

BECOMING BELOVED COMMUNITY WHERE YOU ARE

**A Resource for Individuals & Ministries Seeking
Racial Justice, Healing, Reckoning & Reconciliation**



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www.episcopalchurch.org/ministries/racial-reconciliation

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The vision of Beloved Community rises from the Bible’s most important commandments: to love God and love our neighbors, in whom we see the face of God.

***We understand Beloved Community to be
the community that loves as God intends ...***

*where we speak truth and dismantle hierarchies of human value,
where we seek right relationship with one another and creation,
where each person and culture honors and protects others as equally
beloved parts of the human family of God,
and where we counter human selfishness –
the true root of sin and racism – with the selfless love of Jesus.*

When we speak of “Becoming Beloved Community”, we are not referring to a curriculum or a one-size-fits-all path. The Becoming Beloved Community vision – presented by the Episcopal Church’s key leaders in May 2017 and continually revisited since – is a practical and theological framework guiding Episcopalians into racial healing, justice and reconciliation. It is a positive and biblically based ideal – a dream we strive toward, not just something we are against. It is the end toward which the Jesus Movement points.

Because this is lifelong spiritual formation, and not simply a training or program, we urge you to allow Becoming Beloved Community to shape your whole life. It may be helpful to imagine a labyrinth as you act, reflect and pray. After all, on the road toward reconciliation and healing, we travel around corners, make sharp turns, pass fellow travelers, and double back into quadrants we have visited before, each time discovering a fresh revelation or challenge. Having come to the center, we discover we are never truly finished, so we stand and return to walk the path yet again.



In our experience, the path toward justice, healing and Beloved Community covers four interrelated areas of engagement and commitment. It also allows us to keep our own Baptismal Promises. Notice the synergy between the commitments on the path toward Beloved Community and our Baptismal Covenant ...

BELOVED COMMUNITY AND THE BAPTISMAL COVENANT

Telling the Truth about Our Churches & Race	<p>Baptismal Promise: We will persevere in resisting evil, and whenever we fall into sin, repent and return to the Lord.</p> <p>Labyrinth Reflection: What racial/cultural/ethnic groups are in our church? Whose culture and story shapes our common life, leadership and worship? How has our church excluded or embraced the presence, story and power of different racial/cultural/ethnic groups over time?</p>
Proclaiming the Dream of Beloved Community	<p>Baptismal Promise: We will proclaim by word and example the Good News of God in Christ.</p> <p>Labyrinth Reflection: What does Beloved Community look like for you and your neighbors? How could you preach, pray, and engage in public witness around Beloved Community? How could that vision shape your corporate worship and prayer?</p>
Practicing Jesus’s Way of Healing Love	<p>Baptismal Promise: We will seek and serve Christ in all persons, loving our neighbors as ourselves.</p> <p>Labyrinth Reflection: How will we grow as reconcilers, healers, and justice-bearers? What activities, practices, learning, and experiences would (trans)form us? How will we share stories, grow relationship, and seek Christ in each other and our neighbors?</p>
Repairing the Breach in Society & Institutions	<p>Baptismal Promise: We will strive for justice and peace among all people & respect the dignity of every human being.</p> <p>Labyrinth Reflection: What institutions and systems most bear the signs of racial injustice? How will we participate in the repair, restoration, and healing of people, institutions, and systems?</p>

Walking toward Beloved Community is a lifelong adventure, fueled by the power of the Holy Spirit, and no Christian should ever expect to arrive at the destination. Rooted in our baptismal promises, we join and take up the commitment to the loving, liberating, and life-giving way of Jesus.

TRUTH-TELLING – Telling the Truth About Our Churches and Race

“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.”
(Becoming Beloved Community Vision, p. 9)



Walking the Labyrinth ... *What racial/cultural/ethnic groups are in our church? Whose culture and story shapes our common life, leadership, worship? How has our church excluded or embraced the presence, story and power of different racial/cultural/ethnic groups?*

Racial Justice Audits

Reflect with the Racial Justice Audit of Episcopal Leadership. How does the audit – and the experiences and patterns it reveals – apply to your context and leadership bodies? Conduct an audit of your church or organization with this adapted audit handout.

Truth-telling about Church Participation in Racial Injustice

What is your church’s history of participation in behaviors and structures of racial injustice? In racial justice and also healing? Interview elders, research church and diocesan documents, newspaper accounts, city records, etc. To learn more:

- Peter Jarrett-Schell, Reparations: A Plan for the Church
- Anglican Church of Canada Truth and Reconciliation Process
- Diocese of Iowa Season of Truth and Healing
- Diocese of New York Reparations Committee
- Episcopal Indigenous Ministries Native Voices
- Memorial Church-Baltimore Reparations and Justice Initiative
- Roberson Project on Slavery, Race and Reconciliation
- Virginia Theological Seminary Reparations Project

Demographic Comparison of Your Church and Neighbors

Compare your church’s racial, ethnic, and cultural makeup to the local area’s demographics with the General Convention Office mapping resources. Notice differences between the racial/ethnic makeup of the church and its leadership, versus the wider community. With what diverse neighbors might God be calling you into action and relationship? What historic or systemic barriers would you need to address?

PROCLAMATION – Proclaiming God’s Dream of Beloved Community

“We gather to publicly reckon and share about the history and reality of race, and to proclaim the dream of Beloved Community through prayer, preaching, conversation and public witness.”



Walking the Labyrinth ... What does Beloved Community look like for you and your neighbors? How could you preach, pray, and engage in public witness around Beloved Community? How could that vision shape your corporate worship and prayer?

Transformed Preaching, Worship and Witness

See fuller set of recommendations in the Report of the Working Group on Truth-telling, Reckoning and Healing (pp. 18-20)

- Standing Commission on Liturgy and Music’s Resources for Racial Reconciliation and Justice
- “Prophetic Voices”: Preaching & Teaching Beloved Community Podcast
- “Concerts for the Human Family”: A Beloved Community Project
- “Proclamation and Prayer” Resources
- Seminary of the Southwest Liturgy of Remembrance and Truth-telling
- St. Ambrose-Raleigh, Dismantling White Supremacy in Worship
- Preaching Black Lives Matter, ed. Gayle Fisher Stewart

Community-wide Public Listening and Learning

Helpful steps for organizing a public listening and learning session on race:

1. Partner with neighbors, faith partners, justice and civic groups, etc.
2. Together study the racial history of your area.
3. Listen to the lived realities of race and racism in your context.
4. Discern a shared picture of Beloved Community
5. Discern a shared commitment to repair and healing.

Learn from recent Episcopal public witness and reckoning efforts:

- St. Paul’s Episcopal Church-Richmond (VA) History Initiative
- Washington National Cathedral, Now and Forever Windows
- Equal Justice Initiative, particularly work on public reckoning

FORMATION – Practicing Jesus’s Healing Way of Love

No one ever finishes with spiritual formation. We are always learning and practicing Jesus’ way of love, especially as he calls us to cross racial, cultural and ethnic lines, to examine structures of oppression and their impact on our own and others’ lives.

(Becoming Beloved Community Vision, p. 16)



Walking the Labyrinth ... *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 right relationship across dividing walls, and seek Christ?*

Dismantling Racism/Anti-racism Trainings and Programs

The Executive Council Committee on Anti-racism has created a framework for effective trainings. The following programs have been especially useful among Episcopalians (not an exhaustive list):

- [Chart of anti-racism/dismantling racism programs](#)
- [Seeing the Face of God in Each Other](#)
- [Absalom Jones Center for Racial Healing](#)
- [Courageous Conversation](#)
- [Crossroads Antiracism Organizing and Training](#)
- [Kaleidoscope Institute](#)
- [VISIONS Inc.](#)

Additional Episcopal formation programs around race

- [Sacred Ground: A Film- and Readings-based Race Dialogue Series](#)
- [Doctrine of Discovery Training](#)
- [Healing from Internalized Oppression Training](#)

Racial Healing and Reconciliation Pilgrimages

- [Trail of Souls](#) in the Diocese of Maryland
- Diocese of Atlanta’s [Pilgrimages to Lynching Sites](#)
- Episcopal Relief & Development [Ghana Reconciliation Pilgrimage](#)
- Diocese of Alabama’s [Jonathan Daniels and Martyrs Pilgrimage](#)
- Also take note of celebrations of David Pendleton Oakerhater, Florence Li Tim- Oi, Absalom Jones, Pauli Murray and other holy people of color

Beloved Community StorySharing and Conversations Across Difference

- Encourage individual and group storytelling with the [Beloved Community StorySharing Guide](#)
- Pair off and share across ideological, racial and other differences with [From Many One: Conversations Across Difference](#)
Incorporate StorySharing and Conversations Across Difference into your congregational life (open meetings or Coffee Hour with StorySharing; preach stories of faith, race, and difference; invite congregants to share in pairs during a sermon)
- Share stories in wider and wider circles: within the congregation, with other Episcopal churches different from your own, with other faith groups, with civic and neighborhood groups, with partners in areas different and even distant from your own

Learning Circles

Host a reading or viewing group at your church – and invite non-churchgoers – to reflect together ...

- [Episcopal Reconciliation Pilgrimage to Ghana](#)
- Kelly Brown Douglas, *Stand Your Ground: Black Bodies and the Justice of God*
- Roxanne Dunbar-Ortiz, *An Indigenous People's History of the United States*
- Ibram X. Kendi, *How to Be an Anti-racist*
- Catherine Meeks, *The Night Is Long but Light Comes in the Morning*
- Stephanie Spellers, *The Church Cracked Open: Disruption, Decline and New Hope for Beloved Community*
- Jim Wallis, *America's Original Sin: Racism, White Privilege and the Bridge to a New America*

Additional Resources

- Explore the “[Formation and Learning](#)” section of the “Racial Justice, Healing and Reconciliation Resources” site
- See recommendations in [Report of the Presiding Officers' Working Group on Truth-telling, Reckoning, and Healing](#) (pp. 20-22)

JUSTICE – Repairing the Breach in Institutions and Society

“We cannot speak of reconciliation and healing without also speaking of justice and repairing what our Church has contributed to breaking.”

(Becoming Beloved Community Vision, p. 21)



Walking the Labyrinth ... *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?*

Engage the Spectrum of Racial and Social Justice

- Inventory of Racial Justice and Truth-telling Ministries: summaries of diocesan and congregational work toward racial equity in housing, education, health, immigration, criminal justice and more
- “From the Pew to the Public Square” and local engagement resources
- Office of Government Relations and Episcopal Public Policy Network – Action Alerts and Advocacy Resources
- Explore the “Justice and Action” section of the “Racial Justice, Healing and Reconciliation Resources” site
- See recommendations in Report of the Presiding Officers’ Working Group on Truth-telling, Reckoning, and Healing (pp. 22-24)

Take on Specific Concerns

- Refugees and Immigration:
 - Actively welcome and protect refugees and immigrants alongside Episcopal Migration Ministries
 - Link with local and regional groups like Interfaith Movement for Human Integrity, San Joaquin Refugee and Immigrant ministry, Welcoming Congregations/Guardian Angels Network and others
 - Track federal immigration and refugee-related policy
- Environmental Racism: Engage with the Office of Creation Care through work on eco-justice and environmental racism
- Re-entering after Incarceration: Accompany and advocate with formerly incarcerated or detained people returning to community *and* their families