

2023 ANNUAL REPORT RACIAL HEALING COMMISSION

The Racial Healing Commission continued its mission in 2023 "...to identify and share the harsh truths of our racial history and legacy here and across the nation. We aim to promote repentance and reconciliation for the wrongs of the past and find remedies for the continuing biases and inequities of the present. We commit to action to change our society into an equitable and healthy home for all people so that God's will is done on Earth as it is in Heaven."

The RHC presented an interactive display booth at the 140th diocesan convention in February that received a good deal of interest.

The RHC spent the spring and summer months planning for the first Jazz & Race Symposium, held at St. James Parish in Wilmington on September 16, with keynote speaker Dr. Catherine Meeks, executive director of the Absalom Jones Center for Racial Healing. Following dinner included with the event, the Rev. Skip Walker provided a brief history of jazz and its relationship to African American History, along with a short concert with his ensemble. The response for the over 200 people attending was very positive. The churches of the Lower Cape Fear Deanery were instrumental in providing hospitality for the event. The event would not have been possible without the financial support of donors and sponsors. The goal of the RHC is to hold similar events throughout the diocese in coming years to allow easy access by all and is currently at work toward the next event in this series.

Members of the commission completed work on a form to allow members of the diocese to report concerns related to structural racism subject to review.

Members of the commission have continued to explore anti-racism training for their own education and as possible programs to meet canonically required training. The RHC recommended that the Diocese contract annually with *ChurchNext* to allow use of their anti-racism course, which includes the ability to record and monitor completion of required training. The contract would allow use of all *ChurchNext* courses by other diocesan entities.

The RHC budget will now include financial support for the annual Absalom Jones service at one of the historically Black churches in the diocese.

We are asking the diocese to help us enlist at least four new members to replace the four who have stepped down to pursue other ventures.

The interactive booth was updated in preparation for the October revival that was subsequently canceled.

In December we added to our link on the diocesan website an interactive Cultural Heritage Map depicting sites in the Diocese of East Carolina that have impacted the search and struggle for

racial justice. The map will continue to be developed as additional sites are identified and added. The commission is considering the possibility of arranging bus tours for people who are interested in physically visiting these sites. People who view the map, which initially contains more than 150 sites, are encouraged to send suggestions for consideration to be added to the site.

Submitted by: Virginia Woodruff (Co-Chair), St. James, Wilmington; Lloyd Brinson (Co-Chair), All Saints, Southern Shores; The Rev. Richard Elliott, Rector, St. Andrews on the Sound, Wilmington; Tyrone Francis, St. Joseph's, Fayetteville; Rick Stovall, St. Andrew's, Goldsboro; The Rev. Fred Clarkson, Spanish Language Ministry Coordinator, La Sagrada Familia, Newton Grove; The Rev. Skip Walker, Ministry Coordinator with Peoples of African Descent; The Rev. Ashley Simpson, St. Paul's, Beaufort; Molly Holdeman, St. Paul's, Greenville