

Commission on Dismantling Racism

The Right Reverend Deon K. Johnson, Eleventh Bishop of the Diocese of Missouri
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Vision: As people living out our Baptismal covenant, we see our diocese reconciled to God by challenging racism in ourselves and society.

Mission: To dismantle racism through relationship building, dialogue, education and action.

The Commission on Dismantling Racism is charged by the National Church and the Diocese of Missouri to promote racial justice in the Episcopal Church. The Commission expects to realize this objective by working toward the above stated vision and mission statements. To fulfill this charge, the Commission has focused its work on four major goal areas:

- Goal 1: Increase the presence of the Commission in Diocesan and Congregational activities.
- Goal 2: Train, educate, and update all members of the Commission on some aspect/component of racism.
- Goal 3: Educate and inform so as to empower others to dismantle racism in the Diocese.
- Goal 4: Increase the active membership of the Diocesan Commission on Dismantling Racism.

This has been a year of change and rebuilding for the Commission on Dismantling Racism in the Episcopal Diocese of Missouri. It began in January and February with a transition from and celebration of the 40-year tenure of leadership by Chester Hines Jr. to the installation of four new conveners for the ministry. They include the Rev. Aaron Rogers, the Rev. Shug Goodlow, Harrison Hagan Heil and Kurt Greenbaum.

That transition and celebration included a special meeting of the commission with the bishop and Chester, with an opportunity to recognize his accomplishments during his tenure. We also hosted in February our annual Absalom Jones Celebration, this year at the Church of St. Michael and St. George. This joyous liturgy, celebrated by the bishop and heralding the continuity of the commission's ministry, also included a special moment to recognize and thank Chester. That celebration included a sermon by Kelly Brown Douglas, canon theologian at the Washington National Cathedral.

Other highlights of the year:

- The commission hosted a series of listening sessions with members of the Commission on the goals of the Commission and the needs of the Diocese. This input will inform a fuller strategic plan for the ministry, which is at this time still a work in progress.
- The commission continues to meet monthly by Zoom, usually on the first Saturday of the month at 10 a.m. All are welcome!
- The commission presented its Dismantling Racism workshop on Oct. 14-15. This was presented virtually over Zoom for a small but mighty band of participants. It was a compressed version of the full 14-hour in-person workshop and an adaptation of the virtual training the Commission presented by Zoom in March 2021.
- The commission hosted a conversation with the Rev. Dr. Gayle Fisher-Stewart, author of “Black and Episcopalian,” in October at its regularly scheduled meeting. This conversation capped a series of “book club” gatherings to discuss the book.
- The commission has planned its annual “celebration” event on Dec. 3, 2022, which will include a celebration of dismantling racism work around the diocese.
- The commission is making plans now for its 2023 Absalom Jones celebration, which again includes a liturgy by the bishop and a sermon by the Right Rev. Jennifer Baskerville-Burrows, bishop, Diocese of Indianapolis.

You can contact members of the facilitation team for the Commission on Dismantling Racism here:

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