RACE AND RACISM IN YOUR PARISH: This is a brief template to help guide research and reporting out. Each of these topics could make up distinct sections within a report. Not all of them will perhaps be germane to your parish and its history. One way to focus time periods researched is by rector and term of rectorate, i.e. JOHN SMITH, 1910-1915; ROBERT JONES, 1916-1945, and so on. Tease out the facts contained in the historical record, check out and verify those parish stories and oral histories that have been passed down. Is it based on fact or has it morphed into fantasy over the passage of years? It is fine to repeat the story, but then correct the history by writing what really happened based on the historical record. What story are the documents telling you, what are the voices of the past saying that we need to hear? Writing history truthfully is courageous work. Be brave and honest in what you write.

INTRODUCTION: Who has commissioned this report? When was your parish founded? What are your parish bounds, i.e. the geographical area that your parish covers. What Native Peoples inhabited the land that is encompassed by your parish? The founding date will dictate the focus on your research: colonial, ante-bellum, post-civil war, 20th century, Civil Rights era, etc. What records were consulted to create this report--be specific but not as specific as you will be in your footnotes. For example: Vestry Minutes 1920-1965, located at the Maryland State Archives, St. X Register, 1900-1925, located in the Parish Offices, and so on.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS: Who was on the team? Who helped you in your research? What repositories did you visit and who assisted you there?

YOUR PARISH BY THE NUMBERS: These will be driven by the time period being researched. Brief paragraphs focusing on numbers of enslaved members, racial make-up (if available) post enslavement and into the late 19th and onto the 20th century. If a pre-Civil War parish can you discern how many vestrymen owned enslaved? Were there Native Peoples in your congregation? Is any funding of land or building linked to enslavement or organizations that supported enslavement or later racist policies? Keep these simple and focused on available statistics and history.

RACE IN YOUR PARISH’S NEIGHBORHOOD: A brief history or look back at the surrounding community encompassed by your parish bounds, or broader if you like. Was it primarily farming with an enslaved population? Was the demographic make-up primarily white, black, mixed? How did racial equality play out in your broader community? Were there protests, white flight, urban renewal?

RACE IN THE PARISH: This section will be a drilling down of records of race within the make-up of communicants and operations of the parish. Did the parish have slave owners as parishioners? Did their funds support the parish in ways other than a general fashion, i.e. build, buy land, etc.? How did the parish deal with the Civil Rights movement of the 1960s, and how did they handle integration—or not? When was the first person of color elected to the vestry? Who were they and maybe some biographical background. Are there any standouts within the parish of those who fought for Civil Rights? Where are we now?
The following suggested headings may be used as the research directs. Some will be germane to your parish, some will not.

SLAVERY AND THE PARISH IN THE 19TH CENTURY
ABOLITIONISTS IN THE PARISH
ENSLAVED PEOPLE CONNECTED TO THE PARISH (include here a listing of names of enslaved that were connected to and/or worshipped in the parish if possible.)
SUPPORT FOR THE SOUTH (OR NORTH, OR NEUTRALITY) IN THE PARISH
RESISTANCE AND THE FIGHT TO END SLAVERY AND RACISM
FREE BLACK COMMUNITIES AND MISSIONS WITHIN THE PARISH (Some parishes had separate missions for African-Americans, particularly in the late 19th and 20th centuries until integration.)

End with:

PARISH TIMELINE
Create a simple timeline, arranged chronologically with date and brief sentence on why that date is important.

REFERENCES/BIBLIOGRAPHY
Actual entries of published and unpublished works consulted.

Some Other Questions to Help Focus Your Research
A few crucial questions will help shape and focus your efforts:
● When, how, and why was your congregation founded? If pre-1895 you were in the Diocese of Maryland, post-1895 the Diocese of Washington.
● Where did your founding members come from?
● Who provided the resources for your congregation’s founding?
● Where did the resources for major capital campaigns and expansions come from?
● What are the demographics of your congregation, and how have they changed over time?
● What are the demographics of your surrounding neighborhood, and how have they changed over time?
● Do these changes correlate with Church membership and finance numbers through the years?

“Our past can inform our future, be a lamp unto our feet, and strengthen our ongoing journey to fully realize the great commandment to love our neighbor as ourselves.”
-FAR

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PARISH RESEARCH AND REPORTING OUT: A Research Report Template
History Project Management Team, EDOM Reparations Task Force (Cathy O’Donnell and Franklin A. Robinson, Jr.)