

From *Becoming Beloved Community Where You Are: A Resource for Episcopal Individuals, Congregations & Communities Seeking Racial Healing, Reconciliation and Justice*

www.episcopalchurch.org/wp-content/uploads/sites/2/2021/02/BBC-Becoming-Beloved-Community-Where-You-Are_2020.pdf

Telling the Truth about Our Churches and Race (TRUTH-TELLING)

*Celebrant: Will you persevere in resisting evil, and whenever you fall into sin, repent and return to the Lord?
People: I will, with God's help.*

Anecdotes and stereotypes abound regarding Episcopalians and race, but there is rarely adequate data, especially for dioceses beyond the United States. If we seek reconciliation, healing, and new life, it begins with telling the truth about The Episcopal Church's racial composition and participation in systems of racial justice and injustice, especially given the Church's relationship to the complex history of race in the 17 nations our Church calls home. ("Becoming Beloved Community," p. 9)

Core Questions: What racial, cultural and ethnic groups are in our church? Who is around us? What groups shape our common life, leadership and worship? How has our church excluded or embraced the presence and power of different racial, cultural and ethnic groups over time?

Church, Neighborhood, and Beyond

Compare your church's racial, ethnic, and cultural makeup to the local area's demographics (<https://www.generalconvention.org/study-your-neighborhood>)

- Notice any differences between the racial, ethnic, and cultural makeup of the church and its leadership, and the makeup of the community where your congregation or ministry is based. With what diverse neighbors might God be calling you into relationship, justice-making, and learning? What historic or systemic barriers would you need to address to grow these relationships?
- Notice adjacent geographic areas with a significantly different racial, ethnic, and cultural makeup. With what diverse peoples in your broader area might God be calling you into relationship, justice-making, and learning? What historic and systemic barriers would you need to address?

Within the Church

Reflect with the Racial Justice Audit of Episcopal Leadership at www.episcopalchurch.org/racial-justice-audit. How does the audit and the experiences and patterns it reveals apply to your context and leadership bodies?

Where possible, request and gather data on race, ethnicity and culture within your congregation and diocese

- a. Congregational membership
- b. Congregational engagement (people who may not consider themselves "members" but are part of the church's life and ministry [attend a parents group, 12-Step group, preschool, soup kitchen, etc.])
- c. Congregational leadership (vestry, clergy, staff, other leadership bodies [official and unofficial])
- d. Diocesan leaders and staff, including Trustees, Standing Committees, Commissions on Ministry, etc.
 - Notice the patterns of racial, ethnic and cultural representation in the bodies above. What racial, ethnic, and cultural groups are present? Which are not? Why might these patterns exist?
 - Notice which racial, ethnic, and cultural groups make decisions and hold power in your church and diocese. Are certain groups trusted with power, while others are not? Why might this be?

Participation in Racial Injustice and Justice

What is your church's history of participation in behaviors and structures of racial injustice? In racial justice and healing? Interview elders, research church and diocesan documents, newspaper accounts, etc.

Further Reflection: Even when we have the best of intentions, we will see patterns of exclusion as well as inclusion. How could you tell the truth and take note of current and historic racism around you without feeling paralyzed, criticized, or defensive? What helps you to stay in an open, grace-filled conversation?