

PRESIDING OFFICERS' ADVISORY GROUP ON BELOVED COMMUNITY IMPLEMENTATION

Membership

The Rev. Edwin Johnson, <i>Chair</i>	Massachusetts, I	2021
The Rev. Meg Wagner, <i>Vice-Chair</i>	Iowa, VI	2021
Mr. Rob Corcoran	Texas, VII	2021
Ms. Holly Doll	North Dakota, VI	2021
The Rev. Canon John Kitagawa	Arizona, VIII	2021
Professor Brant Lee	Ohio, V	2021
The Rev. Canon Juan I. Marquez	Dominican Republic, IX	2021
Dr. Dora Mbuwayesango	North Carolina, IV	2021
Mr. Gary Moore	Central Gulf Coast, IV	2021
The Rt. Rev. Phoebe Roaf	West Tennessee, IV	2021
The Rev. Ema Rosero-Nordalm	Massachusetts, I	2021
The Hon. Byron Rushing	Massachusetts, I	2021
The Rev. Fabio Sotelo	Atlanta, IV	2021
The Rt. Rev. Andrew Waldo	Upper South Carolina, IV	2021
The Most Rev. Michael Curry, <i>Ex Officio</i>	North Carolina, IV	
The Rev. Gay Clark Jennings, <i>Ex Officio</i>	Ohio, V	

Mandate

2018-D002 Funding the Work of The Beloved Community

Resolved, the House of Deputies concurring, That the General Convention request that the Joint Standing Committee on Program, Budget and Finance allocate funding for the triennium for the implementation of additional work of organizing our efforts to respond to racial injustice and grow a Beloved Community of healers, justice makers and reconcilers for the implementation of this resolution; and be it further

Resolved, That such monies shall be utilized exclusively to make grants to agencies and dioceses and other affiliated entities of The Episcopal Church for the establishment of such programmatic activities aimed at addressing the issue of Racial Reconciliation. Such activities may include, but not be limited to, speaker series, sacred conversations, Racial Reconciliation Workshops, and other activities that promote the purposes of this resolution; and be it further

Resolved, That this General Convention directs, consistent with established policies and procedures, that The Executive Council be charged with the establishment of all criteria, and procedures associated with the awarding of such grants, and that such criteria and procedures be established as soon as practical, after the conclusion of this 79th General Convention such Committee or Office that Executive Council shall designate with implementation of the grants shall have published the criteria and be ready to accept applications submitted for such grants, and that the entities receiving such grants shall report back to the Committee or Office that Executive Council shall have designated on the usage of its grant, and that the Executive Council shall report back to the General Convention in 2021 on the usage of the funding allocation.

EXPLANATION:

The 78th General Convention of The Episcopal Church recognized, by the adoption of Resolution 2015-C019, that, despite repeated efforts at anti-racism training as well as racial justice and racial reconciliation initiatives—including the passage of more than 30 General Convention resolutions dating back to 1952, that the abomination and sin of racism continues to plague our society and our Church at great cost to human life and human dignity.

And, in the wake of the brutal, overtly racist murders of nine of our Christian brothers and sisters of Mother Emanuel African Methodist Episcopal Church on June 17, 2015; numerous inexcusable deaths of unarmed black men and youth at the hands of law enforcement personnel; and the moral atrocity of mass incarceration in which a hugely disproportionate number of persons of color have been unfairly caught in the net of an unjust criminal justice system, the 78th General Convention established as a top priority of The Episcopal Church in the upcoming triennium the challenging and difficult work of racial reconciliation through prayer, teaching, engagement, and action.

2015-C019 charged the Presiding Bishop, President of the House of Deputies, Vice President of the House of Bishops, and Vice President of the House of Deputies to lead, direct, and be present to assure and account for the Church's work of racial justice and reconciliation. They articulated a framework for that work, entitled *Becoming Beloved Community: The Episcopal Church's Long-term Commitment to Racial Healing, Reconciliation and Justice*, which directs additional work in the area of racial reconciliation.

As we head into this next triennium, we are faced with the realities of a resurgence of white supremacy, the increased normalization of personal and institutionalized fear of people of color, and overtly dehumanizing policies being enacted on refugees and immigrants—in addition to all of the injustices that prompted the 78th General Convention to pass 2015-C019.

We call upon our Church to make an investment of significant resources to hone in on and build capacity among our current and future leaders within The Episcopal Church in order to impact the practices of telling the truth, repairing the breach, practicing Jesus' way of love, and proclaiming the dream of Beloved Community.

In order to make our commitment to Becoming Beloved Community a reality in a world that desperately needs it, local churches, dioceses, and agencies must have the resources to engage this work in their contexts. We believe that these grants will make it possible for churches, dioceses, and other agencies of The Episcopal Church to begin to live into the commitment of the Church to Becoming Beloved Community in new and life-giving ways. In the same way that communities of practice have developed from the Genesis Church Planting grants that were given in the 2015-2018 triennium, we imagine that a network of grant recipients could develop to share best practices, resources, etc. among themselves and with the whole church. Provinces and dioceses that have been unable to afford to provide the canonically mandated trainings would be able to do so. These grants could also make it possible for the development of much-needed culturally appropriate and relevant resources that could be broadly shared with the church through the Absalom Jones Center for Racial Healing.

Summary of Work

Introduction

Greetings Church! We are the Presiding Officer's Advisory Group on Beloved Community Implementation. We were formed in January 2019 and were charged to offer our consult and collaboration around two major aspects of our Beloved Community Implementation: the distribution of grant funds and the convening of a Beloved Community Summit. These critical measures grew out of Resolutions 2018-D002 (Grant) and 2018-A228 (Summit) of the 79th General Convention in Austin, TX. Becoming Beloved Community is a long journey, a journey that spans years, decades and generations. Inspired by Jesus and moved by the Spirit, we've been called to rooted, radical, and collaborative action to move our church forward. In the words of Mordecai, we believe our Church has been called and prepared "for such a time as this" to bring our deep faith and wisdom to the work of becoming beloved community. Over the last two years we've partnered with Executive Council to disburse \$438,400 (plus an additional \$100,000 authorized by Executive Council) thus far and are in the midst of our third and final round of grants this triennium. When the pandemic forced us to postpone our long-planned in-person Beloved Community Summit and Conference (originally to take place May 5th-7th 2020), we convened a convocation across three evenings in July that drew well over 1000 participants from across the Church. More details about the grants, our grantees, our work of convening, and other work can be found below in our report, followed by our broader recommendations and resolutions.

May Summit & Conference Planning

While the previously mentioned in-person Summit in May did not happen, developments that occurred in its planning are worth mentioning. We had 38 confirmed speakers, presenters, and workshop leaders for the conference, which was to be held at the Cathedral in Minneapolis, Minnesota. Little did we know at the time that we were planning to descend upon a part of this country that would be so soon rocked by violence against black people. This diverse group included members of the different ethnic/racial groups, long-time and well-known champions for Racial Justice alongside new and emerging leaders, and our Presiding Officers. The first day, The Summit, was designed to bring together our grantees and other deeply committed leaders. The next two days were designed for a broader audience. The work of racial justice is some of the most difficult and isolating work there is, especially for the leaders. Our aim was to strengthen the movement by offering enrichment, inspiration and most importantly community and networking for those doing this work across the church. While we cannot determine where the Spirit will move us and the church, we are hopeful that such a gathering can be held in the triennium to come; and when it occurs, we are certain that it will both shake and strengthen our foundations as the Jesus movement for everyone.

Once we had determined that we would postpone the conference for a virtual one later on in the year, we held a virtual gathering of leaders, grant recipients, and long-time champions of racial justice on May 7th, what would have been the final night of the conference. Over 100 communities were represented, with our siblings from the Convocation of Episcopal Churches in Europe staying up until 2am to be with us. That gathering alone spawned new projects, new collaborations, and many of our strongest grant applications for the second round of grants.

July BBC Now Convocations

We held three virtual convocations the evenings of July 29th, 30th, and 31st. They came together to form “BBC Now,” and the days focused on Truth, Justice and Healing respectively. The inspiration for this particular focus came from work that Canon Spellers and the staff had done to sharpen their wider church response around Becoming Beloved Community during this tumultuous summer. The gatherings were overwhelmingly well-attended, with two of the three days eclipsing the limit of 1000 registrants and roughly 1600 unique participants engaging overall.

The day centered on “Truth” featured several speakers/presenters who highlighted the transformative power of truth-telling in their contexts. They offered strategies and approaches that created environments where those most impacted could share freely and the broader community could listen most closely. In the time that followed, small groups brainstormed together around ways to implement this in their ministry settings and communities.

The day centered on “Justice” highlighted several communities whose ministries were deeply interwoven with local movements for racial justice. In the midst of this previous summer's reckoning

around racial justice, they each provided unique methods and opportunities to work with and alongside the individuals, organizers, and groups in our midst. There was also a broader call and invitation to action together with the Absalom Jones Center for racial healing.

The day centered on “Healing” became a sacred space for all through a sacred healing circle. Seven persons from different racial and ethnic backgrounds, generations, and regions shared moving stories of their experiences of racism and their work around becoming beloved community. In addition to being a major blessing, this time also lifted up a model that our communities could use both during and beyond the pandemic to center marginalized stories and ignite the genuine reconciliation that our communities need.

At the end of our time we felt proud, blessed, and determined. We were proud to have pivoted so well in response to both the Covid-19 pandemic and the rising tide of racial tensions in the United States. Informed by this, we will strive to make subsequent in-person “hybrid” gatherings to continue to have such broad participation. We were blessed to have been able to build and establish new networks, the most essential goal for the Summit, and were blessed by the deep sharing and participation of registrants and presenters. Finally, we emerged determined to build on this momentum and move the work forward through our work of granting and gathering. While we have not completed the work of becoming beloved community, we took an enormous step forward with God’s help.

Report on Funding

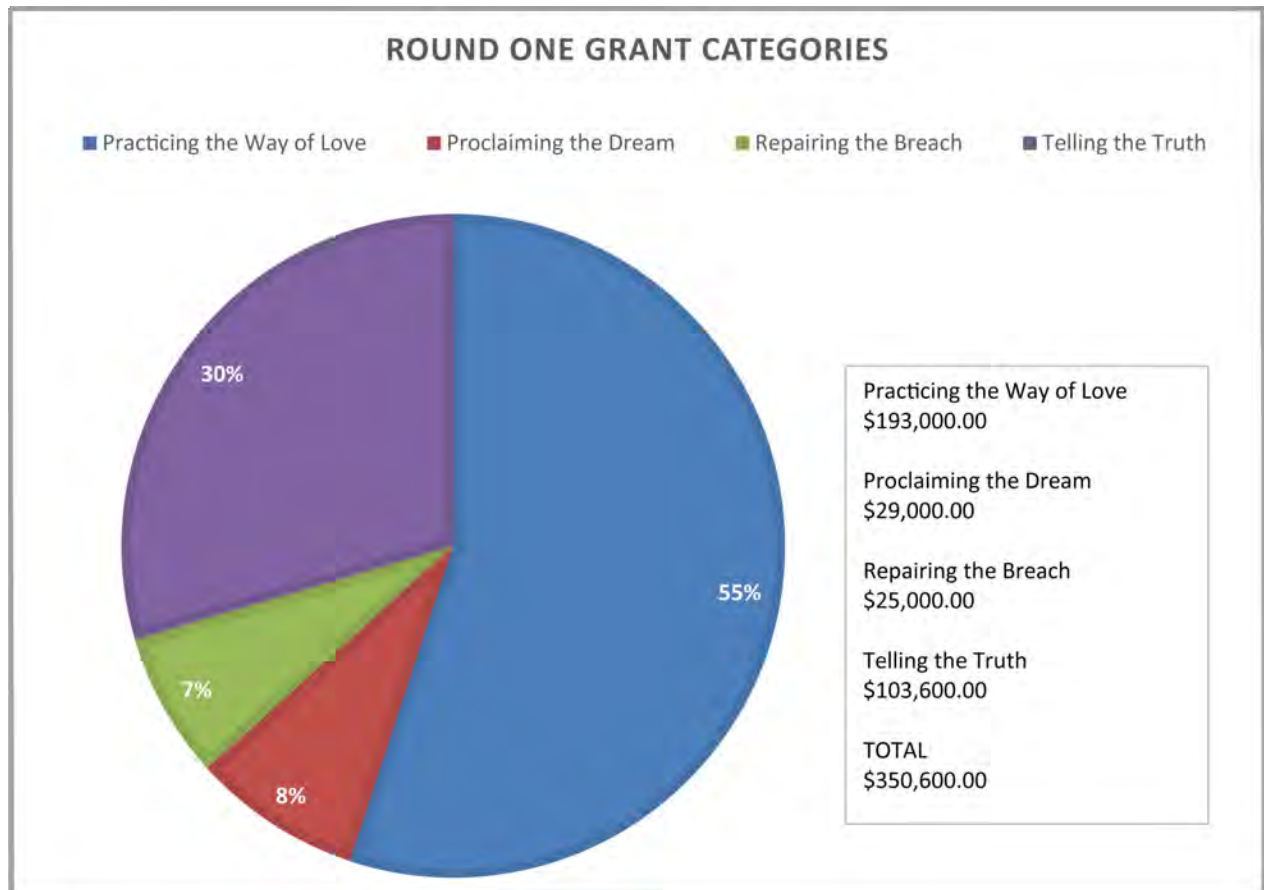
The triennial budget set aside \$750,000 for the fulfillment of resolutions 2018-D002 and 2018-A228. The Advisory Group approved \$350,600 in the first round of grants distributed in late Fall 2019. When the pandemic struck, we gave grantees an opportunity to extend their grant reporting and adapt or pause their plans as needed to ensure peoples’ safety. We held an online session in May for grant recipients and those who had planned to attend the Summit to share the challenges they were facing and how their plans were being altered.

As the pandemic raged on and its disproportionate toll on BIPOC communities became clear, and in the wake of the murder of George Floyd and the increased level of attention in the country to acts of racial violence, our second rounds of grants focused on providing a rapid response to those twin pandemics of COVID and racial violence. We approved grants totaling \$87,800 from our original grant funds plus an additional \$100,000 received from Executive Council for that purpose.

As of this report, we have spent \$2,117 on translation services for grant applications, summit materials, and press releases

Grant Reporting

In the first round of grants, we received 73 applications and awarded 42 grants totaling \$350,600. We offered two different grant types, Seed Grants (up to \$10,000) geared to groups launching new projects and/or evolving the scale of an existing project and Impact Grants (up to \$20,000) aimed primarily at growing capacity, impact and reach of communities and institutions already doing work to advance racial justice, healing, and reconciliation. In the first round we awarded 21 Impact Grants and 21 Seed Grants to 12 churches, 18 dioceses, 10 Episcopal organizations, one seminary, and the Convocation of Episcopal Churches in Europe.



Round One Grants went to:

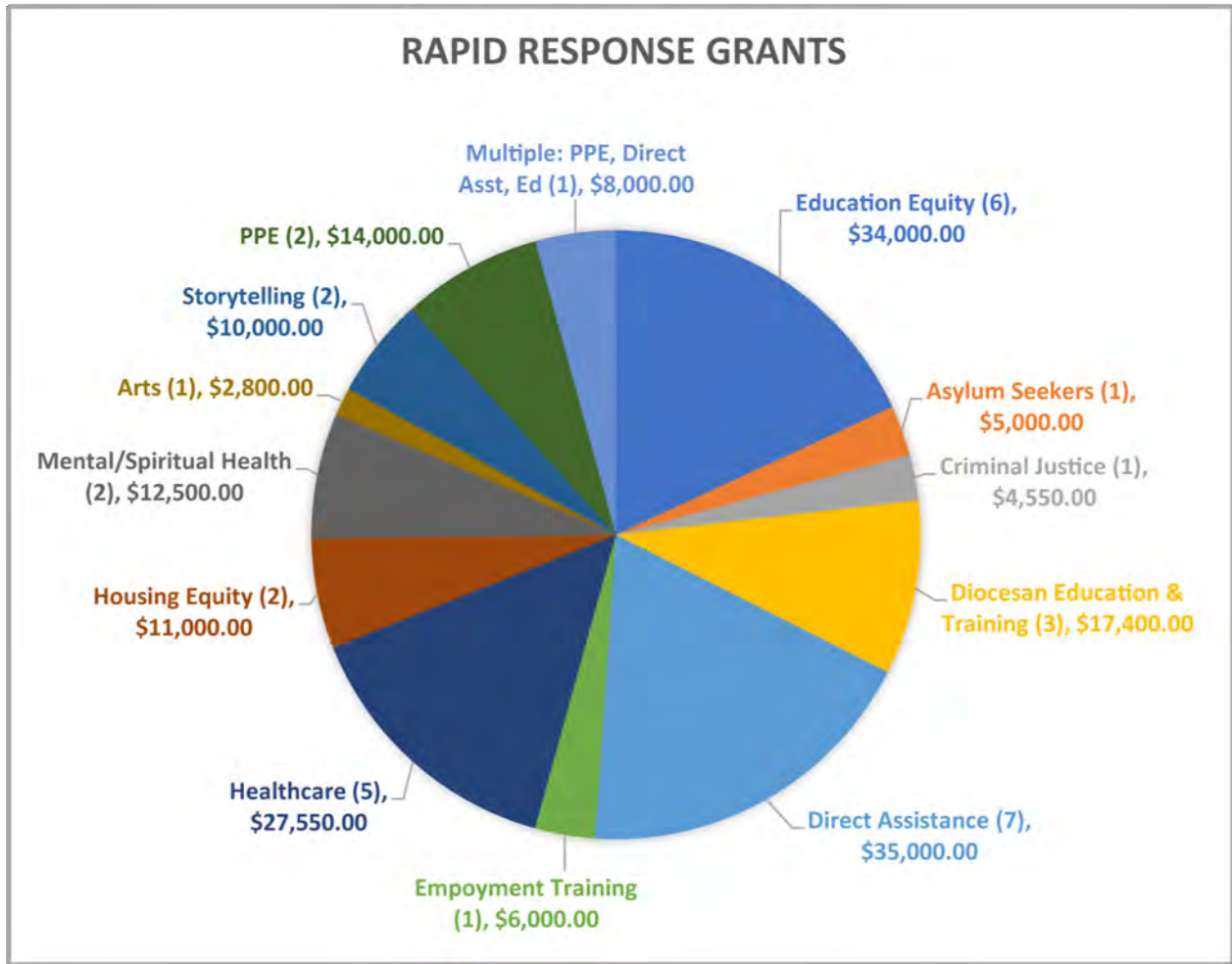
Groups primarily focused on or working with Communities of Color (12)	\$104,500.00
Dialogues/partnerships between Communities of Color and white Communities (7)	\$56,500.00
Churchwide/diocesan wide data gathering (3)	\$33,000.00
Primarily focused on education/training of White Communities to mobilize for justice (18)	\$131,600.00
Intercultural training for diverse organizations (3)	\$25,000.00
TOTAL	\$350,600.00

Rapid Response Grants

In 2020 we dispersed \$187,800 in Rapid Response Grants, thanks to an additional \$100,000 dedicated to this purpose by Executive Council. We received 99 grant requests and were able to fund 33 grants for groups working specifically to address the racial disparities laid bare by the coronavirus pandemic and for groups working to respond to racist violence and police reform. 21 of the grants went to churches, 7 to dioceses, 4 to Episcopal organizations, and 1 to a province. All proposed projects were required to demonstrate adherence to relevant local, diocesan and state public health guidelines for gathering and interaction.

Rapid Response Grants went to projects primarily serving these communities:

Black (8)	\$41,900.00
Black and Indigenous (1)	\$3,500.00
Indigenous (1)	\$9,000.00
Black and Latino/a/x (4)	\$23,000.00
Black, Indigenous, Hispanic, & Middle Eastern (1)	\$8,000.00
Black, Indigenous, & Latino/a/x (1)	\$9,000.00
Haitian (1)	\$6,000.00
Hispanic/Latino/a/x (5)	\$29,000.00
Immigrant/Refugee (1)	\$5,000.00
Mixed, with a majority of People of Color (10)	\$53,400.00
TOTAL	\$187,800.00



Plans moving forward

We have been energized by the work thus far and will continue our work up until the next General Convention. We are receiving proposals for the final round of grants and are leaning into partnerships to ensure even greater reach and diversity. We will be joining and hosting gatherings prior to the convention, including a series that will culminate at the convention itself. We will also be receiving, collecting, and sharing stories from grant recipients around their work and impact. This feels particularly important to us as this work must continue to multiply for us to be able to arrive at where God is calling us.

Beyond the next convention we are most hopeful that this work will root itself more deeply in the work of all the committees and commissions of the church. This is already happening with the audits and other reviews that have unfolded and we are excited to offer our guidance and companionship to all.

Some Words For The Church

The racial injustice and violence in this country has impacted us greatly. So many of us must worry for the health and safety of ourselves, of our children, and of our siblings in Jesus. The news cycle often does not bring us many signs of hope and yet our hope abounds. There are more people committed to this work in our church than we ever imagined. As such, if you find yourself alone, isolated, resisted and exhausted with this work please reach out to us. We are with you and we fully believe that together we can make it to the promised land.

Proposed resolutions

A100 Grants for Becoming Beloved Community

Resolved, the House of _____ concurring, that the 80th General Convention affirms that building the Beloved Community is a primary way this Church fulfills “the mission to restore all people to unity with God and each other in Christ” (Book of Common Prayer, page 855); and be it further

Resolved, that the 80th General Convention recognizes, affirms and encourages the pursuit of racial healing, justice and reconciliation being carried out in creative and powerful ways at the local level; and be it further

Resolved, that the 80th General Convention supports these local efforts with finances, and the human resources of the Church; and be it further

Resolved, that the 80th General Convention budgets the sum of \$400,000.00 to be administered by the Presiding Officers' Advisory Group for Beloved Community Implementation exclusively to make grants to churches, agencies, dioceses, and other affiliated entities of The Episcopal Church for the work of Becoming Beloved Community.

EXPLANATION

The grants made possible by 2018-D002 during the last triennium were impactful, and by the end of 2021 will have empowered over 100 ministries across the country. The grant-making process itself revealed a plethora of serious and creative initiatives to address racism in local communities. Funds granted made it possible for programs to get off the ground, or to be strengthened for greater impact. Because the process was not able to fund all the worthy applicants, it is clear that another pool of funds would be well utilized for the building of the Beloved Community.

A101 Virtual Gatherings with Ethnic Ministries

Resolved, the House of _____ concurring, that the 80th General Convention affirms that building the Beloved Community is a primary way this Church fulfills “the mission to restore all people to unity with God and each other in Christ” (Book of Common Prayer, page 855); and be it further

Resolved, that the 80th General Convention shall mandate the Presiding Officers’ Advisory Group for Beloved Community Implementation to work with each of the ethnic ministries of the Church to facilitate gathering local leaders of their communities in virtual convocations to dialogue about the specific ways systemic racism afflicts their communities, and to develop recommendations to the 81st General Convention for future actions to build the Beloved Community; and be it further

Resolved, that the 80th General Convention tasks the Presiding Officers’ Advisory Group for Beloved Community Implementation to report on these virtual convocations and their recommendations to the 81st General Convention; and be it further

Resolved, that the 80th General Convention budgets the sum of \$50,000.00 to fund these virtual

EXPLANATION

The Episcopal church has long recognized that racism is woven through the fabric not only of society but also the Church. The General Convention and the House of Bishops of the Episcopal Church have historically made strong statements condemning the sin of racism and promoting the building of the Beloved Community. It is understood that racism is not a binary Black-White issue. This resolution seeks to empower our diverse ethnic communities to gather to dialogue about the specific ways they experience oppression of systemic racism, and to give them voice to recommend concrete steps for building the Beloved Community.

A102 Virtual Gatherings with Interim Bodies and Other Ministries of the Church

Resolved, the House of _____ concurring, that the 80th General Convention affirms that building the Beloved Community is a primary way this Church fulfills “the mission to restore all people to unity with God and each other in Christ” (Book of Common Prayer, page 855); and be it further

Resolved, that the 80th General Convention shall mandate the Presiding Officers’ Advisory Group for Beloved Community Implementation to work with the Interim Bodies and other ministries of the Church to facilitate Virtual gatherings to dialogue about the specific ways systemic racism influences and afflicts ability to participate in building the Beloved Community through their ministries, and to develop recommendations to the 81st General Convention for future actions to build the Beloved Community; and be it further

Resolved, that the 80th General Convention tasks the Presiding Officers’ Advisory Group for Beloved Community Implementation to report on these virtual convocations and their recommendations to the 81st General Convention; and, be it further

Resolved, that the 80th General Convention budgets the sum of \$100,000.00 to fund these virtual gatherings.

Explanation

The Episcopal church has long recognized that racism is woven through the fabric not only of society but also the Church. The General Convention and the House of Bishops of the Episcopal Church have historically made strong statements condemning the sin of racism and promoting the building of the Beloved Community. Simply put, it is time to engage every aspect of the Church in meaningful dialogue about the ways racism afflicts its ministries, and to develop ways to address identified issues, all in an effort to build the Beloved Community.