese and/or from money set aside for clergy education (Clergy Days), if appropriate. This resolution will not require additional diocesan funding.

Ask a Mortician Videos:

“ECO-DEATH TAKEOVER: Changing the Funeral Industry,”
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=pWo2-LHwGMM>, 29 minutes

“Traditional vs. Natural Burial,”
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ahM6zFrSplo>, 3 1/3 minutes

3. A Call to Carbon Drawdown

Submitted by:

The Rev. W. (Will) H. Mebane, Jr., St. Barnabas's Church, Falmouth
The Rev. Natalie E. Thomas, St. Barnabas's Church, Falmouth
Delegate, Mr. John Schmidt, St. Barnabas's Church, Falmouth
The Rev. Brian W. McGurk, St. Christopher's Church, Chatham
The Rt. Rev. Roy Cederholm, Bishop Suffragan (ret.)
The Rev. David Fredrickson, Christ Church, Plymouth
The Rev. James Thomas, Christ Church, Plymouth
The Rev. Tim Crellin, St. Stephen's Church, Boston
The Rev. Dr. Libby Gibson Catania, St. Mary's Church, Barnstable
The Rev. Hilary Greene, St. Peter's Church, Osterville
The Rev. Charlie Nichols, St. Mary of the Harbor Church, Provincetown
The Rev. Andi Taylor, St. David's Church, Yarmouth
Delegate Stephen Steadman, Church of the Good Shepherd, Watertown
The Rev. Jennifer D. Beal, St. Anne's Church, North Billerica
The Rev. Marya DeCarlen, All Saints Church of the North Shore, Danvers
The Rev. Nancy J. Hagner, Trinity Church, Concord

The Resolution

Resolved, that the 236th Convention of the Episcopal Diocese of Massachusetts encourages all individuals, parishes, communities and ministries to commit to “Drawdown’— the point in the future when levels of greenhouse gases in the atmosphere stop climbing and start to steadily decline, thereby stopping catastrophic climate change,”¹⁰ well before 2030; and be it further

Resolved, that the 236th Convention of the Episcopal Diocese of Massachusetts encourages the conversion of campuses and facilities held by parishes in trust for the diocese to reduce carbon emissions through minimizing resource consumption, using renewable energy, restoring the land's biodiversity with land management such as permaculture, Good News gardening to supply local food and other drawdown practices; and be it further

Resolved, that the 236th Convention of the Episcopal Diocese of Massachusetts considers the climate implications of day-to-day activities within the diocese and its member parishes, including patterns of resource consumption and travel, and strives to drawdown carbon emissions through revision of standard practices now and in perpetuity; and be it further

Resolved, that the 236th Convention of the Episcopal Diocese of Massachusetts encourages all individuals, parishes, communities and ministries seeking to implement the practices of Project Drawdown¹⁰ to reach out to the Creation Care Justice Network¹¹ for input on strategies such as the following options:

¹⁰ Project Drawdown <https://drawdown.org/>

¹¹ <https://www.diomass.org/creation-care>

(1) Divesting from fossil fuels; (2) utilizing the Diocesan Green Loan Program to make energy-efficient changes to parish buildings; (3) partnering with Massachusetts Interfaith Power and Light to implement renewable energy options such as solar panels; (4) converting lawns to permaculture that fosters natural ecosystems and resilient design; (5) supporting biodiversity by planting native plants, limiting outdoor lighting and keeping leaf litter as winter ground cover (*Nature's Best Hope*, Timber Press); (6) shifting large meetings to virtual platforms, arranging carpools, using public transportation and avoiding non-mandated travel such as to General Convention; (7) advocating for systemic change at local, regional, national and international levels; and (8) committing to intentional and sustained prayer.

Explanation For

In 2021, bishops of the Episcopal Diocese of Massachusetts declared a climate emergency. “An Episcopal Vision for Creation Care” also calls upon clergy and lay members to commit to The Episcopal Church’s “Covenant for the Care of Creation,” through its [Creation Care Pledge](#).¹² This covenant accepts the terms “climate crisis” and “climate emergency,” and also uses “triple emergency” to show the intersection of climate change, poverty and inequality, and biodiversity loss.

World events over the last year have shown that the devastating effects of climate change are not a distant possibility but rather are already being experienced in our lifetimes. The frequency of extreme weather events has increased five-fold in the last 50 years. The U.S. has experienced raging, unprecedented fires on the West Coast, drought in the Midwest and torrential rain and flooding on the East Coast in just the past few months. Similar disasters have occurred in other countries during this similar period.

As descendants of *Adamah* (Adam and Eve), we have a moral obligation to care for Creation (Genesis 2:15). It is imperative that we do everything in our power, with God’s help, to slow or even reverse climate change. The Episcopal Diocese of Massachusetts has an opportunity to become a “city on a hill” (Matthew 5:14) and lead by example in Creation care. Using resources with which we have been entrusted – land, money and time – to live in balance with the Earth will be a powerful witness to our neighbors and communities.

Statements Against

1. Climate change is a long-term challenge, and there are more immediate, pressing issues at hand in 2021. The COVID-19 pandemic has left many parishes with unexpected restrictions in revenue and reductions in engagement, so we do not have the means to adopt drawdown practices at this time.

2. Slowing or reversing climate change will require coordinated efforts at the local, state and national scales. The Episcopal Church is far from the worst polluter, so a more effective approach would involve advocacy for governmental regulation and restriction of carbon emissions.

¹² <https://www.diomass.org/diocesan-convention-2019>; <https://episcopalchurch.org/creation-care/pledge>

3. Climate change is inherently linked with systemic racism and indigenous rights. Reformation of Episcopal parishes through drawdown implementation could be viewed as self-aggrandizing and further alienate communities that are hardest hit by climate change impacts. A more effective approach would involve outreach and assistance to these communities to alleviate systemic inequalities.

Implementation Requirements

This resolution on its own does not mandate or necessitate funds. Rather, it provides the foundation for diocesan and parish-level holistic decision-making appropriate to our climate emergency. A commitment to achieve carbon emission drawdown well before 2030 may lead some parishes and communities to deploy financial resources for renovation or landscaping.

4. Charting the Long Road Towards Reparations

Submitted by:

The Rev. Noble Scheepers, St. John's Church, Westwood
The Rev. Natalie Thomas, St. Barnabas's Church, Falmouth
The Rev. Morgan Allen, Trinity Church, Boston
Delegate Dicky Allison, Church of the Messiah, Woods Hole
The Rev. Rospignac Ambroise, St. John St. James Church, Roxbury
The Rev. Zenetta Armstrong, Church of the Holy Spirit, Mattapan
The Rev. Jennifer Beal, St. Anne's Church, North Billerica
Diocesan Council Member K. Michael Bent, St. Peter's Church, Beverly
The Rev. Dan Bernier, Church of the Good Shepherd, Wareham
The Rev. Rebecca Black, Millis
Delegate Andrea Bolling, St. Andrew's Church, Edgartown
Delegate Christine Carney, St. John's Church, Arlington
The Rev. Dr. Libby Gibson Catania, St. Mary's Church, Barnstable
Diocesan Youth Council Member Emily Chafe, St. Elizabeth's Church, Sudbury
The Rev. Arrington Chambliss, St. Mary's Church, Dorchester
The Rev. Bradford Clark, Ascension Memorial Church, Ipswich
The Rev. Dr. Karen Coleman, University Chaplain for Episcopal Ministry at Boston University
The Rev. Tim Crellin, St. Stephen's Church, Boston
The Rev. Canon Edie Dolnikowski, Diocesan Staff
The Rev. Kate Elledge, Christ Church, Cambridge
The Rev. Tom Ferguson, St. John's Church, Sandwich
Standing Committee Member Angel Figueroa, St. Mary's Church, Dorchester
Delegate Celeste Finn Fossil, Christ Church, Cambridge
Delegate Pamela Galgay, Trinity Church, Boston
The Rt. Rev. Dr. Carol Gallagher, Diocesan Staff
The Rev. Cathy George, New Haven, CT
Delegate Leslie Gore, St. Cyprian's Church, Roxbury
The Rev. Hilary Greene, St. Peter's Church, Osterville
The Rev. Beth Grundy, St. Peter's Church, Osterville
Delegate K. Lynette Hassell, Lay Delegate, Church of St. Augustine and St. Martin, Boston
Delegate Constance Holmes, Church of the Good Shepherd, Watertown
The Rev. Jim Hornsby, St. Luke's Episcopal Church, Fall River
The Rev. Canon Martha Hubbard, Diocesan Staff
Diocesan Council Member Claudette Hunt, St. Andrew's Church, Ayer
The Rev. Joel Ives, Church of Our Saviour, Brookline
The Rev. Harry Jean-Jacques, Church of the Holy Spirit, Mattapan
The Rev. Hall Kirkman, St. Michael's Church, Milton
The Rev. Jim Koderer, St. Luke's Church, Hudson
The Rev. Phil LaBelle, St. Mark's Church, Southborough
Delegate Mary Jo Larson, St. John's Church, Arlington
Diocesan Youth Council Member Cris Latorre, Trinity Church, Boston
The Rev. Susan Hagood Lee, Ph.D., St. Luke's Episcopal Church, Fall River
Delegate Carmelina Lespinasse, Church of the Holy Spirit, Mattapan
The Rev. Angel Marrero, Christ Church y Iglesia de San Juan, Hyde Park
Delegate Alfred Massiah, Church of the Holy Spirit, Mattapan
The Very Rev. Amy McCreath, Cathedral Church of St. Paul, Boston

The Rev. Will Mebane, St. Barnabas's Church, Falmouth
The Rev. Dr. Michael Melendez, St. Stephen's Church, Boston
The Rev. Jeffrey Mello, St. Paul's Church, Brookline
The Rev. Christopher Morck, Grace Church, New Bedford
Diocesan Youth Council Member Chawanzi Muwina, St. Peter's Church, Cambridge
The Rev. Charlie Nichols, Church of St. Mary of the Harbor, Provincetown
The Rev. Canon Jean Baptiste Ntagengwa, Diocesan Staff
The Rev. Canon Kelly O'Connell, Diocesan Staff
Delegate Jenn Paiva, Church of Our Saviour, Somerset
Standing Committee Member Constance R. Perry, Trinity Church, Boston
The Rev. Debbie Phillips, Grace Church, Salem
The Rev. Joe Robinson, Church of the Holy Spirit, Orleans
Diocesan Youth Council Member Nadia Robinson, St. John's Church, Franklin
The Rev. Ema Rosero-Nordalm, Diocesan Ministry
The Rev. H. Mark Smith, Diocesan Staff
Diocesan Council Member Lynn Smith, St. John St. James Church, Roxbury
Delegate Wendolyn Squires, Christ Church, Cambridge
The Rev. Liz Steinhauser, St. Stephen's Church, Boston
The Rev. Leslie Sterling, Allston
The Rev. Andi Taylor, St. David's Church, South Yarmouth
The Rev. James Thomas, Christ Church, Plymouth
The Rev. Tamra Tucker, The Crossing, Boston
Delegate Chuba Udokwu, Trinity Church, Boston
Delegate Deborah Gardner Walker, St. Peter's Church, Beverly
The Rev. Deb Warner, Church of the Messiah, Woods Hole
Delegate Christine White, St. Andrew's Church, Edgartown
Delegate Kristina Wile, St. Elizabeth's Church, Sudbury
The Rev. Robert Windsor, St. Peter's Church, Weston
The Rev. Diane Wong, St. John's Church, Arlington

The Resolution

Resolved, that the 236th Convention of the Diocese of Massachusetts, in recognition of and restitution for the sin and legacy of slavery, accepts and affirms the foundational principle as recommended by the Racial Justice Commission for the articulation of remedies; namely that, in the name of reparations, the Diocese of Massachusetts, its congregations and its Episcopal communities must take action to 1) change how we tell our own histories and present-day story, and 2) make financial compensation; and be it further

Resolved, that Convention, once again following the recommendations of the Racial Justice Commission, commits that 1) the Diocese of Massachusetts Reparations Fund to be established, as called for by the 235th Convention in November 2020, should give priority to making investments in long-term change and empowerment; 2) payments from such fund should be considered to both individuals and organizations; and 3) beyond these two broad principles, decision-making about the priorities for these investments and how they are distributed need to be in the hands of impacted individuals and communities in all parts of the diocese, according to a process developed by the Racial Justice Commission; and be it further

Resolved, that this Convention charges the Racial Justice Commission to assist in developing across the diocese a broadly accepted understanding of what actions to take in the name of reparations; and, using that shared understanding, create the means by which the descendants of enslaved Africans and their communities across and within the Diocese of Massachusetts will be empowered to develop funding priorities, funding strategies and decision-making structures in 2023 so that distribution of monies begins in 2024 from the Diocese of Massachusetts Reparations Fund; and be it further

Resolved, that this Convention directs Diocesan Council and invites the congregations, institutions and other Episcopal communities of the Diocese of Massachusetts to commit 2022 as a year of study, gathering stories, sharing and receiving these stories and discernment across the diocese – in the name of repentance, reconciliation and accountability to the descendants of enslaved Africans and their communities – in order to develop the broadly accepted understanding of what actions to take in the name of reparations; and be it further

Resolved, that this year of study, discussion and discernment calls forth those communities and organizations who have not yet taken up the invitation from the 235th Convention to explore their historic involvement in and present wealth derived from the forced labor of enslaved people to begin this work using the Toolkit for Reparations in Community, resources offered by the Reparations Subcommittee of the Racial Justice Commission and others; and be it further

Resolved, that this Convention directs the Racial Justice Commission, through its Reparations Subcommittee, to support the use of these tools and resources in communities across the diocese, by facilitating conversation and study across communities in the diocese, and by offering a study series for use in Lent 2022 to further this study, discernment and story-sharing, to the glory of God and as one means of living out our mission as a church, “to restore all people to unity with God and each other in Christ” (*BCP*, p. 855).

Explanation For

The intent of this resolution is to encourage Diocesan Convention to keep alive the commitment we made as the elected body of the diocese through resolution at the 2020 Convention in which we committed to take action "in acknowledgment of and repentance for the sin and legacy of slavery" [["A Call for Repentance and Reparations,"](#) submitted to and approved by the 235th Convention of the Episcopal Diocese of Massachusetts on Nov. 7, 2020].¹³ In addition, this resolution is designed to commit our diocese to the next phase in the long work of reparations.

Among the actions called for by the 2020 resolution was the creation of a toolkit of resources by the Reparations Subcommittee of the Racial Justice Commission. The proposed resolution charges that same subcommittee with responsibility for facilitating the toolkit's use by congregations and other Episcopal communities. We must not allow it to simply sit on the virtual shelf. Further, this resolution calls on the subcommittee to create a Lenten series and other activities to help develop a shared understanding across the diocese of the nature of and need for acts of reparation.

¹³ <https://www.diomass.org/diocesan-convention-2020>

The 2020 resolution included an invitation to congregations and other Episcopal communities “prayerfully and purposefully to explore their historic involvement in and present wealth derived from the forced labor of enslaved people,”¹⁴ and a handful of entities have been convening in a loose affiliation of practitioners to support each other materially, spiritually and communally as they begin this difficult work. The sponsors of the present resolution hope its passage will encourage others to join these early adopters, to learn from both their courage and from the lessons they have discovered and are eager to share.

Another action called for in the 2020 resolution was for the Reparations Subcommittee of the Racial Justice Commission to make recommendations for the creation of a Reparations Fund within the Diocese of Massachusetts. The recommendations were to be based on the subcommittee’s research of models and best practices on the establishment of such funds. The committee has interviewed colleagues in the Diocese of Long Island, the Diocese of Maryland, the Diocese of New Jersey, the Diocese of New York, the Diocese of Texas and Virginia Theological Seminary, as well as studying the models from the Diocese of Virginia, Princeton Theological Seminary and others. Each of these organizations is in a different phase in its own process of creating a reparations fund, but all are further along in the process than is our own diocese.

Not surprisingly, each had their own unique process in creating their funds, but two lessons came loudly and clearly in all of the subcommittee’s conversations and study. All our colleagues stressed the necessity of investing time in developing a common understanding across the diocese for what we mean by “reparations” and as well as creating an acceptable but urgent timeline that fulfills the obligations and responsibility set forth in the 2020 resolution “A Call for Repentance and Reparations.” This is the impetus for the “year of discernment” called for in this resolution.

One particular topic for community discernment is to better understand the experiences of indigenous peoples displaced (and worse) for the economic benefit of Europeans. This history is particular – similar to that of enslaved Africans and their descendants in some ways and unique in others. As we learn more, we will need to discern whether the reparations called for toward indigenous peoples should be considered a part of or separate from the work of repairing the harm to enslaved Africans and their descendants. This resolution calls for another 24 months before the distribution of funds from any Diocese of Massachusetts Reparations Fund. The sponsors recognize that for some, this may feel like delay upon delay. However, given the long timeline of our diocesan budgeting process, this really commits to an actionable plan in terms of the scale and source of a diocesan Reparations Fund in a little over a year from now – and we feel this is sufficiently aggressive as to drive action forward but not so expedient as to shortchange the necessary discernment, deliberation and structural development.

That said, the Reparations Subcommittee, the Racial Justice Commission and the sponsors of this resolution felt it very important that the 2021 Convention be called on to consider some actionable recommendations regarding the direction of the fund which will be established and so it is in that spirit that we put forth the broad foundational principles of our diocesan actions as outlined in the first two resolves above. These are inspired by the models we have

¹⁴ Ibid.

researched and seem to the Racial Justice Commission to fulfill the spirit and intent of the 2020 resolution. Among these recommendations, called for in the above resolution, is for the Racial Justice Commission to create a new task force, commission or some other body led and driven by impacted individuals and members of impacted communities, to be given decision-making authority on setting the priorities for a Diocese of Massachusetts Reparations Fund and how those funds will be distributed.

Statements Against

We as a diocese passed the 2020 resolution, “A Call for Repentance and Reparations.” Isn’t that enough? Besides, descendants of enslaved Africans are now in Congress, presidents of corporations, doctors, professors, bishops, etc. Why should the diocese pay these powerful people anything? This resolution opens up the coffers of the Episcopal Diocese of Massachusetts in dangerous ways, including the relinquishment of spending power to new systems outside our traditional and canonically grounded lines of authority. Who knows where this change in our systems could end. It could bankrupt the diocese.

We already have social justice programs in place, as well as organizations like Episcopal City Mission. As a commonwealth and as a nation, we have public assistance, community development programs and social service organizations, both public and private. On an individual level, we can give money to Black organizations and shop at Black-owned businesses. We do not need to allocate additional resources towards alleviating the inequality created by slavery.

I do not believe that I have a responsibility to amend actions taken many centuries ago. The Civil War ended slavery. People need to start taking individual responsibility for their own station in life. Slavery was a historic injustice, but the issues involved are so complex and so far removed from our current reality that it is not possible to create a fair and just reparations process. And even if we wanted to, how can one verify eligibility for reparation when records of the lives of enslaved individuals and their lives are scarce or nonexistent? We can’t possibly make up for the damage that was done by slavery, so why try?

Implementation Requirements

The resolution calls on the pre-existing Reparations Subcommittee of the diocesan Racial Justice Commission to promote and facilitate the use of the toolkit which will be available on the diocesan website by the time of Diocesan Convention. The resolution also charges the subcommittee to develop a study series for Lent 2022 and organize forums across the diocese for story-sharing, study and discernment.

The resolution also calls for the Racial Justice Commission to create a new task force, commission or some other body, made up primarily of the descendants of enslaved Africans and their communities, and that this body be given the authority to develop the priorities and guidelines for the distribution of Reparations Fund resources. Meanwhile, the existing Reparations Subcommittee will continue the work it began as a result of the 2020 resolution, “A Call for Repentance and Reparations,” to examine our unrestricted endowments and restricted endowments among other potential sources of financing for this fund.

The diocesan registrar historiographer with the Diocesan Library and Archives will continue to be called on to assist in this work and fully supports the directives of our Diocesan Convention. They are eager to continue to coordinate with the Office of the Bishop, the congregations and other diocesan-affiliated organizations, as we all work to better understand and document a more accurate and more complete accounting of our diocesan past. The goal of such understanding is an ever-improving diocese. To assist those entities in the work called for in this resolution, the Library and Archives will utilize the Racial Justice Commission's toolkit to provide a foundation for the important work of acknowledgement, repentance and reconciliation.

REPORT OF THE MISSION STRATEGY COMMITTEE *CRAFTING A STRATEGY TO MEET THIS UNIQUE MOMENT*

An Invitation to Reflect

At the beginning of January 2021, the Mission Strategy Committee provided a short set of questions to congregations, deaneries and other groups. The invitation included three questions that were designed to anchor a 20-minute conversation at a congregation's annual meeting:

- 1) The last many months of COVID-19 have forced us as worshipping communities to distill what the essence of our church is for us—what it means to be a particular congregation or community following in the way of Jesus. What essential elements have emerged in your faith community?*
- 2) What about your worshipping community are you most proud of? Why?*
- 3) What one thing do you wish our diocesan leadership knew about your congregation or faith community? Why is this important to you?*

A second version for a longer leadership gathering or retreat invited communities to reflect on their unique identities and on their experience with the nine goals of the current Mission Strategy adopted in 2016. Congregations were asked to submit notes from their conversations by March 19, 2021.

Members of the Mission Strategy Committee read every response and coded it for key themes, noting both signs of progress to celebrate and areas where more support is needed. The responses ranged from reflections on the congregation experience to detailed requests for additions and updates to the Mission Strategy goals. In mid-June, the Mission Strategy Committee sent a report to clergy and congregational leaders along with a survey requesting further input. In total, 42 congregations and 20 organizations, affinity groups and deaneries provided feedback to the committee through letters, meeting notes and survey responses. These messages from people across our diocese informed our report on the current Mission Strategy, and provided the core themes for the new Mission Strategy proposed to Diocesan Convention this year.

Looking Back: The 2016 Mission Strategy and Embracing Brave Change

The Mission Strategy Committee reflected together on the Mission Strategy adopted in 2016 to discern whether its goals have been incorporated into our diocesan life. The committee asked: Are these still the goals we should be working on, or are we ready to bring a new focus to our work?

Diocesan Actions and Achievements

Since 2016 when our Diocesan Convention approved the current Mission Strategy, our diocesan leadership and bishops have made significant efforts to align their work with the three planks: ***Reimagining Our Congregations, Building Our Relationships, and Engaging Our World.***

Reimagining Our Congregations

In response to the Mission Strategy, we reimagined our diocesan structure and staff, adding, eliminating and changing positions to better meet our goals. In 2018, we created the new position of **Missioner for Networking and Formation** to strengthen our formation programs, gather resources, connect congregations and help cultivate the skills of evangelism. This missioner helps coordinate clergy days, ministry fairs, workshops, book groups and trainings available to all congregations. This position has expanded the opportunities for lay and clergy leaders to connect with one another and build their skills in spiritual formation, pastoral care, sound governance, financial stewardship and building use.

The “Wicked Good Idea” **Microgrants** also provided seed money for creative approaches to doing Christ’s work in local contexts. Congregations, networks and organizations were invited to apply for up to \$2,000 to try something new in support of the diocesan mission strategy. In 2020, a total of \$43,461 was granted to launch 24 projects, most of them focused on the technology needed to support online worship.

Building Our Relationships

We created three **Regional Canon** positions to build stronger connections between the diocesan staff and the congregations, bringing resources and attention to every corner of our diocese. Each regional canon regularly visits and communicates with the clergy and congregations in four deaneries, grouped into the Northern and Western, Central, and Southern regions. The **Collaborative Ministries Working Group** was also created after the 2020 Diocesan Convention. This group supports existing collaborations, invites teams to expand or reimagine their work and brings together partners for new initiatives.

In our current mission strategy, we commit to fulfilling the Gospel command to love one another, particularly across difference. In order to celebrate and support the diversity of our diocese, we created the position of **Canon for Immigration and Multicultural Ministries**. This canon organizes workshops and learning events focused on the needs of refugees, the experiences of immigrants, the Deferred Action for Childhood Arrivals (DACA) and other policies, voter turnout efforts and skills for public advocacy; provides limited immigration legal services; supports multicultural celebrations and commemorations; and acts as a liaison for cultural groups including our historically Black churches and our Hispanic, African and Asian ministries.

We also pledge to enter into a large-scale, authentic and committed conversation about racism and other forms of oppression. Our reconfigured **Racial Justice Commission** was announced at the November 2020 Diocesan Convention. Its mission is to help our diocese take the next steps in the essential work of racial justice and reconciliation.

The mission strategy adopted in 2016 expressed our commitment to initiate new relationships across our diocese, inviting us to develop “opportunities for teams from congregations to visit other congregations, sharing worship and learning about one another.” In 2018, the **Indaba** working group of Diocesan Council designed an opportunity for congregations to engage this goal of deepening relationships in 2019. Six congregations participated in this effort. A second cohort was planned, but was cut short by the pandemic in March 2020.

Engaging Our World

In order to strengthen our efforts in engaging our world, two deacons were appointed as the leaders of our diocesan **Global Mission Initiative**. As global missionaries, they have been available to assist with workshops and informational meetings with vestries and outreach committees, sermons and volunteers willing to witness to their global mission experience, congregational discernment for mission, recommendations of global partners, churches looking to collaborate, solutions for small churches, grant preparation and trip preparation, and reflections during and after trips. They also oversee the Sustainable Development and Mission Tithe Relationship grant programs.

Our diocese continues to partner with **Episcopal City Mission** to help congregations engage with their local communities. In 2020 alone, ECM's Justice Network brought together 121 individuals from 38 Episcopal communities for conversation about essential themes in our work of seeking justice. ECM trained congregational teams in the practices of faith-rooted justice; mobilized local action teams for advocacy around immigrants' rights, Black and Indigenous rights, and access to housing; and distributed over a million dollars in grants to parish partners and grassroots community efforts.

In response to the climate crisis our world faces, our Creation Care Committee was reconfigured as the **Creation Care Justice Network**. The network is made up of clergy and lay people working together to help churches and communities care for creation through embracing sustainable practices and providing support and ideas for reducing the church's carbon footprint, experiencing the outdoors and preaching about interconnectedness with the natural world. In early 2021, our diocese contracted with a **Creation Care Advisor** to provide consultation and teaching, and to better connect us with other advocates for creation care in the Commonwealth.

Congregational Actions & Achievements

Our congregations have grown in mission over the past five years, answering the call to "Embrace Brave Change" in countless ways as we seek and serve Christ in our local contexts. The reflections received by the Mission Strategy Committee included many examples of faith communities reimagining their shared life, building relationships with new partners and engaging the world.

The pandemic accelerated our efforts to **Reimagine Our Congregations**. Across our diocese, congregational teams worked hard to provide creative online or outdoor worship. Some have collaborated with other congregations or with ecumenical groups. Many have continued children's ministries in new forms. One church school met online twice a week; another connected a church parent group with parents in the public school for mutual support; and one parish offered its hall and WIFI for students to have a place for online learning. Every congregation that responded to the Mission Strategy Committee reported enhanced pastoral care efforts via phone trees, extra mailings, tech support and prayer partners. One congregation expedited discretionary fund giving and disbursement by creating a Venmo account.

Congregations have been **Building Relationships** in new ways through learning, service and worship. Many have engaged in the Sacred Ground dialogue series on race and faith, some with multiple congregations in small groups together. Parish administrators, children's ministry leaders, clergy and wardens have all found new support through regular online

meetings. Some congregations participated in the Mutual Aid Network led by Episcopal City Mission to get available supplies to the places hit hardest by COVID-19. The Cathedral Church of St. Paul has shared online worship and fellowship with Grace Church, Vineyard Haven through much of the pandemic. Trinity Church, Rockland listed its online worship with the Episcopal Conference of the Deaf, and has people from around the country tuning in.

Many congregations have practiced **Engaging Our World** by ratcheting up food ministries during the pandemic, extending hours, space and expanding services. Several have continued to cultivate international relationships with ministries in Cuba, Haiti, Honduras, Tanzania, Zimbabwe and other countries and the South American Mission Society. Some have participated in refugee care and support of those threatened by Immigration and Customs Enforcement. One congregation has become involved with an interfaith group through the Central Massachusetts Connections in Faith.

While we celebrate these successes, we also acknowledge the challenges we still face. While some congregations are growing in numbers, many others have become smaller. As we move toward more online ministry opportunities, many people still have no internet access, and some are not interested in online gatherings. Children and elders who benefit especially from in-person contact often feel left behind. Several reflections noted that we still have a lot of relationships to build. We do not always know our neighbors, and we don't always tap into the wealth of diverse experiences within our communities. For example, one response lifted up our clergy and lay people from Africa and the Caribbean as under-used resources who could connect more people with local cultures and ministries abroad. Our response to COVID is still ongoing, and we still have much to learn together.

Looking Ahead: What We Heard from Our Diocese

Overall, the Mission Strategy Committee discerned that our diocese has made good progress towards the goals of the Mission Strategy we adopted in 2016. While the work will never be complete, we have incorporated the call to be more creative, collaborative and engaged into both the culture of our diocese and into the concrete ways that we work together. This sense of progress creates space to imagine something new. How can we be bold in following Jesus and responding to the needs of this unique time and place?

Responding to Where We Are Now

The committee began by listening carefully to the reflections it received from around the diocese. The themes that the committee identified are:

Connection to God in Prayer and Worship: We are joyful in how we have been able to find innovative ways to worship and deepen our connection to God through the pandemic as we seek to be faithful disciples of Jesus Christ.

Adaptation to New Technology: We are proud that we were able to pivot to technology-enabled worship through the pandemic and, while deeply looking forward to being together in person again, we hope to continue to use technology to remove barriers to participation and share the Gospel.

Community and Collaboration: We affirm the importance of community. Through the pandemic, use of Zoom and other platforms enhanced congregational life and engagement in

coffee hours and Bible/book study. Technology-enabled collaborations were widespread, some local and some beyond. We hope to continue to build our communities and collaborations now that we can be together in person again.

Connection to our Diocese: We are thankful for the regional canons and other diocesan efforts to build relationships, and we continue to hope to be better seen and known. Lay people want to be called on to serve and lead, and also need to be equipped and invited.

Concern for Children and Young Families: We are concerned that young families who were primarily away during COVID due to child (and parent) “Zoom fatigue” will not return once the pandemic ends, and we are eager to find ways to connect and engage these families.

Concern for Youth: We are grateful for the youth formation that occurred during the pandemic. We also share awareness of the toll on the mental and emotional health of youth from the pandemic, and a general need for greater support for this group.

Outreach and Service to the Community: We are grateful that we have been able to do God’s work during the pandemic, through efforts like food banks and collaborations with other organizations to serve those most in need. We now hope to build on this momentum.

Racial Justice: We deeply desire a more just world for all people and we are eager to engage in this critical work, examining our history, our systems, our finances and ourselves.

Creation Care: We cannot live in a just world without justice for creation. We must address the urgent needs of our planet. We recognize that all injustice is interconnected: the climate crisis affects low-income communities and communities of color first and hardest.

Clarifying Our Vision and Our Roles

Through prayer and conversation, the Mission Strategy Committee connected the hopes and needs it heard with three statements of our identity as a people of God: disciples of Christ, seekers of justice and protectors of creation. The committee heard a call to be bold, decisive and concise—to give a clear focus to our work rather than trying to be all things to all people.

The committee also met with key partners in creating a vision for our church, including: our bishops; Diocesan Council members; representatives of Asian, Hispanic, African, and historically Black congregations; and leaders of Episcopal City Mission, Global Mission, the Racial Justice Commission and the Creation Care Justice Network.

Alongside the nine themes, committee members noticed a lot of variation in how engaged people felt by the Mission Strategy adopted in 2016. Some individuals and congregations reported that they felt the strategy belonged to diocesan leaders. For example, one person wrote to the committee that they had seen “little to no tangible or exciting common project... to garner a decent percentage of support and excitement from the 180 parishes of the diocese,” and therefore that there was little support for the mission strategy goals among parish members.

To invite greater engagement with the new proposed Mission Strategy, the committee divided the actions under each goal between next steps for individuals and congregations, and next steps for bishops and Diocesan Council. Everyone has a gift to contribute to our shared work.

OUR MISSION STRATEGY

As Proposed to the 236th Annual Diocesan Convention (November 2021)

The People We Long To Be

In tumultuous times, the center can be hard to find. We continue to be shaken by a global pandemic, a climate emergency and a new reckoning with racial and economic inequalities. These challenges add to the experiences many of us already have of disruption and decline in our church communities. As people of hope, we come together to find a way forward. Renewing our diocesan Mission Strategy at this crucial moment is one small part of a larger movement of individual Christians and congregations to reclaim our identities and our purpose.

From our own hearts to our shared altars and outward into our diocesan community, we are called to place God's love at the center of our lives. Because Jesus first loves us, we are able to love ourselves, our neighbors and all of creation. Through this transforming grace, we are becoming the people God created us to be:

Disciples of Jesus.

We gather to break bread in Jesus' name, praying to become the Body of Christ in the world. We come together across all ages—children, youth, adults and elders—to teach one another about Jesus' redemptive way. We invite our neighbors to know Jesus, proclaiming the Good News by what we say and how we live.

Seekers of justice.

We recognize the dignity and inherent worth of every person, and we work to build communities where all people find fairness, compassion and the freedom to live fully. We persevere in resisting evil, not just our own sins but the deep, structural sins of racism and oppression perpetuated in our name. We turn to the Lord for the grace to create honest dialogue, lasting transformation and true reconciliation.

Protectors of creation.

We cherish the wondrous works of God and strive to protect the beauty and integrity of all living beings. We recognize that our greed and thoughtless consumption has placed us at odds with the needs of our created world. We respond to the crisis of our climate, using resources rightly and advocating for the restoration of a healthy planet.

When we follow Jesus intentionally, creating justice in our communities and living wisely on our earth, then we find joy and meaning in our lives. Our churches grow strong, with deep and mutual relationships among our members and our neighbors near and far. Our shared mission comes alive, as a bold witness to God's love for this broken and beautiful world.

Our Mission

Our yearnings to be disciples of Jesus, seekers of justice and protectors of creation provide the foundation for us to do our shared work together. We will only reach these goals by becoming more completely the people Jesus calls us to be through the power of the Spirit.

First, last and always, we pray. We ask for God's abiding presence with us and we allow the love of Jesus to transform us. From this place of unconditional grace, mercy and love, we can trust in God's abundance, knowing we will have everything we need. We receive the courage to be agents of reconciliation and justice.

Devotion to the way of love demands vigilance, as the evil powers working to destroy the creatures of God remain unyielding in their attempts to distract us from our relationship to the Almighty. We must address the history and persistent reality of injustice in our church with honesty and humility. We must pray, learn, act and advocate for the world we want to create.

We must be bold. We must be hopeful. We are committed to the tasks being given us by the Spirit. We trust that God is with us in the joys and challenges of this moment. We dedicate ourselves once again as the Body of Christ in this place and time to work for the glorious reign of Jesus.

Our Goals and Actions

1) Invite robust Christian formation at all points of life.

Discipleship is the work of a lifetime. As we learn about our faith, we grow in our connection to God. Our communities nurture new believers and help all of us turn again and again towards God.

Commitments for individuals and congregations:

- 1a. Grow as disciples of Jesus through prayer, study and spiritual practice.
- 1b. Make formation a priority in our congregations, focusing on the areas that are most relevant for each community.
- 1c. Invite vestry members to engage in ongoing formation as spiritual leaders of our congregations.
- 1d. Initiate joint offerings with other congregations and explore creative ways to engage all of our members.

Commitments for Bishops and Diocesan Council:

- 1e. Engage in ongoing formation as spiritual leaders of our diocese.
- 1f. Provide ample funding for formation and networking programs.
- 1g. Prioritize the needs of children, youth and young adults.

2) Nurture healthy communities where we can care for ourselves and each other.

In Christ, we discover our own belovedness. We find healing for our souls and freedom from the fears that silence us. We speak honestly and with compassion, learning from the times that we come into conflict. We respond to the unique challenges of this moment with generosity and patience.

Commitments for individuals and congregations:

- 2a. Ensure that our congregations follow Safe Church best practices to protect children and vulnerable adults.
- 2b. Foster mutually supportive relationships between clergy and lay leaders.
- 2c. Hold honest conversations about our expectations of one another, the sustainability of our ministries and appropriate boundaries.
- 2d. Encourage all members and leaders of our congregations to attend to their own and others' mental health.

Commitments for Bishops and Diocesan Council:

- 2e. Provide coaching to support the wellbeing and effectiveness of clergy and lay leaders.
- 2f. Make training in mental health support available to all clergy and lay leaders.
- 2g. Clearly articulate roles, points of contact and designated staff time to respond to mental health concerns in congregations.

3) Share the Good News.

We confidently share the story of Jesus and his message of love. We listen well to the stories of others as we invite them into Christian community.

Commitments for individuals and congregations:

- 3a. Tell our faith stories authentically and invite new people into our Christian communities, being brave and embracing our discomforts.
- 3b. Create time and space for lay leaders to share their faith journeys at vestry meetings and other opportunities.
- 3c. Be intentional about listening to the experiences of others, especially across difference.

Commitments for Bishops and Diocesan Council:

- 3d. Promote and fund the use of Invite, Welcome, Connect or similar evangelism training tools.
- 3e. Encourage Council members and other diocesan leaders to share their faith journeys at meetings and other opportunities.
- 3f. Invest in technology and staff support to enable the sharing of stories through digital media.

4) Seek greater unity as members one of another.

When we come together with other congregations, we discover new ways that God is present with us. When we deepen our relationships with our neighbors near and far, we better understand the strengths and challenges of our local communities and our global mission partners, learning how to work side-by-side for a more just and peaceful world.

Commitments for individuals and congregations:

- 4a. Work together as congregations and deaneries, creating new teams, strengthening existing collaborations and initiating new partnerships with other Episcopal congregations, ecumenical and multifaith partners, community organizations and global missions.
- 4b. Cross boundaries to seek out diverse partners who will broaden our understanding of God's mission in the world.

Commitments for Bishops and Diocesan Council:

- 4c. Broaden the diversity of leadership for all diocesan project teams and governing bodies.
- 4d. Seek and support opportunities to work ecumenically and with other dioceses both around the corner and around the world.
- 4e. Continue to schedule time to build relationships at all diocesan events.
- 4f. Create and maintain online resources, websites and directories that help members of our diocese to connect effectively.

5) Commit to our own growth as people who live in right relationship with one another.

We hold ourselves and one another accountable to our vision of a just community. We are willing to do the hard work of addressing the sins of racism and oppression in our midst. We pray for God's grace to transform our diocese.

Commitments for individuals and congregations:

5a. Engage in racial justice work with energy and intention, committing resources and time to learning from the Episcopal Church's Racial Justice Audit, educational programs like Sacred Ground, and trainings like those offered by Episcopal City Mission.

5b. Cultivate mutual relationships with people of other faiths, cultures, classes and racial backgrounds, while building awareness of the differences in power that shape these connections.

Commitments for Bishops and Diocesan Council:

5d. Participate in racial justice training and dialogue as a leadership team.

5e. Promote and fund resources for racial justice work, ensuring that all congregations are aware of the opportunities and can readily access them at a reasonable cost.

5f. Equip diocesan and congregational leaders to retain and call clergy of color, so that our diocese may benefit from a wealth of diverse talents and experiences.

5g. Help to sustain networks for Episcopalians of color to connect with and support one another.

5h. Incorporate the findings and recommendations of our Racial Justice Commission into all levels of diocesan life.

6) Work together against the climate crisis.

The forces affecting our planet can feel huge and far beyond our control, and yet each one of us has a role to play in choosing a better future for ourselves, future generations and all living beings. As communities of faith, we can inspire one another's individual choices, take shared actions and speak publicly about God's call to protect creation.

Commitments for individuals and congregations:

6a. Support one another in working against the sins of overconsumption, pollution and complacency.

6b. Choose a specific area of climate response for action and study as a congregation, and partner with other congregations through the Creation Care Justice Network.

6c. Participate in an energy audit to assess and improve the sustainability of our church buildings.

6d. Address the direct impact of climate change on low-income communities and people of color by engaging in local initiatives and worldwide advocacy efforts.

Commitments for Bishops and Diocesan Council:

6d. Promote and fund resources for climate justice work, ensuring that all congregations are aware of the opportunities and can readily access them at a reasonable cost.

6e. Invest in grant programs to support more sustainable church buildings.

7) Influence public policy by advocating for justice for all people and for the creation.

As our own lives and communities are transformed, we hope to shine with the light of Christ, bringing love and justice to every part of our life together in this nation and in the whole human family. We have an important witness to offer to our leaders at every level of government as we stand up for the integrity of creation and the dignity of every human being.

Commitments for individuals and congregations:

7a. Participate in civic life through community meetings, messages to government leaders and educational campaigns.

7b. Continue to draw on the wisdom of the Racial Justice Commission, Episcopal City Mission, the Creation Care Justice Network and our diocesan Office of Immigration and Multicultural Ministries to speak and act boldly for justice.

Commitments for Bishops and Diocesan Council:

7c. Promote participation in faith-based advocacy networks.

7d. Model engagement in civic life, inviting our diocese into conversation about the ethical questions of our time.

8) Communicate our progress regularly and transparently.

True transformation of ourselves and our world will take long years of faithful effort. At the same time, the kingdom of God is very near. We will regularly take stock of the signs of the Holy Spirit's work among us, celebrating our progress and owning the ways that we still need to grow. In particular, we ask our leaders on the Diocesan Council to watch over this work and encourage and challenge us towards our goals.

Commitments for individuals and congregations:

8a. Share stories and videos of our congregations' efforts in formation, health, evangelism, collaboration, racial justice, climate response and public advocacy.

8b. Assess our communities' progress on our strategic goals as a regular part of vestry meetings, annual meetings and deanery gatherings.

Commitments for Bishops and Diocesan Council:

8c. Gather information on our diocese's efforts towards the goals stated in the Mission Strategy and develop tools to convey our progress.

8d. Review recent resolutions adopted by Diocesan Convention on formation, health, evangelism, collaboration, racial justice, climate response and public advocacy, and report on the work remaining to fully implement them.

8e. Empower an implementation team to lead the effort to meet our strategic goals.

A BRIEF SUMMARY OF ROBERT'S RULES OF ORDER

The following is a very brief and highly condensed review of the various motions that can be made according to Robert's Rules of Order, generally accepted as a manual of Parliamentary Procedure. This condensation is a general guide only and does not begin to address the many exceptions and complexities of Parliamentary Procedure.

General Classification of Motions (these are in ascending order of precedence, i.e. the Principal or Main Motion has no precedence over any other motion):

Principal or Main Question or Motion: This must be moved and seconded before Subsidiary or Incidental Questions can be moved.

Subsidiary or Secondary Motions: These take precedence of a Principal Question and must be decided before the Principal Question can be acted upon.

- Postpone Indefinitely
- Amendment
- Amend the Amendment
- Refer to a Committee
- Postpone to a Definite Time
- Limit or Extend Debate * +
- Call the Previous Question (Close debate) * +
- Lay on the Table *

Incidental Questions: These arise out of other questions and take precedence of and are to be decided before the questions which give rise to them. These cannot be amended and are undebatable except an Appeal (which is debatable when it relates to rules of speaking or priority of business or while a previous question is pending).

- Withdraw a Motion *
- Suspend the Rules * +
- Read Papers (Request for reading of the motion before a vote is taken) *
- Point of Order *
- Point of Information *
- Objection to the Consideration of a Motion * +
- Division of a Question *
- Division of Assembly (Vote by Orders) *
- Appeal (to a ruling of the Chair)

Privileged Questions: These take precedence of all other questions whatever and are undebatable:

- Call for Orders of the Day (specific motions to be considered at a specific time) *
- Questions relating to the Rights and Privileges of the Assembly or its Members *
- Take Recess *
- Adjourn *
- Fix time to Adjourn *

A call for Quorum is appropriate at any time and is non-debatable.

* *Undebatable* + *Requires two-thirds vote*

Note: *The standing diocesan Rules of Order, which are part of the diocesan canons, give some information about the precedence of certain motions. Below is a summary of some of these Rules:*

Rule IV lists these specific motions in this order of precedence: 1) to lay on the table; 2) to postpone to a day certain; 3) to postpone indefinitely; 4) to limit debate by taking a vote at a time certain, or by determining the time allowed for each speech; (5) to commit; and 6) to amend.

Rule V states that a motion with distinct propositions can be divided at the request of any member.

Rule VI states that all amendments will be considered in the order in which they are moved. An amendment may be amended, but no amendment may be made to the second amendment, but a substitute for the whole matter may be made.

Rule VII states that a motion to lay upon the table shall be decided without debate.

Rule XII states that a question having been decided shall not be reconsidered during the same session, without the consent of two-thirds of the members present, nor unless the motion to reconsider be made and seconded by members who voted in the majority on the original motion.

ADDITIONAL REPORTS

Antiracism Diocesan Staff Working Group

The Antiracism Staff Working group, operating under the authority of the bishops, was formed in February 2021 and charged to design and shepherd a process to begin to break through the darkness of racism in our midst and develop an antiracist culture among us as your diocesan staff. The working group, while not expressly a committee of Convention, submits this report in our ongoing efforts towards transparency and with hopes that our efforts will encourage those in congregations and other Episcopal communities doing similar work.

Description of Inclusiveness Goals

The diocesan staff desires to respond clearly to the culture of white dominance among and within ourselves. It is our commitment to become an antiracist community and to lead parishes and other bodies of the diocese by example. We seek to create an exemplary work environment that nurtures and supports all employees. We seek to build a more supportive and empowering environment for diocesan staff who are people of color, and, by how we respond to each other and with other groups and individuals both within and outside of 138 Tremont Street, to become a more intentionally antiracist community.

Context for Our Work

We are not doing this work in a vacuum. The staff, chapter and communities of the Cathedral Church of St. Paul have undertaken an expansive set of initiatives to help them evolve into an antiracist institution. As our staff and theirs work closely together and share many resources in common, including office space, some of our work will align with theirs.

We are also striving to work in cooperation with the Racial Justice Commission and its subcommittees. One subcommittee in particular is charged to “Work with diocesan staff to create accountable and transparent structures in our diocese... this includes (but is not limited to) hiring practices, committee makeup, search-committee processes, and vestry business practices.” Our group is in communication with this subcommittee in order to ensure alignment of goals and practices for the benefit of all.

Progress to Date

Recognizing that we would need an outsider’s perspective as well as coaching and facilitation from someone who was not part of the staff, over the spring the focus of our work was to develop a Request for Proposals from diversity, equity and inclusion consultants. Throughout this work we sought input from other staff members. In addition, we have consulted with the Racial Justice Commission subcommittee, the cathedral’s antiracism team, other colleagues in this work and, of course, our bishops.

This fall the group is interviewing potential consultants who submitted proposals. By the time of Convention, we expect to have contracted with someone and begun the first phase of our facilitated process. All staff members are expected by the bishops to participate.

Meanwhile, time has been given over at each monthly staff meeting for members of the working group to give one personal recommendation of some resource they have found useful in their individual efforts to “do their own work” in understanding better what it will mean to be more antiracist. Recommendations have included podcasts, articles, mass market fiction

and nonfiction, and theological and academic titles, depending on the preferences of the working group member making the recommendations. Through this, the staff as a whole have been encouraged to begin their own work in whatever form feels most engaging to them.

Looking Forward

While we hope to begin work with the consulting firm in the last quarter of 2021, we see this work as the work of transformation, not education. We understand that there will be no quick fixes here. We can't tell how long this work will take nor how long the working group will be needed, but the bishops and the working group are committed to continuing this work for the long haul.

We ask for your prayers as we, your diocesan staff, seek to become an antiracist community and better reflect "on earth as it is in heaven" to each other, to the diocese and to the world.

Respectfully submitted,

Mr. Nathaniel Fasman
The Rev. Canon Kelly O'Connell
Ms. Chelsea Smith
The Rev. H. Mark Smith

September 10, 2021

Cathedral Report

The mission of the Cathedral Church of St. Paul is to serve as a house of prayer for all people and amplify the mission of our diocese. In the past year, we have begun living into a strategic plan ratified by Chapter in September 2020, which will strengthen and deepen our mission. This strategic plan is organized in alignment with the mission strategy of the diocese and is appended to this report.

Here are some key aspects of our work living into our mission in the past year:

Reimagining our Congregations:

As in all parts of the church, we now understand “the congregation” to include people gathering in the sanctuary alongside people joining us online. We have installed livestreaming equipment in the sanctuary and Sproat Hall to allow the cathedral congregations, as well as episcopal liturgies and diocesan events, to be hybrid. We are prioritizing health and safety now and going forward, installing UVC fixtures in the sanctuary and Sproat Hall to remove viruses and other contaminants from the air and studying the possibility of adding air conditioning to both spaces so we can serve as a cooling station in an increasingly intemperate location.

As our awareness of how our past shapes our present grows, we have focused on uncovering ways in which racism is woven into our history, vibrates through our operations and limits our capacity to welcome and to love. Our History Committee continued researching the life, work and sources of wealth of our founders, and reported their progress to the Reparations Subcommittee of the Racial Justice Commission. We have been working this year with Conditioning Leaders, a BEID consulting firm. They are conducting an organizational assessment and will advise us and work with us on our next steps to becoming an anti-racist institution. We have been working toward equity in salaries, right-sizing job descriptions and utilizing anti-racist hiring practices. We are discussing how to create a staff culture that prioritizes health and resists perfectionism, individualism and overwork. We have increased staffing to support stronger ministry with Spanish-speaking people. In partnership with Emmanuel Church, Boston, the Crossing Congregation has engaged in Sacred Ground.

Building our Relationships:

At several critical moments, including the week of the presidential election and the attack on the Capitol, the cathedral provided Zoom-based prayer gatherings for the people of the diocese. Members of our staff and chapter helped create pre-recorded Holy Week offerings to unite and celebrate the diverse voices in the diocese. To strengthen musical ministries in the diocese in a time of displacement and challenge, Cathedral Music Director Louise Munding continues to convene a weekly learning community with parish music directors.

We partnered with the diocese and the United Thank Offering to lay plans to host a national conference on Developing a Theology of Gratitude. Our plans envision multigenerational and multicultural sharing and learning, building relationships across the diocese and beyond. Although COVID has delayed the conference until 2022, we will host an evening event on Oct. 16, 2021, – A Multicultural Celebration of Gratitude, lifting up the work of three UTO grant recipient sites in our diocese.

Building relationships with those with whom we share space at 138 Tremont Street has been challenging due to the pandemic but is a high priority. We are seeking tenants for some available spaces here, and will prioritize NPO's who share our values and commitments, especially those led by and serving people of color. Our cathedral Equity Team leaders are in conversation regularly with the leaders of the diocesan staff Equity Team, as we share the goal of making this space one where everyone is truly welcomed, at ease, seen and celebrated.

MANNA continued its expanded ministry with unhoused neighbors, as the ravages of the pandemic increased homelessness and the services available to the unhoused by the city and many non-profits remained curtailed. We are deeply thankful to MANNA's partner parishes, volunteers from several local parishes and the hundreds of people from around the diocese who helped us attend to the basic physical needs and the spiritual needs of the unhoused community at a time of such trauma and displacement. Also, in partnership with Boston Health Care for the Homeless, the cathedral sanctuary served as a vaccine clinic for the unhoused through two months.

Engaging our World:

"Our world" begins with our neighborhood, and this year we strove to engage close to home. We hosted a watch party and post-movie discussion of "A Reckoning in Boston", a new, locally produced documentary film by James Rutenbeck about racial and economic inequalities in Boston. This event was a pilot project to help the film team prepare to share the film widely within The Episcopal Church. We also began our "Walking the Neighborhood" project, through which cathedral members make a prayerful walk through one of the neighborhoods around the cathedral and then come together to share and pray for those who live, work or study on the route. Our Ministry of the Steps on the cathedral plaza offered a chance for joy, connection and reflection to our neighbors all summer.

Our activism and broader engagement focused this year on the housing crisis exacerbated by the pandemic. MANNA Head Pastor Jennifer McCracken penned a petition to Governor Baker, which was signed by 300+ clergy and lay leaders as well as social service providers, urging him to open hotels to the homeless. Cathedral staff and lay leaders participated regularly in advocacy for preventing homelessness, particularly for Right to Counsel, the extension of the eviction ban, and an increase in RAFT funding. This fall we welcomed a Lift Together intern who will be our Justice Fellow, to help us grow our support for the work of the Office of Immigration and Multicultural Ministries, Episcopal City Mission and the MA Coalition for the Homeless.

Aware that our investments have impact on the world, Cathedral chapter leaders reviewed our investment portfolio and learned about wider options for doing positive good. They also engaged in conversations with the Trustees of Donations regarding faith-based, anti-racist investing.

There is much more we could share, and we would be glad to do so anytime. Please be in touch if you have questions or a desire to be more involved in our ministry.

Respectfully submitted,

Jane Peyrouse, Chairperson of Cathedral Chapter
The Very Rev. Amy McCreath, Dean of the Cathedral

Strategic Plan of the Cathedral, as affirmed by chapter on September 22, 2020.

Chapter is responsible for the implementation of this plan. We embrace it in the service of our diocese and with thanksgiving to God.

I. Reimagining our Congregations

Objective #1 - Help transform the culture of Episcopal congregational life by centering the call to anti-racism as an ongoing spiritual practice.

Action item: Make anti-oppression training and reflection an ongoing practice for cathedral chapter, staff and the lay leadership of our congregations.

Action item: With the help of a training organization or equity consultant, develop a plan for piloting the training.

Action item: Review our experience with the pilot program to learn and adjust, then establish a timeline for continued training.

Objective #2 - Share the transformational power of Christ's love by doubling the size and ministry reach of both the Sunday congregation and the Crossing.

Action item: Gain skills for innovative mission development and relational evangelism through sending lay leaders and chapter representatives to trainings.

Action item: Grow the reach of our worship through high-quality live streaming and other online community and formation opportunities.

Objective #3 - Take a leading role in the post-pandemic spiritual renewal of the city and the diocese by expanding our capacity to host excellent worship (in person and online) using the breadth of resources of our Episcopal tradition.

Action item: Install an excellent, appropriate organ that can both support large episcopal liturgies and be used in civic events and partnerships with arts organizations.

Action item: Enhance our worship spaces to provide adequate storage and work space for preparing for Sunday, diocesan and Crossing liturgies, and to make them safer and more usable year-round.

Action item: Archive worship services, sermons and music in a way that both makes them easily accessible now and preserves them for the historical record.

II. Building our Relationships

Objective #1 - Claim our vocation to convene conversation and work across differences in our neighborhood by connecting creatively and learning deeply about our neighbors.

Action item: Commit to an ongoing practice of walking our neighborhoods.

Action item: Create a marketing budget and explore direct marketing through advertising and other means of reaching potential participants.

Action item: Host community events, meals and forums that foster dialogue and relationship building among the diverse residents of our neighborhoods.

Action item: Select lay leaders to represent us at Boston Harbor Deanery assembly meetings on a regular basis, to help us strengthen our relationships and work more collaboratively with other Episcopal parishes nearby.

Objective #2 - Deepen MANNA's relationships with other organizations and faith communities in ways that address the real needs of the MANNA community members.

Action item: Recruit interns, volunteers and future pastoral staff who reflect the diversity of the MANNA community.

Action item: Deepen our connection with local resource providers around housing, mental illness and substance use disorders.

Action items: Create an internship for a graduate student who is knowledgeable about navigating the housing system, including housing court, to assist community members with housing issues.

Action item: Create videos and other educational resources sharing wisdom from the MANNA staff and participants to help other faith communities learn from the MANNA model.

III. Engaging our World

Objective #1 - Participate in the dismantling of white supremacy within our community.

Action Item: Build durable relationships with justice groups led by BIPOC.

Action Item: Use our financial resources and our partnerships to grow the capacity of BIPOC entrepreneurs and address racial inequality in income and housing in the region.

Action item: Conduct an annual investment audit to ensure our financial investments sufficiently reflect our commitment to dismantling white supremacy.

Objective #2 - Expand our engagement in training and work for social, economic and environmental justice, especially in collaboration with BIPOC-led organizations

Action item: Build durable partnerships with organizations committed to justice and transformational change in our community and the world.

Action item: Participate in training and civic engagement that address pertinent issues of injustice in our local, state and national life, in partnership with Episcopal City Mission and the Canon for Immigration and Multicultural Ministries of the diocese.

Action item: Hire justice interns to help us live into these commitments and learn the skills necessary to do so.

Objective #3 - Strengthen the civic fabric and renew hearts and minds by hosting events at the intersection of arts, education and faith.

Action item: Grow our existing relationships with local arts, academic and faith communities with a focus on synergistic collaborations.

Action item: Identify potential new partners for mission, within the building and the neighborhood.

Action item: Host art exhibitions, performances and educational opportunities that bring together a wide range of people and address relevant issues of our time.

IV. Sustainability

Objective #1 - Ensure this strategic plan is carried out in a faithful, timely manner.

Action item: Create an implementation committee to oversee carrying out of the strategic plan and adjust objectives as needed.

Action item: Develop a timeline and metric for measuring the impact and outcomes of the strategic plan.

Action item: Cathedral annual meeting and annual report will include a review of progress on this plan.

Action item: Add cathedral staff who will help us carry out the missional aspects of this plan.

Objective #2 - Raise the financial and other resources necessary to implement this plan.

Action item: Create a grants committee to research, write and oversee grants connected to the implementation of this plan.

Action item: Plan and lead a capital campaign to raise funds for the capital improvements set out here.

Action item: Through sharing our story more broadly and effectively in regular communications, social media and annual appeals, double our donor base

Collaborative Ministries Working Group

The Collaborative Ministries Working Group works to expand the ways in which we as a diocese encourage and support collaborative ministries that can help build new relationships and structures to nurture continued parish vitality, support sustainable clergy vocations and well-being and promote an understanding of our interdependence and common mission in the diocese.

The Collaborative Ministries Working Group grew out of conversations that various groups of clergy and laity were having around support for clergy in part-time calls, questions around compensation and benefits, the changing dynamics of an increase in part-time calls and the reduced availability of clergy to accept those calls. A small group started to gather for conversation in May 2020 to share ideas and plans, and to find a way to connect the various ongoing conversations. We made a request of Bishop Gates to include this important topic in his convention address in November 2020. Because of his address, the Collaborative Ministries Working Group was formed. This group included the regional canons and clergy engaged in various models of collaborative ministry employed both part and full time in parochial ministry, chaplains and bi-vocational clergy.

Since Convention 2020, the Working Group has pursued several avenues of gathering information and expanded our membership. In April and May of 2020, the Working Group held a series of listening sessions with clergy and laity engaged in collaborative ministry. These groups included: several communities sharing the same building and physical space, parishes sharing one clergy person who was the clergy leader for both congregations, clergy engaged in bi-vocational ministry, and parishes involved in liturgical, justice and other ministry collaborations. In total, representatives from approximately 15 congregations participated in these listening groups.

After reflecting on what we learned through the listening sessions, the Working Group identified two categories of collaborations on which we will focus first: 1) collaborations between/among parishes who share clergy, and 2) ministry and programming collaborations between/among parishes. In the coming year we will develop “tool kits” for these types of collaborations, including example models and best practices for parishes interested in exploring such ministries. We have noted other types of collaborations which will be addressed in the future.

In the coming year we will also be reaching out to current collaborations (some which are longer-running, and some which formed during COVID) to determine how best to support them. Understanding their needs for support, mentoring or coaching, or various resources (for example) will help us support their collaborations and also provide additional insight into how we as a working group and diocese can best support collaborations going forward.

In addition to curating resources for parish use, and creating means for supporting collaborations, the Working Group will continue to share our learnings through various forums in the coming year. This fall, we are hosting a workshop for parishes considering collaborating

on the call of a clergyperson. This is part of a series of workshops offered by the Congregational Consultants. We are also hosting one of the small group sessions on the Friday of Convention -- offering our insights and the experiences of folks currently involved in collaborative ministries as examples of Interdependence in Action. We are also in conversation about hosting additional workshop(s) in the spring.

We are continuing to meet on a regular basis and are establishing several subcommittees to address specific issues of collaborations. Over this year, we expanded the membership of the Working Group, reaching out specifically to laity who had shown prior interest or involvement in collaborative ministry. We continue to welcome new members to this work and hope to continue to expand the breadth of voices and experiences involved in this conversation.

We appreciate the participation and support of so many individuals and congregations in our work to date, and as we continue to discern how the Spirit is calling us to nurture and support collaborations moving forward.

Respectfully submitted,

The Collaborative Ministries Working Group

Walter Connelly
Helen Daley
Daniel Dice
Carol Gallagher
Martha Gardner
Beth Grundy
Megan Holding
Martha Hubbard

Jay Jordan
Eric Litman
Kelly O'Connell
Helen Pickard
Suzanne Wade
Harry Walton
Diane Wong

Creation Care Justice Network Report

In the midst of “the three pandemics”—the continuing COVID pandemic that has claimed 650,000 American lives; the mounting awareness of the reality and harms of systemic racism; and the worsening climate crisis—and the inter-connectedness of all three, the Creation Care Justice Network has been building relationships and providing resources.

Expanding to cover both dioceses: This year, the Creation Care Justice Network enlarged to include both dioceses in Massachusetts. In January, the Rev. Dr. Margaret Bullitt-Jonas, Missioner for Creation Care for the Diocese of Western MA, was appointed Creation Care Advisor for the Diocese of MA. Both dioceses have worked together on Creation issues as follows:

- A diocesan resolution sponsored by the CCJN, calling for the bishops to declare a climate emergency, was passed last year at Convention. From this, Bishops Gates and Harris from the Diocese of Massachusetts and Bishop Doug Fisher from the Diocese of Western Massachusetts issued a climate emergency declaration in late March 2021. The declaration can be found at <https://www.diomass.org/news/pray-learn-act-advocate-ma-bishops-declare-climate-emergency>
- Both dioceses participated in a climate emergency webinar series, put together by the CCJN and the Rev. Dr. Bullitt-Jonas, which included four topics: Pray, Learn, Act, and Advocate. The webinars can be accessed at https://www.youtube.com/playlist?list=PLkZVRXvbxoMxQL7vn_sNPwhc3V2onizm8
- In May, CCJN membership and the e-newsletter were opened to all Episcopalians and friends across the entire state. To receive the monthly e-newsletter, sign up at <https://diomass.us20.list-manage.com/subscribe?u=61b8fade370c85d72937ad5db&id=bac769e0f3>
- CCJN supports the new Mass Interfaith Power and Light statewide faith advocacy network called the Faith in Action Campaign. To join, go to (https://docs.google.com/forms/d/e/1FAIpQLSeGlbi1GZBwFkHQrNvPng2_2018zu1D7Wu-paP5XG2JrYGceA/viewform)

Reorganization: In January, the CCJN reorganized into three working groups, namely:

- Action and Advocacy: working with outside groups, such as Massachusetts Interfaith Power and Light, to develop church and community action and policy changes. To join this group, contact Alex Chatfield or Sue Swanson.
- Spiritual Practice and Grounding: offering prayer, liturgies and practices to engage with creation, and a theology that centers environmental wholeness. Contact Lise Hildebrandt if you would like to join.
- Communications and Networking: focusing on interactions to develop a stronger network among parishes and groups within the diocese around Creation and climate justice. Contact facilitator Liz Good to join this group.
- Contact any of these facilitators by emailing them at: creationjusticeepisma@gmail.com

CCJN continues to meet once per month on the first Wednesday at noon by Zoom, and is open to any interested persons. Email creationjusticeepisma@gmail.com for a link.

Connecting with racial justice issues: CCJN is looking for ways to collaborate with Episcopal City Mission and the Racial Justice Commission in meaningful ways

- Natalie Thomas represented ECM in a segment of the “Learn” Climate Emergency Webinar as she explained “The House We Live In;” how racism, economic injustice and patriarchy are all connected with the destruction of Creation and the climate crisis.
- ECM and CCJN began talks of working collaboratively on a “Climate Working Group” of the justice gatherings of ECM; these are on hiatus due to staff changes at ECM.
- Members of CCJN and the Racial Justice Commission met together to share thoughts and feedback on the Mission Statement of the Diocese.

Resources: In addition to the Climate Emergency Webinars, the CCJN put together a list of ways to “Pray, Learn, Act and Advocate” for Creation and climate justice for the Season of Creation. These resources are also applicable throughout the year. The full list is available at https://docs.google.com/document/d/1wNug11oH9ltAJhUXEVQWY91eG_btZvMuvRxuwA90waw/edit?usp=sharing

UN Climate Talks (COP 26): You are invited to join in opportunities for prayer and action before and during the UN Climate Change Conference (Oct 31-Nov 12 in Glasgow), which also corresponds to time of diocesan convention. Join Greenfaith for local faith actions on Oct. 17-18 (<https://greenfaith.org/faiths4climatejustice/>) and stay tuned for diocesan activities.

CRECHE Report

The Charles River Episcopal Co-Housing Endeavor is a 501c3 nonprofit organization that partners with Episcopal congregations to create and support intentional communities. Creche is not just an innovative answer to the urban housing crisis, but also a re-imagining of monastic tradition, rooted firmly in common rhythms of life and disciplines of spirit, offering joyful service and hospitality to the world, and finding abundance by depending on one another.

Creche grew out of the Mission Hub Initiative and the Together Now Campaign in 2016 and incorporated as an independent nonprofit in 2018.

Crafting a Rule of Life

As Creche has grown from one household to four over the past few years, we've discovered a need to understand our collective vocation as a community of communities. A major task of this year was writing a covenant, inspired by the SSJE Rule of Life and the Rule of St Benedict, that serves as a public witness to our way of life and as a guiding star to help us navigate our growth and development.

Written collaboratively by five housemates (drawn from every Creche household) and one staff member, the covenant has accompanied us through the last year and been extremely helpful in our discernment. It's also among the first documents that we send to prospective applicants to help them discern whether or not they are called to our particular model of intentional community. [You can read the draft covenant here.](#)

Continued growth in 2021

Creche has launched a new intentional community each year since 2017, including the Emmanuel House in Allston, the Crossing House in North Cambridge, and the St Mary's House in Dorchester. During the pandemic, our earliest house closed. Despite the pandemic, we envisioned a re-start and after many prayerful meetings and conversations with our partners (Trinity Parish in Newton Centre, the Episcopal Chaplaincy at BC, and Church of the Redeemer in Chestnut Hill), we discerned a need in Newton for affordable, supportive community housing for graduate students at Boston College. Over several months, we found our initial four housemates from places as far-reaching as Myanmar and Brazil and as close as Danvers, and the Trinity House officially launched in mid-August.

Creating an intentional community explicitly for graduate students is a departure from our core model, which focuses on long-term communities. And at the same time, many of the potential partners who reach out to work with us are college chaplaincies, so exploring this model could allow us to respond to a real need. We're particularly excited about the possibility of partnering with the Anglican Episcopal Center of Learning at Boston University to create an intentional community along these lines.

Our other three intentional communities, meanwhile, are growing in their ministry and impact. The Emmanuel House, in particular, has cultivated a magnificent community garden that provides raised beds, fresh produce and a beautiful, welcoming urban oasis to Allston and has been described as a "godsend" by its neighbors. During the pandemic, friends and

neighbors have begun using the garden as a COVID-safe space for events, graduate recitals, choral workshops, photo shoots and more.

One neighbor and garden volunteer is a clothing designer, and she expressed that she'd always dreamed of hosting a maker's market. Two months later, we welcomed eight local artisans to sell their wares to 200 pedestrians who came through the garden! It was a joyful experience, and throughout the day, she kept saying "my heart is so full." This is exactly the sort of neighborhood relationship we want to make possible.

Navigating co-housing in the midst of COVID

The COVID lockdown hit our communities pretty hard – in one household, over half of the residents were laid off in the early days of the pandemic! This challenged us to develop a new practice: providing rent relief for housemates experiencing financial difficulty.

This has been a challenging and counter-cultural act – our culture teaches us to feel shame about money, but we want to be able to talk about money and support each other through difficult times. In our first year, Creche provided \$11,652 in rent relief – that's the equivalent of 20 months of rent! Not one person living in a Creche house had to worry about housing insecurity during the pandemic.

Our vision for 2022 and beyond

Looking toward the future, we have two new intentional communities in the early planning phases and have begun consulting with other dioceses looking to create intentional communities of their own.

Additionally, other intentional communities and housing cooperatives in the Boston area have begun to approach us seeking fiscal sponsorship. The pandemic was hard on the co-housing movement: Boston Community Cooperatives, the Walker Center for Ecumenical Exchange, and the Margaret Moseley House have all ended during the last year. Many of these organizations mentored Creche when we were starting out just a few years ago, so it has been heartbreaking to see them close.

Extending fiscal sponsorship to values-aligned groups would allow Creche to serve wonderful, valuable communities that don't quite fit with the core Creche model of Christian, neo-monastic community, and would allow us to fulfill our baptismal obligation to serve all people.

Respectfully submitted by the Board of Directors and staff

Thomas Marsan-Ryan, President

Rebekah Rodrigues

Michael Scanlon, Vice-President

Kyrah Rodriguez

Chelsea Smith, Treasurer

Pamela Werntz

Michael Zahniser, Clerk

Lauren Zook

Angel Figueroa

Isaac Everett, Executive Director

Megan Holding

Life Together Report

Life Together has always seen itself as part of an ecosystem of change-makers in the church and the world. In *Emergent Strategy*, social justice writer and activist adrienne maree brown compares such ecosystems to the natural world, highlighting the way threads of mycelium grow underground to connect tree roots and strengthen forests. This season has required us to strengthen connections to our ecosystem, helping ensure that our fellows grow deep roots for justice in spite of the pandemic's challenges.

Life Together is a strategic initiative of the Diocese of Massachusetts that seeks to cultivate prayerful and prophetic leaders for the church and the world. We do this by offering one- to two-year fellowships to young adults, ages 21-32, in which they receive intensive leadership training and spiritual formation; serve at a church or nonprofit organization in greater Boston for 32 hours per week; and live together in intentional community. Fellows are supported in their year of leadership development and service with housing provided by the program, a modest cost-of-living stipend, health insurance and a monthly transportation pass. In 21 years, Life Together and its predecessor, The Micah Project, have produced more than 200 alumni who serve as lay and ordained church leaders, community organizers, educators, nonprofit administrators and more.

For the six fellows serving in the 2021-2022 program year, and the eight who served in the prior program year, the organizations where they serve are a central part of our ecosystem. Our partners range from Episcopal parishes to an afterschool program, a domestic violence awareness organization to a mobile health clinic. Throughout the pandemic, fellows have helped communicate with constituents as essential services went online. They have supported Episcopal communities in adapting activities to protect the health and safety of parishioners, while maintaining momentum for mission outreach. At some sites, they provided on-site support for vulnerable communities long before vaccination was a reality. Such partnerships in 2020 allowed fellows to serve more than 12,000 community members. Together with these host site partners, we are speaking words of Christ's peace for our neighbors in eastern Massachusetts.

Life Together also relies on a large network of alumni and supporters nationwide to support the growth of the young adults we serve. Locally, these supporters serve as trainers and facilitators for our curriculum, even as the pandemic required most of those activities to move to online or hybrid formats last year: this included 17 cohort-wide trainings in 2020-2021. Their adaptability and creativity helped us overcome physical distance and continue training fellows last year. This fall, program alumni have come back as trainers in person, sharing with a new generation the tools that helped them become impactful leaders. This network also gathered for two virtual fundraisers in the past program year, including a celebration of the program's 20th anniversary in October 2020 that attracted nearly 100 people from across the country. Both these events were successful largely due to the significant investment of time, talent and treasure from our alumni community and other friends.

Life Together's ecosystem is fundamentally part of the larger ecosystem of the Diocese of Massachusetts. We are one body of Christ, as Paul says in 1 Corinthians, and through Life Together the diocese reaches those that have often been overlooked by the church: young people, Black, Indigenous, and people of color (BIPOC) and LGBTQ+ persons, among others.

Young adults need the broader diocese to invest in their leadership; our church needs their prophetic leadership to become the church God is calling us to be in this season of racism, pandemic and ecological devastation.

This is why Life Together has moved into closer alignment with the new diocesan Office of Youth and Young Adult Ministries, including partnering with the Young Adult Advisory Committee and diocesan campus ministries to hold a young adult discernment retreat on Oct. 30, 2021. Life Together also supported initial conversations that led to the formation of the diocesan Racial Justice Commission, with program alumni in leadership roles. And we continue to partner with Episcopal City Mission to bring racial and economic justice to Massachusetts. As we move into 2022, we seek to deepen those connections with Episcopal communities as we offer tools for leadership to more young adults in eastern Massachusetts.

The pandemic has thrown into stark relief what we've always known at Life Together: that our relationships with individuals and organizations throughout eastern Massachusetts are essential to our thriving. There are still many challenges ahead in 2022, as we seek to form young adult leaders and serve our communities in the midst of so much uncertainty. Yet we know that like mycelium connecting roots underground, our connections within and beyond the Diocese of Massachusetts strengthen all of us as we navigate this season of change.

Lifespan Ministry with Older Adults Report

Back in 2016, a small group of both lay people and clergy identified an opportunity for the church to be more present to our aging population. We presented a resolution at the Diocesan Convention of 2017 to create such a ministry, and that resolution was passed. Our team then came together to implement this initiative. We initially called this ministry “Elder Ministry,” but quickly realized many “older” adults don’t identify with the “elderly” word, nor is there an agreement on what “elderly” is, except for the State of Massachusetts Elder Affairs Office, who calls anyone over 60 “elderly,” so we decided on the name “Lifespan” as a more inclusive word.

In many ways, this ministry is an example of how we experience interdependence between generations, between neighbors, between the church and the secular world. From the start, this ministry sought to leverage established community resources addressing issues of aging, resources that are already out there, so we assembled a single point of contact for both clergy and parishioners seeking information. We made this information available through a section on the diocesan web site (diomass.org/ministry-older-adults). The church and the secular non-profit world would be essential elements of this ministry, such as Massachusetts Executive Office of Elder Affairs, Age and Dementia Friendly Massachusetts, and Alzheimer’s Association.

We also created a working guide, “Lifespan Community Formation Steps,” also available on our web page. It’s a guide to assessing parish accessibility for individuals experiencing the challenges of aging.

Prior to the pandemic, we were visiting parishes, upon request, to assist in getting that assessment process started. We were also presenting the Alzheimer’s Association’s “Ten Signs” educational program to parishes. In early 2020, COVID put those visits hold, but we hope to resume that on-site availability once restrictions have been removed. With the onset of the pandemic lock-down, we, like everyone else, discovered Zoom. The possibilities of on-line presence opened up new possibilities for this ministry, overcoming the challenges of COVID driven isolation, and making expanded geographic connections possible. Since then we’ve hosted several on-line forums, covering such issues as “spirituality in aging,” “dementia-friendly church,” “service professionals forum,” “Dementia Friends” and others. We developed on-line prayer and discussion groups whose participants now span parishes, deaneries, diocese, national borders. Our program, through the growing pains of adapting to the on-line world, now sees new possibilities for connecting people. Being physically cut off from one another has made us all realize how really interdependent we are, for learning, for socialization, for moral support and how virtualization can help minimize the sense of isolation.

For this 2021-22 season, our virtual presence will continue, and we’ve adopted the theme “Prayer and Conversation for the Second Half of Life.” We start the season in collaboration with one of our secular partners, The Alzheimer’s Association, with a series of on-line caregiver support groups. Our team of lay members and clergy are working on additional support and educational offerings, all on Zoom. Our hope is that those engaged in pastoral care of families dealing with dementia and other challenges of aging will take advantage by referring those under their care to such offerings. Look for these announcements on the diocesan calendar and in the diocesan “Networking and Formation News.”

Interdependence really summarizes the role of this ministry. In the ordination service for deacons, we pledge to bring the needs of the world to the church, and in that respect, it's a pledge we hope every member of the church will take, because the church is in the world. We all need to be present to each other, to support each other, whether clergy or laity, secular or religious. We all have something to offer each other.

The Rev. Deacon Phil Flaherty, Missioner

The Rev. Deacon Marilee Comerford, Associate Missioner

Racial Justice Commission Report

Co-Chairs: The Rev. Noble Scheepers, St. John's, Westwood and The Rev. Natalie E. Thomas, St. Barnabas's, Falmouth

Staff Liaison: The Rev. Canon Dr. Jean Baptiste Ntagengwa, Canon for Immigration and Multicultural Ministries

Responsibility: Our diocese established the Racial Justice Commission (RJC) to implement a mandate that falls under the Mission Strategy; we are called to ensure there is a “large scale conversation(s) on racism in our diocese with effective trainers and facilitators that furthers our commitment to anti-racism and other forms of oppression.”

RJC Foundational Commitments:

- God will be at the center of everything we do. Dismantling oppression is painful, and we need God's help at every step. Prayer will soften the hearts of those who are hurting and transform guilt into a desire to be part of healing.
- We will follow a rhythm of assessing our current and historical context, telling the truth about how harm has been done, and then identifying ways to repair the harm that has been done. The Racial Justice Commission will create audits that foster clear quantifiable and qualitative understanding of the past and current reality through honest, vulnerable and courageous truth-telling of stories.
- The work will apply on a diocesan level and in the local context of Episcopal communities.

Report: One year ago, the Racial Justice Commission was formally launched at our 2020 Convention. The year has been full of planning, team building, tough but needed conversations about racism and, most of all, gratitude. We are grateful to God for inviting us into this holy work of repentance, repair and healing. We are grateful to our diocese for acknowledging the necessity of this work. And, we are abundantly grateful for the incredible commitment of the members of the Racial Justice Commission and our subcommittees – they are leading the way, and we are grateful for the opportunity to steward the commission in this time of beginning. Each of the subcommittees has submitted detailed reports, including ways to connect to their work.

Throughout the year, we have reflected on the Parable of the Sower in the 13th chapter of Matthew. Jesus teaches us that if we want our faith, and our works, to produce a bountiful crop, we must be planted in good soil. This year, the RJC has tilled and cleared the soil, planted seeds and bore witness to the first fruits of our labor. In preparing the ground, we have focused on these three things:

- 1) Ensuring this work is led by people representative of our entire diocese. Previously, our diocese has struggled because anti-racism efforts have been seen as “Boston-based” programs spearheaded by a small group. We know that across the diocese, there are people and churches longing for a racially just church. Therefore, we have taken the time to build five subcommittees that are inclusive of race, place, gender, order, sexuality and age. This work took time because relationships and trust needed to be established. We drew on the wisdom articulated by many teachers, most recently

adreinne maree brown, “move at the speed of trust.” The fruits of this relationship-building are demonstrated in the comprehensive support of the resolution put forth by the Racial Justice Commission.

- 2) We are integrating this work into systems and structures. In response to the urgent need to address the ongoing harm done to BIPOC - Black people, Indigenous people, and People of Color - it can be tempting to hurry up and start programs and initiatives. However, programs and webinars can only reach so far. The pain of racism is most profoundly situated in our roots: our structures, systems and culture. In each of our subcommittees, we situated our efforts to uproot racism by attending to the foundational structures and procedures of the church.
- 3) We are collaborating with diocesan bodies and initiatives at every opportunity. We recognize that this work will require more effort than just the RJC alone can muster. We are grateful for the many diocesan bodies that have worked alongside us to make our progress possible in 2021. We are incredibly thankful for the powerful leadership of the Executive Committee of the Historically Black Churches, coordinated by the Rev. Zenetta Armstrong. Their work, initiated by a resolution at the 2020 Convention, has influenced many of our subcommittees. We have included an update from them in our report as they are accountable to the RJC. We are also thankful to the Trustees of Donations, the Mission Strategy Committee and the Office of Immigration and Multicultural Ministries for their ongoing collaboration.

In the upcoming year, we will be focusing on creating tangible resources that support Episcopal communities and our diocese to move towards racial justice. This work will involve developing the resources and supporting lay and ordained leaders to use them within their context. We also want to focus our energy on deepening our commitment and support of the work of the historically Black churches. We look forward to getting to know you better through this work as we move towards God’s vision of racial justice.

Subcommittee One: Structures and Systems

Co-Chairs: Zena Link, St. Luke’s, Worcester and Mission Institute and Kris Wile, St. Elizabeth’s, Sudbury

Members: Helen Patmon, St. Stephen’s Lynn; Grace Clark, Trinity Copley, Boston; the Rev. Canon Martha Hubbard, All Saints, Danvers

Responsibility: Work with diocesan staff to create accountable and transparent structures in our diocese and Episcopal communities - this includes (but is not limited to) hiring practices, committee makeup, search-committee processes and vestry business practices.

Report: Structures are enduring features of an organization, and our subcommittee is working to identify racial biases in the unquestioned assumptions that guide our hiring, retention (who stays and who leaves), evaluation (how we assess performance) and accountability processes (how we manage mistakes), in our governance (whose voices are heard, what are the priorities) and even in our culture and identities (who we think we are).

Seeing and acknowledging these biases is an essential first step toward becoming a genuinely Beloved Community. We hope to share what we learn for a broader awareness across the

diocese and facilitate a collective conversation that makes us decide that it matters enough to make structural changes to our system.

Since March 2021, our small, diverse subcommittee has begun to know and trust one another and develop a statement of work for the first phase - outlining the approach to understanding the current bias in the structures mentioned above. We are building on recent similar work in the diocese and the wider Episcopal Church and plan a generative approach with diverse paths available to share data and stories about where we are called to improve.

We are learning that the white people on our subcommittee are committed to justice and healing work yet are aware of how much they have to learn to be engaged in appropriate ways. We are hearing personal stories of oppression and hurt, those usually damped by white privilege and the dominant culture firmly in place in our diocesan communities. This work often feels uncomfortable, but it is a good discomfort of expanding our understanding and deepening our commitment. All in our team see the difficult consequences of engaging in truth-telling work, which differ depending on social context. The status quo has inertia, and we feel called to meet that resistance with insistent love.

Reflection. Some possible questions for communities and parishes considering next steps:

1. Where in the processes mentioned above have we seen white supremacy operating in our community? Are we willing to learn, acknowledge our history and reconcile?
2. Are we open to expanding our identity as a church, even if it calls for a personal transformation that encompasses mind, body and spirit? There are many paths, but it will take more than one workshop.
3. Are we interested in working with the structures subcommittee to understand how 'business as usual' in our parishes is falling short?
4. Healing needs to happen in tandem with uncomfortable conversations, and that healing looks different for different affinity groups. Who needs to be included in our multifaceted healing process?
5. The work of dismantling white supremacy and establishing an anti-racist church is a commitment. Are our leaders ready to invest time and money to accomplish this goal? If so, please contact Zena Link or Kris Wile.

Subcommittee Two: Finances

Co-Chairs: Holly Carter, St. John's, Hingham and The Rev. Hall Kirkham, St. Michael's, Milton

Members: The Rev. Morgan Allen, Trinity, Boston; Olisa Adigwe, St. Anne's, Lowell; Tamara Sobers, Church of the Holy Spirit, Mattapan; The Rev. Paul Minor, All Saints' Church, Belmont; Patricia Henderson, Christ Church, Hyde Park

Mandate: Ensure financial resources are all located in ways that promote anti-racism - on the diocesan and parish level. This includes, but is not limited to, how resources are allocated in the diocese, how compensation is set, and justly compensating BIPOC for often unpaid volunteer labor.

Report: The primary goal of the Financial Resources subcommittee is to ensure that financial resources of and within the diocese are all drawn and deployed in ways that promote anti-

racism and inclusion. Some questions that guide our work are: How are these resources allocated in and within the diocese? How is compensation set, and are BIPOC individuals justly compensated for their work at the diocesan and parish level? And, most importantly, is there a way to ensure that all financial resources and processes are held under scrutiny that reflects the diocesan commitment to racial justice and equity? To accomplish this critical goal, we have set as our priorities to:

- Review historical diocesan financial audits and complete a current audit with a focus on the rationale for the allocation and distribution of resources;
- Review and assess how the budgeting process and rationale relate to diversity, equity, inclusion and racial justice; and,
- Survey select parishes of varying financial resource levels, races and ethnicities, size and geographical location for a similar review of budget processes and rationale.

The first task of our subcommittee was to identify a truly representative group of individuals to join us as members. We sought Black and Brown members or those from parishes in underrepresented Black and Brown communities. We also sought a gender balance as well as clergy and lay representation. While our search for members took more time than expected, we are proud of the diverse and inclusive subcommittee we have finally assembled.

Over the next several months, as a part of our audit process, we will conduct interviews with crucial diocesan staff (clergy and lay) with finance and budget responsibilities, continue our review of past and current financial audits and begin the selection and survey of parishes with a focus on urban/suburban, BIPOC/White European, local geographic and wealthy/under-resourced community characteristics.

Jesus reminds us that the location of our treasure is a reflection of the location of our hearts (Mt 6.21), warning us that words, actions and even proclaimed beliefs could reflect one set of commitments. Yet, the location of our treasure expresses evidence of conversion.

We expect that our area of study – where are funds, how are they used, what priorities their use reflects and how must all of this recalibrate towards anti-racism – will challenge deep emotional commitments that, for a primarily white and long-established church, feel ‘untouchable’ and ‘off-limits,’ and that may be. That is for the church today to determine.

This work is gradual and deliberate. Deliberateness needs to be balanced with the urgency of moving towards a just resolution to the inequities that financial resource allocation – among Massachusetts parishes and within the diocese – imposes on the children of God. It is frustrating to move slowly; it is also easy to pass over hard questions.

Subcommittee Three: Supporting BIPOC Individuals and Communities

Co-Chairs: The Rev. Diane Wong, St. John’s, Arlington and Claudette Hunt, St. Andrew’s, Ayer

Members: The Rev. Karen Coleman, BU and Trinity Church, Boston; The Rev. Zenetta Armstrong, Church of the Holy Spirit, Mattapan; The Rev. Joel Ives, Church of Our Saviour, Brookline; Julia Slayton; The Rev. Gregory Perez, St. Stephen’s, Lynn; The Rev. Edwin Johnson, St. Mary’s, Dorchester; The Rev. Jennifer Beal, St. Anne’s, North Billerica; The Rev.

Canon Kelly O'Connell (staff liaison), The Rev. Dr. Canon Jean Baptiste Ntagengwa (staff liaison)

Responsibility: Support the wellbeing of BIPOC communities, clergy, lay leaders, and aspirants in the formation process. This includes the personal support of BIPOC individuals in various ways (including BIPOC leaders in primarily white communities) and communal support for historically Black communities, immigrant communities, Latino communities and communities of color.

Report: Our overall goal is to change the culture of our diocese and parishes, so we are indeed the Body of Christ that has an equal place for BIPOC individuals and communities. We want to partner with parishes and our diocese accountable to:

- be intentional in nurturing and lifting BIPOCs, lay or ordained, for leadership roles; ensure there is diverse representation in leadership roles, lay and ordained;
- ensure the presence and voice of BIPOCs are a consistent and regular part of our diocesan life together;
- actively invite, support and assist BIPOC lay individuals in discerning their call for ordained vocations;
- have systems, networks or affinity groups in place to provide opportunities for BIPOCs to build community.

To achieve this, we need collaboration from our parishes. We are asking clergy or wardens to partner with us to learn how to better support BIPOC by doing the following:

- let us know who the BIPOC lay individuals are in their parishes;
- working with us to connect BIPOC to existing affinity groups.

If you are in a majority white congregations. The best ways you can engage are:

- reach out to our BIPOC Support subcommittee to ensure support for their laypeople and clergy of color in the congregation;
- ensure your faith communities are a safe space for their BIPOCs, lay and ordained;
- identify allies for BIPOCs in your congregation.

If you are a congregation of color, we are inviting you to reach out to the subcommittee to ensure appropriate resources and support are available for the congregation.

Anti-racism is ongoing work. We applaud all congregations that have already begun this effort. You can continue on this journey by:

- identifying how microaggressions are operating in the parish;
- having an honest conversation about how the congregation resist BIPOC leadership;
- learning how racism intersects with other forms of discrimination;
- establishing mechanisms for clergy and other staff search processes, so BIPOC candidates are considered and treated equally.

For this work to be successful, we will also need to work with the diocese to address some key questions:

- Why are BIPOC clergy not staying in the diocese? And, why are BIPOC not attracted to come to the diocese?

- How can the COM be more active in inviting BIPoCs for discernment for ordained ministry? How can the ordination process change be more supportive of BIPoC aspirants, postulants and candidates?
- How do we compile and collect data on BIPoC representation on diocesan committees and commissions and remedy the disparity?
- How do we create sustainable streams of financial support for BIPoC affinity groups?

There is much work to do for our subcommittee. Racism intersects with other forms of discrimination, which makes anti-racism work even more complicated and nebulous. Everyone in the diocese who is doing the work of anti-racism must stay connected - to be a community and support one another, pray for one another and have each other's back.

Our work is grounded in 1 Corinthians 12:12- 17, 20-26, which begins, "For just as the body is one and has many members, and all the members of the body, though many, are one body, so it is with Christ." We know we are moving closer to the reign of God when: BIPoC individuals and communities, and white allies are in solidarity with one another and looking out for the interests of other groups; when it is not "us" versus "them," but "we"; parishes and our diocese collaborate with this subcommittee plan and goal.

Subcommittee Four: Reparations

Co-Chairs: Constance Perry, Trinity Church, Boston and The Rev. H. Mark Smith, Diocesan Missioner for Youth and Young Adults

Members: Michael Bent, Diocesan Council, and St. Peter's Beverly; Leonie Drummond, Church of the Holy Spirit, Mattapan and Historically Black Churches' Racial Justice Committee; The Rev. Dr. Tom Ferguson, St. John's, Sandwich; Diane Jemmott, St. Barnabas's, Falmouth; The Rev. Tamra Tucker, Cathedral and The Crossing; The Rev. Skip Windsor, Trustees of Donations

Responsibility: Reparations, in the language of the 75th General Convention in 2006, "examine the a) complicity of The Episcopal Church in the institution of slavery and in the subsequent history of segregation and discrimination and b) economic benefits The Episcopal Church derived from the institution of slavery;" and identify ways to make financial and psychological reparations for pain incurred.

Report: St. Paul tells us that "faith, hope, and love remain... and the greatest of these is love." (1 Cor. 13, CEB) In the work of becoming an antiracist church, we see reparations as antiracist love in action. Not love as a feeling or a sentiment, but love as rubber-meeting-road action. Unearthing the shameful, painful truth behind the extent to which the diocese, diocesan congregations and other Episcopal communities derived economic benefits from the forced labor of enslaved people is an essential first step. Still, this acknowledgment is not love in action. In action, love is retelling our history to ourselves and the world--from pulpits, through plaques and monuments and on websites. Assessing the extent to which our current fortunes result from these past ill-gotten gains is an important step, but this assessment is not love in action. In action, love is willingly offering up some of those resources with no expectation of return. This is the foundation of what we understand our work to be.

In this first year, our work has been two-fold.

- 1) To develop a toolbox of resources that congregations and others can use in their work of unearthing and acknowledging their histories as they relate to benefiting from the labor of enslaved people, as well as stories from enslaved people and their descendants;
- 2) To lay the foundation for a diocesan Reparations Fund.

The toolbox, to be introduced at Diocesan Convention and available thereafter on the diocesan website, lays out a framework that any organization can enter, regardless of where they are on their own road toward reparations. The toolbox will provide a template for parishes and communities to move through the work of reparations, along with resources and models to aid in that work at each stage.

In beginning to plan for a diocesan fund, we are looking at the lessons learned by others leading the way in this work (such as the dioceses of Long Island, Maryland, New Jersey, New York, Texas and Virginia; the Virginia Theological Seminary; and others) while beginning to examine which of the endowed and agency funds of our diocese we might want to draw from in order to seed such a fund. Recommendations that have come from our study are included in the proposed resolution found elsewhere in the Convention Handbook.

Following the lead of sibling dioceses, our initial focus is on repairing the harm done to descendants of enslaved Africans and their communities, recognizing the need for further study, and listening to understand how best to address needed reparations to indigenous peoples.

In 2022 our work will focus on assisting in the use of the toolbox and other resources; organizing a Lenten series and other opportunities to continue the work of story-sharing, discernment and study in order to develop an understanding broadly accepted across the diocese of what reparations are, what form they should take, etc. We will continue to look at other models as well as our own financial holdings and budgetary processes in an effort to develop a financing structure and a mechanism for defining and implementing funding priorities and principles. Echoing the spirit of the 2020 resolution adopted by the Diocesan Convention, impacted individuals and their communities need to be in control of these critical decisions.

Subcommittee Five: Forming Anti-Racist Episcopal Communities

Co-Chairs: Kelsey Rice Bogdan, Life Together and the Rev. Dr. Michael Melendez, St. Stephen's, Boston

Members: The Rev. Ema Rosero, Deacon, Latine Ministries; Deborah Walker Gardner, St. John's, Beverly and clerk of North Shore Deanery; The Rev. Jim Koderer, St Luke's, Hudson; The Rev. Sarah Brock, St. John's, Beverly Farms; Angel Figueroa, Episcopal City Mission; Meredith Wade, The Episcopal Chaplaincy at Harvard University; Cartha Toussaint, Grace Chapel, Brockton; The Rev. Canon Edie Dolnikowski (staff liaison); The Rt. Rev. Carol Gallagher (staff liaison)

Responsibility: Foster active anti-racist Episcopal communities that includes our liturgical practices, formation and seeking justice - we are committed to having anti-racist theologically grounded formation offerings for Episcopal communities, rethinking liturgy through an anti-racism lens, and also activating our parishes to act for racial justice in the world.

Report: Subcommittee Five seeks to form active anti-racist Episcopal communities through three broad areas: by liberating ourselves from racism through formation and education; by fostering repentance from the sin of racism and reflecting the diversity of our church in our liturgical life; and by offering opportunities for Episcopalians to take action to end racism in our broader communities.

The 11 members of our subcommittee, reflecting a diverse group of individuals and communities from across the diocese, are called together by a shared conviction that God desires justice and equity for all people. We invite all of our Episcopal communities to join us on this journey, whether you are just beginning to consider what you can do or the work of racial justice is central to your parish's mission. We seek to make anti-racism work accessible for all diocesan communities, offering tools and resources to support us in becoming a Beloved Community.

For many churches, the challenge is knowing where to begin. Both the Episcopal Church and others have various resources for formation and liturgy, but it can be challenging to know where to find them or whether they will meet the needs of one's community. We are creating a collection of resources that will help parishes begin the work of anti-racism formation or take the next step in their current journey - this will include resources that support BIPOC communities in their anti-racism journey. These resources will serve not only adults but children and youth, not only clergy but also laypeople. Look for materials on the diocesan website in early 2022.

We also seek to acknowledge and support communities already doing this work, amplifying their leadership and connecting them to other parishes looking for a place to begin. There is already so much wisdom in our Episcopal family. In the past year alone, the Cathedral Church of St. Paul has hosted anti-racism book groups and discussions to deepen their understanding and prompt conversation. The North Shore Deanery is hosting a public film screening this fall of "A Reckoning in Boston" to explore issues of racism and housing instability in Boston. Church of the Holy Spirit, Mattapan; Church of Our Savior, Milton; and St. Michael's Church, Milton have partnered in worship on special occasions while helping organize local neighborhood conversations about race. There are also vibrant partnerships between Grace Chapel, Brockton; Trinity Church, Marshfield; and Trinity Church, Randolph, as well as partnerships between Church of the Holy Spirit, Mattapan and St. John's, Westwood. These churches have had combined celebratory services and outreach programs between the white parishes and parishes of color.

If you're curious about how these and other parishes did it, let our subcommittee connect you to them to learn more! Other communities are taking direct action to make racial justice a reality. Our subcommittee will partner with the missioner for networking and formation to help communities make connections to others with similar interests and challenges so that anti-racism work spreads across eastern Massachusetts.

In the Gospels, Jesus sends his followers out in pairs to do the work of teaching and healing, saying, "The harvest is plentiful, but the laborers are few; therefore, ask the Lord of the harvest to send out laborers into his harvest." (Luke 10:2). The harvest of justice is ripe throughout eastern Massachusetts, as we witness the ways racism continues to cause harm to the Body of Christ.

Subcommittee Five seeks to partner with all those in the diocese who want to bring the kingdom of God, the Beloved Community, near our neighbors in eastern Massachusetts. We hope you will join us.

The Executive Committee of The Black Church Summit (ECBCS) *Seven Historically Black Churches*

Coordinator: The Rev. Zenetta Armstrong

Consultant: The Rev. Canon Dr. Sandye A. Wilson

Report: The Executive Committee of the Black Church Summit (ECBCS) is a group representing the *Seven Historically Black Churches*. The committee was established under the Office of Immigration and Multicultural Ministries and is comprised of 14 individuals. The Office of Immigration and Multicultural Ministries serves as the liaison between the Executive Committee of the Black Church Summit (ECBCS) and the Racial Justice Commission (RJC).

Many of the *Seven Historically Black Churches* are currently facing possible extinction in the diocese. It is commonly felt that overt and systemic discrimination, feelings of neglect and unequal treatment have contributed to their current plight.

The Executive Committee of the Seven Historically Black Churches officially formed as part of a resolution presented before the 235th Convention of the Episcopal Diocese of Massachusetts at its meeting in November 2020. We, the *Seven Historically Black Churches*, view ourselves as responding to the mission strategy to reimagine our congregations and build relationships. We have been commissioned with certain goals in mind to bring new life and effectiveness to the entities that we hope will become the beloved community of *Seven Historically Black Churches*.

Our goals are to:

- Understand our current situation while considering our own internalized racism and feelings of neglect and unequal treatment in the diocese. Envision a way forward that provides specific opportunities to work collaboratively and not competitively with each other.
- Develop a capacity to flourish through a discernment process of deep listening, a study of shared histories and looking realistically at each of our congregations as we move from survival to celebration.
- Develop mutual goals that enable our congregations to grow as we simultaneously serve our respective communities and the diocese-at-large. Assuredly, this process of “reimagining our congregations” will provide opportunities for us to build relationships with each other.

Update on Efforts of the Executive Committee of the Black Church Summit (ECBCS)

In January 2021, the ECBCS was commissioned by Bishop Gayle E. Harris. Since February 2021, we have been meeting bi-monthly (twice a month) to discuss issues of concern and how to grapple with other related matters.

- We began our discussions by identifying areas of neglect. These areas include feelings that limited resources have been invested in our parishes. The church structures created a situation in which we were forced to compete against each other for support.

- Each congregation began its individual work by looking at its own history and experiences in the diocese.
- We invited Byron Rushing, with his extensive knowledge of the history of many of our churches, to support our learning and understanding of our current realities.
- We discussed the racial composition of our parishes, relationships with our respective communities, historical demographics and histories of Black clergy in our parishes.
- There are also the distinctions of having the designation of a few parishes that originated for or were built by people of the Diaspora. Most of the parishes were started by white members; however, demographic shifts resulted in white flight. The Black members, who in many cases were not welcomed in the leadership role of these parishes, inherited the buildings, which were challenging to maintain due to the socio-economic disparities already in place in society.
- It is only in recent years that Black clergy were a visible presence in the predominantly Black congregations.
- Understanding our past history explains the evolution of the different personalities of the congregations.
- Black churches in a predominantly white denomination were always pushing against the tide counter-culturally.

Committee meetings have also been the forum to build relationships, to acknowledge what we have in common and to develop opportunities to work together in collaborative ways as well as with the larger ecumenical community, i.e., the Roxbury Dorchester Power in Community (RDPIC). During Lent, we all participated in The United Lenten Devotions, which included the Seven Historically Black Churches and (RDPIC) Churches. Moreover, each parish had individual worship liturgies on Wednesday nights in which an average of 90 persons signed in and participated. The Mission Hub is another example of collaboration between some of the Historically Black Churches.

These are just some of our discoveries which only touch the tip of the iceberg. The forces of racism and our internalization of these forces combined with sexism, patriarchy and all forms of oppression have had a devastating impact on the viability and health of people of color and, consequently, on these churches. We are in communities that suffer from these forces. Our presence is needed to bring God's healing and love to a people scarred and traumatized by a system that has been put in place to treat us/them as second-class citizens.

We have discovered that this important work has just begun. Our challenges run deep, and we must continue to work on the goals stated above. We need to devote ourselves to ongoing reflection and deep listening to understand the interlocking impact of these forces and devote a path to healing and survival. We need to do some work by ourselves, but that is not enough. We need to build bridges and work with our white siblings in Christ to bring about a new life filled with God's Holy Spirit at work, transforming us to be the people of God we have been called to be.

As we look toward the future, we plan to provide opportunities for the Black Summit Churches that we represent to participate in educational opportunities such as the impact of "Patriarchy" and "Healing from Internalized Oppression," a workshop offered by the Office of Black Ministries and presented by Canon Sandye Wilson.

This is Holy work calling us to be vulnerable with one another about our challenges. We begin with this committee that represents the Seven Historically Black Churches, extending the invitation to the churches we represent and eventually joining our siblings of all ages and races to create the church that God himself has called into being.

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2021

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Constitution and Canons

Membership to be determined.



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