

Form Name: Inventory of Episcopal Racial Reconciliation and Justice Ministries, including Truth and Reconciliation Processes  
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## Inventory of Episcopal Racial Reconciliation and Justice Ministries, including Truth and Reconciliation

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### Introductory Info

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**Name** Gail Avery

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**Title** Canon for Transition and Community Engagement

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**Organization** Episcopal Church of New Hampshire

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**Diocese** Please select one

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**Email**

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**Contact Phone Number (include country code if outside U.S.)** 603-224-1914

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**Please identify whether you are answering this survey as a representative of an entire diocese or as a church or institution:** Entire Diocese

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### Section One: Telling the Truth About Our Churches and Race, including Truth and Reconciliation Processes (TRUTH)

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**Check all the Truth-telling ministries with which your diocese, congregation or institution has engaged over the last 12 months:**

- Demographic study of congregations, including racial and ethnic make-up
- Demographic study of geographic communities within the diocese, including racial and ethnic make-up
- Historic study of diocesan and/or congregational participation in systemic oppression of Indigenous, Black, Latinx, Asian, Pacific Islander peoples and other people of color
- Intentional efforts to increase proportion of people of color among clergy
- Intentional efforts to increase proportion of people of color among staff

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**Please describe the efforts related to the boxes checked above:**

Since 2019, parishes have participated in Renewal Works and have received information about their spiritual and racial demographics and how those demographics compared to similar studies within the Episcopal Church, other denominations, and local communities.

Parishes are also participating in the ECF vitality survey that was developed in partnership with Faith X and ECF.

Our Transitional Officer has joined other Transition Officers in predominately white dioceses discussing how we might increase the number of people of color among clergy, staff, and membership. Transitional Officer also attended a two-day Bias facilitator training offered by the Transitional Ministry Conference (TMC).

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**Has your diocese, congregation or institution or entity in recent years engaged in a Truth and Reconciliation process, understood to be: (please check all that apply)**

Investigating the organization's historic role in racial injustice;  
Linking historic injustice in your organization with ongoing patterns of racial injustice  
Committing to specific action to repent, heal and repair past and present injustices with which our organizations and members have been and/or are complicit (also known as "reparations").

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**Please describe these Truth and Reconciliation process efforts:**

A resolution was passed at our November 2020 Diocesan Convention calling "all parishes, missions, diocesan council, convocations, and episcopal schools to commit to taking up a collection that supports the study of and leads to actions for reparations and reconciliation, and supports efforts creating a conference on reparations that addresses legislation, education, access to health-care, economics, and other needed areas of action."

Parishioners attended webinars offered by the New Hampshire Council of Churches around racism-movie, and discussion on A Bloody Sunday in Selma; NH Faith-Based Conversation on White Supremacy; Discussion with MLK Jr. Scholar on Right to Work; How to have Difficult (but Faithful) Conversation about Race; Faith Voices for Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion; and Difficult (but Faithful) Conversations about Race: Next Steps.

"The Red Church Door" podcast hosted a conversation with The Rt. Rev. Carol Gallagher (Cherokee) who spoke about the intersection of our Christian faith and the indigenous people, and how her advocacy for the indigenous people has shaped her own spiritual journey and her relationship with God.

The Digital Mission of the Episcopal Church of New Hampshire is fostering dialogue across difference. In May they hosted "Same Place, Distinct Worlds: How Race Shapes our Paths", a dialogue with Bishop Rob Hirschfeld and Mr. James McKimm, President of the Manchester Chapter of the NAACP, around their shared, but distinct, experience of being in college at the same time, in the same place. In September the Digital Mission and Reconciliation Commission will host a dialogue about Reparations: what they are, what they are not, and what it means living faithfully in right relationship; and in October-Indigenous People's Day: Prayer, Conversation and Ritual with Paul & Denise Pouloiot from the Cowasuck Band of the Pennacook Abenaki.

We are a sponsor of the Black Heritage Trail of NH (BHTNH) Annual Conference this coming October. This year's theme is "Crossing River Jordan: Healing Racial Wounds Through Accountability & Truth Telling. Panelists and keynote speaker will explore the ways spiritual practices provide sources of strength, hope, resistance, and healing for Black People in their fight for racial equality and justice.

We continue our Lenten Program in cooperation with BHTNH, resulting in a published book, How the Light Gets In. Each day, a story is introduced about one of our forgotten black forebears who contributed to New Hampshire's history and concluded with a Collect written by members of the Episcopal Church of New Hampshire. This has culminated in BHTNH hosting annual Good Friday Stations of the Cross pilgrimages in Portsmouth and Milford, NH.

Members of our diocese have participated in the community readings

throughout the State of Frederick Douglass' "What to the Slave is your 4th of July" hosted by BHTNH. We also participated in BHTNH's Elinor William Hooker (EWH) tea talk series this year that were held virtually due to COVID. The talks focus on coming together in dialogue around issues of race and places where black people (those left in the shadows) are least expected nationally and state-wide. <http://blackheritagetrailnh.org/tea-talks>

**Is there a staff person and/or volunteer who serves as point person for diocesan racial reconciliation and justice ministries?**

Yes

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**Name**

Gail Avery

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**Email**

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**Are they a staff member or volunteer?**

Staff

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**Would you like to identify another leader?**

No

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**Has your diocese, congregation or institution organized a commission, working group or other regular meetings to work on a Truth and Reconciliation process?**

Yes

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**If yes, please summarize and provide the name of the commission/group, and a contact person with name and email address.**

Reconciliation Commission members:  
The Rev. Canon Gail Avery, Staff Liaison,  
The Rev. Zackary Harmon,  
The Rev. Betsy Hess,  
The Rev. Hays (Hank) Junkin,  
Susan (Sooky) Lassen,  
James McKim, (also chair of ECCAR, president of the  
Manchester Chapter of the NAACP, and managing partner of Organizational  
Ignition-a consulting firm that improves organizational performance through  
diversity, equity, & inclusion.  
Betty Lane,  
Jacqueline Weatherspoon,  
Michael Reinke,  
The Venerable Derek Scalia,  
The Rev. Dr. Nancy Vogeles, Chair,  
The Rev. Teresa Gocha,  
The Rev. Sarah Rockwell, President, Granite State Organizing Project,

The Rev. Jason Wells, past ED, NH Council of Churches,

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**Please indicate the types of entities in your diocese that have engaged or are now engaging in a Truth and Reconciliation process.**

Congregation  
Seminary or School  
Other Episcopal-Affiliated Institution

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**Please describe the Truth and Reconciliation efforts related to the boxes checked above, including names of congregations or institution, if known:**

Congregations: This Spring 30 of our 48 parishes (62%) participated in either 'Sacred Ground' or 'The Church Cracked Open' (23 parishes, 49%). Rough estimate of people who participated is 335, including our Bishop and members of Diocesan staff.

Diocese Commissions and committee: We have 3 diocesan commissions and one committee that have been tasked to lead this effort-The Reconciliation Commission (Racial reconciliation), Our Kids Commission (addressing the ever-widening opportunity gap), Earth Care (Eco Justice) and Prison Concerns.

Seminary: Our School for Ministry educates our seminarians around Anti-racism training and social justice issues.

Schools: The Episcopal Schools in NH (St. Paul's, White Mountain School, and Holderness Schools) are looking at white and gender privileges, classism, and racism. We've also invited the schools to support the study of reparations and reconciliation and support efforts in creating a conference on reparations that addresses legislation, education, access to healthcare, economics, and other needed areas of action. At the suggestion of our Bishop, Holderness School has broadened the use of The Right Rev. Philip A. Smith Fund, a fund established for educating sons and daughters of Episcopal clergy, to include supporting educational diversity at the school.

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**Have Episcopal entities pursuing Truth and Reconciliation hosted events and webinars or produced any documents, testimonials, reports or other content?**

Yes

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**If your diocese, congregation or institution has not begun to pursue a Truth and Reconciliation process, have leaders expressed interest in starting such work?**

Yes

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**What assistance or resources would help you to take the next steps around Truth and Reconciliation?**

Our diocese is interested in being a sponsor for a Reparation Conferences that include other community partners such as NAACP, New Hampshire Listens, Saint Anslem College, Granite State Organizing Project, members of the Cowasuck Band of the Pennacook Abenaki, Black Heritage Trail of NH, NH Charitable Foundation, members of the Poor People's Campaign, Endowment of Health and members of their Race, and Equity working groups. Unfortunately, the timing wasn't right for 2021. We hope to be part of a working group next year. Our Bishop is intentional (and passionate) in addressing racial, class and economic disparities through our diocese, especially in regard to closing the opportunity gap within our state. Despite our state's assumed whiteness, we are desiring to increase the number of people of color in leadership roles, both lay and ordained. As a result, more work needs to be done around Bias training, especially when parishes are in transition. We need to resume the work that was approved at our 2019 diocesan convention. A resolution was passed inviting parishes to look more deeply into their racial history. Black Heritage Trail of New Hampshire and Abenaki tribal leaders had agreed to be a resource. All this stopped as a result of COVID. We'll also be looking at the "Racial Justice Audit of Episcopal Leadership" that was published this year considering whether a similar audit can be done throughout our diocese.

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**Section Two: Proclaiming the Dream of Beloved Community (PROCLAMATION)**

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**Check all the Proclaiming the Dream ministries with which your diocese, congregation or institution has engaged during the last 12 months: (check all that apply)**

- Host a Listening and Learning Session around race in partnership with neighbors, faith partners, civic groups, schools, etc
  - Offer public witness (editorials, public speaking, protests and vigils)
  - Participate in local or regional efforts to examine the history of race and racism
  - Participate in efforts to generate a local or regional vision for racial healing
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**Please describe the efforts related to the boxes checked above:**

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**What assistance or resources would help you to take the next steps around Proclaiming the Dream?**

We're thinking about how to 'map' all these endeavors we're participating in and would appreciate some guidance how best to proceed. We would also appreciate any assistance in engaging those parishes and individuals who have yet to engage in racial reconciliation work in any meaningful way. In other words, how to engage the reluctant or just overbusy.

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### **Section Three: Practicing Jesus's Healing Way (FORMATION)**

**Check all the Practicing the Way ministries with which your diocese or entity has engaged during the last 12 months: (check all that apply)**

Sacred Ground dialogue circles  
Anti-racism or dismantling racism training  
Racial healing, reconciliation and justice pilgrimages  
Liturgies of repentance and lament  
Preaching on race and racism  
Diocesan or organization-wide reading of book(s) on race  
Storytelling circles, including Beloved Community Story Sharing

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**Please describe the efforts related to the boxes checked above:**

This Spring 30 of our 48 parishes (62%) participated in either 'Sacred Ground' (6 Circles with participants from 13 Episcopal and two non-Episcopal parishes and the diocesan staff) or The Church Cracked Opened (23 parishes, 49%) book discussion. A rough estimate of people who participated is 335, including our Bishop and members of Diocesan staff. The Rev. Canon Stephanie Spellers also provided a diocesan-wide webinar discussion on her book, The Church Cracked Opened.

Parishes also participated in the Podcast series "Seeing White"; "Be the Bridge" curriculum; Waking up White, Four Vision Quests of Jesus, Stamped: Racism, Antiracism, and You book discussions; and discussions around the Doctrine of Discovery.

Our School for Ministry offers Anti-racism to seminarians and church leaders. Beginning in October, a number of our lay leaders will be participating in Bexley Seabury's anti-racism course for lay and ordained leaders that is being led by Kaleidoscope Institute.

Pilgrimages to the Black Heritage Trail of NH (BHTNH) and funding BHTNH in their efforts to extend the trail.

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**What assistance or resources would help you to take the next steps around Practicing the Way?**

More liturgical repentance/healing resources.

As a result of participating in Sacred Ground Circles, parishioners have deepened their relationships with one another and together are determining possible next steps addressing issues within our NH context.

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## **Section Four: Repairing the Breach in Institutions and Society (JUSTICE)**

**Check all the church-wide Repairing the Breach efforts with which your diocese, congregation or institution has engaged during the last 12 months:**

Episcopal Public Policy Network (EPPN) or the Office of Government Relations  
Asset-based Community Development  
Poor People's Campaign  
Other: Granite State Organizing Project, community organizing training

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**At what levels is your diocese, congregation or institution engaging with "Reimagining Policing and Criminal Justice Reform"?**

Learning  
Local engagement  
State engagement

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**At what levels is your diocese, congregation or institution engaging with "Prison Ministries or Re-entry Ministries," that is, supporting persons re-entering community following incarceration?**

Learning  
Local engagement  
State engagement

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<p><b>At what levels is your diocese, congregation or institution engaging with “Refugee Ministries”?</b></p>	<p>Learning Local engagement State engagement Federal engagement</p>
<p><b>At what levels is your diocese, congregation or institution engaging with “Immigration Reform”?</b></p>	<p>Learning Local engagement State engagement Federal engagement</p>
<p><b>At what levels is your diocese, congregation or institution engaging with “Education Equity,” including support for Historically Black Colleges and Universities and partnering with under-resourced schools primarily serving students of color?</b></p>	<p>Learning Local engagement State engagement</p>
<p><b>At what levels is your diocese, congregation or institution engaging with “Housing Equity” for/with communities and People of Color?</b></p>	<p>Learning Local engagement State engagement Federal engagement</p>
<p><b>At what levels is your diocese, congregation or institution engaging with “Economic Opportunity” for/with communities and People of Color?</b></p>	<p>Learning Local engagement State engagement Federal engagement</p>
<p><b>At what levels is your diocese, congregation or institution engaging with “Environmental Racism and Eco-justice”?</b></p>	<p>Learning Local engagement State engagement Federal engagement</p>
<p><b>At what levels is your diocese, congregation or institution engaging with “Reparations for Racial Justice”?</b></p>	<p>Learning Local engagement State engagement</p>

**Please describe the efforts related to the boxes checked above:**

Episcopal Public Policy Network (EPPN) or the Office of Government Relations: Several parishes have participated in EPPN's "Make me an Instrument of Your Peace: A Guide for Civil Discourse."

Asset-based Community Development: The Venerable Derek Scalia and The Rev. Canon Gail Avery took part in the "Call to Transformation" curriculum for participants and facilitators, a program offered jointly by ERD and the Iona Collaborative. To date, 2 parishes and the diaconal cohort in The Diocese of NH have benefited from the training.

Poor People's Campaign: We work in collaboration with The NH Council of Churches, NH the Poor People's Campaign in their National Call for a Moral Revival and addressing today's issues in NH: Unemployment, underemployed and raising the minimum wage; Racial and social justice; Immigration detention, deportations, and zero-tolerance policies; disability rights and fair treatment in healthcare; unhoused, affordable housing.

Reimagine Policing and Criminal Justice Reform: Involved in NH's Committee on Criminal Justice Reform (CCJR) that submits House Bills to our legislators. Also, support the ACLU petition asking our lawmakers to stop the harmful policing of our students.

Prison Ministries or Re-entry Ministries: We have a diocesan Prison Concerns Committee that prays and offers pastoral care to those incarcerated and to employees of the system, advocates in the areas of mental health and the penal system, and educates the Church, breaking down the walls of fear. Looking for greater parish involvement for those re-entering our communities following incarceration. We also support Dismas Home of NH-a re-entry home for women, a prison arts program, CHiPS Christmas gifting program for children of incarcerated parents, eucharist services at prisons, visitation of those in Strafford County jail waiting for deportation. Susan Lassen, a parishioner of St. John's Portsmouth, has been appointed to the Community Advisory Board of DOC. Jacqueline K. Weatherspoon, a parishioner of Christ Church Exeter, is a member of NH's Advisory Committee to the U.S. Commission on Civil Rights.

Refugee Ministries: Some of our churches are members of the Immigration Solidarity Network, helping refugees who have declared sanctuary. We also testify at state hearings and connect with our state Senators for refugee support and policy changes.

Immigration Reform: Attending vigils and testifying at state hearings and connecting with our state Senators to support policy changes.

Education Equity: Testifying at state hearings regarding the opportunity gap with our youth across the state. Established an "Our Kids" commission within our Diocese that supports mentoring and helping disadvantaged youth. Conversations continue with Bishop Hirschfeld and 'Our Kids' Commission how the highly resourced Episcopal schools within our state

might partner with our under-resourced public schools.

**Housing Equity:** Involved in the Endowment of Health Race and Equity working groups that address housing issues within our state. Bishop Rob Hirshfeld, along with sixty other local faith leaders, signed a letter asking Governor Sununu to improve and expand the NH Housing Relief Fund, as well as restore and strengthen the statewide eviction moratorium that was in place earlier in the pandemic. Last September, Christ Church in Exeter was awarded \$25,000 by the Hillsborough County Emergency Food and Shelter National Program (EFSP) Board as part of the Phase CARES, a program to help meet the needs of hungry and homeless people throughout the U.S. by allocating federal funds for the provision of food and shelter.

**Economic Opportunity:** Involved with and the support of NAACP, Endowment of Health talks, ACLU, and Granite State Organizing Project who keep the gap of Economic Opportunities for People of Color, disabilities, and the marginalized foremost in our preview.

**Environmental Racism and Eco-justice:** Our Earth Care Commission has granted \$4,000 to the Solar Saints initiative providing with LED lightbulbs to parishes, Sustainability Grants provided through the Diocesan Advance Fund, parishioners participating in Sustaining Earth Our Island Home, Church of the Woods, Province One Climate change conversation with ERD. The Revs. Revs. Carolyn Stevenson, chair of the NH Earth Care Commission, Steve Blackmer, found of Kairos Earth and Church of the Wood, are members of Province One Regional Consultative Group for Creation Care. Bishop Rob is member of the Episcopal Church's Creation Care taskforce.

**Reparations for Racial Justice:** A resolution was passed at our November 2020 Diocesan Convention calling "all parishes, missions, diocesan council, convocations, and episcopal schools to commit to taking up a collection that supports the study of and leads to actions for reparations and reconciliation, and supports efforts creating a conference on reparations that addresses legislation, education, access to health-care, economics, and other needed areas of action." Efforts in co-sponsoring a Reparation conference that includes community partnership was initiated. A working group hopes to reconvene sometime next year. Digital Mission dialogue around reparations is scheduled for September.

**In what other ways is your diocese, congregation or institution engaging with racial justice and Repairing the Breach?**

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I think we covered it

**What assistance or resources would help you to take the next steps around Repairing the Breach?**

More work needs to be done in the greater church around reparations, especially understanding the church's historical role in slavery and how we might make restitution. Predominately a white diocese and state; more work needs to be done around the 4 W's of whiteness: white identity, white Privilege, white fragility, white supremacy

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## **Conclusion**

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**Is there anything else you wish to share about your diocese, congregation or institution and its engagement with racial reconciliation and justice ministries, overall?**

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We are involved in Addiction and Recovery ministries. Also, support abolishing the Death Penalty and reducing Gun Violence