

## INTRODUCTION

Slavery was a fact of life in the United States for more than two hundred years. Though we think of it as a southern issue, slavery had a strong foothold in the Diocese of New York for much of that time. From the construction of our churches, to the private households of prominent church leaders, to the refusal of the Episcopal Church in New York to recognize the ministry of black Episcopalians, our diocese was a powerful agent of oppression. More than 150 years after the Civil War, its impact is still felt throughout our land. Whether in the form of Jim Crow laws, segregation, sundowner laws, redlining, wholesale incarceration, or voter repression, slavery has never really left, and we have never fully dealt with it.

That is the job of the Reparations Committee. In 2006, Bishop Mark Sisk formed this group with the task of looking honestly at our past—and our church’s culpability in it—to understand how that past affects our present and to work to repair the breach.

This repair—these reparations—are part our Christian mission of reconciliation, which “is about a return to wholeness and right relation with God and one another” (The Rev. Winnie Varghese in Church Meets the World). As St Paul writes, “Through Christ (God) reconciled us to himself and gave us the ministry of reconciliation; that is, in Christ God was reconciling the world to himself, not counting their trespasses against them, and entrusting to us the message of reconciliation.” (2 Corinthians 5:18-19)

Reparations is more than mere monetary compensation (though that is not excluded). Reparations is confronting the prejudices that still exist and correcting the systemic injustices that, from the time of slavery to today, have continued to harm brothers and sisters in Christ.

The first step in this process is Lamenting. Why lament? Because even today, we are diminished by slavery and its newer incarnations. Even today, some of us benefit from its lingering power while others suffer. And this is lamentable. Because without acknowledging a problem and lamenting it, there can be no repentance, no recognition of the need for justice, no healing, no repair, and ultimately no reconciliation.

We lament the suffering caused by this scourge and we lament the indifference our society and our church have for too long hidden behind.

How do we lament? Think of the scriptures, of those ripped from their homes and forced into slavery, and how they lamented their fate.

*By the waters of Babylon we sat down and wept,  
when we remembered you, O Zion.  
As for our harps, we hung them up  
on the trees in the midst of that land.*

Lamentation is filled with longing and rage, but mostly it is a cry of grief. And the legacy of slavery has left us so much to grieve. We grieve not only the suffering but the sin itself, for when we fail to see Christ in each other, when we fail to see and respond to injustice or suffering, we remove ourselves from Christ and die a bit in our souls.

Over the course of this year, we will have opportunities to express our lamentation, but we do this always with the awareness that it is a first step toward repentance and reparation.

**2018 Year of Lamentations: The Diocese Laments its Role in Slavery**

### Connect with us!

#### Follow our Prayer Blog!

*To connect to an online prayer community,  
read opinion pieces and keep up with current events*  
[ednyreparationsblog.wordpress.com](http://ednyreparationsblog.wordpress.com)

#### Check out our website!

*To learn more about the Reparations Committee*  
[bit.ly/ednyrep](http://bit.ly/ednyrep)

#### Follow us on Facebook!

*To get real time updates on everything going on with the committee*  
[@Ednyreparationscommittee](https://www.facebook.com/Ednyreparationscommittee)

#### Email us!

*For any questions, comments or  
sign up information for any Year of Lamentations events*  
[diocesanrepcommittee@gmail.com](mailto:diocesanrepcommittee@gmail.com)

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and everything going on within the diocese*  
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**REPARATIONS** is the process to remember, repair, restore, reconcile and make amends for wrongs that can never be singularly reducible to monetary terms. The process of reparations is “an historical reckoning involving acknowledgement that an offense against humanity was committed and that the victims have not received justice.\*”

### Committee Members

Co Chair Rev. Richard Witt  
Lynnaia Main  
Carla Burns  
Roger Taylor  
Rev. Chuck Kramer

Co Chair Cynthia Copeland  
Diane Pollard  
Nell Gibson  
Rev. Mary Glasspool





# Events for the

## January

**Theatrical Presentation** Christ Church, Staten Island

***A New York Lamentation*** A play exploring the history of slavery within the Episcopal Church. 01/21 3-5pm

## February

**Film and Discussion** Church of St Barnabas, Irvington

***Strong Island (2017)*** Join us as we view *Strong Island* and discuss the thematic elements together. 02/04 7pm

**Blessed Absalom Jones Liturgy** Cathedral of St John the Divine

A liturgical celebration of the first African American Priest ordained in the Episcopal Church. 02/10 10:30am

**Film and Discussion** Donegan Hall, Cathedral Close

***Birth of a Nation(2016)*** Join us as we view *Birth of a Nation* and discuss the thematic elements together. 02/22 7pm

## March

**Theatrical Presentation** Christ Church, Poughkeepsie

***A New York Lamentation*** A play exploring the history of slavery within the Episcopal Church. 03/04 3-5pm

**Book Discussion** Donegan Hall, Cathedral Close

***Deep Denial, David Billings*** Join the discussion on the narrative elements of Billings' book. 03/14 6-9pm

## April

**Film and Discussion** Church of the Ascension, Manhattan

***Agents of Change (2016)*** Watch *Agents of Change* with us and engage in a discussion afterwards. 04/22 2pm

## May

**A Liturgy of Lamentation** Cathedral of St. John the Divine

Celebrate with us through prayer, dance, song, and theater. 05/17 7pm

**Sacred Walking Tour Part 1** Manhattan

Sacred walks to honor and explore sites that mark early African presence in New York. Saturdays in May

## June

**Film and Discussion** Christ Church, Staten Island

***Strong Island (2017)*** Watch and discuss *Strong Island* with us as we delve into the topics of race, culture, and family. 06/10

## July

**A Pilgrimage of Lamentations** Upstate New York

A three-day pilgrimage visiting historic sites that broaden our knowledge and understanding of African American history in New York State. End of July



Scan the QR Code for a more detailed calendar of events updated in real time! Or just go to this link: <http://bit.ly/yolcalendar>

# Year of Lamentations

## August

**Jonathan Daniels Pilgrimage**

A pilgrimage offering an opportunity for high school students to visit historic sights across Georgia and Alabama and understand civil rights activist, St. Jonathan Daniels and the historic events surrounding his life and death.

Details to come. Early August

## September

**Theatrical Presentation** St. Paul Community Baptist Church, Brooklyn

***The MAAFA Suite... A Healing Journey*** Come see the theatrical presentation depicting the stories and events that have shaped the African American experience. Please sign up ahead of time tickets are limited.

## End of September

**Book Discussion** St James the Less, Scarsdale NY

***We Were Eight Years in Power, Ta-Nehisi Coates*** Join the discussion! Let's review and discuss this amazing book together. 09/16 2-4pm

**Theatrical Presentation** St. Philip's Church, Harlem

***A New York Lamentation*** (See January for details.) 09/23 3-5pm

**Film and Discussion** Grace Church, Nyack

**Film Festival for Youth** Come view a series of short films introducing youth to the Civil Rights Movement and its implications. 09/30 2pm

## October

**Book Discussion** St George's, Newburgh

***We Were Eight Years in Power, Ta-Nehisi Coates*** (See September for details.) 10/21 2-4pm

**Theatrical Presentation** St Bartholomew's, White Plains

***A New York Lamentation*** (See January for details.) 10/14 2-4pm

**Concert** The Church of Heavenly Rest

**Vibrations for a New Movement** A concert celebrating the empowerment of music! 10/27 4pm

**A Diocesan Conversation**

A forum discussing and reflecting upon the Year of Lamentations.

10/28

# Theatrical Presentation

## *A New York Lamentation*

Check out this informative play looking into the history of some great community leaders and how the effects of slavery had shaped their lives, the community of the Episcopal Church, and the evolution of race and culture in New York.  
See calendar for showings.

# Book Club

***Deep Denial,***

**David Billings** *Deep Denial*, part popular history and part memoir, documents why, despite the civil rights movement and an African-American president, we remain, in the words of the author, a nation hard-wired by race. (Please read the book before coming)

***We Were Eight Years in Power,***

**Ta-Nehisi Coates** This book features Coates' iconic essays first published in *The Atlantic* that revisit each year of the Obama administration through Coates' own experiences, observations, and intellectual development. (Please read the book before coming)

# Film and Discussion

***Birth of a Nation (2016)***

A depiction of the violent and historic rebellion in Southampton County, Virginia, led by Nat Turner, an enslaved Baptist preacher on a quest for justice and freedom.

***Agents of Change (2016)***

*Agents of Change* examines the untold story of the racial conditions on college campuses that led to the takeover of the student union at Cornell University in 1969 at the intersection of the civil rights, black power and anti-Vietnam war movement in America.

***Strong Island (2017)***

A movie that tells the story of the Ford family: Barbara Dunmore, William Ford and their three children and how their lives were shaped by the enduring shadow of race in America

# Workshops

The EDNY Reparations Committee facilitates workshops that examine the hidden history of the Episcopal Church's involvement in the Transatlantic Slave Trade using a 30 minute DVD, *The Diocese of New York Examines Slavery: Talking About Reparations, Repair and Reconciliation*, and a handbook created by the Diocese of New York's Reparations Committee. Come examine the hidden history of our church and ourselves as we challenge the dominant narrative of American and global history.  
Email us for more information and to schedule a workshop today!

# Journeys

**A Vibration for a New Movement**  
Check out this concert celebrating the empowerment of music!  
October 2018

**Sacred Dignity to Human Suffering, Walking Tour, Part I**  
Join us over the span of three weekends to honor and explore sites that mark the Early African Presence in New York. Sites that pay homage to the ancestors will include the Slave Gallery at St. Augustine's Church, The African Burial Ground and Seneca Village.  
Saturdays in May 2018

**Sacred Dignity to Human Suffering, Excursion Tour, Part II**  
Join us on a three-day pilgrimage as we visit historic sites to broaden our knowledge and understanding of African American history in New York state. Itinerary in formation and to include: The Stephen Myers Home, Albany, NY; Gerrit Smith Estate National Historic Landmark, Peterboro, NY and the Harriet Tubman Home National Historical Park, Auburn New York  
TBD, July 2018

