

**Report of the Moses Commission Convening Group
Concerning Implementation of Reparations
in the Episcopal Diocese of New York**

**Submitted on February 13, 2026
in observance of the Feast of Blessed Absalom Jones**

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Introduction

The Lord will guide you continually
and satisfy your needs in parched places
and make your bones strong,
and you shall be like a watered garden,
like a spring of water
whose waters never fail.
Your ancient ruins shall be rebuilt;
you shall raise up the foundations of many generations;
you shall be called the repairer of the breach,
the restorer of streets to live in.

~ Isaiah 58:11-12

“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 acknowledgment that an offense against humanity was committed and that the victims have not received justice.”¹

~ Reparations definition adopted by the Reparations
Commission of the Episcopal Diocese of New York

The transatlantic slave trade and the institution of chattel slavery marked and continue to color every part of life in New York. The whole enterprise of slavery – the skilled labor stolen, the bodies controlled, the families destroyed, the lives taken, the ships built and outfitted, the goods traded, the wealth and property accrued almost exclusively to White people – ensured the unprecedented explosion of American wealth and the rise of an empire. Without slavery, there is no American mercantile domination. Without slavery, there is no need to legally codify hierarchies of human beings. Without the loss of unpaid enslaved labor, New York might not have been so eager to welcome the low-paid labor of immigrants.

In the mid-18th century, New York held more people enslaved than any city in the American colonies, with the exception of Charleston, South Carolina. At the time, more than 40 percent of New York households owned slaves. On the eve of the Civil War, New York remained America’s most active outfitter and funder of slave ships. By the latter 1800s, when many Christians in the U.S. and our Anglican counterparts across the Atlantic were begging the church to repent, New York’s Episcopalians steadfastly refused to even hear resolutions calling for the true abolition of slavery and divestment from the slave trade. Instead, we consistently doubled-down on White supremacy (when St. Philip’s, the diocese’s first Black church, petitioned to take its seat at convention in 1846, leaders argued that St. Philip’s members “are socially degraded, and are not regarded as proper associates for the class of persons who attend our Convention.”)

¹ The Reparations Commission’s reparations definition is drawn from “A Call for Study on Reparations for Slavery,” a resolution adopted by the United Church of Christ’s 23rd General Synod in July 2001, which itself builds on the work of the Rev. Dr. Iva Carruthers, author of *The Church and Reparations*. See text of the UCC resolution in Appendix A.

The truth is, much of our region’s wealth, power and infrastructure – and the Episcopal churches that both received and blessed those resources – would simply not exist without slavery and anti-Blackness. The Episcopal Diocese of New York and its ministries are uniquely implicated in the odious institution of slavery and in anti-Black policies and practices that extend through the generations and to this very day. It is not merely a problem for the South. It is not only a problem for the rich or those who trace their lineage to slaveholders. If we Episcopalians claim to follow Jesus, if we desire wholeness within the body of Christ, if we promise to love God and our neighbor, we must address and eventually repair and make amends for this deep, still-festering wound.

This is why the Episcopal Diocese of New York supports reparations for slavery. We collectively seek justice, wholeness, repair and ultimately reconciliation. We know these are the marks of the Spirit’s movement, and we want to bear those marks as a church. We hear Isaiah’s insistence that God longs to satisfy the most vulnerable, to make our bones strong and shower us with waters that never fail. We know God rebuilds what has been torn and repairs what has been broken or was never built. We seek to repair and restore lives, communities and histories, and understanding the church’s mission is reconciliation with God and one another.

The Rt. Rev. Matthew Heyd renewed this commitment on Juneteenth 2025 by calling forth a convening group for the Moses Commission. Originally authorized at diocesan convention in 2022, the Commission was intended to take responsibility for deploying the diocese’s \$1.1 million Reparations Fund, designated by the Rt. Rev. Andrew Dietsche at the 2019 diocesan convention. The Moses Commission would pursue this practical work in conversation with the longstanding diocesan Reparations Commission, which focuses on formation and truth-telling, and the collection of stories across the diocese.

At Bishop Heyd’s request, a group of conveners were asked to identify the Moses Commission’s unique priorities over its first five years, with an initial six-month focus on the following:

- Reviewing existing models for reparations work inside and outside of The Episcopal Church
- Examining models for ongoing funding of the work of the Commission
- Recommending a permanent board structure
- Identifying areas the Reparations Fund can be deployed consistent with the Mission Priorities of the Diocese.

The report that follows is our faithful response to the Bishop’s charge. In the pages that follow, we will share:

1. the process and work of the Moses conveners from August 2025 to February 2026, including newly developed Guiding Principles, Mission Statement, Vision and Commitments for the Moses Commission;
2. a brief history of the work of reparations in the Diocese of New York;

3. a summation of the key harms for which the Diocese, its congregations and its ministries are responsible *and* the proposed reparatory actions that aim to heal what Episcopalians in the Diocese of New York have broken;
4. a description of the status of diocesan reparations funding and recommendations for raising and managing these funds for the foreseeable future;
5. a proposal regarding the initial organizational structure for pursuing the prescribed work of the Moses Commission;
6. a concluding statement from the chair of the conveners group; and
7. a set of appendices featuring relevant resolutions and the landscape of faith-based reparations efforts that informed the Moses conveners.

* * *

One day, Jesus was walking through Jericho, looked up and saw Zaccheus, a rich tax collector who was known to have gained his wealth from defrauding his neighbors. Jesus beckoned him, “Zacchaeus, come down immediately. I must stay at your house today” (Luke 19:5). Witnesses were horrified that Jesus would dare to visit this notorious sinner’s home. Zaccheus was just overwhelmed by the opportunity to enter into new relationship with Jesus. He also understood it meant transforming his relationships with other people. “Look, Lord!” he announced. “Here and now I give half of my possessions to the poor, and if I have cheated anybody out of anything, I will pay back four times the amount.”

Zaccheus didn’t approach reparations as a loss or punishment. It was a logical step on the way toward restoration and new life. It was an act of faith, a renunciation of selfish gain and a return to living as the child of God he was created to be. That may be why Jesus could respond by confidently declaring: “Today salvation has come to this house, because this man, too, is a son of Abraham. For the Son of Man came to seek and to save the lost.” Zaccheus’s neighbors needed reparative action. Zaccheus also needed to engage in repair for the sake of his own salvation.

May the reparative work of the Episcopal Diocese of New York bear similar fruit: healing and repair for Black communities, ministries and lives *and* rehabilitation and restoration within the body of Christ and in the hearts of all Episcopalians.

1. The Conveners' Journey and Process

The Moses Commission Convening Group began our work in August 2025, under the leadership of our chair, The Rev. Marisa Sifontes. Sessions were held on a roughly monthly basis and focused on clarifying the charge from Bishop Heyd and identifying other reparations initiatives from which we could learn. Outside of meeting times, members agreed to interview leaders (or at a minimum conduct extensive online research) on various initiatives. Together we collected narrative and information from and reflected on the following efforts (underline indicates hyperlink leading to online material):

- Diocese of Maryland Reparations Committee
- Episcopal Diocese of Washington Task Force on Reparations
- Memorial Episcopal Church-Baltimore Justice and Reparations Initiative
- Virginia Theological Seminary Reparations Fund
- Diocese of Virginia Truth and Reparations Task Force
- Diocese of Texas Racial Justice Initiative
- Georgetown University and the Society of Jesus (The Jesuits)
- Justice and Sustainability Associates
- Diocese of New Jersey Reparations Ministry
- Church of England Church Commissioners—Fund for Healing, Repair and Justice
- Diocese of Massachusetts Reparations Fund
- Diocese of Long Island Reparations Committee
- Diocese of North Carolina Reparations and Restitution Ministry

The stories and wisdom we heard covered a broad range of perspectives and experiences. We spoke to groups that started with a set amount of money and then sought a reparative course of action. We sat with others who began by listening to those harmed and waited to determine a financial commitment, if any at all. Some focused on grants; others issued scholarships. A few met with little resistance; most said it was a struggle to gain credibility and to effect change. For readers who wish to learn more, Appendix B of this report reviews the landscape of faith-based initiatives we studied.

It quickly became clear to us that there is no perfect method for pursuing reparations. Instead of looking for solutions and models to directly replicate, we established a set of guiding principles that shape reparations implementation in the Episcopal Diocese of New York.

Guiding Principles for Reparative Action

- *Clarity is holy.* Racism ultimately diminishes people of every race, and we do not wish to construct a hierarchy of oppressions. At the same time, the resolutions and diocesan commitment that yielded the Reparations Fund and Moses Commission are both a direct response to the legacy of chattel slavery and the transatlantic slave trade in the Diocese of New York. Our call is to reckon with these specific systems and their devastating aftermath, and to help to repair the brokenness and injustice they spawn to this day.

- *We will not choose between repair beyond the church and repair within the church.* The church's reparative action must address both the wounds the Diocese of New York and its members have inflicted in our broader communities and society *and* the deep wounds to Black people within the church and across the entire body of Christ.
- *Repair is relational, not transactional.* Reparations and reparative action cannot be limited to a financial transaction or a cash figure, nor can they be confined to the distribution of checks. We seek transformation of the body and its members, in order to become a community that looks, acts and loves more like Jesus.
- *You can only repair what you have named.* Truth-seeking and truth-telling are essential and in themselves an important element of healing.
- *Repair is concrete, not abstract.* The reparative path requires identifying specific harms and wounds for which the Diocese of New York and its ministries are responsible, and then discerning specific, strategic remedies that address those harms.
- *The oppressor cannot set the terms.* White people and majority-White institutions cannot decide for themselves what constitutes repair for chattel slavery, the slave trade and their myriad consequences. Black people and communities must take the lead on designing the way forward, in partnership with allies of all backgrounds and ethnicities, including White people who bear special responsibility for repairing sinful systems designed for White flourishing.
- *One group cannot do everything.* The Moses Commission is not and should not be the only group pursuing racial repair, justice and healing. "Repair" is one of the Diocese of New York's mission priorities, and this Commission will pursue it in concert with the Reparations Commission, Antiracism Committee and numerous other diocesan and community organizations with a stake in restoring and rehabilitating what racism has torn asunder. We will break down silos and refuse the temptation to compete and hoard control - impulses that too often diminish movements for justice.
- *We should use every tool at our disposal to address the harms in need of repair.* We learned from other initiatives that there are many ways to effect repair. In some instances, the Moses Commission may need to take responsibility for funding and/or implementing work it is uniquely positioned to lead or support. At times, the Commission may advocate and recommend other bodies pursue a reparative course of action. Then again, the Commission and its members may leverage the Reparations Fund to secure wider financial partnerships that serve the work of repair, rehabilitation and healing.

While much of our initial work focused on learning from others' examples, we also took time early on to mine the history of diocesan reparations work, our own experiences, and two years' worth of reporting by congregations working locally on racial injustice. These historical insights - captured in Section 2 of this report - helped us to better understand our church's context and eventually to name the harms for which the Episcopal Church in New York is uniquely culpable.

The convening group prayerfully discerned remedies associated with these harms. By December it became clear that we needed to ask Black Episcopalians to reflect separately on what might constitute reparative action in and by the Diocese of New York. The decision flowed logically from our shared belief that Black people should ultimately determine what is repair for chattel slavery and centuries of anti-Black policies and practices, after which a broader, multiracial circle can together pursue repair and healing.

A subgroup made up of Black members of the conveners' group and a small group of Black lay leaders and clergy met in mid-December and again in early January to discern the course for repair. These proposals were presented to the Moses conveners as a whole, who prayed, reflected and worked with the Black leaders' wisdom in order to craft a shared vision for repair. Section 3 of this report details both the harms and the proposed repair we believe the Moses Commission should now pursue, in continued conversation with and accountability to a circle of Black leaders.

In addition to our efforts as a committee of the whole, in September we divided into working groups responsible for research and strategy around the areas in our original charge: history of the diocesan reparations journey, reparations funding models and strategies, and possible organizational structure (including exploring whether to move ahead on forming a nonprofit corporation or to remain for the time-being within the diocesan structure). These groups met throughout our term and reported regularly back to the whole. We have addressed their important contributions in dedicated sections of this report, beginning with the brief history of reparations work in the Diocese of New York in the next section.

In the course of our journey, the Moses Commission convening group agreed on a Mission Statement, Vision and Commitments. We pray these statements will shape and advance the work of the Moses Commission and the Diocese of New York for many years to come.

Moses Commission Mission Statement

The Moses Commission is dedicated to the ongoing repair of systems, communities and people wounded by chattel slavery and anti-Black policies and practices as perpetuated by the Episcopal Diocese of New York and its congregations.

Moses Commission Vision

The Moses Commission seeks to complement the diocese's long-term work of truth-telling, formation and apology for the sin of racism. We will chart a specific, concrete course of action that heals, rehabilitates and celebrates Black bodies, communities and cultures in the Diocese of New York – both within and beyond the church.

Moses Commission Commitments

We lean into the witness of both the Hebrew prophet Moses, who followed God's call, led the Israelites out of enslavement, and pointed the way toward the promised land; and Harriet Tubman, the Black abolitionist from Maryland and New York who earned the name "Moses" because she shepherded enslaved people to freedom and wholeness.

As the Moses Commission, we will deploy the diocese's existing \$1.2 million Reparations Fund with care and with an eye toward systemic justice and liberation. In addition, given the extraordinary wealth accrued to New York's Episcopal institutions as a result of slavery and anti-Black systems and behaviors prevalent throughout most of our 330-year history, and given the continued operation of anti-Blackness and White superiority in our churches and society, we understand the current funds to be an initial investment that should be systematically, significantly and regularly augmented by the Diocese. It is the only faithful way to engage God's call to reconciliation and our diocesan mission priority of repair now and well into the future.

2. A Brief History of Reparations Work in the Diocese of New York

One of the earliest clear signs of diocesan commitment to reparations came in 2005, when the Rt. Rev. Mark Sisk, 15th Bishop of New York, said in public remarks: “The wounds of slavery are both in our hearts and minds. Slavery marks the soul of this nation.”

A year later, at its 75th General Convention in June 2006, The Episcopal Church adopted resolutions around slavery and racial reconciliation (A123)², restorative justice (A127)³, and federal legislation to study reparations (C011)⁴. Together, they caught attention for the apologies they made and the action they pledged. Dioceses were directed to examine their histories of participation in, and enrichment from, the transatlantic slave trade, and to learn about its legacy of persistent segregation and discrimination. These resolutions were submitted by the Diocese of New York’s deputation to General Convention and like-minded deputations from other dioceses.

At the next diocesan convention in November 2006, Bishop Sisk called for the creation of a new Reparations Task Force to use documentation and storytelling to collect information on the complicity in, and enrichment of, the Diocese of New York via the institution of slavery. Knowledge gathered about “historical and present-day privilege and under-privilege” would be used to discern “a process toward restorative justice” and “whether EDNY was called to conduct a truth and reconciliation process” to explore and expose the legacies of racial discrimination and oppression. See Appendix C for the text of the resolution establishing the new task force.

During its first six years, the original Reparations Task Force became the Reparations Committee and focused its energy on education around the shared history of slavery. In January 2008, the group organized an ecumenical liturgy titled *Let My People Go: a Service of Liberation* to mark the bicentennial of the abolition of the transatlantic slave trade on January 1, 1808. The Reparations Committee also produced a documentary titled *The Diocese of New York Examines Slavery: Talking about Reparations, Repair and Reconciliation*, and encouraged churches to use the resource to fuel their own historical exploration and storytelling. Committee members went on to ensure parish staff and volunteers were trained to advance the work of collecting and telling stories.

Starting in 2017, the diocese entered into a three-year Cycle of Lamentation, Apology and Repair for the sin of slavery. The Reparations Committee guided extensive work throughout 2018, the Year of Lamentation. Among other activities, Committee member the Rev. Chuck Kramer wrote and Jeannine Otis directed *A New York Lamentation*, a history play set in the 1800s that features brief monologues and intriguing interactions among Episcopal priests, formerly enslaved people, apologists for enslavement, and an abolitionist.

² General Convention 2006, Resolution A123,
https://digitalarchives.episcopalarchives.org/cgi-bin/acts/acts_resolution-complete.pl?resolution=2006-A123

³ General Convention 2006, Resolution A127,
https://digitalarchives.episcopalarchives.org/cgi-bin/acts/acts_resolution-complete.pl?resolution=2006-A127

⁴ General Convention 2006, Resolution C011,
https://digitalarchives.episcopalarchives.org/cgi-bin/acts/acts_resolution.pl?resolution=2006-C011

A Liturgy of Lamentation was held in May 2018 at the Cathedral of St. John the Divine. Additional events included film and book discussions, walking tours, a pilgrimage to historic sites upstate, and a diocesan conversation in advance of that year's convention in White Plains, at which the history play was presented and followed up by small-group discussion facilitated by Reparations Committee members.

A Year of Apology followed in 2019, in which the Committee further led the Diocese to further name its sin, accept responsibility, express remorse, make amends where possible, and commit to a new way. The diocesan convention in November 2019 passed four resolutions condemning slavery - all of which had been submitted by John Jay II in 1860 and tabled by convention leaders who overwhelmingly supported slavery.

At the same 2019 convention, Bishop Andrew Dietsche, 16th Bishop of New York, made news and surprised many leaders by presenting a proposal that the Trustees set aside \$1.1 million from the diocesan endowment for reparations. He said he landed at the amount after considering two then-recent reparations commitments by seminaries. Virginia Theological Seminary had pledged 1.1 percent of their \$140 million investment portfolio, and Princeton Seminary set aside 2.25 percent of their \$1.2 billion portfolio for reparations. He reasoned that, in setting aside \$1.1 million, an amount equal to 2.5 percent of the Diocese of New York's then-\$44 million portfolio, he had designated a figure that, "much smaller, and the resources for significant reparation would be insufficient; much larger, and it might not be something we could do." See Appendix D for the relevant text from this address.

A resolution of that same Convention directed the Trustees to designate \$1.1 million "by which this diocese may make reparation for its part in the American slave trade and in the legacy of injustice which has continued in this our diocese to our own day." At their December 5, 2019, meeting the Trustees created the "Reparations Fund":

The Trustees of the Diocese authorize the creation of a designated fund, which may be made available to the Bishop of New York for the purpose of reparations for its part in the American slave trade. Such fund will be called "Fund for Reparations in the Diocese of New York;" and be it further

Resolved, that \$1,100,000 of the general endowment be designated in this fund.

The COVID-19 pandemic stymied implementation of the third year of the cycle, which was to be devoted to Repair. But the pandemic push to go online opened doors for other ways to engage. The Reparations Committee undertook a series of panel discussions on Zoom, entitled *Voices Heard*. Each panel addressed a topic like housing, education, medical care, criminal justice, and the deployment of Black clergy and featured experts on the impact of racism and discrimination on Black communities. The Antiracism Committee also stepped up its work in the aftermath of the murder of George Floyd in May 2020. Between 2021 and 2022, the group held two diocesan online summits and a retreat.

It is important here to note that, beyond these diocesan ministries, numerous churches have also taken up the charge to address reparations. The conveners took particular note of work by the

Rivertowns Episcopal Parishes (All Saints-Briarcliff Manor, St. Barnabas-Irvington, Christ Church-San Marcos-Tarrytown and Grace Church-Ossining), St. Michael's-Manhattan, St. Mark's in the Bowery, St. James-Madison Avenue and Trinity Church-Wall Street. Congregations have also participated in the Ma'afa pilgrimage, a commemoration at St. Paul Community Baptist Church in Brooklyn that re-enacts the journey of enslaved Africans to America and promotes internal healing for people of African descent and allies.

More recently, the Reparations Committee was made a Commission in 2022. The same year, diocesan convention created the Moses Commission via "A Resolution Establishing a 501(c)(3) Organization to Hold and Administer the Corpus of Funds Received and Identified for Reparations." See the text of this resolution in Appendix E. On March 25, 2023, Bishop Dietsche preached the first full and explicit apology for the diocese's complicity in slavery and its aftermath, in the context of a Liturgy of Apology at the Cathedral of St. John the Divine on the International Day of Remembrance of the Victims of Slavery and the Transatlantic Slave Trade.

In December 2023, funds were gifted to the following organizations in recognition of their ongoing reparatory work: Hudson Link for Higher Education in Prison Inc., Brooklyn Public Library Unbanned Books Program, and St. Paul Community Baptist Church.

The Rt. Rev. Matthew Heyd, 17th Bishop of New York, entered office with a commitment to healing historic harms within the Church and a promise to apply a reparations lens to our common life. Early on he asked the Trustees to approve property loan forgiveness for congregations of color, an act that constitutes the diocese's first direct financial reparations action. Bishop Heyd asked the 249th Diocesan Convention in 2025 to commit one percent of proceeds from property sales to supplement the \$1.1 million Reparations Fund. He also took responsibility for constituting and charging a group of conveners to recommend the future shape and mission of the Moses Commission.

The Diocese of New York's reparations work has served as an inspiration and guide to many other dioceses and organizations. It is clear the need is only increasing for robust work by the Diocese of New York, including through its Reparations Commission, the Moses Commission, the Antiracism Committee and other leadership bodies, all working in tandem to support the ministry of healing and repair.

Those familiar with the history can cite the many times Episcopal and diocesan leaders have made promises and even taken significant steps, only to allow the energy and action to fade. Let us learn from history and pledge here and now to stay the course, understanding the reparations journey is longer than any bishop's term or political movement, longer even than the lifetimes of those now serving. Repair is the heart of the gospel.

3. Identified Harms and Proposed Reparative Action

Identified Harms

The church has a unique responsibility to name and repair what our institutions and members have broken. In other words, we have to identify and then address real wounds and harms related to chattel slavery and its legacy.

With this weighty task in mind, the conveners of the Moses Commission have taken care to review the intensive truth-telling and reparations work conducted by the Episcopal Diocese of New York, its congregations and ministries over the last 30 years. Members of our group serve on the Reparations Commission, Antiracism Committee and other bodies dedicated to racial healing and justice in New York and beyond, and we brought that wisdom and historic perspective to the table.

Together, we noted a host of ways that Episcopalians and our institutions in New York have wounded Black communities and people within and beyond the church. While ours is not an exhaustive list, we believe it is critical to state the harms most in need of reckoning and repair.

- *Our church has consistently blessed and participated in systems of anti-Blackness, through the transatlantic slave trade and the institution of chattel slavery, and also through centuries of racial injustice and animus against Black people and culture.*
 - The early Anglican church in New York from its creation benefited from free labor at the Coddington Plantation and Estate in Barbados, supported by the Society for the Propagation of the Gospel.
 - Countless Episcopal laity and clergy enslaved people and profited richly from the shipping and trade of Africans. These profits were in turn used to build churches, fund operations, and enrich the coffers of the Diocese and its institutions.
 - Episcopal churches maintained balconies where enslaved people and Free Blacks were made to sit, separated from the White congregation; one such balcony, at St. Augustine of Hippo Church in lower Manhattan, was built in 1828, *after* slavery was abolished in New York.
 - The diocesan convention in 1860 refused to vote on resolutions condemning slavery and the illegal slave trade; the measures only passed convention in 2019.

- *We have wounded Black people and communities by consistently elevating the perceived superiority of and preference for White culture and people across our leadership and liturgical life.*
 - Historically, Black congregations and their leadership were far too often not trusted to make their own decisions or were not fully included or welcomed in the life of the Diocese.

- When asked in 1907 by *The New York Times* about his view on Black and White people belonging to the same church, the Rev. George Van de Water, rector of St. Andrew's on 127th Street in Manhattan, said: "[T]he sooner the colored people get out of St. Andrew's the better it will be for both whites and blacks. If President Roosevelt wants to eat with a colored man he can do so. I won't."⁵ The church at the time had several Black members.
 - Between 1900 and 1930, a large number of Black families moved to uptown Manhattan. All Souls Harlem welcomed them, and by 1932 about half its congregation was Black, with 200 Black children attending Sunday School. The majority White vestry ordered the rector to "cease encouraging the Negroes," and when he refused, they demanded his resignation and cut his pay. When this failed, the vestry scaffolded the sanctuary (falsely declaring the ceiling unsound) and changed the locks to close the church.⁶
 - Today, many Episcopal churches and liturgical leaders refuse to use the African American-inspired *Lift Every Voice and Sing* hymnal, or - if they do - only during Communion or at times when professional singers are not asked to sing music viewed as substandard and not truly Episcopal.
- *We have underfunded and abandoned Black communities and ministries, often through the closure of majority-Black ministries and transfer of proceeds to support majority-White ministries.*
 - St. Cyprian's, a thriving Black congregation and community center located in the San Juan Hill neighborhood of Manhattan, was sold in the 1950s to make way for construction of Lincoln Center. The congregation was displaced and the funds absorbed into the Diocese.
 - The Diocese has not consistently met its fiduciary duty with regard to property sales. In particular, malfeasance around the handling of St. Philip's property both impoverished and changed the trajectory of New York's first Black congregation.
 - St. Andrew's Church in Beacon has all but disappeared. Unsupported by the Diocese as urban renewal in the 1960s and '70s demolished Black homes and businesses to build Route 9D, St. Andrew's was forced to merge with majority-White St. Luke's Church. Today St. Andrew's is considered by many to be merely an outreach arm of St. Luke's.
 - *We have forced Black leaders to suffer inequities both in the ordination process and upon deployment as clergy in our diocese, and our church leadership structures too often mirror societal inequities.*

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<https://www.nytimes.com/1907/03/03/archives/wants-no-negroes-in-st-andrews-dr-van-de-waters-published-statement.html>

⁶ https://anglicanhistory.org/usa/wtmanning/all_souls1932.html,
<https://www.nycgo.org/Organs/NYC/html/AllSoulsEpis.html>

- The Rev. Peter Williams endured a 16-year process to become the first Black priest ordained in the Diocese of New York. In 1811, he was appointed lay reader at the diocese's first Black church, St. Philip's. The Standing Committee didn't allow him to become a deacon until 1820, and only after he and the church promised they wouldn't attend diocesan convention. While most deacons waited six months until priestly ordination, Williams was forced to wait until 1826.
 - Rev. Dr. Alger L. Adams graduated from General Theological Seminary in 1937 with honors, but because Black clergy could only serve Black churches, it took a decade for him to finally be assigned to a post: two Black congregations in Westchester.
 - To date, few Black clergy in the Diocese of New York have been called to lead non-Black churches, especially congregations with ample financial resources. This pattern stands in contrast with the higher number of Black leaders serving as high-profile rectors in neighboring dioceses.
 - Our diocesan leadership - whether staff, appointed or elected - has not consistently included Black voices and presence.
 - New Black clergy who are raised in this diocese report frequently experiencing underemployment and leaving the diocese to gain experience or to find full-time employment. In addition, qualified and capable Black clergy report that they struggle to find work in the diocese, even with qualifications comparable to White counterparts.
- *Finally, we have refused to sustain rigorous truth-telling and reckoning around these very harms. And our \$1.1 million reparations commitment is too small to facilitate real change and threatens to trivialize the actual depth of the wounds our church has inflicted.*

Proposed Reparative Action

Given these significant harms, what constitutes repair? Black members of the convening group met with Black peers in the diocese for time apart to pray and discern around this very question. Having learned from other reparations efforts, we knew the call to repair often leads to grant or scholarship programs that fund individuals, ministries or community organizations. In our context, we have determined repair requires something different. We seek to leverage the funds and diocesan will for the sake of structural change that advances our gospel values.

And so, taking into account the Moses Commission's specific charge, capacity and resources, we have identified **three major avenues for repair**, each of which the Moses Commission proposes to help lead and fund over the next five years and into the future:

Avenue 1: Repairers of the Story

Given our church's role in disappearing and abusing Black bodies, voices and stories, and given how sporadically Episcopalians have engaged in truth-telling and reckoning around our

complicity in anti-Black racism, the Moses Commission should collaborate with the Reparations Commission to lead the Diocese and its congregations to become Repairers of the Story.

Over a roughly three-year period, we should pursue the following course:

Stage 1: Unearthing Stories: At a time when leaders in our state and nation are bent on burying Black stories and denying historic racial injustice, every congregation and institution could join in a rigorous effort to publicly gather history and stories focused on the following:

- Episcopal participation in anti-Black violence, from chattel slavery and the slave trade through Jim Crow, redlining, mass incarceration and other contemporary manifestations of anti-Blackness
- Episcopal resistance to the systems listed above

At the same time, throughout this critical first stage, the Moses Commission should partner with Diocesan leaders to create more visible spaces for reclaiming and voicing Black Episcopal histories and experiences of systemic and personal harm. This truth-telling can happen in safe, private spaces but also in public, facilitated listening sessions where people bravely tell the truth and invite reckoning, justice and healing. This work should draw on methods and materials found in the [Episcopal Project](#) (a site that captures stories, video, photos, archives, etc.) and in the [Black Presence in the Diocese of New York](#) website.

Despite numerous resolutions at the churchwide and diocesan levels, many congregations and institutions have yet to take up this kind of historical examination. Even the ones who've engaged the work have room to explore more deeply and find fresh ways to share their stories more broadly. We are convinced it is critical that the entire diocese join in this season of collectively unearthing the truth. The experience, resources and leadership of the Reparations Commission will be essential for supporting congregations in this work, especially smaller churches that lack resources to pursue historical study on their own.

All the stories described above should be gathered-in by a person paid by the diocese, in order to guarantee successful movement to the next phase of the work. To complement and deepen the story-gathering by local institutions, the Moses Commission may also engage the services of an academic to excavate the stories and history of Episcopal participation in the vast institution of chattel slavery and the slave trade in New York.

Stage 2: Honoring Stories: These dramatic stories deserve a life beyond reports, archives and even websites. Too often, the diocese hasn't captured and held onto these accounts, which leads to anecdotal recitations instead of systemic accounting (we discovered this in our own efforts to gather a true account of anti-Black harm in the diocese). Stories - particularly those captured and shared on film - can serve as a powerful catalyst for reckoning and healing.

In 2027, the Moses Commission should urge congregations to take two steps to honor the stories surfaced in Stage 1:

- Install historical markers visible to the church and public
- Record and film stories to create content for more robust engagement opportunities

Where there is financial burden, the Moses Commission can make modest grant funding available to assist with installation of markers. The commission should also fund a consultant who can provide filmmaking guidance (but in limited instances conduct the filming) for capturing local stories. This person will also gather and organize footage from across the diocese to create the resource at the heart of Stage 3.

Stage 3: Reckoning with the Truth: With so many churches and institutions participating in this public witness, we will be well positioned early in 2028 to reckon with the stories and the truths they reveal. This should happen in two ways:

- A pilgrimage to learn and pray at the historical markers across the diocese. The first journey should be led by Bishop Matthew Heyd. See [Diocese of Maryland's Trail of Souls](#) and also the Diocese of New York's own experience offering Stations of the Cross-style journeys to closed churches.
- A diocesan video curriculum based on the storytelling and films from across the diocese, similar to Sacred Ground but with New York's own stories at its heart. The Episcopal Diocese of [El Camino Real](#) has done something like this. Every congregation and ministry would be urged to host circles to take the film-based journey together. The curriculum should be required for diocesan elected leaders, seminarians and clergy search committees.

Successive years: Historical mining, storytelling, truth-telling, markers, pilgrimage and learning should all pave the way for action, repair and new relationship. The healing will no doubt run deeper because it is rooted in local stories and resources. It will also be sustained because we're connected in a network and engaging the journey as a diocese.

Avenue 2: Repairers of the Community

Black communities have been destabilized and shattered by the legacy of chattel slavery, by the ongoing presence of anti-Black systems and behaviors, and by the Episcopal Church's historic denigration of Black people and institutions. The harm manifests on a daily basis in the racial inequities we see in education, healthcare and housing. It also shows up in continued White domination of Episcopal culture and liturgy.

Episcopalians have long studied and listened around these critical issues, but we have too often stopped before taking corrective action. The Moses Commission and Diocese should commit to concretely repairing this harm by providing vision and financial support for a new set of

comprehensive, collaborative, reparative community ministry centers rooted in majority-Black neighborhoods and churches across the diocese.

Each of these reparative community ministry centers should respond to needs and gifts the local community has identified, and each must be accountable for promoting Black community healing and repair. By leaning into the principles of community organizing and asset-based community development, the centers would reverse the pattern of traditional, White-controlled Episcopal interventions that tell Black people and communities what they need. In time, we believe these partnerships will yield healing and reconciliation within and among Black folk, our neighbors and our wider church.

Ministries like these may be less familiar in the Diocese, but they are not new in The Episcopal Church or wider community. Since 2012, the Church has sparked Mission Enterprise Zones that focus on mutual relationship across historic boundaries, and on justice and mercy-based ministries rather than solely traditional church structures. In particular, we believe New York can learn from the experience of Christ's Beloved Community in Winston-Salem, North Carolina, and Halau Wa'a (House of Canoes) in Oahu, Hawaii, two ministry centers rooted in the culture, voices and power of communities of color and dedicated to widespread healing and renewal.

The Moses Commission would provide vision and guiding principles, along with key financial and strategic support, for the establishment of New York-based reparative community ministry centers. We propose aiming to launch three such centers over the course of six years, spaced over time so that the first center can pave the way, and successive centers in other sites can learn from their predecessors. This also allows the Diocese, the Moses Commission and partners to develop support for each ministry center as it grows toward greater maturity and community impact.

- **Step 1:** In partnership with the Bishop and diocesan staff, Moses would prayerfully and strategically identify a particular majority-Black community and Black church where the diocese is called to repair. The churches selected to become ministry centers are most likely to be those who have diminished but possess resources in the form of building and/or endowment, often just waiting to be deployed. These resources would be combined with contributions from the Diocese and/or the Reparations Fund corpus. Other community development efforts - especially the Kingsbridge Armory Project in the Bronx - give us cause to believe these centers will be attractive options for outside and/or government fundraising and partnerships.
- **Step 2:** The Moses Commission would help the Diocese to hire a faith-rooted community organizer to build a local team that includes but is not limited to lay leaders from the original or existing congregation, if present. Together, this team would organize trauma-informed listening sessions in the community, and then lead discernment at the intersection of the gifts and longings of the community and, if present, the congregation.
- **Step 3:** Together the organizing team will discern a focus for the ministry's repair and healing work. We anticipate each center will give special attention to focus areas like education, healthcare or housing, which often are underserved or underdeveloped in

Black communities. However, our theory of repair states we cannot anticipate what communities and teams will say constitutes repair in their midst.

- **Step 4:** Each reparative community ministry center will also include an element of spiritual nourishment and engagement, one that weaves local Black culture, voices and leadership together with Episcopal gifts and traditions. This commitment to an Afro-centric Episcopal spiritual expression is absolutely critical for healing and reversing the harm our church has inflicted by elevating Whiteness and rejecting Blackness in Episcopal worship and leadership.
- **Step 5:** Each community ministry will engage regularly in a process of community accountability, evaluation and learning, so their wisdom can inform the other community ministries and inspire deeper healing and partnership.

In six years, we foresee the launch of three of these reparative community ministry centers in Black churches and communities across the Diocese.

Avenue 3: Repairers of the Body of Christ

Repair is a priority of the Diocese of New York, but more than that, it is the dream of God. Jesus invites us to share in his ministry of reconciliation, knitting together the broken parts of our world, and brokenness within the body of Christ itself. Especially within the church, we believe it is critical that - when we say “The Episcopal Church Welcomes You” - our welcome is not only words but an invitation to engage in a mutual, transformative, healing relationship across ethnicities, cultures and identities.

This reparative work happens best through reconciling conversation and shared ministry, the kind that rehabilitates and heals us all. We suggest Moses partner with other diocesan entities to pursue an Indaba-like process to facilitate reconciling conversation and ministry across the diocese.

The consulting group of Black diocesan leaders were enthusiastic in their support for Indaba in New York. Based on the model that transformed South Africa’s work toward truth-telling and reconciliation, New York hosted an Indaba in 2013-2014. Groups from three churches partnered for the experience, which included each group visiting the other church communities, staying for two nights in members’ homes, touring the neighborhood, sharing ministries, eating community meals in homes, and worshipping on Sunday. In other words, Episcopalians truly shared life with one another.

Members of the consulting group agreed the original Indaba was “one of the best things the diocese ever did.” They appreciated that Indaba is not just conversation, but also shared journey, shared projects, shared homes, shared meals and shared worship. It is a space and experience within which we discover The Other and rediscover ourselves.

Commission conveners took this wisdom to heart and also advocated for an Indaba-like process, not as a replacement for the avenues for repairing the story and community but in addition to

them. In particular, a new Indaba would benefit from the following:

- Tap into diocesan and staff experience, making adjustments for our current polarization.
- Must provide history, background and context for race in New York, and not only emphasize the telling of personal stories.
- Host public storytelling sessions across the diocese (Avenue 1: Repairing Story) and then move into Indaba groups. The work doesn't begin with Indaba.
- Ensure everyone tells their story. Everyone is vulnerable and present. Rise from suffering into new beings. We heal in connection.
- Once again offer the option of connecting not just congregation to congregation, but individuals from different places.

While both the consulting group of Black diocesan leaders and the conveners advocate for such a process -- it will be important to take advantage of lessons learned from the diocese's earlier efforts in order to fashion a process that focuses on the best parts of the experience while working to remediate some of the challenges identified.

Additional Reparative Action

Forensic Audit

In order to address the insufficient commitment to reparations, the Moses Commission will call on the Trustees to conduct a forensic audit of diocesan and congregational involvement in chattel slavery and the transatlantic slave trade, similar to that conducted by the Church of England and the Church Pension Group. With these details in hand, the Diocese of New York will be better situated to establish a monetary figure for meaningful reparations.

As has been discussed, the \$1.1 million Reparations Fund of the Diocese of New York was determined without extensive research or consultation. It is our contention that further research is necessary to discern a financial commitment that represents genuine sacrifice and promises healing and repair; in other words, a commitment that reflects the true spirit of reparations.

The experience of the Church of England is instructive here. In 2022, the Church of England (CofE) announced the completion of its own forensic audit.⁷ The Church at the time had an endowment of £10.1 billion. In 2023 the Church of England announced plans to establish a fund totaling £100 million. Even that figure was deemed "very small compared to the scale of racial disadvantage originating in African chattel enslavement".⁸ In response, the C of E in 2024 increased the target for the fund to a total of £1 billion, using the £100 million as seed money which will be grown in a variety of ways. The seed money is roughly 1% of the Church's endowment; the total fund once it is grown would represent about 10% of the total endowment when the seed money had been designated.

⁷ See

<https://www.churchofengland.org/about/governance/national-church-institutions/church-commissioners-england/who-we-are/church-commissioners-links-african-chattel-enslavement>

⁸ See BBC article: <https://www.bbc.com/news/articles/cjrjv9r1jyko>

We believe that a forensic audit would ensure that the Diocese of New York will be better situated to establish a more precise monetary figure for meaningful reparations. Therefore the Moses Commission requests that the Trustees of the Diocese of New York determine whether a forensic audit is possible, how much it would cost, report to the Moses Commission and Convention the feasibility of such an audit, and if possible, begin such an audit as soon as possible. A beginning step could follow the example of the historical study of financial sources and assets conducted by Church Pension Group in response to General Convention 2022 Resolution A129. This study - published in May 2024 and available at https://www.cpg.org/globalassets/documents/publications/resolution_a129_report_from_cpg.pdf - features the historical context of donor wealth at the time of CPG's formation in 1917, background on some of the largest original contributors to the clergy pension fund, and an appendix with a complete list of top donors.

Conducting a forensic audit would align with one of the Moses Commission's guiding principles that: "Truth-seeking and truth-telling are essential and in themselves an important act of healing." Therefore, the Moses Commission is willing to contribute from the Reparation Fund a portion of the cost to facilitate the audit, and requests that Moses name half of the members of the forensic audit client team.

The Moses Commission believes that a forensic audit will reveal that the current fund is insufficient and, if not augmented, threatens to trivialize the actual depth of the wound our church has inflicted.

Once such an audit has been completed, the Moses Commission will work with the diocese to determine how (or if) any additional commitment (financial or otherwise) might be made to continue supporting Reparations.

In addition to this diocesan effort, the Moses Commission encourages every congregation that has not already done so, especially those that might have had involvement in chattel slavery and the transatlantic slave trade, to embark on or deepen their journey toward reparations through an examination of their own historical records.

Reforms Impacting Black Clergy

Finally, we believe the Office of the Bishop, Commission on Ministry and Canon for Lay and Clergy Formation are best positioned to directly address the inequities long suffered by New York's Black clergy and leaders. That said, the Moses Commission will serve as a strong advocate and consulting partner, and may also submit relevant resolutions to diocesan convention, to press the Diocese to prioritize the recruitment, deployment, encouragement, mentoring and wellness resources necessary for Black ministry leaders to thrive, with special attention to new ordinands. The following initial recommendations bear serious consideration by diocesan leadership:

- Mandate anti-racism training for all search committees filling clergy and major lay positions

- Require blind resume review in the first round, a hiring practice that reduces bias by removing personally identifiable information — such as names, gender, age, address — from applicant resumes prior to review
- Supplement health care and benefits for Black clergy placed in congregations struggling to provide adequate compensation
- Reform voting and appointment processes at diocesan convention, to ensure that leaders who represent the Diocese locally and at the churchwide level reflect the diversity of our congregations and membership

New York's Black clergy have suffered untold injustices since Rev. Peter Williams' arduous journey to ordination in 1826. Going forward, the Moses Commission will support and challenge relevant diocesan bodies to pursue reparative action. We will be partners in healing and transformation.

4. Reparations Funding Status and Recommendations

This section is divided into five parts: 1) Creation and Assessment of Reparations Fund and Moses Commission; 2) Fundraising Challenges; 3) Recommended Fundraising Methods for the Next Five Years; 4) Management and Segregation of the Reparations Fund; and 5) Conclusion and Action Item Bullet List.

Regardless of the results of any forensic audit, the Moses Commission believes that far more money is needed to do ongoing reparations work in the geographic confines of the Diocese of New York. As such, raising additional funds to support the Commission's work will be necessary. During the Commission's founding work in 2025, it became clear that the landscape for external funding from institutions and foundations had changed since Moses was imagined. With that in mind, we are recommending several avenues and opportunities for fundraising.

Lastly, we believe it is essential that the Reparations Fund is managed and overseen by the Moses Commission. As detailed in Section 5, below, the conveners' recommendation is that the Moses Commission will not initially be established as a nonprofit corporation with full control over any funds earmarked towards reparations. Therefore, the Diocese of New York and the Moses Commission will need to establish a policy that ensures the Reparations Fund is segregated from the Diocesan Investment Trust (DIT) as much as possible, and invested and managed according to guidelines determined by the Moses Commission. Until such time that the Commission receives direct control over the fund, it will need to receive regular, detailed updates on the Reparations Fund's status. The conveners believe it is important to make clear that use of the fund is entirely at the discretion of the Moses Commission consistent with the parameters set forth when the fund was established by the Trustees on December 5, 2019, and the Moses Commission was established by Convention on November 12, 2022.

Part 1: Creation and Assessment of Reparations Fund

The Reparations Fund set aside by the Diocese of New York currently stands at approximately \$1,200,000, as it has grown via investment from the initial seed fund of \$1,100,000 set aside in 2019. The original fund was set up with the understanding that a Task Force would make recommendations to the Diocesan Convention in 2020 regarding the use of the funds (see Appendix B for text of resolution that established the Task Force and Fund). The fund was then segregated from the endowment and converted to Treasury Bills to protect it from the market destabilization that occurred in early 2020 due to COVID-19. The work of the Task Force stalled for several years (in large part due to the disruptions caused by COVID-19). Because the funds were not immediately used, the Reparations Fund was eventually restored to investments.

At present, the Reparations Fund is held by the Trustees of the Diocese of New York and invested in the DIT. Part 4 of this section of the report details a plan for ensuring that the Reparations Fund is administered according to guidelines determined by the Moses Commission.

Ultimately, the Moses Commission intends that its work of Reparations will be ongoing and significant. However, a total drawdown of the fund principle would reduce reparations to one or a handful of projects with limited reach and effect. On the other hand, a sustainable draw from the fund would support only about \$50,000 of Reparation work each year. Therefore, it is appropriate to grow the fund principle. Because the wealth of the diocese is not centralized as it is in other bodies, such as the Church of England, it is essential that the fund be augmented both by the diocese and, where appropriate, by its congregations. Methods and associated challenges for growing the fund are outlined below.

Part 2: Outlook for External Fundraising

There are several primary features of the Moses Commission and related variables that will likely affect how it can be funded. It is our belief that reparations funds should be drawn primarily from the resources of the institutions that committed the harm and are now seeking repair. Outside money via foundations and funders outside the Diocese of New York may be used to leverage and augment the corpus, but should not be used as a substitute for our own sacrificial giving.

Primary Features:

Episcopal/Religious: The Moses Commission is inherently an Episcopal (Christian / Religious) organization tied to the Diocese of New York. The founding donation of \$1,100,000 came directly from the Diocese of New York. The Moses Commission conveners are priests and laity who are canonically resident or members of the Diocese of New York. If the Moses Commission remains formally part of the Diocese (as a Commission of the Diocese) it will be considered by donors to be a religious/Episcopal entity. If in the future it should become a separate nonprofit corporation, its board should include the Bishop of New York and/or a certain number of designees from the Diocese of New York to ensure that it remains a creature of the Diocese of New York. For the purposes of fundraising from outsiders, it will likely be easier to attract donors if the Moses Commission is an independent nonprofit corporation with a clearly sectarian mission. Whether or not that potential increase outweighs the funding opportunities from donors within the Episcopal Church is an open question.

Mission: The currently defined mission of the Moses Commission includes support for religious entities in Black communities. The religious aspect will limit its fundraising ability from other (non-Christian, non-Episcopal) sources as well as from groups that will not provide financial support to religious entities.

Variables:

Separate legal entity from Diocese of New York or not: As noted above, it will matter in the short and long term whether or not the Moses Commission is part of the Diocese of New York or a separate nonprofit corporation.

Time: As noted above, funding opportunities may change over time: at present, over the next five years, and into the foreseeable future.

Part 3: Recommended Funding Methods for the Next Five Years

Continued funding in the Budget of the Diocese of New York: In the current budget, the Moses Commission received a flat \$50,000, essentially 0.5% of the overall diocesan budget, which is to be used to support its operations. In order to support this active phase of the Commission's work, we request that this amount be changed to 1% of the annual expenses of the diocesan budget to be used at the discretion of the Moses Commission. This would allow the money to be invested if it is not used for operations. We intend to offer a resolution to this effect in 2026.

Property Sales from the Diocese of New York: The Right Rev. Matthew Heyd, Bishop of New York, is committed to allocating 1% of all diocesan property sales to Reparation work, and the current policies for property sales adopted by the Standing Committee and Trustees support this. It is unknown what amount this might be over the course of a decade, but if there were \$100,000,000 in property sales over a decade, the corpus of the Reparations Fund would increase by \$1,000,000. In the long term, this is a viable fund-raising source for the work of the Commission, assuming that future Bishops, Trustees, and Standing Committees continue to support this policy. The Moses Commission intends to work with the Trustees to craft and submit a resolution to Convention in 2026 to ensure that the wider diocese supports and enshrines this commitment and policy. The resolution should also make clear that "air rights" sales or development rights deals are also treated as property sales subject to the 1% allocation to the Reparations Fund.

Additional Targeted Common Mission Share from Congregations of the Diocese of New York: The new Common Mission Share formula of the Diocese of New York decreased assessment payments for most congregations. A modest additional Targeted Common Mission Share could raise annual (or one time) funds for the Reparations Fund. For example, a targeted 0.25% on Church Non Capital Expenses (CNCE) below \$250,000 and 0.5% on Church Non Capital Expenses (CNCE) above \$250,000 would yield more than \$1,100,000. This would match the original reparations commitment from the diocese, but spread the giving across our congregations. The Diocese currently lacks a mechanism to gather funds in this way, but as soon as one is available, the Moses Commission should submit a convention resolution asking for at least one year of a targeted Common Mission Share so that congregations in the diocese can equally support the Reparations Fund. Please note: the resolution should be crafted in a way that excepts the participation of Black congregations. We also recommend that any such resolution take into account each congregation's historical and ongoing financial commitments toward reparations.

Fundraising Appeal to Congregations and Individuals: The Moses Commission conveners also suggest that the Diocese establish an annual appeal inviting congregations and individuals across the Diocese to directly participate in the work of repair.

Part 4: Management and Segregation of Reparations Fund

Lastly, we believe it is essential that the Reparations Fund is managed and overseen by the Moses Commission.

It is essential that the Moses Commission grow the invested funds and have its own investment policy. The model of the Church of England makes clear that growing the endowment is essential for the work to continue into perpetuity. The Moses Commission should never prioritize long-term endowment growth over necessary reparations but should always be mindful that growth of the endowment is a long-term goal that can further reparations.

The Moses Commission will need to determine whether or not its fund should be invested with the endowment of the Diocese of New York (and whether or not that is with the DIT). So long as the Moses Commission is “of the diocese” it will likely not be able to segregate its fund completely from the diocese. At the very least, a monthly accounting of the fund amount is necessary.

As soon as possible, the Moses Commission should appoint a treasurer who can work with the Treasurer of the Diocese of New York and ensure financial transparency of the fund. The work of this treasurer will include overseeing the creation of investment guidelines and policies for the Moses Commission. The work of the treasurer will also include tracking all revenue that comes from fundraising, diocesan budget allocation, property sales, and any Targeted Common Mission Share. The role of the treasurer is detailed in the next section of the report, “Initial Organizational Structure.”

The Moses Commission must receive regular, detailed updates on the Reparations Fund’s status, and ensure that the Reparations Fund is as segregated as practicable, and invested and managed according to guidelines determined by the Moses Commission. Allocations and disbursements from the Reparations Fund must be fully at the discretion of the Moses Commission and consistent with the parameters set forth when the Fund was established by the Trustees on December 5, 2019, and the Moses Commission was established by Convention on November 12, 2022.

Part 5: Conclusion and Action Item Bullet List

The establishment of the Reparations Fund and the Moses Commission are only two steps on a long journey. We are passionate about ensuring the work of reparations will continue, and as a convening group we offer the following proposals, which the Moses Commission should consider presenting for consideration by the Diocesan Convention in 2026:

- A resolution directing a forensic audit to be done by the Diocese of New York and requesting every congregation report to the diocese whether it is likely to have had involvement in chattel slavery and the transatlantic slave trade, whether or not it has done any research or a forensic audit to quantify that. To facilitate the audit, the Moses Commission conveners recommend a contribution from the Reparations Fund amounting

to the *lesser* of a) up to 1/10th of the cost of the forensic audit or b) \$100,000 of Reparations Fund existing fund.

- A resolution that the annual budget allocation from the Diocese of New York be changed to 1 percent of the annual expenses of the diocesan budget and that it be used at the discretion of the Moses Commission.
- A resolution to ensure that 1% of all diocesan and congregational real estate sales (gross) and air rights sales (gross) are allocated to the Reparations Fund of the Moses Commission.
- A resolution calling for an annual appeal to congregations and individuals to support the Reparations Fund.

Finally, once the Diocese has settled into the Common Mission Share, and appropriate mechanisms are established, the Commission should introduce a resolution asking for at least one year of a targeted Common Mission Share allocated to the Reparations Fund of the Moses Commission.

5. Initial Organizational Structure and Governance of the Moses Commission

Organizational Structure

As part of its charge, the Moses Commission conveners were tasked with recommending a permanent board structure for the Commission as it moves forward. This work encompassed a consideration of options for its structure, including whether the Commission should incorporate as a non-profit organization under Section 501(c)(3) of the tax code in accordance with the resolution adopted at the Diocesan Convention on November 12, 2022 (see the resolution in Appendix E). The planned work of the commission also affects any recommendation for the board structure. Since form should follow function, the conveners stepped back to consider the options before them.

The decision to incorporate as an independent non-profit organization is not without precedent. Episcopal Charities exists as a separate legal entity from the Diocese that supports the mission work of religious and secular programs in our communities. The Diocese works directly with Episcopal Charities, provides space for its administrative operations, and supports it monetarily through an allocation in the annual diocesan budget.

Organizing as an independent non-profit corporation would enable the Moses Commission to focus its fundraising efforts both from individuals and foundations.⁹ It also may open avenues of funding from those who are unable or unwilling to donate to religious organizations.

However, forming a new entity also creates challenges. A non-profit organization would need to have the administrative support for its operations (e.g. accounting). It would be required to annually file Form 990 and NYS CHAR-500, and undertake substantial compliance programs to conform with IRS and NYS Charities Bureau regulations and best practices for 501(c)(3) organizations. This independent structure would reduce spending allocated to the work of repair in order to cover amounts spent on administration and overhead. Given the limited corpus, the conveners believe it is prudent to not unnecessarily commit the Moses fund unless and until such time that the fund has grown to a point that it is better able to cover any necessary administrative overhead.

Based on its analysis, the conveners believe that the Moses Commission should organizationally remain a part of the Diocese of New York at this time. The benefits of becoming a separate entity are outweighed by the organizational complexities (both legal and financial). Under this structure, individuals, churches, and others are still able to make monetary contributions to support the work of the Commission, although some donors may be less likely (and some foundations unable) to give to a religious organization. More importantly, the Diocese is best positioned to continue providing staff and back office support for the work of the Commission

⁹ To be eligible for donations from most grant-making foundations, however, the Commission would need to qualify as a “public charity.” A new non-profit organization is categorized by the IRS as a “private foundation” until it passes the public support test and applies to the IRS for public charity status. The test is met when the organization can demonstrate (citing Form 990 tax returns filed annually) three consecutive years in which less than 33 percent of its revenue comes from sources other than its founding source (in this case, the Episcopal Diocese of New York).

without having to create or maintain a duplicative structure required by an independent organization.

Retaining the current structure as a Commission of the Diocese of New York also ensures that the work of the Moses Commission remains fully accountable to the Bishop with visibility to the entire Diocese. This is important as the Moses Commission and its associated fund were created by the Diocese of New York to address harms caused by those within the Diocese, and remains a key component of the Diocesan efforts to engage in the work of repair in communities and with individuals it has harmed. We recognize that as the Commission's work continues, this balancing of factors may change. The Moses Board should reevaluate this decision in future years to determine if its work has developed to a point where it would be better served as an independent organization and could attract substantial additional funding.

Governance Structure

The conveners considered the demographics, skillsets, functions and processes for a proposed board under the organizational structure outlined above. In order "to reflect the geographic, racial and ethnic diversity of the people of The Episcopal Diocese of New York," as advised by the originating 2022 resolution (see Appendix E), we suggest an appointing process similar to that used by the Diocese of Maryland's Reparations Commission whereby members are reviewed by Diocesan Council and appointed by the Bishop.

The Moses Commission board should strive to have up to 12 members at any given point, more than half of whom must identify as Black. It should include both clergy and lay persons and be drawn from all three regions of The Episcopal Diocese of New York. While there is some interest in members being elected through a convention vote of nominees, the conveners recognize that this may not result in achieving the goal of diversity required for this work. We would recommend setting staggered terms for initial board members who would start with either three, four, or five year terms, thus resulting in three-year terms after year six. The conveners suggest that the chair be subject to the same term limits as the other board members.

We recommend there be one board member drawn from the current membership of the Reparations Commission and one from the Antiracism Committee, and that one of the Diocesan Trustees be appointed as a liaison to the Commission. The Moses Commission will also need the support of Diocesan Property Services. These linkages are important for the coordination of the work of the commission with the work of the Diocese.

Other skillsets that the conveners believe would be useful in Moses board members:

- Anti-racism
- Law
- Finance
- History/academic
- Fundraising
- Arts and film

The Moses Commission will continue to look to the Diocese for support particularly in the areas of property support, finance and human resources.

Other Considerations

Members of the Moses Commission will conduct themselves in the way of a board, with duties of loyalty to the mission and vision of the Commission, and duties of care of confidentiality in undertaking the work of Moses free of conflicts of interest and with all the customary requirements and expectations of diocesan leaders.

Finally, we wish to address some special needs of the Commission:

1. *Moses' process of refreshing and restating the harms and remedies/repair:* As documented elsewhere in this Report, the conveners assembled a group of actively engaged Black leaders from EDNY to define the harms and the remedies and repair to address those harms, in fulfillment of the Guiding Principles for Reparative Action, and in particular the principle that *The Oppressor Cannot Set the Terms*. This agenda-setting function of EDNY Black leadership originally set and legitimized the initial priorities for Moses and the actions it is expected to take. Restating harms and remedies will be essential to renew the pertinence and legitimacy of Moses priorities.

It will be the responsibility of the Moses Commission:

- In setting priorities and fulfilling its purpose, the Commission's duty of loyalty uniquely entails staying true to the determination of the Black diocesan leaders who establish the remedies and repair to be pursued. The Moses Commission will need to remain faithful to the harms and remedies/repair as articulated by Black diocesan leaders in the words of those leaders, and without gratuitous interpretation or translation; otherwise the Commission risks violating its guiding principle that the oppressor cannot set the terms.
 - In order to ensure accountability to the communities that have been harmed, from time to time and no less frequently than every three years, it will be necessary for Moses to reconvene with a larger group of Black diocesan leaders to revisit and restate their determination of harms and remedies/repair. No more than three years should elapse between concerted effort to draw together a cross-section of the diocese's Black leaders to pose with them afresh the question of what harms need to be addressed, and specifically with what remedies and repair.
2. *The Moses Commission needs a treasurer:* Most committees and commissions of the Diocese participate to a degree in the annual budget process, in some cases via a staff liaison, and that is sufficient to their needs and scope of concern.

The Moses Commission, as steward of the Reparations Fund, will need to work with the diocesan Finance Office to fulfill a fiduciary function, and this role should be embodied in the role of Moses Commission treasurer, as also described in Part 4 of the “Reparations Funding Status and Recommendations” section of this report. The treasurer will:

- Receive and review monthly reports of the Reparations Fund additions, withdrawals, investment performance, and monthly balances as supplied by the diocesan finance office and/or Diocesan Investment Trust.
 - Lead an annual budgeting process for the Moses Commission, and coordinate with the diocesan finance office on the distinctions between Commission-related spending by the diocesan budget and Reparations Fund spending, with an eye also to the timing and availability of funds, cashflow, and the overall adequacy of resources to undertake the work of the Diocese and the Commission on priorities of joint interest.
 - If needed, lead the Commission in setting investment policy, asset allocation, and guidelines for the investment of the Reparations Fund.
 - To the extent necessary, project anticipated fund-raising costs and grant-making disbursements, and track the revenue expected from the Moses Commission’s fund-raising and its proportion of revenue from diocesan property sales, the Common Mission share, and other revenue streams relevant for the Commission to monitor, as these are all elements of the Moses Commission’s annual budget.
 - Report to the Moses Commission at each of its regular meetings on all of the above aspects of the Commission’s fiduciary needs.
3. *The Moses Commission may call for work that can only be done by employees.* In order to establish new reparative community ministry centers, as described in the “Identified Harms and Proposed Reparative Actions” section of this report, the conveners recommend hiring a community organizer who will build a local team, catalyze trauma-informed listening sessions in the community, and lead discernment in the community and church. It is the convener’s intent that the Moses Commission work with the Diocese and use its existing hiring and employment infrastructure to engage the services needed for such work. The Commission may also engage independent contractors to assist in its efforts or may contribute to the Diocese, which would then contract for the necessary support. The Moses Commission would look to the Diocese for office space, as needed, to support its operations and house employees or contractors in need of space as they work for the furtherance of these goals.

6. Concluding Statement from the Conveners' Group Chair

While chattel slavery of African Americans may have ended, we remain surrounded by its legacies. It is the original sin that underlies the founding of our country. It formed the basis for enrichment of our cities and construction of our churches. It shows up in the places we live and where we worship. One need only glance at the windows or walls of our churches to see images that reflect neither the diversity of our communities nor authentic representations of the divine. This legacy affects our worship and our music, limits our imagination of the divine, and even influences patterns of leadership in our churches and in our diocesan leadership. None of us can escape this reality. Each and every one of us in the Diocese of New York is affected.

Given the enormity of this legacy - a legacy for which those among us bear both burden and brunt, I am proud that the conveners of the Moses Commission, after full consideration, have issued this report.

This report comes at a time when throughout our mutual life, the injustices suffered by Blacks, both historic and current, are being obscured and erased. We are called to be truth-tellers and repairers of the breach in our quest to live into the Gospel and spread God's redeeming love.

The work to which we are called - repairing breaches we may not personally have caused - is not easy. And yet, we have committed as a Diocese to repair and renewal, and we have declared that if one of us is not free, then none of us is free.

Along the way, we have seen signs of progress and hope. Over the past thirty years, our congregations have engaged in the work of reconciliation in many ways, from examining our histories and embracing Sacred Ground to creating full-scale reparations committees to take up this work at a parish-level. As a diocese, we have held antiracism summits and services of lament. We openly talk about reparations as our common work and support it in the diocesan budget.

The steps the Moses Commission conveners propose in this report are deliberate. Our purpose is to build on the strong foundations of the work of the Reparations Commission, the Antiracism Committee, and on the reparative example of colleagues in other faith-based and secular settings. These steps are designed to move us forward and create a path to engage in actual repair not only within our diocese but beyond, as we extend our efforts into communities that have been affected by both our actions and our neglect.

Gathering our stories and preserving them will provide a clear picture of where we have been as we chart a path forward, so that we might never repeat the ways we have neglected to show God's love to all God's children.

The Indaba work, informed by our past experiences, will help us build stronger relationships across our community, will help us see Christ in our neighbors, and strengthen our common life and faith.

Revitalizing our spaces and turning their focus to directly serve the Black communities in which they dwell both decenters ourselves in this work and leans into a model of being church that speaks to the time we find ourselves.

This work is neither simple nor quick. And much remains to do so that all congregations understand how each of us is a part of the legacy of chattel slavery and called by our faith to ameliorate this fact. It will require our collective support to make a difference.

And so, this report ends where it began.

The Prophet Moses heard the cry of his people in bondage in Egypt. He didn't know where he might lead them, didn't know if he would ever see the promised land, but he trusted and followed God. Similarly, blessed Harriet Tubman shone her light in a world of despair, so she might liberate her siblings in bondage.

May this report provide a similar path for us towards God's beloved community. May it help to illuminate the barriers between us and create the conditions for our mutual flourishing. As called by Isaiah, may we be repairers of the breach. And may we all find rehabilitation and restoration like Zacchaeus.

May the work of the Moses Commission stand as a testament of our common diocesan commitment to repair as we live together into the Gospel.

Appendix A: A Call for Study on Reparations for Slavery, General Synod of the United Church of Christ

01-GS-14 VOTED with abstentions: The Twenty-Third General Synod adopts the Resolution “A Call for Study on Reparations for Slavery.” (July 2001)

CALL FOR STUDY ON REPARATIONS FOR SLAVERY

WHEREAS the institution of slavery is internationally recognized as a crime for which there is no statute of limitations;

WHEREAS uncompensated labor was demanded from enslaved Africans and their descendants for more than two centuries on United States soil;

WHEREAS reparations is a process to remember, repair, restore, make amends for wrongs, reconcile, and can never be singularly reducible to monetary terms; is an historical reckoning involving acknowledgment that an offense against humanity was committed and the victims have not received justice; speaks to a corporate or individual process to confess to a wrong, culpability, and accountability for offenses that led to beneficial gains or harm to others, and is to seek the pathway to justice from confession to reconciliation, inclusive of apology and moral, economic, political, and educational structural adjustments;

WHEREAS the principle that reparation is the appropriate remedy whenever a government unjustly abrogates the rights of a domestic group or foreign people whose rights such government is obligated to protect or uphold has been internationally recognized including:

- German reparations to the State of Israel for the Holocaust
- United States reparations to Japanese Americans for illegal internment
- Reparations by the United Kingdom to the Maori people of New Zealand;

WHEREAS this violation of the human rights of Africans has left a long legacy of subordination, segregation, and discrimination against descendants of slaves. In January 2000, the Commission to Study Reparations Proposals for African Americans Act (H.R. 40) bill was presented in the United States House of Representatives by Rep. John Conyers (D-Mich.), which states, “To acknowledge the fundamental injustice, cruelty, brutality, and inhumanity of slavery in the United States and in the thirteen American colonies between 1619 and 1865 and to establish a commission to examine the institution of slavery, subsequently de jure and de facto racial and economic discrimination against African Americans and the impact of those forces on living African Americans, to make recommendations to the Congress on appropriate remedies and other purposes”;

WHEREAS in the century and a half since the abolition of slavery, the United States government has never acknowledged or taken responsibility for its role in the enslavement of Africans and the promotion of White Supremacy;

WHEREAS the experience and legacy of enslavement, segregation, and discrimination continues to limit the life chances and opportunities of African Americans;

WHEREAS Christians must not only continue to call for the release of the captives (Leviticus 25:52), but also to proclaim liberty, bring good tidings to the afflicted, and build up the ancient ruins (Isaiah 61); and

WHEREAS General Synods of the United Church of Christ have voted ten resolutions, statements, and pronouncements on racism since 1963;

THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED that the Twenty-third General Synod of the United Church of Christ encourages Conferences, Associations, congregations, agencies, and ministries of the United Church of Christ to join in active study and education on issues dealing with reparations for slavery;

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that Justice and Witness Ministries of the United Church of Christ be called on to develop a study paper with scriptural basis to equip churches and individual Christians so that they might urge local schools to adopt history texts that tell the truth about the history of slavery, encourage them to communicate to elected government representatives their faith-based reasons for support of a formal apology for slavery, and create a congressional commission for the study of reparations issues; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the Twenty-third General Synod calls on its General Minister and President, John Thomas, and other United Church of Christ leaders to be in dialogue with leaders of other Christian denominations, other faith groups, and leaders and activists in the secular community to raise this issue at every opportunity. Funding for this action will be made in accordance with the overall mandates of the affected agencies and the funds available.

Appendix B: A Review of Reparations Initiatives across the Faith-based Landscape

Members of the Moses Commission convening group dedicated our first two months to listening and learning from faith-based reparations initiatives in the U.S. and England. We are deeply grateful for the courage and wisdom these siblings in the struggle shared, whether during virtual and phone interviews or via ample resources online. The following summary attempts to describe the landscape and principle insights, first among groups who have been in the trenches for some time and then among those who may be newer to the work but no less committed.

ESTABLISHED EFFORTS

Diocese of Maryland Reparations Committee

The Reparations Committee acknowledges that reparations is not just about money but about agency, dignity, access and respect. Their Reparations Task Force formed in 2007 to encourage “each parish to research their own histories and discover how they may have contributed to and profited from slavery and its residual effects” and to discern a diocesan response that goes beyond mere apology for slavery to repair. The task force and anti-racism ministries merged into a Truth and Reconciliation Commission committed to “work for justice, peace and enlightenment as it pertains to past, present and future concerns around race.” After years of work, including a [Trail of Souls](#) pilgrimage through the diocese, they committed in 2020 to an initial investment of \$1,000,000 from diocesan resources.

The task force is now a grant review committee, and the committee attempts to include at least one member from each county and the City of Baltimore. Members of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission and the United Black Episcopalians are also on the committee. The committee members are reviewed by Diocesan Council and appointed by the Bishop. Of the 9-12 members, half of whom must identify as African Americans with a mix of clergy and lay persons serving up to three years before rotating off. The members participate in anti-racism training in order to continually be mindful of their actions, assumptions, and motivations.

They give out two categories of grants: startups and established organization. There are five pillars: Education, healthcare/elder care, affordable housing, environmental degradation, job creation/micro investment. The task force receives 60-80 applications annually from the region of the diocese and eligibility requirements are published on their website. The churches of the diocese may not apply for grants but organizations that partner with the churches may do so.

The focus is on African-Americans and organizations that benefit African-American and very occasionally organizations led by a non-African-American. There is recognition that mentoring is needed for both applicants as well as those reviewing applications.

Episcopal Diocese of Washington

The Task Force on Reparations led EDOW’s reparations efforts from 2019-2023. The Committee on Diocesan Reparations was formed in the spring of 2023 after the passage of the resolution [Towards Repentance and Reparations at Diocesan Convention](#). In 2025 the diocese passed a resolution committing no less than \$5 million during budget cycles 2026-2035 for initial financial reparations. The resolution suggested consideration of funds for purposes of grants to Black churches to narrow inequities in resources, scholarships for Black seminarians, supplementing pensions of retired Black clergy, establishing a Reparations Trust Fund and staffing the reparations effort.

The Reparations Committee was created in 2025 to assess past and present racial injustices in the diocese, develop a comprehensive reparations plan and implement reparative measures including expenditure of the funds. The \$5 million was determined by addressing the wealth gap within the diocese between the black churches and the average in the diocese. The amount is from interest on existing endowment assets. There was an individual church reparations project, particularly at St. Columba's, a well-endowed white parish that has worked to understand the history of harm done to Blacks who formerly lived in the neighborhood and had a Black church closed due to urban redevelopment. Black priests cannot afford to accept calls of Black churches. The new Reparations Committee is charged with continuing to investigate history but the primary focus will be the use of the \$5 million.

Memorial Episcopal Church-Baltimore Justice and Reparations Initiative

Memorial Episcopal Church-Baltimore's work on reparations is often viewed as some of the most intentional in The Episcopal Church. Starting in 2018, they have engaged in uncovering the truth of their past and coming to terms with their legacy around both slavery and segregation.

The church voted in 2020 to set aside \$500,000 for reparations, to be distributed in \$100,000 blocks each year until 2025. The funds came from the church's existing financial resources and contributions from Memorial congregants, though they hoped to supplement with foundation grants (it is unclear if that effort was successful). The Vestry has the ultimate fiduciary oversight and responsibility for the funds.

Memorial Church has adopted four focus areas: housing, education, environment, and criminal justice. For each focus area, they begin by deeply listening to and learning from people in the community. They then make a clear connection between identified harms (historic and contemporary racial harm in a particular zip code, as well as in Baltimore and Maryland) and then reparative goals for each area (both justice-focused goals and charity-focused goals). Metrics are based on achievement of the Action Team plans, considering data such as home ownership, employment, voting participation, academic outcomes and civic leadership projects.

Virginia Theological Seminary

In September 2019, VTS announced the creation of an endowment dedicated to the payment of reparations, and the intent to research, uncover, and recognize Black people who labored on-campus during slavery, Reconstruction, and segregation under Jim Crow laws.

The program has since established five bold goals:

1. Build relationships with descendants when and if they are willing and interested, including the stories of their ancestors in the Seminary's history, and providing them or their designees with disbursements from the Reparations fund.
2. Build relationships with the two local African American congregations with close historical ties to VTS: [Meade Memorial Episcopal Church](#) and [Oakland Baptist Church](#).
3. Support African American alums working in historically Black congregations.
4. Raise up African Americans to be trained for leadership (lay or ordained) in congregations.
5. Support projects related to racial and social justice.

Background on the fund: In 2018, Virginia Theological Seminary leadership set aside \$1.7 million for an outreach fund; it was decided in 2019 that it would be completely devoted to forming a reparations "initiative." Payments are drawn from this fund annually at the same rate that VTS uses annually to draw from its endowment for the institutional operating budget.

Decision about how to pay reparations: Because the labor of enslaved people was not compensated, and those who labored during Jim Crow were inadequately compensated, the school believes cash payments to descendants are an appropriate form of reparations. It also gives descendants maximum autonomy and decenters the school's authority. Initial payments were about \$2,100 each, and descendants (also called "shareholders") were offered access to on-campus amenities that were off-limits to their ancestors.

Note: The program includes the flexibility to emphasize systemic investment rather than individual payments, if the families wish to go in that direction. VTS views the individual payments as the beginning of a reparative process that is likely to go on for generations.

Diocese of Texas

At the 2020 convention of the Diocese of Texas, Bishop Andy Doyle announced a \$13 million initiative to amplify racial reconciliation efforts. Titled "Missionary Vision for a Racial Justice Initiative," the effort aims to commence racial healing and repair for individuals and communities who were directly injured by slavery in the diocese. The initiative primarily offers various scholarships for Black seminarians and financial support for historic Black churches and HBCUs. The racial justice leadership committee has met with Black church representatives to invite their future collaboration and support.

It is worth noting that actual diocesan materials speak of repair and healing but not specifically of "reparations." We also noted that it is unclear what has happened since 2022, specifically whether there is ongoing work beyond scholarship funds. The diocesan pages on racial justice are dated, and it is not clear whether any staff are dedicated to ongoing efforts.

Georgetown University and the Jesuits (Society of Jesus)

The Maryland Province of Jesuits sold 272 enslaved individuals in 1838, the proceeds of which supported Georgetown University. In 2017, Georgetown and the Jesuits formally apologized and set out with greater intention on a course toward repair.

Together with Descendants whose ancestors were once enslaved on the Maryland Jesuit plantations, Georgetown established a new charitable foundation focused on racial healing and educational advancement. The school and Jesuits pledged about \$500 million, but the fund has taken in only about \$27 million in school and private funding.

With the support of the Kellogg Foundation and the Justice and Sustainability Associates group (headed by Don Edwards of Washington, D.C., *see below*), Georgetown has engaged with members of the Descendant community through collaborative projects and new initiatives and learning and research. These include:

- Established [new programs, projects, and initiatives to deepen its commitment](#) to African American Studies, to promoting justice and equity, and to addressing present day manifestations of the legacies of slavery and segregation
- (thanks to a 2019 student referendum adding a "reconciliation fee" of \$27.20 to tuition) Awarded \$400,000 annually to community-based projects that have direct impact on Descendant communities
- Improved a historic cemetery that includes many enslaved and free Black people, often in unmarked graves

Justice and Sustainability Associates

Don Edwards, the retired founder, is not a reparations expert but a conflict resolution expert. His group worked closely with the Jesuits and Georgetown as they pursued reparations and justice. He recommends many more people will be needed in the effort and recommends a co-leadership model (the current size of the Moses Commission is small compared to the size of the challenge and is clergy-heavy). His insights are as follows:

- White people and organizations should give 14.7% of their assets NOW to support reparations—this is a measure of the difference in wealth between white and Black people in the US
- Black people should decide how the money is spent
- Choose a black run community organization whose mission makes you uncomfortable to receive funding
- Spend a lot of time listening
- Check your whiteness at the door
- Foster relationship between community that has been harmed and community that did the harm
- Rely on an accountability board
- As policy is implemented, resist tendency toward efficiency at the expense of relationship
- Conduct your truth-finding before pursuing truth-telling. White people have to be specific about the harm; only then can repair begin.
- Repentance is turning around and changing policies.
- White and black communities have never been “reconciled”; we don't know what that looks like.
- Reparations as removing obstacles to black achievement but also transferring wealth to enable equal opportunity.
- The current resource gap has been institutionalized; dismantling it must be an institutional commitment.
- Support communities of color directly rather than lobbying white institutions that sabotage them.
- Repair past harms, repent of and prevent future harm.
- The difference between reparations and charity is who makes the choices.
- Structures for authority, responsibility and accountability have to be negotiated with the people who have been harmed.
- Reparations are a means but have to press on to right relationship.
- Set achievable goals and measure success, but also recognize you will never be done. This is a life journey, so be prepared to fall short.
- Racial healing is a lifelong process of spiritual formation.
- Keep asking: what else can I do to stop exploiting someone?
- Don't ask for forgiveness— that isn't what this is about.
- Identify why you are doing this. Not “because it's the right thing”; it has to be personal.

[Diocese of New Jersey Reparations Ministry](#)

The diocesan Reparations Ministry was launched with overwhelming support at the 2020 Diocesan Convention. While it is unclear as yet if the diocese has set aside reparations funds or if that is a priority, the Reparations Commission has achieved these goals:

- Developed [Anglican and Episcopal Slavery in New Jersey Pilgrimage Guide](#) about the history of the diocese with respect to slavery and Jim Crow.
- Tracking ongoing historical self-study in [one place](#) (“Diocese of New Jersey Racial Justice Review”). Includes painful chapters around the closure of Black parishes, and how the proceeds were used to fund churches in whites-only suburban developments.
- Fierce organizing around a bill before the NJ legislature to establish a Reparations Task Force. The committee would charge experts to study New Jersey history and propose targeted and strategic policy recommendations for reparative justice.

NEWER EFFORTS (since 2023)

[Church of England Church Commissioners—Fund for Healing, Repair and Justice](#)

The Church of England's leadership works hand in hand with the Church Commissioners, the source for the £100 million fund for Healing, Repair and Justice. The Church has conducted extensive research into the history of wealth obtained due to chattel slavery. They have created a new charity that will be responsible for the work, as well as an Oversight Group to guarantee accountability. Learn more about [Fund recommendations](#) and the [2024 report of Oversight Group](#).

[Diocese of Massachusetts](#)

Called forth in 2022 and established in 2023, the Massachusetts Reparations Fund is focused on addressing systemic issues and supporting African American and Afro Caribbean communities in the areas of education, healthcare, and housing. The original designated amount had been \$3 million with goal of reaching \$11 million over time. Their hope is to begin dispersing in Fall of 2026 after hosting a series of listening sessions in the community. The proposed listening sessions will take place in person and will target those living within the geographic area of the diocese who identify as African American or Afro Caribbean or provide services to African Americans. (Previously the Reparations Committee held Zoom listening sessions specifically with Episcopalians.) They are also considering how to support Black churches in the diocese that are struggling with a recognition that their COM is not doing the best job of raising black clergy.

Massachusetts has developed several resources and clear processes to guide their work. One is the [Process toward Reparations](#) guide, a valuable, practical template for the reparations journey. They recommend the following steps:

1. Learning the Truth

- To be conducted by the diocese and by congregations and ministries
- Investigate slavery, post-slavery, Jim Crow, civil rights era, affirmative action, redlining & white flight, sources/industries that provided church wealth, patterns of inclusion and exclusion

2. Telling the Truth

- Make intentional, public, systematic statement of truth using web, plaques, events, sharing with historical societies, etc.

3. Begin Repairing

- Identify systems that are damaging and harming Black lives and begin the hard work of changing them.
- Revise organizational staffing and leadership structures to match the values of reparations
- Form community partnerships and identify monitors who will assess progress and provide accountability

4. Paying Reparations

- Identify who has been harmed. Identify your role in it. Look back at your history, what you've learned, what truths you've uncovered, what systems you are benefiting from, and who may be in harm's way because of your participation within that system. Identify with whom you might need to repent and repair to be in right relationship.
- Who should be in the room or at the table when it comes to decision-making?
- What form will financial repair take? Checks to individuals or organizations, scholarships, free space to communities of color in your building, socially responsible investments, affordable housing, etc.
- For how long will reparations be paid?
- Principles:
 - Let go of any intention or desire to receive interest or proof of impact

- Repair includes public statues, exhibits, place and street names, etc. - whatever it takes to tell the full story and heal the wounds

Diocese of Long Island Reparations Committee

The focus of the subcommittee of the Diocesan Council provides scholarships to African and Caribbean Americans, with over 100 applications in the first year. The fund grants \$5,000 per student with no limit. There were 16 last year and 18 this year. A historically black church (St. John's Lynnbrook) was sold and tithe went to the reparations fund. While recipients do not have to be affiliated with The Episcopal Church, moving forward half will be Episcopal students and must permanently reside on Long Island. There is no formal follow up after the grant. In addition to the existing corpus, a portion of the diocesan capital campaign will go towards reparations.

Diocese of North Carolina Reparations and Restitution Ministry

When the Diocese unveiled its new mission strategy in 2022, the first priority was Racial Reckoning, Justice and Healing. In 2023, they hired a canon for reparations and restitution ministries and set up a commission of diocesan leaders to guide the efforts. Further work includes the following:

- An initial report on the history of institutional racism in the diocese, from its founding through 1960. In it, they trace the history of church leaders and prominent Episcopal community members; experiences of historically Black congregations; and past financial gains and resource allocations. People are encouraged to use the companion guide, "Initial Report: Praying Through a Difficult History," which provides prayers, reflections and prompts for further engagement.
- A thorough history of black Episcopal parishes, updated in 2021 and 2023
- In 2024, \$3 million was set aside from the sale of diocesan headquarters for projects aligned with the Mission Strategy. Black, Latino and poor churches have priority access to these funds.

North Carolina has not yet established a diocesan reparations fund, per se. Instead, in a reflection titled, "What Is Needed for Healing?", [Rev. Robert Fruehwirth and the Rev. Lisa Frost-Phillips](#) say North Carolina has chosen to "start with relationships, not with anxious, abstract speculation about what reparations could possibly mean." Leadership urges each congregation to have structured conversations about race (past and present) and then to decide for themselves how best to respond. The diocesan team provides support for these conversations and also gathers-in the stories for [sharing online](#).

Appendix C: Resolution Establishing a Task Force Concerning the Participation of the Episcopal Diocese of New York in the Slave Trade

Whereas, following the direction of its Reparations Committee, the Episcopal Diocese of New York committed itself to a Year of Lamentations in 2017-2018, and a Year of Repentance/Apology in 2018-2019, and will now commit to a Year of Reparation in 2019-2020; and

Whereas, the complicity of the State of New York and the Episcopal Diocese of New York in the American slave trade right up to the threshold of the Civil War is well documented.

TEXT OF THE RESOLUTION(S)

[1] Resolved: that this 243rd Convention of the Episcopal Diocese of New York ask the Bishop of New York to convene a task force to study the legacy of our participation in the slave trade; identify those areas of our structures, patterns and common life by which people in our diocese of African descent still carry the burden of the unfairnesses, exclusions and biases born out of the legacy of slavery; propose means of remedy by which repair of that legacy may be effected; and report their findings and recommendations to the 244th Convention of the Diocese of New York; and further

[2] Resolved: that that task force be called into being within thirty days of the 243rd Convention, carry out its mandate through 2020, conclude its work before the 244th Convention, and be retired at that convention; and further

[3] Resolved: that that task force be comprised of no fewer than four representatives of the existing Reparations Committee, of no fewer than four representatives of the existing Anti-Racism Committee, and of additional persons appointed by the Bishop of New York to reflect the geographic, racial and ethnic diversity of The Episcopal Diocese of New York; and further

[4] Resolved: that this Convention direct the Trustees of the Diocese of New York to designate \$1,100,000 of the endowment of the Diocese to be made available to the Bishop of New York to fund those measures which the 244th Convention of the Episcopal Diocese of New York, having received the report and recommendations of the task force, may adopt and by which this diocese may make reparation for its part in the American slave trade and in the legacy of injustice which has continued in this our diocese to our own day.

Explanation

This resolution is offered in response to the annual address of the Bishop of New York to the 243rd Convention of the Diocese of New York, and the explanation for this resolution may be found in that address.

Appendix D: Excerpts from Bishop Andrew Dietsche’s Address to the 243rd Convention of the Diocese of New York, November 9, 2019

Regarding the creation of a Reparations Fund:

“But there is a third and final chapter to this movement, which begins now with this convention, and that is the Year of Reparation. The year of repair. What do we do with this knowledge? By what may we give expression to the depth of our sorrow and our repentance? How can we as a community make reparation for what our forebears did in this place? What heals history? You know that our canons make provision for resolutions to come before the convention even at the last minute, if they come as a response to my address. I am going to ask for three resolutions in the address I am giving right now. The first has to do with reparations, and it is going to require some explanation, so I ask you to bear with me.

I am asking for a resolution, that this convention direct the trustees of the Diocese of New York to set aside 1.1 million dollars from the diocesan endowment for the purpose of reparations for slavery. Now I want to talk about how I came up with that number, and why, and what I believe this level of funding might mean as reparation. Right now, we have two examples, both of which have been widely publicized, and which I took as guides for my thinking about this. Earlier this year Virginia Theological Seminary announced that they would reserve 1.7 million dollars from their endowment to pay reparations to descendants of the slaves who helped to build the seminary. More recently Princeton Seminary announced that they would give 27 million dollars from their endowment for reparations

Virginia Seminary has a 140 million dollar endowment, so the money they have pledged represents 1.1 percent of their endowment. Their endowment is some three and a half times larger than ours, so if we pledged the same 1.1 percent the amount of money which would be created would be too small to be substantive. Princeton Seminary has an endowment of 1.2 billion dollars, so that their 27 million dollar pledge represents a two and a quarter percent commitment. With these examples in front of me, I began to think about an appropriate level for this resolution, and arrived at 1.1 million dollars, which represents two and a half percent of our endowment. Much smaller, and the resources for significant reparation would be insufficient; much larger, and it might not be something we could do. We already have a wonderful Reparations Committee, and the offerings of these last two years are just one small marker of the intelligence, creativity, the love of God and the thirst for justice which characterizes everything they do. But taking responsibility for a million dollars requires a broader diocesan effort and representation, and so I am proposing that by this resolution I will create a task force, whose work will begin within thirty days of this convention and will end at our 244th Convention - a task force which will include representation from our existing Reparations Committee and our existing Anti-Racism Committee, with additional appointments by me to achieve full diversity across our diocese, both geographically across our regions, and racially and ethnically. This task force will be asked to enter into a period of dreaming and imagining and hard deep research into what reparations could really mean in the Diocese of New York. What is possible for us? What can we do, with our strengths and our limitations, to address the moral imperative of repair, and the weight of our history, and then to return to the 244th Convention with the report of their work, and with their recommendations, in the form of resolutions.

Even as I ask you to create this funding, I worry about the effect that pouring money onto the process may have. I don’t want the task force to reduce their work to the question “how can we spend this money?” This money is dear. I have carried a personal desire and intent to substantively raise the endowment of this diocese during my time, and I have seen and I understand that that is going to be very hard. Short of a major campaign, we may not be able to do it to any appreciable degree, and this resolution will set that back. And I know that we depend on the income derived from our endowment to support the budget of this diocese. When I ask that we remove this much money from our modest endowment I know that this is

not a small thing. However, I am sure that any honest process of reparation must require sacrifice, and a commitment not only from our surplus, but from our seed corn. Obviously taking a million dollars from our endowment is not something we will ever be able to do again, so we have to get this right.

And what comes back to us from the task force must be serious, and respectful of what this is going to cost us, and be substantial, and it must have the real capacity to make a difference. It's actually okay not to spend all the money. Because what the task force is really being asked to do is to grapple with the legacies of slavery in this diocese, and the continuing unfairnesses that mark our common life; and the privations under which so many people and parishes of African descent live; and the barriers and roadblocks that keep experienced, seasoned, serious black clergy from finding vocational calls outside Harlem and the Bronx; and the inequities in the places that white people, black people and people of color occupy in our church, from the local parish to the bishop's office. And White Supremacy. And most of that is not about money. It is about our hearts, and minds, and the quality with which we love each other. Or don't. And it is about our sorrow. And then to propose remedy, and to propose repair. And what I am asking you for today is that as they do that work, there will be funds available for it, to do the things we come to realize over these months we must do. And then after our next convention, with resolutions offered and passed, we will have the money and we can begin to invest in our own new future.

Slavery was a crime visited upon individual persons, and upon a people. The Diocese of New York played a significant, and genuinely evil, part in American slavery, so we must make, where we can, repair. All the while recognizing that it will never be possible for this convention or this diocese or even this country to ever make adequate compensation for the suffering of a great host of people bent under the yoke of four hundred years of servitude, violence and privation. And the whipping post and the lynching tree, and crimes unspeakable, and the horrors of children taken from their parents and put to hard labor, and of families separated forever, and of lives begun in bondage and ended in bondage who never drew a free breath and that was the only life they got out of this world. One point one million dollars divided among the people of African descent in the Diocese of New York would be less than one hundred dollars per person. Which would spend away all the money and do nothing. So what we engage to do must be systemic, a remedy for a whole people, and for a church - white and black and brown and Asian - trying to come back to itself across the divide of a terrible history.

I do not want to dictate to the task force the deliberations which will come. But may I say that this money could produce five ten thousand dollar college or seminary scholarships every year in perpetuity. This money could establish and fund an education and advocacy library and resource center in this diocese dedicated to racial justice and reconciliation. This money could support a first step program in this diocese to invite, nurture and prepare black young people, and men and women, to explore the possibility of ordained ministry. One point one million dollars isn't so much money, but it's not nothing either, and I look forward with anticipation to the creative possibilities that might come from this initiative.

What I ask each of you to do today is to approach this resolution and question with courage and integrity. If you cannot support this, if you think this is irresponsible, if you think it is unfair, then please come to the microphone so we can talk about it. But if you hold up your green card, then go from this convention and support it and explain it and help it along as we begin talking about it as a diocese.

Appendix E: Establishing a 501(c)(3) Organization to Hold and Administer the Corpus of Funds Received and Identified for Reparations

Text of the Resolution(s):

[4] Resolved, that the 246th Convention of The Episcopal Diocese of New York (the "Diocese") authorize the establishment of a new corporation (the "Corporation") for the purpose of holding the corpus of funds (the "Funds") received and identified for the purpose of reparations for the enslavement of African Americans and its aftermath; and be it further

[5] Resolved, that the name of the Corporation be "The Moses Commission of The Episcopal Diocese of New York, Inc."; and be it further:

[6] Resolved, that legal title to the Funds be in the name of the Corporation but remain part of the investment portfolio of the Diocese, invested on a commingled basis but accounted for separately and reported to the Corporation no less frequently than quarterly; and be it further

[7] Resolved, that the Bishop of New York shall serve ex officio as a director on the governing board of the Corporation; and be it further

[8] Resolved, that the Corporation report regularly, at least annually, and on a half-yearly basis upon request by the Trustees, to the Trustees of the Diocese as to the allocation and distribution of the Funds; and be it further

[9] Resolved, that the Corporation prepare and deliver an annual report to the Convention of The Episcopal Diocese of New York on the use of the Funds and seek the Convention's affirmation and approval on the proposed allocation and use of the Funds for the upcoming period before the next Diocesan Convention.

Explanation:

In the Bishop's address at Diocesan Convention in 2019, Bp. Dietsche called for the allocation of \$1.1 million in Diocesan funds to make reparations to African Americans in the Diocese. Convention voiced unanimity of support, and the Trustees followed through with the allocation of the funds. The Diocesan Reparations Committee, in studying optimal criteria for the Reparations Fund, discussed at length many approaches and strategies being pursued by parishes, other dioceses, and similar organizations. It engaged in deep, prayerful deliberations on the importance of this work and unanimously agreed that in order to achieve its mandate a 501(c)(3) organization should be established.

A separate 501 (c)(3) will allow for both distributions of funds and serve as a solicitor and recipient of do. nations from other organizations and individuals who have a like-minded desire to advance this purpose.

The existing Reparations Committee will be newly accountable that the distributions of funds be consistent with Diocesan guidelines, and it will coordinate the reparations work of the Committee with that of the new Corporation. The Corporation will report to the Trustees of the Diocese at least annually and on a half-yearly basis upon request by the Trustees, and to the annual Diocesan Convention as set forth above.

To incorporate the organization and draft and approve required by-laws, legal counsel, ideally on a pro bono basis, will be invited from the Diocese and outside auditors engaged.