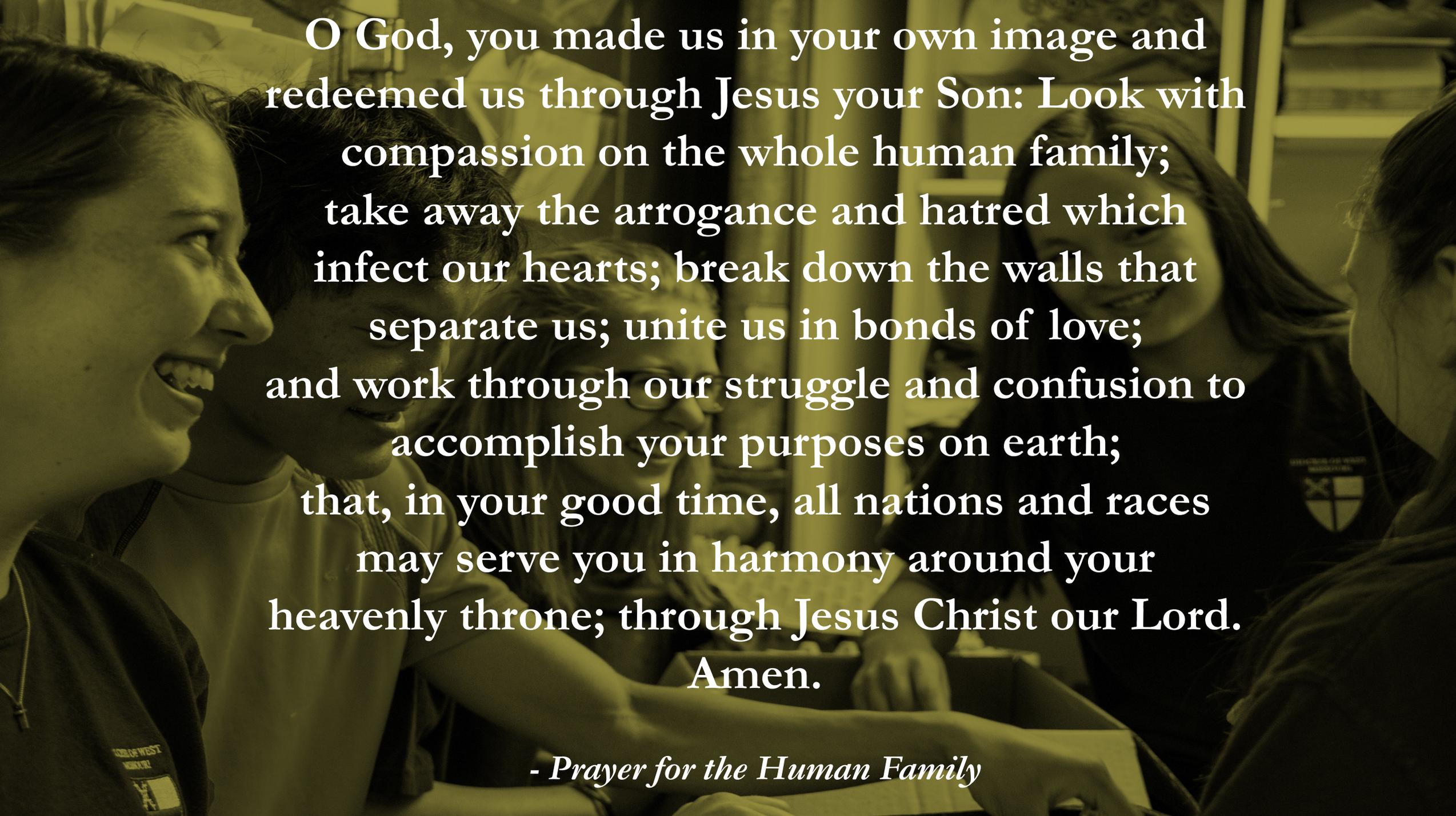


Systemic Racism & the People of God

The Rev. Canon Stephanie Spellers
Canon to the Presiding Bishop for
Evangelism, Reconciliation and
Creation Care



A group of people, including a young girl and a woman, smiling and looking at each other in a warm, indoor setting. The image has a greenish-yellow tint. The text is overlaid in white, serif font.

O God, you made us in your own image and redeemed us through Jesus your Son: Look with compassion on the whole human family; take away the arrogance and hatred which infect our hearts; break down the walls that separate us; unite us in bonds of love; and work through our struggle and confusion to accomplish your purposes on earth; that, in your good time, all nations and races may serve you in harmony around your heavenly throne; through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

- Prayer for the Human Family

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Nine Dominant Patterns of Systemic Racism in The Episcopal Church



Transformation vs. Transaction

Some anti-racism work seeks genuine transformation of the dominant culture over time (*systemic change*). White dominant culture and leaders tend to address racism with disconnected transactions (*episodic change*), assuming that “If I do (or read or watch) *this*, I will get (or be) *that*.” anti-racism often forces People of Color to placate and pacify white dominant systems and to survive and keep a job or seat at the table.

Leverages of Power

People of Color report varying degrees of ease and difficulty navigating Episcopal power structures. In general, the church often uses money to either harm or help anti-racist efforts, by withholding funding for certain work, paying People of Color less for comparable work, or measuring clergy of Color by how much money they bring in, not if their ministries are thriving.

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Hypervisibility vs. Invisibility

People of Color report being simultaneously hyper-visible and invisible. They are often tokenized or pigeonholed into work that revolves around diversity, anti-racism, or global mission, while they are often overlooked for certain positions or assumed to be “new” Episcopalians unfamiliar with the church’s culture and systems. In addition, white people often do not recognize racism or race in predominantly white spaces.

Faith & Spirituality

People use the language of faith as they reflect on anti-racism and explain why the church should engage in becoming Beloved Community. People lift up theology, liturgy, and spiritual practices as leaven for this ministry. At the same time, they note how these elements of our faith are often used to actively maintain white supremacy culture and racism.

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Political Polarization

Because racism has become so politicized and polarized, especially among white people, there is both urgency around anti-racism and anxiety about how to navigate it. Likewise, leaders of Color interviewed after the murder of George Floyd mention an uptick of instances of blatant racism within The Episcopal Church.

Anti-Racist Leadership

Leaders of Color have great self-confidence combined with a deep commitment to their church and to addressing racism. They also name the stress of being the first or the only Person of Color in mostly white contexts. White culture often places leaders of Color on a pedestal and holds them to unreasonable expectations. It also holds them primarily responsible for naming, calling out, and confronting racism.

Nine Dominant Patterns of Systemic Racism in The Episcopal Church



Intersectionality

Leaders of Color note the complexity of internalized racism among People of Color and racial tensions among and between other groups of People of Color. People also speak of the limitations of the Black/white paradigm for challenging racism.

Historical Context

There is a deep longing and commitment to telling the whole historical truth of how The Episcopal Church financially benefited from, participated in, and perpetuated white supremacy and racist practices and beliefs, and how it continues to benefit from, participate in, and perpetuate racism to this day.

Intentionality & Ongoing Commitment

There are no single, accidental, or quick solutions to racism. Many people recognize that anti-racism, racial justice and healing requires long-term commitment, lifelong learning, deep intentionality, accountability, financial redistribution.

Nine Dominant Patterns of Systemic Racism in The Episcopal Church



Reflecting on the 9 Dominant Patterns of Systemic Racism

- Which patterns are most familiar or resonant for you?
- Which show up most powerfully in your context?
- What is the impact of these patterns of behaviors and experiences in your leadership body or ministry as a whole?

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Breakout Group Reflection

What could you or your leadership body do to transform and influence these patterns of systemic racism?

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Audit Engagement Opportunities

EDUCATION

Review the Racial Justice Audit Report findings and identify any terms that are unfamiliar, including those in the report glossary.

Conduct research, read books, watch films, etc., to learn more.

RELATIONSHIP

Use the adapted version of the Racial Justice Survey of Episcopal Leadership to guide an in-depth conversation in your own ministry or leadership body about racial identity and racism.

<https://tinyurl.com/RJAHandout>

DATA

Gather data on race, ethnicity and culture within and around your ministry (congregation, diocese, etc.) and notice differences in who is a member or leader or engaged.

Compare your racial, ethnic, and cultural makeup to the local area's demographics

Contact
missioninstitute.ma@gmail.com
about a comprehensive audit

Telling the Truth about Our Churches and Race ***–TRUTH-TELLING***

- What racial, cultural and ethnic groups are in our church?
- Who is around us?
- What groups shape our common life, leadership and worship?
- How has our church excluded or embraced different racial, cultural and ethnic groups over time?

Will you persevere in resisting evil, and whenever you fall into sin, repent and return to the Lord?



How?

- *Census of the Church*
- *Racial Justice Audit of Structures and Ministries*

The logo features a white trapezoidal shape centered within a solid maroon square. The text is arranged vertically within the white shape. The words "RACIAL", "JUSTICE", and "AUDIT" are in a bold, uppercase, sans-serif font. The word "of" is in a smaller, italicized, lowercase serif font. The words "EPISCOPAL" and "LEADERSHIP" are in a bold, uppercase, sans-serif font, similar to the first three words.

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www.episcopalchurch.org/racial-justice-audit

Truth, Reckoning and Healing Ministries

Clearinghouse & Website



*About 72 dioceses and
140 congregations and
institutions provided data
regarding their
engagement in truth-
telling, reckoning and
healing over the last 12
months. Data available
starting in November
2021.*



Proclaiming the Dream of Beloved Community – PROCLAMATION

- How has our town/city/area participated in racial injustice or racial healing over time?
- What is happening today?
- What do we and neighbors dream?
- What behaviors and commitments would foster it?

How?

- *Public Sacred Listening and Learning Engagements*
- *General Liturgy and Prayer Resources*
- *Prophetic Voices: Preaching and Teaching Beloved Community Podcast*
- *Concerts for the Human Family*

Will you proclaim by word and example the Good News of God in Christ?

Practicing the Way of Jesus – FORMATION

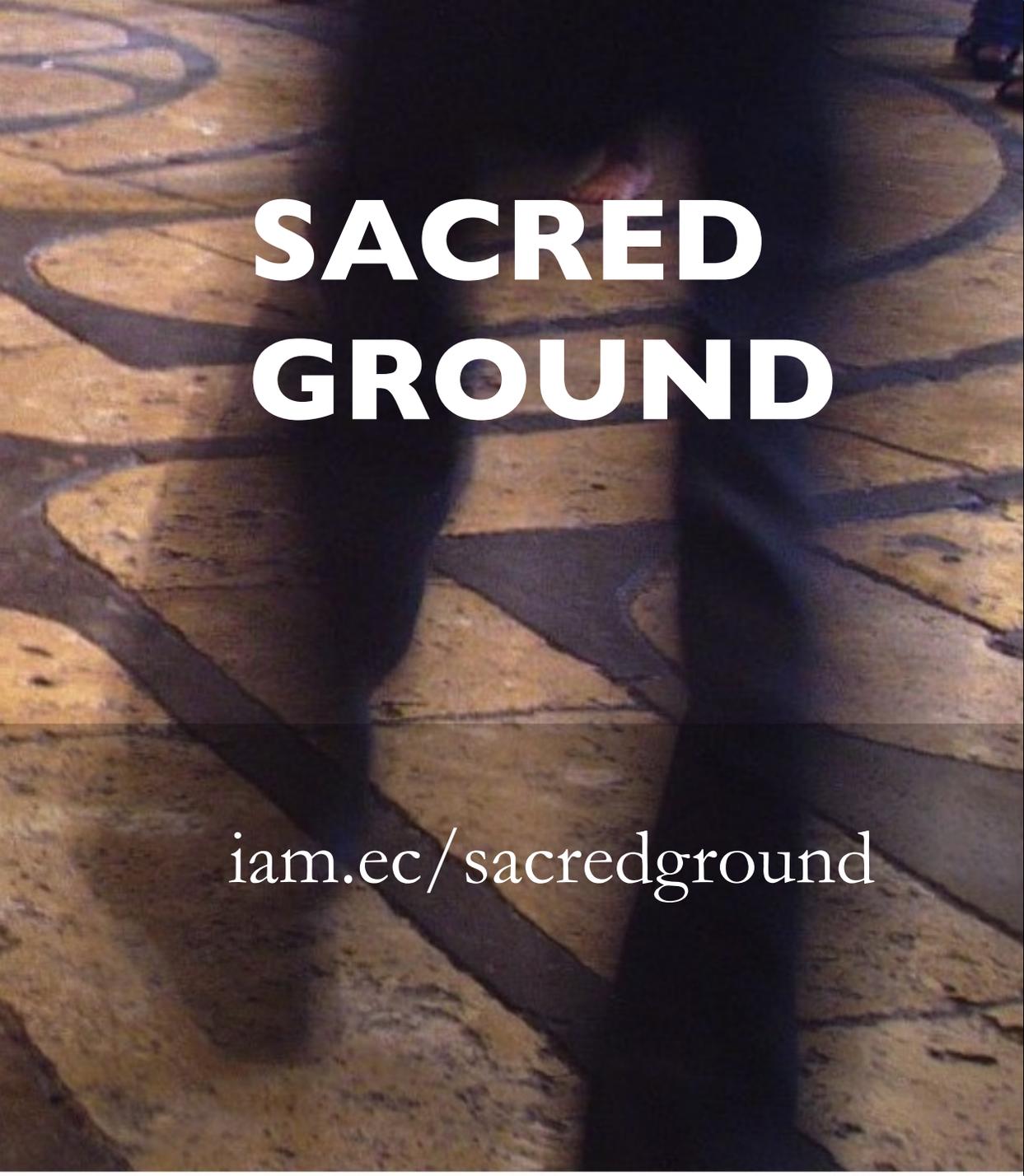
- How will we grow as reconcilers and healers?
- What activities, practices, learning and experiences would (trans)form us?
- How will we share and receive stories, grow relationship across dividing walls and seek Christ in each other?



How?

- *Sacred Ground Film Dialogue Series*
- *Doctrine of Discovery and Healing from Internalized Oppression Trainings*
- *Beloved Community StorySharing*
- *Reconciliation Pilgrimages*
- *Multicultural, All-ages Anti-racism Training and Formation*

*Will you seek and serve
Christ in all persons, loving
your neighbor as yourself?*

A person is walking on a stone path with circular patterns. The path is made of large, irregularly shaped stones, some of which are circular. The person is wearing dark clothing and is walking away from the camera. The background is dark, suggesting an outdoor setting at night or in low light.

SACRED GROUND

iam.ec/sacredground

*A film-based dialogue series
on race, grounded in faith,
with small groups walking
together through chapters of
America's history of race
and racism.*

GUIDE AND RESOURCES

FROM MANY, **ONE** CONVERSATIONS ACROSS DIFFERENCE

It all starts with four simple questions:

1. What do you love?
2. What have you lost?
3. Where does it hurt?
4. What do you dream?

www.episcopalchurch.org/from-many-one



Repairing the Breach in Society and Institutions – JUSTICE

- What social institutions and systems most clearly bear the signs of racial injustice and brokenness?
- How could we participate in the repair, restoration, and healing of people, institutions, and systems?

How?

- *Criminal Justice Reform and Re-Entry Ministries*
- *Immigration and Refugee Reform and Advocacy*
- *Equity in Housing, Education, Healthcare and Jobs*
- *Eco-justice and Environmental Racism*
- *Efforts to Address Racist Monuments/Memorials and Correct Historic Record*

Will you strive for justice and peace among all people, and respect the dignity of every human being?

5 WAYS TO ENGAGE



Voting
Voting in national, state, Tribal, and local elections. Educating ourselves about candidates and issues voting rights.



Direct Action
Using actions such as sit-ins, boycotts, divestment, vigils, marches, and protests to draw attention to an issue or disrupt an unjust system.



Policy Advocacy
Getting issues on ballots and before lawmakers, such as petitions, legislative outreach, and awareness campaigns.



Mobilizing Resources
Organizing resources of people, time, space, and money to create systemic change that you want to see in your community.



Prayer
Transforming evil unjust systems to bring about a just and equitable world through private prayer, public worship, teaching, and preaching.

FOR DISCERNMENT:

Where do you feel the most energy?
What next steps would you like to take?
What questions are you left asking?

Telling the Truth about Our Churches and Race

What racial, cultural and ethnic groups are in our church?

Who is around us?

What groups shape our common life, leadership and worship?

How has our church excluded or embraced different racial, cultural and ethnic groups over time?

Repairing the Breach in Society and Institutions

What social institutions and systems most clearly bear the signs of racial injustice and brokenness?

How could we participate in the repair, restoration, and healing of people, institutions, and systems?



Proclaiming the Dream of Beloved Community

How has our town/city/area participated in racial injustice or racial healing over time?

What is happening today?

What do we and our neighbors dream for Beloved Community?

What behaviors and commitments would foster it?

Practicing the Way of Love in the Pattern of Jesus

How will we grow as reconcilers, healers, and justice-bearers?

What activities, practices, learning and experiences would (trans)form us?

How will we share and receive stories, grow relationship across dividing walls and seek Christ in each other?

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Breakout Group Reflection

- Where do you feel the most energy?
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Where can I get help moving forward?

- Becoming Beloved Community:
www.episcopalchurch.org/beloved-community
- Racial Reconciliation Ministries and Resources
www.episcopalchurch.org/reconciliation
- Audit Info: www.episcopalchurch.org/racial-justice-audit
- Engaging the Racial Justice Audit (inc. adapted survey questions):
<https://tinyurl.com/RJAHandout>
- Mission Institute missioninstitute.ma@gmail.com
- Racial Reconciliation Officer, Isaiah Shaneequa Brokenleg
ibrokenleg@episcopalchurch.org
- Episcopal Church Ethnic Missioners