

2021 RESOLUTIONS | R3-2021

TITLE: R3-2021: RACIAL JUSTICE AUDIT

PROPOSED BY: Michael Adams, Delegate, St. John's Episcopal Church, Roseville; The Rev. Anne Clarke, Assistant Rector, Grace Episcopal Church, St. Helena; Miriam Casey, Co-chair, Commission for Intercultural Ministries, Episcopal Diocese of Northern California; The Rev. Robin Denney, Rector, St. Mary's Episcopal Church, Napa; The Rev. Tom Gartin, Priest in Charge, Faith Episcopal Church, Cameron Park; Patricia L. Heinicke Jr., Former Co-chair, Commission for Intercultural Ministries, Episcopal Diocese of Northern California, and Member, Trinity Episcopal Cathedral, Sacramento; The Rev. Canon Kathy Hopner, Canon for Education and Spiritual Formation, Trinity Episcopal Cathedral, Sacramento; The Rev. Bayani Rico, Rector, Ascension Episcopal Church, Vallejo; Jo Ann Williams, Vestry Member, St. John's Episcopal Church, Roseville; Lynn Zender, Co-chair, Commission for Intercultural Ministries, Episcopal Diocese of Northern California, and Delegate, St. Martin's Episcopal Church, Davis

REPRESENTATIVES: The Rev. Anne Clarke, Jo Ann Williams

PRESENTERS AT CONVENTION: The Rev. Anne Clarke, Jo Ann Williams

DATE SUBMITTED: August 23, 2021

RESOLUTION:

RESOLVED, That the Diocesan Convention strongly urges the Board of Trustees of the Episcopal Diocese of Northern California to devote no less than 1% of our annual diocesan operating budget, beginning in 2023, to the work of (in the words of the guiding document on Building Beloved Community in the Episcopal Church) "telling the truth about our churches and race," beginning with internal audits of our leadership and structure that will help us to learn about and address systemic racism in our congregations and diocese, and be it further

RESOLVED, That the Diocesan Convention charges the Commission for Intercultural Ministries with the work of facilitating these audits in partnership with our governing bodies, and evaluating them afterward, with an eye toward discerning next steps in the work of truth-telling and justice. These audits include an audit of the Standing Committee, the Board of Trustees, the Commission on Ministry, the Commission for Intercultural Ministries itself, Deanery leadership, and other leadership of the diocese, including the leadership of congregations that are willing to enter into this work.

EXPLANATION:

One of the three priorities in the Episcopal Church right now, as articulated by Presiding Bishop Michael Curry and our bishops and deputies at General Convention, is racial reconciliation. As leaders in this work have written, "We measure what we value. Anecdotes and stereotypes abound regarding Episcopalians and race, but there is rarely adequate data... If we seek reconciliation, healing, and new life, it begins with telling the truth about The Episcopal Church's racial composition and participation in systems of racial justice and injustice" (from *Becoming Beloved Community*, The Episcopal Church's long-term commitment to racial healing, reconciliation, and justice).

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The Episcopal Church recently released a churchwide racial justice audit of leadership in the Episcopal Church, with the central questions, “Who comprises the leadership of The Episcopal Church, and what is their experience of race and racism in their leadership roles?” asked of more than 1,300 leaders in the church. Conducted by The Mission Institute in partnership with The Episcopal Church’s Racial Reconciliation and Justice Team, the audit and resulting report offer data, stories, major patterns and themes, recommendations, and key questions for the church to truly become beloved community.

As leaders in our diocese have explored the results of this audit, we have found it eye-opening and relatable to our experiences here in Northern California. Reading the audit report has also prompted curiosity and the desire to do our own internal work to learn about and make changes in the way that systemic racism is perpetuated in our congregations and diocese.

The churchwide *Racial Justice Audit* originated from a request of General Convention to those charged with creating the budget for the Episcopal Church to set aside money for this work. This racial audit was born out of General Convention 2015 Resolutions A182 and C019, which urged “the Executive Council to conduct its own internal audit to assess to what extent, if at all, racial disparities and systemic racial injustices exist within the Church” and requested that “the Joint Standing Committee on Program, Budget and Finance consider a budget allocation of \$1.2 million for the Triennium for the implementation of this resolution.”

The monetary request in this resolution represented approximately 1% of the total operating budget for The Episcopal Church. We hope to prompt similar work in our diocese by passing this resolution and articulating that the work of rooting out systemic racism in our diocese is a priority of our Diocesan Convention.

The Commission for Intercultural Ministries has been engaged in this work for many years, most recently helping to facilitate Sacred Ground circles in the years since 2019. Good work, in large part funded by outside grants, will continue in 2022, including the re-configuration of Racial Healing workshops through a consultation with Dr. Catherine Meeks, Executive Director of the Absalom Jones Center for Racial Healing, as well as ministry toolkits and a project on Land Acknowledgments, led by The Rev. Canon Tina Campbell, which two congregations are piloting.

We seek to build on this foundation by learning more about and reflecting on our internal structures and cultures in the Diocese of Northern California. While we all can and should continue to pursue any and all avenues to do the work of truth-telling and becoming beloved community where we are, racial reconciliation is complex work requiring commitment and resources. Engaging outside, expert resources is an important part of helping us to hear and understand our truth, especially in a diocesan community that is mostly white. We propose that, beginning in 2023, we use this budgetary commitment to seek assistance from the Mission Institute or similar organizations to consult with us and help to carry out the audits, with the initial priorities being to audit these bodies in the diocese: The Commission for Intercultural Ministries, the Standing Committee, the Board of Trustees, the Commission on Ministry, and representative congregations from our seven deaneries.

After we evaluate the first year’s audits, we hope that the Board of Trustees will continue to allocate a similar or greater percentage of our diocesan budget toward the continuation of this

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work with our congregations. These audits and the expert consultation that accompanies them will certainly teach us about patterns and ways forward that can be shared with congregations and other organizations in the diocese. This will be an ongoing process of learning, and we can continue to discern about and change our priorities as our work unfolds with the long-term commitment of becoming Beloved Community within this diocese. This work must be a priority to truly live into our Baptismal vows to strive for justice and peace and to respect the dignity of every human being during this pivotal time in the life of our church and our world.

FISCAL IMPACT:

The Mission Institute, which facilitated the churchwide audit, is one possible resource for this work. Their offerings can be adapted to various contexts, but generally cost between \$10,000 and \$25,000 per audit, depending on the size of the organization.

Our diocesan operating budget is approximately \$2.5 million dollars, and so 1% of our budget would be in the \$25,000 range per year. Our diocese currently has a high level of operating reserves, and many of the program positions have been unfilled for several years now. We encourage the Board of Trustees to prioritize this work in our budget without raising apportionment levels, perhaps by drawing on operating reserves, or by treating this work as a budget priority as they make decisions about resources.