



The Episcopal Church of the Epiphany

2089 Ponce de Leon Ave., NE Atlanta, GA 30307-1345

April 26, 2022

Dear fellow Epiphanites,

As we discern how we are called to live out our Baptismal Covenant to love our neighbors as ourselves, we affirm our call to faithfully speak out against racism and take action to dismantle systemic racism in our country. When racism is tolerated, the reconciling work of Christ is contradicted. As followers of Jesus, we must work to remedy the injustice around us, from which so many of us benefit, often unknowingly.

We believe that the Church of the Epiphany community can be a powerful ally against racism as we work towards creating a Beloved Community. We re-commit ourselves to becoming a church in which all feel truly welcome and heard. We know that historically, the universal church as an institution has often failed to advocate for the oppressed and the most vulnerable, and that it is contrary to our faith to close our eyes and do nothing. We can and must live up to the promise that the church is a universal body of belonging based on love. In that many of us have enjoyed the privileges afforded by systemic racism, as an act of repentance toward reconciliation, it becomes our responsibility to fully participate in dismantling racism, act differently, and do the requisite personal work of choosing anti-racist action.

Through our repentance, we can turn toward a new direction. As we imagine a world more closely aligned with the tenets of our faith, we begin to fully embrace our Christian humanity and stand in solidarity with all Black Americans and People of Color. Until all lives are treated equally under the law and within our institutions, we will have failed to live up to our faith. If one member suffers, we all suffer together (1 Corinthians 12:26). We individually commit to lifelong learning of the origins and effects of racism so as to illuminate truth and inspire transformation. We will continue to ask for God's guidance to understand what we have done and what we have left undone. We commit to the hard work of change.

Recognizing that the work of racial equity and justice is a long-term commitment, we:

- Invite all lay leaders and parishioners to inform themselves about the Episcopal Church's Becoming Beloved Community program of racial healing, reconciliation and justice in that it provides an important opportunity to ground our work in our faith.

- Continue to support the work of our Epiphany Racial Justice group (ERJ) and welcome its feedback on ways we can continue a dialogue of education and action.
- Work toward dismantling systemic racism by exploring ways to support and participate in programs that ensure every person is able to exercise their right to vote and have a voice in our democracy.
- Address environmental racism and justice through our commitment to Creation Care.
- Build relationships and take guidance from the most marginalized, especially the poor and communities of color.
- Ensure that our Christian formation activities address racism.

We acknowledge that racism is a sin against God. Through our faith, we live in hope for a world without racism. We cannot ignore, deny or suppress our country's racial history. We believe that the path forward is a constant renewal of our faith through action.

Please watch for more information from Epiphany's Racial Justice Group in upcoming Epiphany Star newsletters, and contact the Rev. Amy Dills-Moore, the Rev. Nicole Lambelet, or Senior Warden Erin Braden with any questions or suggestions.

Faithfully,

Your 2022 Epiphany Vestry