

Anti-Racism Commission
Report to the 238th Convention of the Diocese of New Jersey

These are difficult times, but God has provided technology and skills to move forward. The coronavirus pandemic necessitated moving most meetings to computer screens. After several Black people died at the hands of police officers and others in 2020, America experienced a racial reckoning unprecedented in its urgency and reach into many layers of society. The result was that the Anti-Racism Commission saw its busiest and most productive year in 2021.

People sought accessible education about race and racism, and they enrolled in training that the Anti-Racism Training Team developed in the diocese. The Anti-Racism Commission equipped and organized Training Teams to offer many programs, all of which were tailored for each specific participant group and updated to address current racial injustice events. This required weekly meetings and the trainers also giving up 24 Friday evenings for the Zoom discussions that were integral to the 20-hour training classes. In 2021 trainers and workshop facilitators:

- Presented four 20-hour Anti-Racism Training classes that enrolled 156 participants from the diocese and all over the country, Canada and the Virgin Islands
- Conducted six introductory workshops for parishes in transition
 - St. Uriel the Archangel (Sea Girt)
 - All Saints' Church Bay Head
 - St. John's Church (Little Silver)
 - Good Shepherd (Pittman)
 - St. Stephen's (Beverly and Riverside)
 - Holy Spirit (Tuckerton) and St. Stephen's Church (Waretown)
- Designed special workshops for the Trenton Convocation, vestry retreats at St. Stephen's Church (Mullica Hill) and St. Andrew's Church (Lambertville), and Project Interaction (Camden)
- Advised developers of Youth Anti-Racism workshops
- Presented information at ECS monthly meeting on Juneteenth

2021 marked the 25th year of the Anti-Racism Ministry that began as the "Racism Committee" in 1996 and renamed the Anti-Racism Commission by Bishop George Councill. The Anti-Racism Commission has worked with the Committee on Constitution and Canons to propose a new Canon that defines the structure, membership, and responsibilities of the Anti-Racism Commission as it has evolved to its current functioning entity in the diocese. Canon 40 will be considered at the 2022 Diocesan Convention.

The Anti-Racism Commission appreciates Bishop Stokes' support and the financial support provided by diocesan funds. This work must continue as long as the need to act against all forms of racism. The Rev. Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. said in his Letter from a Birmingham Jail, 1963, "We must use time creatively in the knowledge that the time is always right to do right."