

Becoming Beloved Community: A set of interrelated commitments around which Episcopalians may organize our many efforts to respond to racial injustice and grow a community of reconcilers, justice-makers, and healers.

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Presiding Bishop Michael Curry speaks of living the Christian life as “the Way of Love.”

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- 1. Telling the Truth:** Who are we? What things have we done or left undone regarding racial justice and healing?
- 2. Repairing the Breach:** What institutions and systems are broken? How will we participate in repair, restoration, and healing of people, institutions and systems?

Becoming Beloved Community is focused on four areas:

3. Practicing the Way of Love: How will we grow as reconcilers, healers, and justice-bearers? How will we actively grow relationships across dividing walls and seek Christ in the other?

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4. Proclaiming the Dream: How can we publicly acknowledge things done and left undone? What does Beloved Community look like in this place? What behaviors and commitments will foster reconciliation, justice, and healing?

Becoming Beloved Community is focused on four areas:

1. Telling the Truth: **Confession**
2. Repairing the Breach: **Repentance**
3. Practicing the Way of Love: **Forgiveness**
4. Proclaiming the Dream: **Amendment of Life**

Building Block One: Provides an introduction, overview of the course, definitions of terms and concepts we will be using throughout the series, and several resources for getting started on your journey toward building Beloved Community.

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Building Block Two: Briefly covers the history of race and racism in American culture.

Building Block Three: Dives deeper into the contemporary context of systemic racism and its consequences.

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Building Block Four: Focuses on the historical background of race and The Episcopal Church and the Christian call to resist racism.

Building Block Five: Addresses racial reconciliation, personal empowerment, and the obstacles to Becoming Beloved Community in the church. Key to this session: addressing the operation of white privilege in our society.

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Building Block Six: Presents concepts and best actions for Christians and churches to take toward actively building Beloved Community in their congregations and communities.

Three Principal Reasons for Taking this Course:

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2. Racial and ethnic diversity in the United States has increased substantially in the past 50 years and is likely to continue increasing. It is imperative that we find a way for us to work together.

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3. These changing demographics are key to the continuation of the church. The Episcopal Church is overwhelmingly white in a nation that is increasingly diverse.

For Social Justice

Grant, O God, that your holy and life-giving Spirit may so move every human heart, and especially the hearts of the people of this land, that barriers which divide us may crumble, suspicions disappear, and hatreds cease; that our divisions being healed, we may live in justice and peace; through Jesus Christ our Lord. *Amen.*

Race/Racism:

- Generally refers to the visible, phenotypical characteristics, such as skin color, hair texture or form, eye shape, nose shape and width, and lip shape and width, that distinguish the appearance of various individuals and populations. These visible traits are used to put people with similar traits into groups that are commonly called races.

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- Race is an ideology, a belief system, and a powerful social construct.
- The social construction of race was necessary to support the system of slavery in the New World, and the imperialist expansion that was essentially the global conquering or subjugation of peoples of color.

Systemic Racism:

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- It's a means of highlighting aspects of our national history and culture that have tended to provide privileges associated with whiteness and disadvantages associated with people of color.

Structural/Systemic Aspect:

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- Refers to how privileges and disadvantages are embedded in everyday life and have persisted and adapted over time. Systemic racism is a society-wide concept and is not based on the actions of individuals or a few institutions.
- Instead, systemic racism is a part of our structure – economic, political, educational, judicial, and social systems throughout our society.

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- The unearned, largely unacknowledged social advantages that white people receive in society in comparison to other racial groups.
- These advantages tend to be taken for granted by white people, but they cannot be similarly enjoyed by people of color in the same context, such as in government, in communities, workplaces, or school.

White Supremacy:

- The belief that white people, or people of European descent, are of a superior race, which entitles them to dominate society and to segregate, oppress, or exclude people of other racial or ethnic groups.