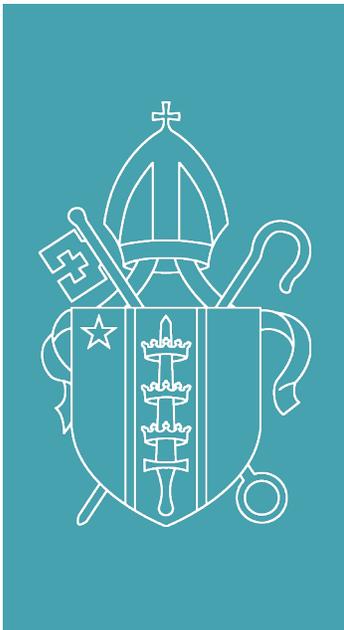


The Process Toward Reparations:

A Template



***Part of “A Toolkit for Reparations in Community:
A Resource for the Body of Christ”***

Developed by the Subcommittee on Reparations

Racial Justice Commission

Episcopal Diocese of Massachusetts

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Beginning the Journey Toward Reparations

Dear Siblings in Christ,

It took many meetings, minds, hearts, and prayers to produce this resource. It is intended as a guide, a resource, a conversation partner for you as you do this hard work. It is an incomplete document, a living document that will change and grow, as transformation is intrinsic in our tradition and way of being human. While we ask in our humility, “Who am I?”, our faithful response is, “Here I am.”

This template is part of *A Toolkit for Reparations in Community: A Resource for the Body of Christ*, developed as called for in the resolution “A Call for Repentance and Reparations,” adopted by the 2020 Diocesan Convention of the Episcopal Diocese of Massachusetts. With this toolkit, we invite you to change us and to help us grow. You will have resources that are not in this document, stories that we have not heard. We invite you to bring all that you are, to share the parts of you that can make our Body of Christ stronger. And we commit to changing and growing the document as we change and grow together.

So, let us begin.

In faithful service,

Subcommittee on Reparations
Racial Justice Commission
Episcopal Diocese of Massachusetts

Introduction to this Template

This template invites you to ask yourselves: “What?”, “So what?”, “Now What?”, and “Now What Now?”. This approach is the one used in the [Racial Justice Audit](#) done by The Episcopal Church in 2021. We’ve designed this navigational template as a curriculum or conversation partner to accompany you as you and your community work through each phase. In each of them, you will find suggestions for things to consider as a community (“Consider this...”), important conversations that your team and your community will need to have (“Conversation Questions”); and actions to take along the way (“Taking Action”). Each phase is also accompanied by a list of resources. Some resources are links to organizations you might want to reach out to, while others are books and articles, and still others are databases and curricula that can deepen your understanding.

This template is designed for you to be able to drop into this process wherever you are, but we suggest reviewing the earlier phases, even if you feel you are “well on your way.” There will always be something to gain and learn from each step. In the end, we will begin again, as this work will never end.

You will notice that at every phase there is a place for exploring and developing relationships. What relationships have you had, do you have, have you abused, need repaired? What relationships can help you look back, locate, or move forward? While there is a place for individual education, reflection, healing, and action, we are meant to be in relationship with one another. Always look up to look around you, and know that you are not alone in this process.

There is a role for education at each phase. Often, however, people who are white get stuck in the education phase, thinking they must learn everything before they can do anything. While education is an important aspect in each phase of the process, do not let not knowing enough keep you from taking action. Let each action be an education that leads you to take another action. And allow that cycle to never end.

Introduction to the Process of Repairing

What brought you to this conversation? Another church member doing advocacy work? A directive from the diocese? A justice-focused deacon? Whatever brought you to this conversation, welcome!

This is going to take a long time. A long time. Prepare yourself to start a journey that will not end, put aside your expectations of ending your reparations process with a check and a check mark at the end of the year. Prepare to be changed, to let go of what you learned and knew, to listen to hard truths and hear them without assuming it is personal.

We have organized this template into four phases: 1. Learning the Truth; 2. Telling the Truth; 3. Begin Repairing; and 4. Paying Reparations. There is no phase that will be completed with one meeting. We suggest having a small group, committee, or reparations team work through the first couple of phases before widening the scope of work. Each phase is broken down further into more “bite-sized” sections. These sections will include conversation questions, things to consider, and taking action lists. We recommend taking one section at a time. (And in each step, remember the importance of taking action.)

Think about the racial composition of your reparations committee. Consider that if it is an all-white committee, there will be a perspective that is missing. The weight of racial work sits heavier on the shoulders of people of color, and voices of color need to be heard and listened to at every opportunity, not to do the work for you but to show a reality that you cannot see if you have an all-white committee. If you have an all-white congregation, or if none of the few people of color in your pews is willing or able to join the committee, seek Episcopalians who are people of color from another congregation in the diocese to serve as advisors and coaches to your committee. In addition, there are a number of books and articles in the [Reparations Resources and Suggested Reading List](#) that can help expose you to the experience and perspective of people of color, and we strongly recommend that each group use them.

Education will be at every level, and when you feel “finished” with this process, there will be more to learn. Always embrace a growth mindset, a position that allows and invites us to learn more. As you investigate and grow in your understanding, let go of some of the things we might have learned. Let go of the instinctual protective action of taking it personally and embrace the sense of wonder and desire to grow closer to God.

With God’s help, let’s begin!

Taking Action

Depending on where your congregation is in your collective understanding of the systemic nature of racism in our country and in our church, you might need to do some foundational work through curricula such as “[Becoming Beloved Community...Where You Are](#)” or the more extensive [Sacred Ground](#), both produced by The Episcopal Church.



Resources for Beginning the Journey

[Racial Justice Audit of Episcopal Leadership](http://www.episcopalchurch.org/racial-justice-audit) from 2018 to 2020, by The Mission Institute and The Episcopal Church, 2021. (www.episcopalchurch.org/racial-justice-audit)

[“A Christian Call for Reparations,”](#) by Kelly Brown Douglas, Sojourners, July 2020.

[Being Beloved Community...Where You Are: A Resource for Individuals, Congregations and Communities Seeking Racial Healing, Reconciliation and Justice,](http://www.episcopalchurch.org/belovedcommunity) The Episcopal Church. (www.episcopalchurch.org/belovedcommunity)

[Sacred Ground: A Film-Based Dialogue Series on Race and Faith,](https://www.episcopalchurch.org/sacred-ground/) The Episcopal Church. (<https://www.episcopalchurch.org/sacred-ground/>)

Reparations4Slavery (<https://reparations4slavery.com>), a portal “for white Americans walking the path of reparations.”

“Reparations Resources and Suggested Reading List,” Subcommittee on Reparations, Racial Justice Commission, Episcopal Diocese of Massachusetts, November 2021 (<https://www.diomass.org/reparations-toolkit>)



Phase 1: Learning the Truth - The “What”

Getting Started

You may want a small group to lead this process. This group of leaders may want to go through some of the steps ahead of the rest of the congregation to start. This is tough work, so find your committed volunteers to lead this effort for the long haul, and check in as a group and with your congregation’s leadership periodically to be sure you continue to receive the support you need.

Taking Action

Review [Reparations 101](#) and [The Episcopal Church and Slavery](#), two separate elements of the toolkit, and have a conversation about what reparations are, what reparations mean for you in your context. For whom and for what purpose are you beginning this work of reparations?

Review [The Racial Justice Audit of Episcopal Leadership](#). Do the nine dominant patterns of systemic racism laid out in the report offer a useful framework to consider as you work?

Consider this...

“Truth” and “facts” are terms that have been highly politicized. Yet, we are calling ourselves and each other into our baptismal covenant to “persevere in resisting evil” and “respect the dignity of every human being.”¹ Therefore, we seek to hold “truth” and “fact” in this Christian perspective, outside of the political emotions that each elicit. If there is a historical truth that differs from your history, that does not mean your history is a lie. It means that your history is incomplete, that there is a larger truth than just your history. In a world where “alternative facts” somehow exist, finding “facts” as solid evidence will stand in contrast to what we may have been told or taught. And while reparations have economic and political implications, we do this work because we are Christians and the mission of the church is “to restore all people to unity with God and each other in Christ.”²

Conversation Questions

Sit with the difference between “truth” and “facts.” What emotions come up for you? What challenges to your ego do you face in order to do this important work? How are you coming to this work and what is your intention?

¹ *The Book of Common Prayer*, pp. 304-305. Baptismal covenant.

² *The Book of Common Prayer*, p. 855. The mission of the church.

Taking Action

Write out your intentions as a group. Write out your definitions of reparations, truths, and facts. Share these with each other and discuss both where there is alignment and where there are differences. Don't feel that you have to come to consensus at this point—just being aware of where the similarities and contrasts are among you will be helpful.

Create some working agreements for your team; include your practices of respecting each other's time and how you will handle disagreements. You can [check out this example](#) of a community covenant for inspiration.

Review your definitions and working agreements at the beginning of every meeting.

Interrogating your Congregation's History

Consider this...

Here are some questions to consider as you begin to look more deeply at the ways in which your current community is benefiting from past aggressions, oppressions, and exploitation:

- Who were the first peoples of your land?
- What brought the first non-native residents to your area, to this land? What was the value of the land that belonged to everybody until someone took it as their own?
- How did the founders of your congregation operate in their community? How did they earn their livelihood? Did they enslave people? Was the labor of enslaved people used in the building of the church? Did enslaved people or their descendants attend?
- What systems allowed founders to take from other people? What land acquisition treaties, decrees, or laws assisted or allowed white supremacy to evolve? How are those systems still operating today?

If your congregation was established long after slavery, don't think you are off the hook. A similar set of questions are just as important:

- Who were the first peoples of your land?
- What systems allowed founders to take from other people? What land acquisition treaties, decrees, or laws assisted or allowed white supremacy to evolve? How are those systems still operating today?
- What was the chain in the ownership of the land from the first people to you today? Where was the wealth earned to buy the land?
- What brought the founding families and their peers to your area? How did the founders of your congregation operate in their community?
- How did they earn their livelihood? How many generations back did their inherited wealth go? What was the original source of that wealth?
- Did your community ever formally or informally exclude other groups, or deny opportunities?

Talk with the people of color in your congregation if they are willing.

- What is their history? What is their family's story?
- As they tell you their stories, really listen. By their energy, gestures, body posture, what is clearly most important to them? How does listening to their story make YOU feel, in your heart, in your gut?
- How does their story compare with that of your founders and their descendants? If the stories are different, how do the people of color to whom you are listening understand the difference?

And considering all of this,

- What harm are you repairing?

Taking Action

There is a lot of homework in this section. Be sure to take an appropriate amount of time.

- Contact the diocesan historiographer and find out what useful records might be available. Ask for the historiographer's ideas on what in your own archives could prove useful. Ask for suggestions of others to talk to.
- Talk to long-term members of your congregation. What is their recollection of the founding of your congregation? Do they remember the arrival of the first people of color in your congregation? How were they received?
- Contact your [local historical society](#). It may have valuable records for you and it may be able to connect you with local historians in your area.
- Explore the Massachusetts Historical Society's website, [African Americans and the End of Slavery in Massachusetts](#), a good introduction to parts of our Commonwealth's history that many of us were never told. Where is your congregation's story in this story? Where is the story of your own family?
- Check out the [1754 Massachusetts Slave Census](#) and its related resources.
- What does your local library offer in the way of local history?
- Check the histories developed by three historic Boston parishes: [Trinity Church](#), [Christ Church \(Old North\)](#), and [King's Chapel](#).
- Record your findings and share them with vestry and other leaders and collaborators as you go.

Interrogating your Community's History

Consider this...

The conversation needs to extend beyond your congregation. Just as your context today affects your current ministry in the world, your community's past has had an important, if sometimes subtle, impact on your congregation today.

Taking Action

- Find community partners to aid in a deeper understanding of your historical context.
- Check out the [1754 Massachusetts Slave Census](#) and its related resources.

- Talk to your [local historical society](#). What light can it shed on your investigation? Does it have experts on your local history to suggest?
- What does your local library offer in the way of local history?
- It's field trip time! Go into your community square or park or street. What plaques or statues or historical signs are around your community? Do they tell the truth you have found? The whole truth?
- Check the statues, the plaques, the street names, the names of your schools, bridges, fields and sports complexes, etc. Take records of the names, and check them against your research.

Interrogating Broader Historical Factors

Looking more broadly, what political, educational, and societal trends, events, and movements have impacted your current position?

Consider this...

Aspects of our broad social systems themselves exacerbate the oppression of some and the privilege of others, such as education, housing, mass incarceration, and the history of policing in this country. You have to expose and embrace this truth in order to correct it.

- Look inwardly and be honest about your own privilege, as individuals and as a congregation. To what extent did you “work hard for everything I have” and to what extent are you where you are because you were on the winning end of historical imbalances and systemic favoritism?
- Be honest about your own biases and assumptions about what is “normal” and what is odd, exotic, or strange.
- Explore how disparate access to resources can foster negative views of oneself and may harm people of color further.

Taking Action

- When you are ready, have a conversation with groups of people of other races to learn their understanding of how educational, economic, and legal structures affect them, either positively or negatively.
- “Jim Crow” was not just an idea or an attitude—Jim Crow laws were codified. What ordinances and other legal structures in your community's past disenfranchised and otherwise disadvantaged people of color? What zoning practices are in place to limit people of color from even moving in, implicitly if not explicitly? Did [redlining](#) affect your community's or neighborhood's racial makeup?
- How was the founding or evolution of your congregation affected by “white flight,” the migration of people who are white out of the cities and to the suburbs in the 1950's, 1960's, and beyond?
- People who are white were not the only ones leaving urban centers in the middle of the last century. Internalized oppression within middle and higher income people of color move some of them to join the white flight from their communities, thereby draining their communities and churches of significant resources and pledges. Was this phenomenon part of your history?

Ready to move on?

Conversation Questions

- When you feel you've learned enough to move to the next step, ask: What do the facts say in relation to what we learned or believed before? What are we moved to do with this learning?

Resources for Phase 1

Reparations 101, by Subcommittee on Reparations, 2021 <https://www.diomass.org/reparations-toolkit>

The Episcopal Church and Slavery, by Subcommittee on Reparations, 2021 <https://www.diomass.org/reparations-toolkit>

Massachusetts History Alliance, a membership organization of historical societies and other institutions (<https://masshistoryalliance.org/mha-members/>)

[African Americans and the End of Slavery in Massachusetts](#), Massachusetts Historical Society (<https://www.masshist.org/features/endofslavery>)

1754 Massachusetts Slave Census and accompanying resources (<https://primaryresearch.org/the-1754-slave-census/>)

Three historic Boston parishes—[Trinity Church](#), [Christ Church \(Old North\)](#), and [King's Chapel](#)—have all begun important work in uncovering their connections to slavery.

Mapping Inequality: Redlining in New Deal America (<https://dsl.richmond.edu/panorama/redlining/#loc=11/42.314/-71.23&city=boston-ma&area=C8>)



Phase 2: Telling the Truth - The “So What”

This phase not only discusses why we need to learn about our truth, but also why we need to tell other people the truth and not just stick our research in our church archives and hide it from the rest of the world. Telling the truth matters because words matter as much as our actions. When we do not share our findings we continue to be complicit in the harm past communities have done.

We look to our baptismal covenant for guidance: Will you persevere in resisting evil and, whenever you fall into sin, repent and return to the Lord? Will you seek and serve Christ in all persons, loving your neighbor as yourself? Will you strive for justice and peace among all people, and respect the dignity of every human being? Each of these questions calls us to speak up against injustice, to stand up for our neighbor, and to lift up the dignity (not just existence, but dignified lives) of every human being.

Taking Action

- Prepare a presentation for the full congregation—as a Sunday sermon, as part of the annual meeting, or in some other broadly attended event.
- Take a look at the plaques, statues, and other memorials and images around your church. What story do they tell? How does that story compare with the broader understanding you are uncovering?
- Work to add the broader historical truth-telling to your website. Visit other churches' websites to see how they have used them to tell their truths. (Several are listed in the Resources section of this phase.) Notice what is missing or isn't done on their websites. If you did not have the link, would it be easy or difficult to find this page from their home page? (Remember to work within your means. You don't have to have a high-gloss website to tell your truth. Prominence of your truth-telling is just as impactful as its production values.)

Conversation Questions

As you discern how to tell the truth, the facts, about what you've discovered, what do you as a community do with the facts? What do you do with what you have learned? How does what you've learned affect how you move forward? What does this matter? What impact does our baptismal covenant have on telling the truth?

Repairing Relationships

Conversation Questions

- Look at your relationships in the wider community. What impact do your relationships have on the truths you must tell? Who is missing from your conversation? Do you need to address the differences, modify or rebuild the relationships, divest from certain relationships?

- Do you need to share these facts with other organizations like historical societies, church archives, historians, and libraries?

Taking Action

- Identify your past relationships, and then your current relationships. Mark and record the make-up of those relationships. This will include communitywide organizations and institutions. Identify what relationships you want to have, what relationships are missing, what relationships will help restore and rebuild a broader truth.
- Begin building the relationships you have identified as missing.
- With those with whom you have a broken or wounded relationship in your local context, begin a dialogue with them about how to repair those relationships, heal the wounds caused by harm.

Changing the Public Narrative

Consider this...

Making reparations means more than money. Repairing our histories to include untold stories and facts is part of paying reparations. It is still at a cost, sometimes a more difficult one to pay. It costs pride. It may cost people the stories and histories they have identified with and looked up to their entire lives; it may cost a part of their identities. However, this doesn't have to be seen as a negative cost. Consider that finding a wider truth, a truth that includes more stories and voices, is a cost that allows more people to be fed. Consider the biblical loaves and fishes, the cost to a child who gave what that child had, that allowed the masses to be fed.

Conversation Questions

- How does your information change your understanding of the history of your wider community? Does it include more people? Does it repent? Does it honor your neighbor?
- How can you correct historical inaccuracies and share the broader truth you have discovered?
- How do you hold our grief at the loss of our heroic historical narratives?

Taking Action

- Bring your whole city or town into the work. Consider presenting the material to the whole community.
- Report findings to your historical societies, libraries, and other organizations.
- Begin conversations with your wider community regarding any changes the community seeks to make to hold the wider truth and honor the stories not heard.
- Begin holding space for the community to share the stories of the plaques, people, and truths you've found. But also include making space for people often left out of the conversation; make space for people of color to share what they know of the history, their stories.

Finding Support

Consider this...

People who are white and people of color all have racial trauma, whether their ancestors received or inflicted pain. That trauma carries through the generations, and we will have to work through that trauma differently. Consider checking in with your therapists or counselors to start building up your support system. This is a long process and will take time to work through generations of grief.

Conversation Questions

- What support do you need to tell the truth? Do you need tech support to put this on your church website? Do you need a grief counselor for your shared community pain? Do you need an affinity group or a reconciliation process in your community?
- Look at the work of Dr. Joy DeGruy on [post-traumatic slave syndrome](#). How does this expand your understanding of the generational trauma that people of color are carrying in their bones?

Taking Action

- Talk to the therapists or counselors you know. Get names of counselors who specifically work on racial trauma. Talk with several to create a program or system of pastoral care for your committee and/or others in your congregation.
- Do people of color need a system of support that is different from that for people who are white?

Liturgy: The Work of the People

Consider this...

To demonstrate, articulate, and sanctify your commitment to repair the damage done on your behalf, consider planning a liturgical rite of lament and confession. Note that this isn't reparations. This is confession. Without or until reparations are being paid, our confessions and lamentations are words without action and not a complete act of reparation.

Pause and take note: Before planning this service, be sure you are ready. Have you dug deeply enough into your past and listened to enough stories to actually understand all that you are confessing to in order to make a soul-filled lament? Doing "lamentation light" will do more harm than waiting.

Taking Action

- Schedule a service of lament and confession for your congregation. Schedule it far enough in advance that you have the time to both develop and promote it, but don't put it so far off that you lose the momentum of your work towards reparations.
- Check out the liturgical resources for reparations offered by [The Episcopal Church](#) and [the Episcopal Diocese of New York](#). What do you notice about these liturgies? What seems really important to include in your own liturgy? What is missing? Search for other resources and models. Develop your own liturgy specific to your own context.

- 
- Once you have drafted your liturgy, get feedback from people of color, whether in your congregation or elsewhere. How does your proposed lament and confession “land” on the people most harmed by the past aggressions, oppression, and exploitation?

Moving Forward

Consider this...



When we know the truth but do not tell the truth, we would typically call that *lying by omission*. When we put our truths in a box in the archives, we are hiding our whole selves. Our concealment is complicity. Complicity continues to do harm; even if we didn't set the systems in place, our complicit silence makes us responsible for any further harm done. Therefore, identifying the systems that harm, naming their attributes and continuing to name them even after they become common knowledge is a part of our repentance and a part of our promise to maintain the dignity of every human being. Consider what our future looks like if we continue the harm. Consider that God loves us completely, wholly, faults and all. It is that grace that we know we receive that moves us to tell the truth.

Conversation Questions

Look back at all you've learned, the hard truths you've had to tell, the grief you have held. Look at the relationships you have lost, have begun to heal, want to build. Consider your relationship with God. How are you? What image arises for you at this stage in your process?

Resources for Phase 2



Examples of church and other websites that are telling a broader truth about their history:

King's Chapel, Boston, MA (<http://www.kings-chapel.org/slaveryhistory.html>)

St. Paul's Episcopal Church, Richmond, VA (<https://www.stpaulsrva.org/HRI>)

The Episcopal Diocese of New York (<https://dioceseny.org/mission-and-outreach/social-concerns/reparations-for-slavery/>)

Virginia Theological Seminary (<https://vts.edu/mission/multicultural-ministries/reparations/#1627493993530-1164d3aa-79f6>)

Royall House & Slave Quarters, Medford, MA (<https://royallhouse.org/press/>)

Liturgical resources:

The Standing Commission on Liturgy and Music of The Episcopal Church (<https://standingcommissiononliturgyandmusic.org/2018/01/03/prayers-for-racial-reconciliation-and-justice/>)

The Episcopal Diocese of New York (<https://dioceseny.org/ednyfiles/reparations-liturgical-toolkit/>)



Phase 3: Begin Repairing - The “Now What”

You have begun to tell the truth and reorient your community’s story to include a wider lens on the truth. You’ve already begun some actionable steps toward reparations in the simple but hard practice of telling the truth. And, reparations do not end with telling the truth. Now you want to begin the steps of tangible reparations. Remember that education and relationships are the constant in this process. You will continue to deepen the relationships and education as you go. In your group, spend time with the questions below. Then follow through with the action items that follow, or create your own action items that relate to your context after each conversation section.

Discerning

Conversation Questions

What have you learned? Given what you have learned, what change do you want to make? Where is the passion stirring for you?

Consider this...

Remember, the tendency is to get stuck in the learning phases. We often find that we never know enough and the fear of doing the wrong thing causes inertia. You will make mistakes, and these mistakes are a part of our learning process. Making mistakes is not a cause for stopping the process; it is the process. Part of our baptismal covenant is to repent when (not if) we fall into sin.

Taking Action

- Sit with the preceding questions, giving 10 minutes to each question. Record each person’s comments, allowing for an abundance of passion to take place. Learn, decide, act, assess, learn again, decide again, act again, assess again.
- Don’t get stuck. Keep on going.

Getting Support

Consider this...

Now would be a great time to bring in some racial equity consultants to work with your congregation on your staffing and leadership structures. Racial equity consultants offer coaching, mentoring, and consulting with organizations, companies, government agencies, and social justice leaders to transform beliefs and assumptions, behaviors, strategies, and organizational structures. Since education is always a part of each phase, you’ll keep learning how our systems (education, health, housing, justice, the courts, government, etc.) are products of white supremacy, and we will

need help in learning how to work against white supremacy in our structures. Racial equity consultants are trained to help us learn and gain a wider perspective.

Taking Action

- Check out [this list](#) of racial equity consultants created by The Boston Foundation. This list is not exhaustive, but it is a good start at finding racial equity consultants working in eastern Massachusetts.
- Knowing what you know now, you can begin taking steps in your congregation to dismantle the culture and systems that have been set up primarily by and for people who are white and that intentionally or unintentionally oppress people of color. Racial equity consultants can help with this. It is part of the work to learn how and why the systems were created.
- Identify your systems that are damaging and begin the hard work of changing them. Consider the [Racial Justice Audit](#) and the nine patterns found in racial inequity throughout The Episcopal Church. Sit with each pattern and ask your community how that pattern is true in your congregation, organization, community, or context.
- Revise your staffing and leadership structures to match the values of reparations (hiring, supporting, reviewing, compensating, communicating, supervising, electing, promoting to senior leadership positions, etc.).

Consider this...

Consider consulting a grief counselor or a racial affinity group counselor (racial affinity groups are groups of people sharing a common race who gather with the intention of finding connection, support, and inspiration¹) for those struggling with the process. Note that there are differences between bereavement counselors that deal with loss/death and counselors who specialize in generational racial trauma. Historical trauma sits in our bones and sits differently for different people. Not addressing it will only aid in perpetuating the harm.

Taking Action

- Consider if you are looking for more assistance dealing with grief. Or ask your racial equity consultants for recommendations.

Extending the Community

Consider this...

You always need to continue asking, “Who is missing?” all along the way. As new people join, those new voices and perspectives may well change the direction you are headed and decisions you have made. Make room for this to happen

Conversation Questions

Who needs to be involved in this phase of the process towards reparations? How will you identify them? Once you identify who else needs to be involved, you need to outline a plan to recruit and engage them. What relationships do you have in your community that are affected by the truths you’ve now told? Have you begun or continued to be in conversation with them about the truths you’ve uncovered? What

¹ <https://www.greatschoolspartnership.org/resources/educational-equity/racial-affinity-groups-guide-for-school-leaders/>

relationships do you have, want to have, repair, divest from? Open up to receive other facts and stories that come to light and participation of others.

Taking Action

- Take a look at the preliminary work you did in “Interrogating your Community’s History” in Phase 1. Share this work with the new community partners you have gathered along the way. Who is still missing?
- Outline a plan to find and engage these organizations.
- If you have not done so already, host a community presentation on your work and include listening sessions to hear your community’s voice, specifically those not typically heard or listened to. Your truth won’t be the only truth and making space for others doesn’t mean you’re the new expert. It does, however, show your care and commitment to change the system.
- Include in your plan an open invitation to your new or revised community relationships to offer their insights on what kind of reparations would be most helpful.
- Actively listen to people and stories in the community that are impacted. Integrate what you have heard into your plan.

Make a Plan and Make it Public

Consider this...

So what are you going to do to begin the process of making reparations? Develop a plan of concrete actions you will take as an organization and as individuals. To whom will you make yourselves and your organization accountable? How will you follow through on these commitments? How will the plan be monitored and by whom? Make your commitments SMART (specific, measurable, attainable, realistic, and timely).

Conversation Questions

How is our baptismal covenant (*The Book of Common Prayer*, pp. 304-305) represented in the actions to which you’ve committed?

Taking Action

- Consider what you are committing to the community and how your message could be received. It is absolutely critical at this point to include the people and communities who have been harmed in discerning what actions can begin to repair the harm.
- Plan a liturgy of commitment, a public consecration of your covenant, and a communal prayer seeking God’s help in fulfilling your pledge.
- Share your commitments to reparations publicly. Share them with your news media, on your website, and with your community organizations that will be affected.
- For those monitoring the plan, be clear about their role and its term. Include support for them and check-ins throughout the process.

Voting & Money

Consider this...

On a larger scale, how we vote and where we invest our money matters. When you vote, do you ask yourself how people of color are impacted by the issue on which you are voting? Every issue impacts communities of color differently than communities that are white. Staying educated and aware of how political issues affect communities of color requires relationships and commitment to consistent reflection. What are the current issues in your next election? Have you read H.R.40 (a bill presented to Congress to establish a commission to study and develop reparation proposals)? Where do you stand on H.R.40? Information on how to support H.R.40 is available through [The Office of Government Relations of The Episcopal Church](#).

Likewise, if you have not begun to do so yet, now is the time to review your investments. How we spend and invest our money also affects communities of color. Where does your congregation/organization invest? Do the institutions it invests in abuse systems of power to the detriment of communities of color?

People of color need people who are white to join them as advocates. Too often, those in power are tone deaf to the voices of people of color. Like it or not, there are rooms in which only people who are white are listened to. People who are white advocating for reparations in the church and in the public arena is essential.

Conversation Questions

- [The Rt. Rev. William H. Stokes](#), Bishop of New Jersey, says, “Are these ‘political actions?’ Yes. Are they partisan? No.” Discuss this as a group and as a community.
- As you consider taking actions in advocating on public policy, check yourselves: Are you doing this in addition to retelling your history and making financial reparations, or instead of? What does this say about your deep commitment to repair the harm you and your organization have caused?

Taking Action

- [Read about H.R.40](#). Contact your representatives or senator (www.lwvma.org) to voice your support for the bill.
- Review organizations that educate about and promote votes that support communities of color, such as [United for a Fair Economy](#) and [MassVote](#).
- If divesting or redirecting your investments look at resources such as the Interfaith Center for Corporate Responsibility (www.iccr.org) for ideas for where to put your money.



Resources for Phase 3

Racial Equity Capacity Builders Directory, The Boston Foundation, 2020 (<https://www.tbf.org/-/media/tbf/files/nonprofits/tbf-racial-equity-capacity-builders-directory-newest.pdf>)

Episcopal Church Racial Justice Audit from 2018 to 2020, a Joint Venture of the Mission Institute and The Episcopal Church (<https://www.episcopalchurch.org/ministries/racial-reconciliation/racial-justice-audit/>)

“Hogg Foundation for Mental Health - Episode 107: A Therapist on Racial Grief” (<https://soundcloud.com/hoggfoundation/episode-107-a-therapist-on-racial-grief/>)

“New England Historical Genealogical Society American Ancestors” (<http://www.americanancestors.org>)

“Massachusetts Historical Society an Independent Research Library, founded in 1791” (<http://www.masshist.org>)

The Boston Public Library (<http://www.bpl.org>)

The Office of Government Relations of The Episcopal Church
<https://www.episcopalchurch.org/ministries/office-government-relations/racial-reconciliation/>

“[H.R.40 - Commission to Study and Develop Reparation Proposals for African Americans Act](https://www.congress.gov/bill/117th-congress/house-bill/40/text),” 117th U.S. Congress (<https://www.congress.gov/bill/117th-congress/house-bill/40/text>)

League of Women’s Voters guide (<https://lwvma.org/your-government/federal/>)

United for a Fair Economy (<https://www.faireconomy.org/>)

MassVote (<https://www.massvote.org/>)

Interfaith Center for Corporate Responsibility (www.iccr.org)



Phase 4: Paying Reparations - The “Now What Now”

In the beginning of this process, you probably had some conversations about what reparations are and why you and your congregation are engaging in this hard and long work. You likely discussed and discerned how you are relevant in this process and why. Throughout this process, you also may have learned a lot about how the people in your community were affected by slavery, how your community played a role in slavery, or what gains your community has made because of the slave trade. You also probably understand how much paying reparations is not just about money. It's important to pay reparations in other ways like correcting historical records and presentations and lifting the forgotten voices (intentionally left out or “accidentally” forgotten). Let's just say it: Reparations is not only about money, nor does the work end with a check. It is also about building relationships, fostering understanding, and repenting for the past and the present. Our efforts toward reparations will be meaningless if we don't change how we move through our world. That said, money is important as it is tied up in the inequitable oppression of people of color. In this phase you will consider questions and suggestions for paying reparations both with and without money.

Reflection

Conversation Questions

- Ask, or ask again, what is a reparation and does it apply to you? Is there anything here to repair?
- Divide your history into the historical periods of slavery, post slavery, civil rights era, affirmative action, and present day. How has your church behaved in its interactions and relationships with African Americans during these periods? What are your positive relationship-building stories?
- When you think about repairing relationships and examining solutions, consider asking any persons related to your community's failures about equity solutions, or use consultants to help develop community solution ideas to repair past wrongs.

Taking Action

- Identify who has been harmed. Identify your role in it. Look back at your history, what you've learned, what truths you've uncovered, what systems you are benefiting from, and who may be in harm's way because of your participation within that system. Identify with whom you might need to repent and repair to be in right relationship.
- Write out your answers and record them.

Money & Funds

Conversation Questions

It's time to make some decisions on paying reparations. Here are some important questions to ask: Who will be receiving compensation for reparations? How are you deciding this? Who should be in the room or at the table when it comes to decision making (remember power structures when it comes to decisions discussed in [The Racial Justice Audit of Episcopal Leadership](#))?

How much money will be included in the reparations? What will the money look like? (i.e., checks to individuals or organizations, scholarships, free space to communities of color in your building, socially responsible investments, affordable housing). For how long will reparations be paid?

Consider that your typical financial adviser is not usually in the line of work to give money away. You will need to consider that the advice you get may be in conflict with the intention of reparations. Consider researching financial ethicists or finding financial consultants that specialize in racial equity and socially responsible investing to determine how and how much wealth you can invest and subsequently plan to distribute, and for how long.

Consider this...

Look back at the section in [The Racial Justice Audit of Episcopal Leadership](#) that discusses power dynamics. When you identify to whom reparations will be paid, know when it is time to let go of your power. Let those who are receiving reparations decide how to receive them.

Consider also that reparations are meant to be payment or correction without expectation of receiving anything in return. When it comes to creative ways of giving reparations funds, let go of any intention or desire to receive interest or proof of impact. That is not reparations.

When it comes time to identify and disperse reparations funds, remember again that Black people need the advocacy of people who are white alongside them in order to have their voices heard.

While developing your plan, consider the benefits of “doing good deeds” to uplift beneficiaries, without expectations of financial returns. A plan which involves sustained giving and investing for the future will require you to look into socially responsible investing (SRI) and environment, social and governance investing (ESG).

Socially responsible investing is an investment for socially responsible reasons. Socially responsible investments for the purposes of reparations is the practice of investing money in African-American companies, organizations, individuals, and select mutual market funds.

Long-term strategies require investment frameworks to sustain long-term financial commitments.

Taking Action

- Decide who will be making these decisions. Include in the decision-making process people who are affected by the slave trade and racism. Let those receiving payment make the decisions on how they would like to receive payment.
- With the community, create your plan for payment. Include a timeline, an amount, the proper accounts for the fund. Each plan will look different; there is no one way to do this. The who, what, when, and how will be your own creation, and the Subcommittee on Reparations can share some models with you. In case you missed it in Phase 3, one place to start is the Interfaith Center for Corporate Responsibility (www.iccr.org). Within the Diocese of Massachusetts is the Socially Responsible Investment (SRI) Committee of the Trustees of Donations (www.trusteesofdonations.org). The Trustees of Donations SRI Committee can offer advice and assist you with your decisions. Choices range from donating to an existing fund; directing a portion of investments toward benefiting change while the remainder is directed at investments; and dual purpose indirect investment. You may choose to join with others to set up a fund, or go on your own with a simple charitable trust.
- Explore models outside the diocese, such as
 - <https://resilientventures.org/> Faith Invests
 - Domestic Impact Strategies Frameworks: DFC Investing in Development, [DFC | Investing in Development](#)
 - Global Impact Strategies Frameworks: IFC - International Finance Corporations IFC https://www.ifc.org/wps/wcm/connect/corp_ext_content/ifc_external_corporate_site/home

Reparations Outside of Money

Consider this...

As you are aware by now, reparations is not only about money, it is about examining the public record to set it right. It means that public statues, exhibits, place and street names, etc. tell the full story. It means that our governing bodies and diocese acknowledge inequities that lead to the unequal system. It means re-examining the curriculum in the church, schools, etc. to insure that the facts are included in full for all sides of the story. (For example, you might present schools or churches with research and suggest, “Here’s what was found on this statue or in this textbook; however, through research and examination, here’s what really happened.”)

It is important to understand and to share with one another that no one is trying to take your history away; we are trying to make OUR history more representative of our multiple realities so that we know the full breadth of what happened. Consider also that the language that we use to make things “accessible” may not be equitable and may not uphold the dignity of all; who are the people who get to decide what is right or correct or normal or standard? Is it a part of the white supremacy culture that excludes others from access to education, wealth building, owning property, and freedom?



Taking Action

Historical correction: Review your church history and community histories. Submit any corrections that offer a fuller history.

Resources for Phase 4

The Interfaith Center for Corporate Responsibility (www.iccr.org)

Trustees of Donations (<http://www.trusteesofdonations.org/>)

Faith Invests (<https://resilientventures.org/>)

Domestic Impact Strategies Frameworks: DFC Investing in Development, DFC | Investing in Development (<https://www.dfc.gov/>)

Global Impact Strategies Frameworks: IFC - International Finance Corporations IFC (https://www.ifc.org/wps/wcm/connect/corp_ext_content/ifc_external_corporate_site/home)

Beginning Again

Consider this...

We will never stop.

Changing a complex system is long and difficult work. It can get daunting really fast. Finding manageable changes you can make within your own context shifts the system. And doing this work with others in community shifts it even more.

Reparations won't end with a check or the last statue being taken down. We will be tasked to always consider the voices not heard, the stories not told. We will continue to be called to learn more and to be in relationship with an ever-more expanding community. There will always be another conversation to have, another part of the story to unfold.

And, we recognize that descendants of enslaved Africans are not the only people who have been enslaved and oppressed in our diocese. We must all continue to widen our scope of work to include all peoples so that we fulfill our promise in our baptismal covenant to “respect the dignity of **every** human being.”

So we begin again.