

Resolution 3: on Creation of a Task Force on Black Ministries for the Diocese of Washington

Submitted by: The Rev. Antonio J. Baxter, Atonement; the Rev. Ricardo Sheppard, Atonement.

- 1 **RESOLVED**, that the 127th Convention of the Diocese of Washington establish a Task Force on Black
- 2 Ministries to study the revitalization of Black Churches in the Episcopal Diocese of Washington;
- 3 and be it further
- 4 **RESOLVED**, that a Task Force on Black Ministries be appointed by the Diocesan Council
- 5 consisting of members of churches (task force of ten) that are historically black or who
- 6 have a significant Black membership; and be it further
- 7 **RESOLVED**, that this Task Force on Black Ministries will complete its work by September 1, 2022
- 8 and make recommendations to the Diocesan Council to enhance, revitalize, and empower Black
- 9 churches and Black parishioners in the Diocese of Washington; and be it further
- 10 **RESOLVED**, that This Task Force on Black Ministries will examine issues such as racism and its impact
- 11 on the vitality of Black Churches in the Diocese of Washington, strategies needed specifically
- 12 to ensure vitality of Black Churches in the Diocese of Washington, and specific resources needed
- 13 to make these strategies successful.

Explanation

The National Episcopal Church has an Office of Black ministries with the mission to inspire, transform and empower the people of the African Diaspora to live fully into the Jesus Movement. The missional priorities of this office include the following: To provide an overview of and/or processes for developing congregations' vitality through investment in people, to educate and empower congregations and leaders to engage in processes for strategic revitalization, and to develop and support lay and ordained leadership.

The Task Force on Black Ministries would be charged using these missional priorities to look at past injustices and to develop strategies and the resources needed to make Black parishes viable in the diocese. There have been some historically Black Episcopal Churches that have closed or that face significant challenges in vitality. It is critical to maintain their vitality because as noted in a report in the Philadelphia Tribune, 75 percent of Black priest come from Black parishes¹. Their vitality is critical to ensure the representation of Black clergy in the diocese. Also, the Task Force on Black Ministries would examine practices and models in evangelism, worship, and mission that would be more conducive to their revitalization from the Black church perspective.

The initial creation of the Task Force on Black Ministries will not require funding at this time if the Task Force is established via the resolution. However, there may be budget implications with the recommendations that the Task Force on Black Ministries may recommend. These recommendations will be submitted via resolution for the Diocesan Convention in 2023 in accordance with the provision that outline resolutions that have fiscal/budget impact.

¹ Yonat Shimron. "Worries About Black Episcopal Churches Surface" accessed November 30, 2021, https://www.phillytrib.com/religion/worries-about-black-episcopal-churches-surface/article_5304facb-a4e7-5a56-bd76-d8119a59bb61.html