

RACIAL HEALING COMMISSION

The Racial Healing Commission of the Diocese of East Carolina, having been reorganized in 2020 and 2021, began training members in 2022 with the purpose of becoming an action-oriented unit seeking, with God's help, to find pathways of understanding and communication that will promote the recognition and the healing of racial and social injustices.

Several members completed Sacred Ground and Absalom Jones training in racial awareness, as well as trainings offered by the dioceses of New Jersey and North Carolina. Commission members continued to help local parishes gain access to awareness training.

One of our action committees continued the work of drafting a formal instrument to identify and address structural racism in the diocese.

The commission drafted a resolution, which was adopted by the 139th Convention, condemning Racism as a sin and calling upon parishes "to strive for justice and peace among all people and to respect the dignity of every human being."

We organized and conducted two well-attended and well-received workshops at the 139th Convention – workshops examining racism and allowing participants to share stories about their work within their parish and community, and for some, renewed efforts to build bridges to reach mutual understanding among people with varying ethnic origins.

We have updated our website and added a suggested reading list to that website.

In August the commission met at Trinity Center to evaluate our accomplishments and to determine activities toward living up to our mission statement as we move into the future.

We have asked the diocese to add three new members to the commission and to name former chairperson Mary Reese as member emeritus. The members we have lost have been called to active roles for other worthwhile causes and organizations.

Some members are pursuing avenues to provide resources for enriching liturgies to include racial healing. We discussed the possibilities of having the subject of dismantling racism in all diocesan offerings.

We are in the process of planning the details for what we hope will be an annual diocesan event. The first annual event, "Jazz and Race," has been confirmed for September 16, 2023. The entire diocese will be invited. The intent is to host this event annually in different locations throughout our diocese to make the event as accessible to all members of our diocese as possible. The first event will be held at St. James Wilmington, making use of their large multi-purpose room to accommodate as many from our diocese and community as are able to attend this first symposium. We are excited to announce our guest speaker, Dr. Catherine Meeks, who will lead our conversations that afternoon. This portion of the event will be followed by dinner and a program about the history of jazz as developed out of the African-American experience, presented by Skip Walker, and to include a concert featuring Skip and local musicians. In addition, Dr. Meeks will serve as guest preacher for a service on Sunday, September 17. We are excited and look forward to sharing this event with the diocese.

Submitted by: Virginia Woodruff (Co-Chair), St. James, Wilmington; Lloyd Brinson (Co-Chair), All Saints, Southern Shores; The Rev. Richard Elliott, St. Andrews on the Sound, Wilmington; Tyrone Francis, St. Joseph's, Goldsboro; Rick Stovall, St. Andrew's, Goldsboro; The Rev. Fred Clarkson, La Sagrada Familia,

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Newton Grove; Meg Jones, Christ Church, New Bern; The Rev. Skip Walker, St. Paul's, Greenville; The Rev. Ashley Simpson, St. Paul's, Beaufort.