

Co19 OFFICERS GROUP CHARGED WITH RESPONSE TO RACIAL INJUSTICE

Membership

The Most Rev. Michael Bruce Curry	North Carolina, IV
The Rev. Gay Clark Jennings	Ohio, V
The Rev. Canon Dr. Michael Barlowe	California, VIII
Mr. N. Kurt Barnes	New York, II
The Rt. Rev. Mary Gray-Reeves	El Camino Real, VIII
The Honorable Byron Rushing	Massachusetts, I
The Rt. Rev. Dean E. Wolfe	New York, II

Staff:

Ms. Heidi J. Kim	Olympia, VIII
The Rev. Canon Stephanie Spellers	Long Island, NY, II
The Rev. Canon E. Mark Stevenson	Louisiana, IV
The Rev. Charles A. Wynder, Jr.	Massachusetts, I

CHANGES TO MEMBERSHIP

Secretary of the House of Deputies, the Rev. Canon Dr. Michael Barlowe was appointed immediately after General Convention. The Treasurer of General Convention, Kurt Barnes joined the group at the end of 2016. Bishop Dean Wolfe resigned his post in the House of Bishops and withdrew from the Co19 Officers Group in January 2017.

Mandate

“That the Presiding Bishop, President of the House of Deputies, Vice President of the House of Bishops, and Vice President of the House of Deputies be charged to lead, direct, and be present to assure and account for the Church’s work of racial justice and reconciliation.”

Summary of Work

With the passage of [Resolution 2015-C019 Work for Racial Injustice and Reconciliation](#), the 78th General Convention called the whole Church to take on the ministry of racial justice, reconciliation and healing. It also allocated \$2 million and – almost as important – called the Church’s top leadership to share responsibility for this critical work.

In February 2016, the Presiding Officers of the House of Bishops and House of Deputies (known hereafter as “The C019 Officers Group”) met in Austin, Texas, to follow through on that charge. Supported by staff members serving in the area of reconciliation and justice (Canon Stephanie Spellers, Ms. Heidi Kim, Rev. Chuck Wynder, as well as Canon Mark Stevenson, Ms. Tara Holley and Ms. Rebecca Blachly) and with wise counsel from Dr. Catherine Meeks, Ms. Diane Pollard, Dr. Cynthia Copeland and Brother Reginald Martin, the Presiding Officers shared their own gifts and stories, explored the Church’s historic and current activities, and began to discern a way forward. Rather than proceed with quick fixes or an instant program, they adopted two (2) essential practices: deep listening to stories and patient commitment to mutual transformation over the long haul.

The officers also paid close attention to legislation relevant to the Church’s work of racial reconciliation and justice, particularly the following:

- Resolution 2015-C019: Work for Racial Justice and Reconciliation (Establish Response to Systemic Racial Injustice)
- Resolution 2015-A011: Urge Advocacy for Policy Changes to End Mass Incarceration Practices (Recommit to Criminal Justice Reform and Study)
- Resolution 2015-A024: Direct Dioceses to Examine the Impact of the Doctrine of Discovery
- Resolution 2015-A182: Address Systemic Racial Injustice (Using Education, Community Dialogue and Internal Audit to Respond to All Forms of Racial Injustice)
- Resolution 2015-A183: Encourage Study of the Issue of Mass Incarceration (Recommended Book Study of the Triennium: “The New Jim Crow: Mass Incarceration in the Age of Colorblindness”)
- Resolution 2015-A302: Express Sorrow and Solidarity to Emmanuel AME Church, Charleston, SC (Letter of Condolences to Emanuel AME Church, Charleston, SC)
- Resolution 2015-C028: Utilize Available Background Resources in a Search Process (Disclosure of Criminal Records)
- Resolution 2015-D039 Send Delegation to AME Symposium on Race

- Resolution 2015-Do40: Develop Anti-Racism Youth Ministry Curriculum (Create Youth Anti-Racism Curricula)
- Resolution 2015-Do68: Support Ministries Against the School-to-Prison Pipeline (Dismantling School to Prison Pipeline)

On March 12, 2016, the C019 Officers Group communicated their initial direction with the House of Bishops, the House of Deputies and the wider Church. In particular, they suggested developing the following:

- Vehicles for sharing stories, developing relationships, and listening to the Other
- Age-appropriate formation and education opportunities for dismantling racism
- A summary of the Church's current ministries and gifts for racial justice and reconciliation
- A census or audit to gain a clearer understanding of the Church's demographic make-up and its historic and current participation in systems of racial injustice
- Gathering for listening with the wider Church, our neighbors and eventually including partners in the Global South

The Officers Group spent the rest of 2016 and beginning of 2017 listening, learning and discerning, again in close partnership with the Presiding Bishop's staff and in conversation with Executive Council (especially the Standing Committee on Advocacy and Networking), institutional leaders, and networks across and beyond The Episcopal Church.

In February 2017, the C019 Officers Group approved a draft comprehensive strategic vision, including a program budget detailing the \$2 million allocation. The House of Bishops and other key leaders offered feedback over the next three (3) months. The final vision – titled “Becoming Beloved Community: The Episcopal Church's Long-term Commitment to Racial Healing, Reconciliation, and Justice” – was then presented to the Church in May 2017.

Hundreds of Episcopalians participated in a May 16 webinar where the heads of the House of Bishops and House of Deputies together introduced the long-term vision and welcomed Episcopalians to join them in a comprehensive approach to racial healing and justice. That vision is presented via the following image, known as the “Becoming Beloved Community Labyrinth”:

BECOMING BELOVED COMMUNITY

THE EPISCOPAL CHURCH'S LONG-TERM COMMITMENT TO
RACIAL HEALING, RECONCILIATION AND JUSTICE

**Telling Our Truth
about Our Churches and Race**

Who is included and excluded?
What things have we done and left
undone regarding racial justice and
healing in the church?

via

Census and Audit

**Repairing the Breach
in Institutions and Society**

What social institutions and systems
are broken? How will we participate in
the repair, restoration, and healing of
institutions and systems?

via

**Criminal Justice and Re-entry Ministries
Immigration and Refugee Reform
Partnership with Episcopal HBCUs**



**Proclaiming the Dream
of Beloved Community**

What is the story of race and the vision of
Beloved Community in the wider communities
we inhabit? What collective commitments and
behaviors will foster healing, reconciliation
and justice?

via

Sacred Listening & Learning Engagements

**Practicing the Jesus Way
of Healing and Reconciliation**

How will each of us learn to be reconcilers,
healers, and justice-bearers? How will we
share stories and grow relationship across
dividing walls and seek Christ in the other?

via

**Beloved Community Story-sharing Campaign
Multilingual, All Ages Formation and Training
Pilgrimage and Retreats
Liturgical Resources**

In August 2017, the Presiding Bishop's Staff released "Becoming Beloved Community Where You Are," a practical resource for individuals, congregations and communities to apply the original Church-wide vision to their contexts. Dioceses and congregations across the Church reported the resource was especially useful for bridging the gap between Church-wide initiatives and ministry on the ground. Many dioceses, including Arkansas, El Camino Real, Iowa, Indiana/Northern Indiana, Southwestern Virginia and even more individual congregations and ministries organized their own Becoming Beloved Community sessions and shared wisdom with the wider Church.

Reconciliation and Communications staff partnered yet again in November 2017 to offer “Preparing to Become the Beloved Community,” an Advent formation curriculum with materials suited for usage any time of year. The team also launched a corresponding social media campaign with daily reflections, blog posts and/or exercises to foster racial healing, reconciliation and conversation.

The Becoming Beloved Community vision also caught the imagination of ecumenical and secular organizations. By Winter 2018, we were in partnership talks with our full communion partners the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America, which shares the Episcopal Church’s struggle to embrace and honor different cultures and races. The W. K. Kellogg Foundation also expressed strong interest in Becoming Beloved Community as a primary framework for engaging faith groups in the foundation’s \$200 million effort to end racism in America. The team also made promising presentations with the J.C. Flowers Foundation, with a pending ask for \$1 million to support an ongoing Racial Reconciliation Fund.

These overarching efforts ran alongside specific initiatives in the four (4) quadrants of the labyrinth: TELLING the Truth about Our Churches and Race, PROCLAIMING the dream of Beloved Community, PRACTICING the way of love in the pattern of Jesus; and REPAIRING the breach in society and institutions. For the most up-to-date stories and resources for work in this area, please go to The Episcopal Church’s website and click follow links for Racial Reconciliation: www.episcopalchurch.org/reconciliation:

TELLING THE TRUTH ABOUT OUR CHURCHES AND RACE

Core Questions: Who is included and excluded? What things have we done and left undone regarding racial justice and healing in the church?

- a. *Census of The Episcopal Church (related to Resolution 2015-A182)*
If we seek reconciliation, healing and new life, it begins with telling the truth about The Episcopal Church’s racial composition, especially given the Church’s relationship to the complex history of race in the seventeen (17) nations we call home.

The Domestic and Foreign Missionary Society [DFMS] is contracting with Delaware-based North Star Strategies to assist in conducting a more comprehensive, multi-nation, Church-wide census and thus to gain a clearer understanding of the demographics of the Church. They are expected to begin in early 2018 with the Dioceses of Connecticut, Washington, Atlanta, Georgia, Minnesota, San Joaquin and El Camino Real (pending as of Blue Book Report deadline). Once the models and methods have been tested and improved, the process will spread to more dioceses over a three (3) year period.

- b. *Audit Church’s Participation in Racial Injustice and in Reconciliation (related to Resolutions 2015-A182 and A2015-024)*

The audit process will gather information about our historic and current participation in systems of racial injustice, as well as how Episcopal groups participate in racial reconciliation and justice. The Officers Group has charged staff to engage provincial leadership, the Executive Council Committee on Anti-Racism and legal experts to design a process that accounts for 1) the make-up of major Episcopal bodies and 2) processes of recruiting, selecting, hiring and training that reinforce or transform Church committees, staff and leadership. Initial results are expected by the 79th General Convention.

PROCLAIMING THE DREAM OF BELOVED COMMUNITY

Core Questions: What is the story of race and the vision of Beloved Community in the wider communities we inhabit? What collective commitments and behaviors will foster healing, reconciliation and justice?

- a. *Regional Public Sacred Listening and Learning Engagements around Race (related to Resolution 2015-A182 and Resolution 2015-A024)*

As we speak the truth about the history and reality of race in a particular place, we can then take steps to re-imagine the dream of God in those contexts. The Church is especially well positioned to convene diverse, multi-sector circles where partners can name what Beloved Community would look like and what they will do to foster it.

The “Becoming Beloved Community Where You Are” resource offered specific steps for congregations and dioceses seeking to host regional public sacred listening and learning sessions. The team also worked closely with a few locations to create sessions, with the hope that the whole Church could join in watching and learning from one community’s reflection:

- *Washington National Cathedral:* Co-sponsored and organized series of events in 2017 and 2018 designed to engage congregation, city and wider community. Each livestreamed to a broad, extended audience.
- *Province IX:* Organized an August 2017 gathering of women leaders in the Latin American dioceses (Province IX) in Panama, led by Catherine Meeks, Ema Rosero-Nordalm and Heidi Kim
- *Diocese of Southwestern Virginia:* Supported and amplified Fall 2017 diocesan campaign featuring three (3) sessions across the diocese
- *In progress for 2018:* Episcopal Health Foundation/Diocese of Texas; Brotherhood of St. Andrew/Diocese of Atlanta; Diocese of Southern Ohio

PRACTICING THE WAY OF LOVE IN THE PATTERN OF JESUS

Core Questions: How will we grow as reconcilers, healers, and justice-bearers? How will we actively grow relationships across dividing walls and seek Christ in the other?

- a. *Beloved Community Story-Sharing Campaign (related to Resolution 2015-A182)*
Funded chiefly by a Constable Grant, the Campaign calls Episcopalians to tell and receive stories of faith, race and difference within our Churches, between diverse Churches, and

beyond the Church in community sessions and individual meetings. Led by Project Coordinator Hershey Mallette Stephens, Curriculum Consultant Day Smith Pritchartt and an Advisory Group, the Campaign will release a Story-Sharing Guidebook in March 2018. Six (6) young adult interns across the Church will collect stories and train groups in story-sharing. Churches can then use the Episcopal Asset Map and other resources to link virtually and share stories across cultural/regional divides, culminating in a story-sharing event at General Convention.

- b. *Multilingual, Multigenerational Formation for Dismantling Racism (related to Resolution 2015-D040):*
- Overall, Church leaders turned from one-size-fits-all approaches to training and celebrated the breadth of trainings and programs such as Seeing the Face of God in Each Other, VISIONS Inc., Crossroads, Kaleidoscope, The People’s Institute and more.
 - In May 2017, DFMS entered into formal partnership with the new Absalom Jones Center for Racial Healing in the Diocese of Atlanta. The Center will be a hub for developing and sharing a new generation of resources for racial justice and reconciliation. Materials in Spanish and for youth groups are already in development or in trials.
 - In November 2017, the Executive Council Committee on Anti-Racism released a white paper and new set of training guidelines for effective training to dismantle racism, with support from the Presiding Bishop’s staff.
- c. *Liturgical Formation (related to Resolution 2015-A182):* The Standing Commission on Liturgy and Music identified and developed a rich collection of worship resources for racial reconciliation. Upon approval they will be featured on the Episcopal Church’s racial reconciliation site at www.episcopalchurch.org/reconciliation.
- d. *Book Studies (related to Resolution 2015- A183):* The “Becoming Beloved Community Where You Are” resource recommended that Episcopalians organize book study groups to read a carefully curated set of books, including Michelle Alexander’s *The New Jim Crow*.
- e. *Reconciliation and Justice Pilgrimages:*
- Episcopalians put feet on our faith with journeys like the Young Adult Pilgrimage to Ferguson (Fall 2015), a planned Young Adult Pilgrimage to either Navajoland or Standing Rock, and various diocesan pilgrimages.
 - The House of Bishops’ Fall 2017 gathering in Alaska turned bishops into pilgrims who prayed, witnessed and walked closely with indigenous brothers and sisters.
 - Members of the Presiding Bishops’ team also joined two (2) Episcopal Relief & Development reconciliation pilgrimages to slavery-related sites in Ghana in 2017. A film and teaching tool on the pilgrimages will be available prior to General Convention.

REPAIRING THE BREACH IN SOCIETY AND INSTITUTIONS

Core Questions: What social institutions and systems are broken? How will we participate in the repair, restoration, and healing of institutions and systems?

- a. *Partnership with Episcopal Historically Black Colleges and Universities (HBCUs)*
 - The Co19 Officers Group is passionate about repairing the Church’s relationship to St. Augustine’s and Voorhees, the two (2) historically Black schools founded by the Episcopal Church. In addition to ongoing block grants to both schools, the Co19 Officers Group dedicated funding and staff time to improve essential administrative function, fundraising efforts and academic/community programming.

- b. *Criminal Justice Ministries (related to Resolutions 2015- A183, 2015- D068, and 2015-A011)*
 - The Office of Government Relations [OGR] led advocacy efforts to change federal sentencing policies that fuel mass incarceration. Many dioceses, congregations, and groups worked to block the school-to-prison pipeline (of special note is All Our Children, which hosted its first national gathering in January 2018) and to accompany people exiting prison and struggling to reenter community (note partnerships between New York City Episcopal parishes and the J. C. Flowers Foundation).
 - At the Church-wide level, the Presiding Bishop’s team co-sponsored two (2) convenings of prison re-entry ministries (Louisiana, March 2017; Nevada, November 2017).
 - The team also assembled an Advisory Group led by formerly incarcerated people, the first step in a project to develop re-entry programs that address the spiritual, physical, economic and emotional needs of formerly incarcerated people and their families.

- c. *Immigration and Refugee Reform:*
 - In Summer 2017, the Co19 Officers Group took special note of the link between racism and immigration/refugee policies emerging in the United States. They welcomed Racial Reconciliation and Justice staff to join colleagues in OGR, Episcopal Migration Ministries [EMM], Ethnic Ministries and regional and local networks.
 - Episcopal groups dedicated to immigration reform partnered more fully in 2017. Staff from OGR, Racial Reconciliation, EMM, Ethnic Ministries worked to support Deferred Action for Childhood Arrivals (the “Dream Act”) and other programs to protect and welcome immigrant neighbors.
 - The November 2017 Episcopal Revival in the Diocese of San Joaquin – titled “Called to Be a Safe Place for All God’s People” – highlighted the powerful synergy between evangelism, racial justice and immigration reform.

- In January 2018, leaders from EMM, OGR and Racial Reconciliation proposed a process for sponsoring joint efforts like EMM's Love God, Love Neighbor Training and Partners in Welcome project.

2019-2021 TRIENNIUM

The C019 Officers Group understands that Becoming Beloved Community is a long-term commitment, and they urge the General Convention to dedicate significant funding for the effort well into the next decade. 2016-2018 budget expenditures for this ministry will amount to less than \$1 million, which means more than \$1 million will be available to continue the work in the 2019-2021 triennium. Those funds will be essential for pursuing efforts in all four (4) parts of the labyrinth, including the following:

- Further Census and Audit data gathering and analysis in dioceses, provinces, seminaries, House of Bishops, House of Deputies and other Episcopal institutions.
- More Sacred Listening and Learning Engagements will be held across the Church, many of them locally sponsored with consultation from the Church wide team.
- Beloved Community Story-Sharing Campaign will spread to even more of our neighbors and ecumenical/interfaith partners, and include more podcast and/or video components, all of which will be featured via social media and smoothly transferred to Archives.
- Dismantling Racism/Anti-Racism formation will emphasize state-of-the-art training of trainers, and the development of even more resources for understanding and dismantling racism in diverse cultural contexts.
- The Church will learn from and call upon the National Association of Episcopal Schools, an ally committed to preparing young people to forge Beloved Community.
- We will devote more resources and energy to partnerships with ecumenical and secular organizations that address the growing threat to people of color in the U.S. and around the world, especially focusing on criminal justice reform, poverty and immigration/refugee policy.