

Grouped Questions from Repairing the Breach Reparations Symposium

What's the First Step? / Defining the Scope of Work

- Where do we start?
- How?
- Is there more work after this?
- How big will this get?
- How do we determine where resources come from, and to whom they should go, given the diversity of the diocese? (x-post funding/sustainability)
- What form should reparations take?
- Do reparations have to be monetary? (original q: does it have to be money?)
- Is this only about chattel slavery, or are we considering other forms of racism?
- How do the bishop and dean fit in?
- What does healing look like?
- What inequities are counted?
- What does sustained justice look like, especially for parishes in debt?
- How do we know who is owed what?
- How specific or broad do we need to be?
- Shouldn't we focus on economic reparations?
- Can a capitalist economy ever allow true reparations?
- Are we investing, or doing charity?
- How do we do this in a way that is not simply symbolic?
- What is reparations?
- Who controls the process?
- Should reparations look at injustices to Indigenous Americans, Latinos, or Japanese Americans?
- How can this not be a one time thing?
- How can this conversation [the symposium] inspire concrete and objective commitments?
- How on earth do you make reparation for the harms of racism?
- How do we define the offenses that racism has caused?

Developing Process Management and Accountability

- Will we build in reviews and tweak the rhythms of this endeavor as we go along?
- How do we stay focused on the importance of the work when something "new and shiny" comes along?
- What are the actual steps?
- What kind of timeline?
- How do we ensure reparations are made for, or with, and not to?
- How do we identify who should receive reparations?

- Should congregations with distinct histories work together on this, or individually?
- How can we build in regular assessments?
- How do we know when we've done enough or need to refocus? (x-post defining success)
- How do we create accountability?
- How do we maintain momentum?
- What is the best possible course of action to ensure the best possible outcome?
- How will we listen for what is needed?

Building Buy In

- How will we reach out to all our parishes and congregations to ensure we move together?
- How do we ensure we guide people to yes?
- How do we reach the hearts that are hardened?
- How do we invite congregations for whom the word "reparations" is immediately divisive?
- Are reparations really important to our congregations? How do we make it so?
- How many must be engaged to reach a tipping point?
- How do we find consensus?
- How do we reach beyond the choir?
- How do we encourage listening and proximity?
- How do we overcome the objections of those who say this has nothing to do with them?
- Are clergy ahead of laity on this issue?
- How do we engage or shut down "what about-isms"?
- How do we counter the "but it wasn't us" argument?
- How can we explain that this is not a zero sum game?

Funding and Resources / Sustainability

- Where will funding and staff come from to do this well?
- Will reparations be sustainable?
- How do we determine where resources come from, and to whom they should go, given the diversity of the diocese? (x-post defining the work)
- Where do the resources come from?
- Is this going to be a sacrificial kind of commitment?
- How can we afford this when we have so many current needs?
- Does this have to be a sacrificial commitment?
- How do we release the vast wealth that resides in the people of the congregations?
- How does our budget reflect our morals?
- How do we fund this?
- How do we leverage the privilege of the diocese?
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Defining Success / What's the End Game/Goal?

- How do we ensure the process is regenerative in the long term and not punitive?
- How will we measure success and efficacy?
- Is there an end state?
- How would we know if we accomplished the end state?
- How do we measure success?
- How do we ensure this doesn't become an exercise in writing a check and saying "we're done"?
- How do we know when we've done enough or need to refocus? (x-post developing project management)
- How will reparations restructure institutions?
- How will we know we're on the right track?

Who

- Who's at the table?
- Will historically Black congregations receive reparations? (x-post under effect on Black parishes)
- Will we partner with other institutions in this work, and how would they impact the work?
- Who are we making reparations to?
- Who is left out and who may be harmed?

Effect on Black Parishes

- Will historically Black congregations receive reparations? (x-post under who)
- What is the role of Black parishes in this work?
- What will be expected of the traditionally Black parishes?
- What is the "real history" of St. Mary's, Foggy Bottom?
- What would our Black congregations lose, if anything, by integrating?

Effect on All Parishes

- Will reparations look different in each region of the Diocese?
- Will this work serve all 86 parishes? How? To what end?
- Will each congregation be required to do their own reparations work?
- What is the obligation of parishes?
- How can we present this to our congregations in an appealing and attractive way? (x-post communications)

Formation / Education / Liturgy

- Will reparations include education?
- How do we overcome music and liturgy?
- How does discernment fit into formation for this issue?
- Are we prepared for this to shape the way we pray?

- How do we discern the difference between systemically racist elements of our worship and Jesus's teaching?
- How do we make this a spiritual experience?
- Can we put together this conversation in the context of a religious rite?
- How do we learn our history, individually and as a diocese?
- How do we educate white people that they are in a better position to buy a house?
- How will EDOW teach people about reparations?
- How do we bring Kelly Brown Douglas's theological grounding into this work?
- How does this conversation become part of formation?
- How do we create liberation theology models?

Learning from Other Examples of Reparations

- What do we need to learn from other dioceses in this work? What went right? What were their problems?
- What other dioceses or religious institutions will be included?
- Who can we work with?
- How do we engage and build relationships with others outside our parishes to learn what reparations might look like?
- What models do we have for reference?
- How do we avoid the pitfalls of those who have attempted this work before?

Building Equity, Equality, and Reconciliation

- Will the work actually reconcile?
- How do we get to financial equity?
- Should our goal be financial equality between Black and white congregations?
- How do we avoid systemic pinfalls created by inequality?
- How do we ensure there are people of color in the pipeline for leadership?
- How do we measure the effect of inequality?

Capturing the Work and Reporting Out / Communications

- What is the role of the Diocesan Archivist to record all the history?
- What outreach and communications are needed?
- What tools do we need to better communicate?
- How do we tell an updated story?
- How can we present this to our congregations in an appealing and attractive way? (x-post effect on all parishes)
- How do we document for future generations?
- How will we capture what we learn?

Changing the Narrative, Grappling with Discomfort and Building Trust

- Are we prepared to accept great changes, and possibly be uncomfortable with the repercussions?
- How do we reckon with congregations that have complicated histories?
- What kind of mediation is needed?
- How do we strengthen relationships during this process?
- How do we build trust?
- How do we talk to people who disagree or don't believe there's a problem?
- Are we prepared to deal with a house divided?
- Is there a via media in this?
- Can white congregations listen to Black congregations?
- How do we keep white people from doing the bare minimum?
- How do we hold space for the oppressed to be with their oppressors?
- How does white supremacy, as a root of our capitalist economy, still live in our Episcopal institutions?
- How can we change the narrative of racism at a deep, subconscious level?
- How do we explore our own racism?
- How do we take action that complements and deepens a change in narrative?
- How can we change the narrative every day with every Black person we meet?
- Are we willing to be uncomfortable?
- Are we willing to make mistakes?
- Are we willing to be corrected?
- Are we okay with people being mad about taking their money?
- How has the diocese been complicit in or benefitted from racism and the legacy of slavery?

Grace

- What will we do when we make mistakes?

Misc.

- Can we really heal the whole world?
- Will [this work] ever be adequate?
- How can we release power?
- Can we change?
- How will we change going forward?
- We can vote for money and time, but how will we vote to repair the breach?
- How do you quantify the harm done through years of internalized inferiority brought on by racism?
- How do we acknowledge the sin of forced conversion?