

Broken, Blessed, Beloved - sharing stories of sexual harassment and misconduct for healing and transformation

From the the EDNY #metoo Task Force:

There is not yet a commonly held understanding of the truth of the prevalence and effects of sexual harassment and abuse in the Episcopal Church, and truth is a precondition to justice and reconciliation. Several resolutions came to General Convention this summer about the topic, but this is too important, and too local, to wait for churchwide action.

We are a group of people who have experienced sexual harassment and abuse in the church and in the world, and we desire to gather narratives to bring the church to repentance, understanding, healing, and action around the issue of sexual harassment and abuse in the Diocese of New York.

In some cases, our stories were shared, but the church fell sinfully short in responding with love and justice. In some cases, sharing our stories would have carried consequences that were too great to bear for ourselves and others, and so we kept silent. In some cases we shared stories in safe spaces, with friends, but found no productive means to take action.

And sometimes in the moment we didn't even know there was a story—it was only in the buildup of day-in, day-out looks, statements, and aggressions that we realized there was a problem, and that we were not being treated with the dignity due to all human beings.

So these are not new stories.

But we are a church that tells ancient stories every week in our worship: we find meaning in standing up and embodying the words and narratives of our forebears. We tell about Leah, Rachel, Zilpah, and Bilhah; we speak of Ruth, Tamar, Jesus, and Mary Magdalene. We believe these stories of scripture have the capacity to change hearts and minds and bring us closer to God.

So do our stories.

Our goal is to gather anonymous narratives of sexual harassment and abuse which happened to people in the Diocese of New York.

Some stories will be read aloud at a liturgy of lamentation and repentance at Diocesan Convention this November.

Possible further uses for your stories include:

- Reading them aloud by other clergy/laypeople to embody these important stories at a Diocesan event
- Developing resources for congregations to use to discuss sexual harassment and abuse in the church and beyond—either written or video.

Guidelines:

We are asking you to provide anonymized narratives of sexual harassment and abuse in the Episcopal Church.

- What happened to you? What was the role (clergy/lay/employer/etc.) of the perpetrator?
- What effect did that event have on your faith, your vocation, and your relationship with the church?

- Did you report it? If so, to whom, and did you find the way it was handled satisfactory? What could have made the reporting process better?
- If you chose not to report it, why not? What would have made it more likely for you to report it?

We are also inviting anonymized narratives of sexual harassment and abuse from those who look back on their past behavior and realize they need to repent.

- What did you do? Did you misuse your authority in some way?
- When did you repent? What actions have you taken towards reconciliation and amendment of life? What would you be willing to do?
- What training, teaching, or practices would have been helpful in preventing you from doing what you did?

Click on this [link](#) to get to a Google form on which to share your story, or go to

https://docs.google.com/forms/d/e/1FAIpQLSdyR5VITipg46-GBqEQiqarN8JjViTAcTUX7MunbgIm3EPKEg/viewform?usp=sf_link

This is not a way to official report misconduct in the church. If you do wish to officially report misconduct in the Diocese of New York, the Intake Officer is the Rev. Nora Smith who can be reached at 917-319-3959.

If telling your story or having to remember it because of this email is causing you distress, you are invited to receive confidential pastoral care from the diocesan helpline at 212-932-7365, or emailing ednymetoo@dioceseny.org. Leave a message, and you will get a response within 24 hours.

The Rev. Carol D. Gadsden, Rector
St. Thomas', Mamaroneck

The Right Rev. Mary Glasspool, Assistant Bishop
Diocese of New York

The Rev. Cameron Hardy, Chaplain
The Millbrook School

Ms. Esslie Hughes, Chief of Finance and Operations
The Diocese of New York

The Rev. Tyler Jones, Rector
St. Paul's, Poughkeepsie

The Rev. Leigh P. Mackintosh, Associate Rector
St. Michael's, Manhattan

The Rev. Gwyneth MacKenzie Murphy, Interim
St. John's, Larchmont

The Rev. Yejide Peters, Rector
All Saints, Briarcliff

The Rev. Alison Quin, Rector
Christ the King, Stone Ridge

The Rev. Jennifer Reddall, Rector
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The Rev. Nora Smith, Director of Strategic Programs
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