

Becoming Beloved Community Strategic Plan

Objectives and Action Steps

In June of 2017 St. Martin's vestry commissioned a team of parishioners to study how St. Martin's could live out its commitment to Becoming Beloved Community in a comprehensive and sustainable way, flowing out of our baptismal covenant and parish values. The Rev. Carol Duncan; Barb Ballenger, associate for spiritual formation and care; and Justina Barrett, a vestry member, were tapped to lead the 13-member team, made up of parishioners who have been through the Becoming Beloved Community (BBC) training. The team has created a parish strategic plan that outlines how the parish can promote racial sensitivity and healing in education, public witness, and evaluation of its institutional structure.

The group worked from September 2017 through June 2018. They listened and wrote and rewrote. They learned from consultants; they met together and separately as three teams. They read, researched, and pursued one-to-one meetings with staff and parishioners. They used the good work of the Zones of Peace leadership team. They consulted with St. Martin's community engagement committee and with the 5% of parishioners who are people of color.

The BBC strategic planning team has determined that achieving authentic and deeply rooted transformation around race will require an ongoing process of personal and corporate commitment to spiritual growth. This must include exploring our parish's history of privilege, and our own deeply rooted, often unexamined, attitudes about race. Currently our parish lists "becoming a racism-free and diverse community that reflects the city where we worship" as an aspirational value. To make this a core value, we must live into a practice in which living as Beloved Community is woven into the very fabric of parish life.

The BBC strategic planning team offers the following objectives and action steps as a beginning of the journey. Also included is who would be responsible/accountable for each action step, as well as the committee or group who have a stake in the work getting done (stakeholders).

General

I. Objective: The St. Martin's community is equipped and empowered to ensure that all aspects of parish life flow out of our baptismal covenant and parish mission and values, especially as they call us to address racism.

Action Steps:

1. Becoming Beloved Community becomes a standing ministry that supports the staff and vestry in continuing the work encompassed in this document.

Who is Accountable: BBC staff leadership would bring a formal proposal to the vestry for its approval. Vestry would vote to approve.

Stakeholders: BBC team, parishioners

2. Starting in 2018-2019 the parish offers annual comprehensive leadership training to all parish leaders (staff and lay), which:

- a) Includes racial sensitivity and inclusive practices facilitated by trainers skilled in racism education.
- b) Ensures that the ministry teams and meeting structures are developed with a racially aware lens in areas such as recruitment of members, structuring when and where meetings happen, managing meetings.
- c) Provides evaluation tools that measure the movement of ministries along a continuum toward being fully inclusive, with the goal of moving anti-racism from an aspirational value to a core value.
- d) Fosters community building that encourages fellowship across boundaries, and encourages courageous conversations about race.

Who is Accountable: The BBC committee, which would provide proposals for trainers/consultants and scope of trainings for vestry and rector's consideration. The rector and the vestry would be responsible for approving scope and structure of trainings, schedule, and budgeting.

Stakeholders: Parish leaders, who would need to have buy-in to this process.

Education and Liturgy

II. Objective: Incorporate spiritual practices grounded in the Baptismal Covenant to strengthen and underpin the work of Becoming Beloved Community.

Action steps:

1. Clergy create a healing ritual of confession that acknowledges the history of white privilege. This ritual will be designed to invite repentance around the sin of racism and foster commitment to dismantling structures of racism and white supremacy. This ritual can be offered as part of our racial education work, as white people seek ways to repent and lament the racism they have inherited.

Who is accountable: Clergy and pastoral staff

Stakeholders: Those who desire the ritual as part of their personal journey.

2. Working in collaboration with BBC, Wellspring develops spiritual practices to strengthen racial work, such as:
 - a) Compassionate Listening
 - b) Mindfulness and White Privilege
 - c) Opportunities to share stories and explore spiritual dimensions of racial healing

Who is accountable: Associate for Spiritual Formation and Care and Wellspring Coordinator.

Stakeholders: Parishioners and community members involved in the work of racial healing.

III. Objective: Formation for children and adults will intentionally integrate strategies and practices that support more racially and culturally inclusive programming.

Action Steps:

1. Create targeted training opportunities for all Kairos (faith formation for children and youth) teachers

Who is accountable: Associate for Spiritual Formation and Care

Stakeholders: Kairos teachers

2. The Children, Youth, and Family Ministry Team implements more racially and culturally inclusive programming for children and youth.

Who is accountable: Associate for Spiritual Formation and Care working in conjunction with the Children Youth and Family Ministry Team (still to be created)

Stakeholders: Parish children, youth and families

3. Ensure that adult formation ministries include racially and culturally inclusive programming with many points of entry, recognizing that people are at varying levels of experience with and awareness of the impact of exclusionary practices and the legacies of racism.

Who is accountable: BBC Committee in conjunction with formation ministries

Stakeholders: adult parishioners

4. Include within the BBC committee a subcommittee that encourages different ministries to think about how this work applies to them and generates ways they can move it forward.

Who is accountable: BBC Committee

Stakeholders: parish ministry leaders and parishioners

IV. Objective: Liturgy and music are welcoming to people of diverse backgrounds and reflect global Anglican traditions.

Action step: Liturgical leaders will intentionally use an inclusive lens as they design liturgical experiences.

- a) The congregation will sing and pray in solidarity with other cultures in the Anglican Communion through the use of culturally diverse liturgies and music.
- b) Highlight them in the leaflet's explanatory notes.

Who is accountable: Clergy and music director

Stakeholders: Parishioners

Institutional Practice

V. Objective: Ensure our hiring practices, as well as our policies and procedures, are racially inclusive, culturally humble, and fair.

Action Steps:

1. The vestry hires a personnel consultant skilled in cultural competency/racial healing in the 2018-2019 programming year to:
 - a) Develop a hiring strategy on recruiting candidates of color for full-time staff positions, so that we are prepared at the next staff opening. This should include strategy on how to appoint a search committee.
 - b) Help develop a strategy to address racial insensitivity that happens at the parish.
Who is accountable: Rector and vestry, who would hire consultant in dialogue with BBC leaders.
Stakeholders: Parishioners

2. Parish ministries plan and evaluate annually based on the trainings. Results of evaluation should appear in the annual report.
Who is accountable: Vestry and rector, who would set expectations and approve schedule/deadlines for planning and evaluation. BBC would assist in the creation of the report for the annual report.
Stakeholders: Parish ministry leaders

V. Objective: Ensure our hiring practices, as well as our policies and procedures, are racially inclusive, culturally humble and fair.

1. Parish commits to diversity and inclusion in the purchase and procurement of goods and services by creating and following a process for identifying and utilizing businesses owned or run by people of color.
Who is accountable: Parish Administrator and Finance Committee, which create process for identifying and selecting businesses. Parish personnel that make procurement decisions follow the process.
Stakeholders: Parish committees, parishioners, minority-owned businesses.

Public Witness

VI. Objective: Build relationships that support St. Martin's advocacy platform, public witness, and direct action against racial oppression.

Action Steps:

1. BBC partners with the community engagement ministry to develop advocacy principles and procedures that include active public witness against racial oppression.

Who is accountable: BBC team and community engagement committee

Stakeholders: Parishioners and community members

2. Follow POWER's lead in being a public witness against racism in our community.

- a) Connect to the Clergy Caucus listserv and other networks where immediate actions are conceived.
- b) Participate in POWER trainings and actions
- c) Community engagement develops a process for making quick decisions on immediate responses for public witness on racism.

Who is accountable: The staff liaison to POWER; the community engagement ministry

Stakeholders: POWER, community members and parishioners

3. Foster relationships with the Diocesan Anti-Racism Commission and other relevant diocesan entities working on racism education and advocacy, e.g., attending the Diocesan Absalom Jones celebration.

Who is accountable: The BBC team

Stakeholders: The diocese, community members, and parishioners

4. Foster relationships with parishes of color for joint programming, being mindful of the need for cultural humility, e.g., supporting the Juneteenth celebration at St. Luke's Episcopal Church in Germantown, or holding joint camps or choir events with other parishes.

Who is accountable: The rector, who would be ultimately responsible for approving and overseeing relationships with other parishes, working in collaboration with the BBC Committee

Stakeholders: Community members, congregations of color, parishioners

Members of the 2017-2018 Becoming Beloved Community Strategic Planning Team:

- Barb Ballenger
- Justina Barrett (Vestry member)
- Martha Crowell
- The Rev. Carol Duncan
- Bill Jacobson
- Anita Kinsley
- Shirley Mann
- Kate Maus
- Cary Nicholas (Vestry member)
- Rebecca Reumann-Moore
- Victoria Sicks
- Adenike Webb
- Leni Windle