Ministry for Racial Justice and Healing –
Report to the 232nd Annual Convention of the Episcopal Diocese of Virginia

"...faith communities must be places to ask deeper, more probing questions of ourselves, of our nation, of our world, and even of our faith traditions, especially in times of local, national, and global crises...[Howard Washington] Thurman reminds us that our work and witness calls us to reflect on critical theological questions and to find the courage to embrace difficult, desperate answers."
Critical Race Theology, Juan Floyd-Thomas

The **Diocesan Ministry for Racial Justice and Healing** in the Diocese of Virginia remains committed and actively engaged in supporting individuals, parishes, institutions and regions throughout the Diocese in the work of embodying justice. Over the course of the last year the Ministry for Racial Justice and Healing has refreshed its mission and vision with the following statement: "*Based on the teaching and resurrection of Jesus, the Ministry for Racial Justice and Healing leads the Diocese of Virginia, its members, institutions, and wider community in reckoning with its past and present participation in the sin of racial injustice. The Ministry centers and embodies the work of truth-telling, repentance, and repair at every level of the Diocese of the Virigina. The Ministry offer resources to do this work and promote healing.*" While this mission guides our ministry, the following seven pillars more clearly defines the focus of our work 1) Bolster Internal Structures and Visibility within the Diocese, 2) Training and Education, 3) Tell the Truth about Race and Racism in the Diocese Now and in the Past, 4) Diocesan-Wide Involvement in Racial Justice, 5) Healing, 6) Serve as a Racial Justice Resource, and 7) Support the Reparation Work of the Diocese.

This report is submitted by Dr. J. Lee Hill, Jr., Dean of the Diocesan Ministry for Racial Justice and Healing, with the support of Dr. Tammy Lewis, Minister for Justice and Repair, Dr. Chris Cameron of St. Anne's Episcopal Church in Reston, Chair of the Ministry for Racial Justice and Healing.

This year we give thanks to God for the faithful leadership of several long-term members who have completed their terms as members of the Ministry for Racial Justice: Dr. Christine Cameron (St. Anne's, Reston), Mr. Jonathan Perry (Little Fork, Rixeyville), The Very Rev. Joe Hensley (St. George's, Fredericksburg), The Rev. Michael Guy (Grace, Casanova and St. Luke's Remington), and The Rev. David Curtis (All Saints, Richmond). In 2027 we will welcome to leadership in the Ministry the following persons: Mr. Wesley Palmer Curl (Trinity, Charlottesville), Mr. Gregory Redding (St. John's, West Point), Ms. Cynthia Bullard-Perez (Resurrection, Alexandria), Ms. Judy Hall (Good Shepherd-of-the-Hills, Boonesville), Ms. Melanie Pressley (Abingdon Church, Haynes), The Rev. Kara Laughlin (St. Anne's,

Reston), and Ms. Isabella Cuellar Baldelomar (La Iglesia de Santa María, Falls Church, youth representative).

The Ministry maintains ministerial oversight for the following areas of ministry: Native American/Indigenous Ministries, Triangle of Hope, Ministry with Hispanic/Latino Communities, Immigration, Sacred Ground, Healing from Internalized Oppression, the Truth & Reparations Task Force, and Pilgrimage Experiences. Reports for these areas of ministry are below.

A central focus of the **Ministry for Racial Justice and Healing** has been expanding our racial justice training, **I Will, With God's Help**. Through reflection, conversation, and shared learning, participants explore the Church's responsibility to confront racism, pursue justice, and respect the dignity of every human being, with a curriculum that is rooted in the Baptismal Covenant. Connecting with congregational through the regions of our Diocese has been essential to this work. In partnership with regional deans the ministry has offered training workshops in more than seven different regions, with plans to host trainings in the remaining nine regions in early 2027. We remain excited to see how, in hosting regional trainings like these, opportunities are created to hear local perspectives, strengthen relationships, and encourage continued engagement in the work of racial justice and healing.

In the Fall of the year **Sacred Ground** organizers updated the curriculum and launched. The revised curriculum introduces refreshed readings, film links that align with the 11-session dialogues. The update places stronger emphasis on moving from dialogue to action, helping circles connect historical learning with local, parish, community and diocesan racial justice initiatives. Through facilitator recruitment, mentorship, and encouragement two new Diocesan circles will be launched in 2027, with support clergy and lay leaders in their work and understanding of racial justice.

Healing from Internalized Oppression is a curriculum and spiritual retreat series designed specifically for the BIPOC community to explore racial justice conversations. Healing from Internalized Oppression is an offering of African Descent Ministries designed to process the psychological and spiritual impacts of system racism. The workshop weekend centered scripture, prayer, and communal reflection and guides participants in dismantling internalize racial stereotypes and overcoming shame to reclaim inherent worth and dignity in God. The workshop will be guided by the Reverend Lester Mackenzie, Chief of Mission Programs and the Rev. Canon Anita Braden, Interim Missioner for African Descent Ministries in the Office of the Presiding Bishop. The gathering will be held in partnership with the Diocese of Southern Virginia, February 12-13, 2027 at the Roslyn Retreat and Conference Center.

Ministry at Midday is a series that provides monthly opportunities to learn about diocesan ministries connected to racial justice and healing. These brief online gatherings invite

participants to ask questions, discover resources, and identify opportunities for greater involvement and sharing.

Native American/Indigenous Ministry is building relationships that strengthen the Diocese of Virginia's engagement with Native American and Indigenous communities. The ministry continues to ground its work in listening, learning, and honoring the histories, cultures, leadership, and priorities of Virginia's Tribal Nations. Throughout the year, ministry team members participated in cultural events and educational gatherings, including the Virginia Native American Festival, a presentation on Tribal Engagement Principles and Best Practices, and the Virginia Tribal Education Consortium. These experiences deepened their understanding of respectful partnership, preserving sacred lands, and the importance of letting Indigenous voices guide this work.
The ministry, in expanding its team and welcoming new voices, has begun discerning a shared direction for future engagement. Planning includes opportunities to visit tribal communities, strengthen existing and forging new relationships, and identifying meaningful partnerships shaped by those communities' interests and priorities. The ministry is also exploring a Native American-led Diocesan-wide gathering in the Fall of 2027 to recognize Indigenous Peoples' Day, with opportunities for education, worship, cultural sharing, and fellowship.

The **Triangle of Hope** continues to deepen relationships among the Dioceses of Virginia, Liverpool, and Kumasi through prayer, fellowship, and shared learning. This partnership invites young people to explore the historical connections among their communities and consider their calling to the work of racial justice and Christian discipleship. Preparations for the 2026 youth pilgrimage included a site survey visit to Ghana in May 2026, following a Triangle of Hope Steering Committee meeting in Liverpool. The Virginia delegation included Bishop E. Mark Stevenson, the Canon Dr. J. Lee Hill, Jr., Mrs. Kendall Stevenson, and the Venerable Susie Harding. The visit supported coordination with international partners, visiting historical and cultural sites of significance and planning for the youth experience. From August 2–10, 11 youth and 4 adult leaders from the Diocese of Virginia participated in the diocese's first youth pilgrimage to Ghana. Through encounters with international peers, worship, cultural engagement, and visits to sites connected to the transatlantic slave trade, invited participants to reflect deeply on our shared history while building relationships rooted in faith, hope and reconciliation. Dr. Tammy L. Lewis administratively supported the pilgrimage, while Canon Hill, the Very Reverend Janettarose Greene, the Venerable Susie Harding, and Mr. Jabriel Hassan served as adult leaders. After returning, youth are encouraged to continue to reflect upon and share their experience in parish reflections, adult forums, youth gatherings, and regional gatherings. The Triangle of Hope remains an opportunity to nurture young leaders, strengthen international relationships, and connect reconciliation work with the lived experience of the next generation. Interested youth, in grades 8-9, are strongly encouraged to make application to join the next cohort.

Early this year members of the **Hispanic/Latino Communities** gathered to express the need for ministerial support for Spanish-speaking and Latino/Hispanic ministries in the

Diocese. Conversation in the Spring of year focused on education, listening, mending and strategic planning were held with leadership from the Ministry for Racial Justice and Healing attending. With intentional focus, and the support of Bishop Bourlakas and the Office of Congregational Vitality planning for a Diocesan-wide celebration of our diversity was advanced, and strategic work to invite a priest to lead this work began in earnest. In the fall of the year we welcomed the **Reverend Edgar Otero, our new Minister for Hispanic/Latino Communities**, and the first-ever Diocesan-wide celebration, ¡Festival!, was held at St. Timothy's (Herndon). We are grateful for Father Edgars' "Yes" to share in ministry amongst us, and the Ministry for Racial Justice and Healing has pledged its full support in the carrying out of this important ministry of racial justice, healing, and repair.

In January of this year, we held a special Clergy Call to focus on **Immigration** related ministries throughout the Diocese. The Executive Director of Episcopal Migration Ministries, the Rev. Sarah Shipman, provided space for clergy to ask relevant questions, and shared the most up-to-date information on how to protect and serve the most vulnerable amongst us. Know Your Rights cards in English/Spanish were shared with the deans of the regions and a diocesan resource page was created to support parish leaders in their work. Bishop Stevenson announced the opening of an Immigration Assistance Fund to assist congregations with members having trouble with their immigration status. In the Fall 2026 the Diocese made application and received a $12,000 grant from **Episcopal Migration Ministries** to continue to advance this important ministry throughout the Diocese. The Reverend Edgar Otero, Minister for Hispanic/Latino Communities, will shepherd this ministry amongst us.

This year we supported one **Book Study;** *Critical Race Theology: White Supremacy, American Christianity, and the Ongoing Culture Wars* by Juan Floyd-Thomas of Vanderbilt Divinity School. The book study invited participants to examine how theological concepts have historically been used to weaponized and justify racial hierarchy and white supremacy. The 4-week study drew upon Black Liberation and Womanist helped participants think deeply about what they can do in their own local communities to help embody God's vision of the Beloved Community. In 2027 Dr. Tammy Lewis, Minister for Justice and Repair, will be leading this Diocesan offering.

The **Truth and Reparations Task Force** has been working hard to more clearly define its mission and establish a strategic activity roadmap for reparations in the Diocese of Virginia. The Task Force has identified a broad spectrum of potential recipients, including descendant communities, BIPOC parishes, and communities along with financial mechanisms and non-monetary resources to approach the work with a method that combines direct community donations via regional allocation formulas with reparations to specifically Impacted Individuals and Entities (IIE), such as historically Black and BIPOC parishes, living descendants of the enslaved, and other BIPOC communities, BIPOC small businesses, and community-based social service organization and institutions within the Diocese. This comprehensive model seeks to streamline funding distribution, eliminate barriers to entry for recipients, and begin direct reparation payments to harmed

communities in 2027. The Task Force is committed to centering truth-telling, transparency, and establishing accountable relationships throughout the Diocese; and working through the regional structure to advance its mission. Over the next several months, the Task Force will be working with parishes, through the regional structure, to establish clear communication pathways, a centralized digital resource hub, and data-informed feedback loops. The approach aims to eliminate entry barriers for recipients, honor local regional knowledge, and establish a more relational, justice-centered model of repair. In addition to this, the Task Force is committed to sharing its work through first-personal narratives, social media posts, and video narratives. Gratitude is extended to entire the Task Force for their commitment to the work, and especially Mr. Thomas Howard (St. Paul's, Miller's Tavern), and The Rev. Dawn McNamara (St. Martin's, Richmond) who serve, respectively, as Chair and Vice-Chair.

Ministry for Racial Justice and Healing

The Rev. Benjamin Badgett, St. Mark's, Richmond
Dr. Christine Cameron, St. Anne's, Reston (Chair)
Mr. Larry Clark, St. Philip's, Richmond
Mr. Jan Cornelius, The Falls Church, Fall Church
Miss Isabelle Cresswell, St. Paul's, Richmond (youth representative)
The Rev. David Curtis, All Saints, Richmond
The Rev. Michael Guy, Grace, Casanova
The Venerable Susie Harding, St. Andrew's, Burke
The Very Rev. Joseph Hensley Jr., St. George's, Fredericksburg
Ms. Maggie Keller, St. John's, McLean
Ms. Ericka Masias, La Iglesia de Santa María, Falls Church
Ms. Gwen Malone, Clark Parish, Berryville
Dr. Jayne Osgood, Christ Church, Alexandria (Vice-Chair)
Mr. Jonathan Perry, Little Fork, Rixeyville