

# Resolution 1: Toward Repentance and Reparations in the Episcopal Diocese of Washington

*Submitted by:* The Rev. Peter Antoci (St. Thomas, P.G. County), The Rev. Antonio Baxter (Atonement), The Rev. Anne Derse (St. John's, Norwood Parish), Stacy Carter (Grace Church, Georgetown), Mark Edwards (St. John's, Norwood Parish), The Rev. Gayle Fisher-Stewart (ret.), The Rev. Susan Fritz (Christ Church, Durham), Erika Gilmore (St. George's, DC), The Rev. Yoimel Gonzalez (St. Alban's), The Rev. Vince Harris (ret.), Robert Hartman (St. John's, Norwood Parish), The Rev. Peter Jarrett-Schell (Calvary), The Rev. Rondesia Jarrett-Schell (St. Stephen and the Incarnation), C. Michael Livingston, Sr. (Calvary), Clara Lovett (St. John's, Norwood Parish), The Rev. Kathryn McMahon (Good Shepherd), Jonathan Nicholas (All Souls), The Rev. Sarah Odderstol (Grace Church, Silver Spring), The Rev. Ricardo Shepherd (Atonement), Elly Sullivan (St. John's, Norwood Parish), The Rev. Greg Syler (Ascension & St. George's Churches), The Rev. David Wacaster (Grace Church, Georgetown)

## SEC. 1 – APOLOGY, REPENTANCE AND REPARATION

1 **RESOLVED,**

- 2 1. The Diocese acknowledges its long, complicated history of participation in, and benefit from,  
3 anti-Black racism, and commits to continue uncovering and sharing that history.
- 4 2. The Diocese now publicly confesses and repents of its participation in anti-Black racism, apologizes  
5 for the harms done against the Black community, including both the Black members of this  
6 Diocese, and the larger Black community in this geographical region.
- 7 3. The Diocese commits to make reparation, with the acknowledgement that the injuries and harms  
8 from 400 years of abuse can never be fully healed.
- 9 4. The Diocese commends those congregations that have undertaken a serious study of racism through  
10 Sacred Ground and other anti-racism curricula and calls upon all congregations and their leadership  
11 to undertake anti-racism training and education, and to research and publicize their own specific  
12 histories with the legacy of anti-Black racism.
- 13 5. We recommit ourselves, as a Diocese, to God's dream of the Beloved Community and take the next,  
14 most necessary steps toward restitution for the sinful legacy of racism that we have inherited.

## SEC. 2 – COMMITTEE ON DIOCESAN REPARATIONS

15 And be it further **RESOLVED,**

- 16 1. **COMMENDATION.**— That the current Reparations Task Force of the Diocese is commended for its  
17 work to date, and is hereby dissolved.
- 18 2. **ESTABLISHMENT.**— That there is established The Committee on Diocesan Reparations (in this  
19 Resolution referred to as “the Committee”) consisting of two working groups: the Policy Working  
20 Group, and the Education Working Group.
- 21 3. **MEMBERSHIP.**— Not later than March 1, 2023, the Bishop with the advice of the Standing  
22 Committee, and Diocesan Council, shall appoint 8 members to the Policy working group, and  
23 8 members to the Education working group.
  - 24 a) All appointed members shall be individuals with demonstrable history of commitment to  
25 racial justice (including participation in organizations and initiatives working toward racial  
26 equity).
  - 27 b) At least 5 members of those appointed to the Policy Working Group shall be African American,  
28 or such a number as is necessary to make the total membership of the Policy Working Group, including  
29 *ex officio* members, majority African American, whichever is more.

- 30 c) In making appointments, the Bishop and Standing Committee shall endeavor to reflect the  
31 geographical, lay/clerical and other significant diversities of the Diocese.
- 32 4. **EX-OFFICIO MEMBERS.**— The Chancellor of the Diocese, the Treasurer of the Convention,  
33 The President of the Standing Committee, The Moderator of Council and the Chief Operating  
34 Officer shall serve as ex officio members of the Policy Working Group.
- 35 5. **CO-CHAIRS.**— The Bishop shall designate 1 of the members appointed under section 3 with a  
36 demonstrable history of leadership in issues of racial justice, as Chair of the Policy Working  
37 Group, preferably an African-American member of a predominantly African-American  
38 congregation. The Bishop shall further designate 1 of the members appointed under section 3 with  
39 a demonstrable history of leadership in issues of racial justice, as Chair of the Education Working  
40 Group. These shall jointly serve as Co-Chairs of the Committee.
- 41 6. **TERMS.**— The term for each appointment shall end with the termination of the Committee.
- 42 7. **VACANCIES.**— If a position on the Committee is vacant or a member of the Committee becomes  
43 unable to serve, the Bishop may appoint a replacement member for the remainder of the applicable  
44 term.

### SEC. 3 – POLICY WORKING GROUP

- 45 1. **IN GENERAL.**— The Policy Working Group shall investigate and make recommendations on:
- 46 a. What additional research is necessary to uncover and share the full history of this Diocese,  
47 and its antecedents, with anti-Black racism, and the impact of that history.
- 48 b. What transformational policies and structural changes might be necessary and appropriate  
49 to promote and achieve more just and equitable outcomes for Black communities, Black  
50 congregations, and Black individuals when interacting with this Diocese, whether they  
51 be members of this Diocese or not.
- 52 c. What initiatives on the part of the Diocese are advisable to support the healing, atonement  
53 and repair of historical injuries against the Black community.
- 54 d. Appropriate communication approaches for truth-telling and story-sharing regarding this history,  
55 and methods for distributing information to the wider community.
- 56 e. What actions and goals would be most appropriate to provide redress for harms done, including  
57 specific financial commitments and other targets.
- 58 f. What Diocesan resources, both financial and otherwise, would be appropriately used to achieve  
59 such redress.
- 60 g. What administrative and/or legislative action would be necessary to make such resources  
61 available for redress.
- 62 h. Fair and sensible criteria to identify eligible recipients for disbursements.
- 63 i. Proposed policies and mechanisms for disbursements.
- 64 j. Reasonable timeframes for disbursements.
- 65 k. Appropriate methods to educate EDOW parishes about the Committee’s findings.
- 66 2. **ACCOUNTABILITY AND CONSULTATION.**— The Policy Working Group shall convene an Advisory  
67 and Accountability Board, composed of directly impacted stakeholders, specifically, representatives of the

- 68 Black Community within the geography of the Diocese to whom reparations might be due, to provide  
69 counsel, advice and accountability
- 70 3. **PROGRESS REPORT.**— The Policy Working Group shall submit a report of current progress for the  
71 consideration of Diocesan Convention held in calendar year 2024.
- 72 4. **REPORT.**— Not later than September 1, 2024, the Committee shall submit a report with  
73 recommendations to the Bishop, the Diocesan Council, and the Standing Committee.
- 74 5. **RESOLUTION.**— Not later than Oct. 1, 2024, the Committee shall submit its recommendations  
75 in the form of resolution, for the consideration of Diocesan Convention held in calendar year 2025.
- 76 6. **EXTENSION OF SUBMISSION DATE.**—
- 77 a. **REQUEST FOR EXTENSION.**— The Committee may submit a request to Diocesan Council for  
78 an extension of the date for the submission of the report.
- 79 b. **AUTHORITY TO EXTEND.**— Diocesan Council may grant 1 or more extensions under this  
80 paragraph.

## SEC. 4 – EDUCATION WORKING GROUP

- 81 1. The Education Working Group shall work to educate, encourage and support the Diocese  
82 in preparing for, and carrying out, the recommendations of the Policy Working Group as developed,  
83 and when delivered.

## SEC. 5 – TERMINATION

- 84 1. The Committee shall terminate on the day following the last day of the Diocesan Convention held  
85 in calendar year 2025.

### EXPLANATION

The Reparations Task Force of the Diocese of Washington has worked the past four years to encourage and support the Diocese at large in reckoning with, and making reparation for its historical and continuing harms against the Black community.

The Task Force has taken the following as its working definition of reparations: Reparations is the spiritual process to remember, restore, reconcile and make amends for historical and continuing wrongs against humanity that can never be singularly reducible to monetary terms, but must include a substantial investment and surrender of resources.

While there is more to uncover, the documented record establishes beyond any doubt that the antecedents of the Diocese knowingly, willfully, and beneficially participated in the slave economy:

- Congregations were funded by the colonial-era tobacco tax, gathered in large part from slave plantations.
- Many rectors and vestrymen, and most large givers of record, were themselves enslavers.
- At least one congregation profited directly from the sale of enslaved persons.
- Church buildings were built using enslaved labor, including some in use now.
- Assets garnered through this participation operate in the Diocese today.

Following Emancipation into the present, the Diocese knowingly, willfully, and beneficially participated in ongoing exploitation and marginalization of Black Americans and Black congregations:

- Assets from predominantly Black congregations were transferred to white flight congregations.
- Upon their closing, Black congregations' assets were sold and transferred to white congregations.
- Our sanctuaries have been adorned in iconography elevating whiteness. Many remain so.
- Our churches have used Christian-education curricula that assume and privilege a white perspective.

These were not simply the actions of persons who worshiped in our churches, but the behavior of our institutional branch of the Body of Christ across centuries.

The Diocese of Washington has never acknowledged, confessed, or atoned for this grave sin against our Savior's commandment to "love one another as I have loved you."

We can never right the wrong that was done to generations of our sisters and brothers in Christ long gone. But we can acknowledge our history, shine light on its troubling chapters, and recognize its impact on lives today.

This resolution would make public apology for this shameful history and convene a Reparations Advisory Committee, with Policy and Education working groups to help the Diocese on the road to repair. The Policy working group will research and propose an earnest and significant plan for reparation, to present at Diocesan Convention in two years. While the Policy Working Group drafts a plan, the Education Working Group will strive to educate, encourage and support the Diocese in preparing for, and carrying out, that plan when delivered.

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