

Memorial Episcopal Church Guy Hollyday Justice and Reparations Initiative

Introduction

Since 2018, Memorial Episcopal Church has been engaged in uncovering the truth of our past and coming to terms with our legacy of slavery and segregation: Memorial was founded by the slave owners of Hampton Plantation in 1860. Memorial's current Deacon is a direct descendent of the enslaved, while a current leader of Memorial is a descendent of the slave owners. Historically, Memorial has actively contributed to housing segregation and redlining in the early 1900's that led to the disenfranchisement of black Baltimoreans. Memorial has been and remains complicit through action and inaction in the racism, white law, and white institutions that maintain practices that result in fewer opportunities and significantly more negative results for black residents than for white residents in all aspects of our life together, including housing, education, the environment, and criminal justice.

We have created the Guy T. Hollyday Justice and Reparations Initiative to understand, confront and change those negative outcomes experienced by our black neighbors in zip code 21217 and throughout the city and state.

Who We Are

Memorial's core values of Faith, Community and Justice will guide us in our reparation efforts to desegregate, establish rights, and create equality in the neighborhoods surrounding our church. It is our intent to support the building of a base of power in these disenfranchised neighborhoods in 21217 in Upton/Druid Heights. We will speak truth to power: raising our voices, working for just policy, legislation and institutions, and developing deep partnerships.

Definitions: Reparations, Justice and Charity

We begin by defining what we mean by justice, reparations and charity.

Reparations means repairing, healing, restoring, building what is broken and denied by government, corporations, faith communities, civic institutions and powerful people through centuries of enslavement that gave way to similar negative consequences during the nation's Jim Crow period. Today, these continuing negative consequences are most brutally reflected in our criminal justice system but also manifest in our schools, neighborhoods, health systems, faith communities, even the air we breathe. Reparations redirects the power and wealth of an unjust society to build a just society.

Justice is action designed to fundamentally alter institutions, systems, governments and laws to ensure that the repairing, healing, restoring and building is permanent, systemic, impacting large numbers of individuals, families and communities. Justice establishes the access and opportunity for individuals to thrive.

Charity through a Christian lens is providing funding and other supports for those in need. Often this kind of giving is short-term, affects small numbers of people, and does not fundamentally change the institutions, systems, governments and laws that keep racism in place; thus, resulting in the need to repeatedly provide charity. We, however, also view charity as the expression of our love for God towards our fellow human beings; we hope to stand in solidarity with black residents of 21217 and beyond for the common good of Baltimore.

What We Will Do

The Justice and Reparations Initiative, while sourced by Memorial Church is composed of community members, organizer-activists, non-profit leaders, residents and members of the local faith communities with an interest in West Baltimore. We will begin with the following strategies:

- To study as a community the topic of Gospel Centered Justice and to make the transition from ministry that is charity-focused (doing for others) to justice-focused (anti-racist action with others).
- To identify and invest in, with the support of community partners, doing justice-centered work to undo inequality in Housing, Education, Environmental Justice and Criminal Justice.
- To foster collective strategies and action to respond to profound opportunity gaps and to demonstrate Christ's never-failing love for God's people by working in community.

We believe that this Initiative begins "at home", within Memorial, to complete the "truth telling" process with a church-centric strategy that: a) continues to examine the history of racist policy complicity by the church in these focus areas and b) deepens our collective understanding and capacity to pursue racial justice and equity work and c) encourages Memorial congregants to engage their minds, time, talents and treasure in this robust anti-racist Initiative that, in time, we envision being a primary characteristic of what it means to be a "Memorialite."

Where We Will Focus and How We Will Work

We have adopted four focus areas: housing, education, environment, and criminal justice.

In each focus area, we will seek to more deeply listen and learn from people in the community to define our path forward. We will engage others who have interest and expertise in our mission. In consultation with our community-based partners, we will identify the outcomes we seek to achieve and the projected timetable for achieving them. We will specify how institutions and laws must change to ensure reaching our goals. Informed by our understanding of reparations, justice and charity, we offer the following examples as illustrative of the racial harm currently being done to our 21217, city and state black fellow citizens, and the type of justice and charitable actions we

would consider reparative. The actual actions the Initiative undertakes will be determined through a strategic action planning process described below.

Potential Actions/Goals

Justice-

1. **Education Harm:** In 2020, Baltimore City Public School (BCPS) had a less than 70% graduation rate. Only 18% of BCPS elementary school students are proficient in reading and math, and the 21217 zip code includes some of the lowest performing schools in the City.

Source:

<https://reportcard.msde.maryland.gov/Graphs/#/AtaGlance/Index/3/17/6/30/XXXX/2020>

Potential Actions/Goals

Justice-Build on the work with Strong Schools Maryland and other Baltimore-focused education advocates which has resulted in the “Blueprint for Maryland’s Future.”

<https://www.strongschoolsmaryland.org/about-1>

The Blueprint will make the practice and funding of education more equitable, particularly in the 21217 zip code, with sustainable funding for strategies like community schools.

Charity-Memorial and its partners will look to build and sustain volunteer programs in identified Central West Baltimore schools with activities such as tutoring, mentoring, or serving on the school's Parent Community board. We will also work to generate jobs for black high school youth.

Vision: Identified schools will be safe, thriving community hubs where children are increasingly “ready for kindergarten,” reading proficiently by third grade, performing at grade level in 8th grade, and college/career ready in high school.

2. **Climate Harm:** Blacks are 500% more likely to die of asthma than whites due, in part, to air pollution. In Baltimore City, 12.4 percent of adults and 20 percent of children (one of the highest rates in the nation) are diagnosed with asthma impacting the daily quality of life.

Source:

<https://www.politifact.com/factchecks/2015/aug/11/hillary-clinton/clinton-accurately-says-black-children-asthma-have/>

<https://www.npr.org/sections/health-shots/2016/06/07/481092103/scientists-see-genetic-clues-to-why-asthma-is-deadlier-in-blacks>

Potential Actions/Goals

Justice: Endorsing the work of the Maryland Campaign for Environmental Human Rights toward a MD Constitutional Amendment that would declare that every Marylander is

entitled to Clean Air, Clean Water and Clean Land. This would be a counterpart to the constitutional provision that every Maryland child has a right to a “thorough and efficient system of education”.

Endorsing the platform of the Baltimore Peoples Climate Movement which embraces a holistic approach to building the new energy and economic future by taking into account the state of our infrastructure, housing, educational system, criminal justice system, healthcare system, opportunities for stable income as well as addressing environmental racism as well as all other forms of racism.

Charity: activities like planting trees in Guy Hollyday’s memory or renovating the green space at St. Katherine’s (supporting urban farms, tree planting, etc.)

Vision: All Baltimoreans will have clean, safe, affordable drinking water, will be able to breathe clean air, will have access to an abundance of green spaces and will be able to transition to a modern, efficient electric grid that maximizes diverse renewable energy resources to lower costs and increase reliability and resiliency.

3. **Housing Harm:** 25% of all renters pay 50% or more of their income in rent. More than 150,000 cases are filed in rent court every year. There are 7,000 evictions each year. Only 28% of homes in neighboring Upton/Druid Heights are owner-occupied for example; typically 74% of whites own homes.

Source:

<https://www.nfib.com/content/news/economy/number-of-americans-who-spend-50-of-household-income-on-rent-growing-70958/>

<https://www.baltimoresun.com/news/investigations/bs-solutions-rent-court-two-sidebars-one-20170506-story.html#:~:text=Most%20commonly%2C%20a%20tenant%20will%20have%20fallen%20behind,up%20tends%20to%20leave%20with%20a%20favorable%20judgment.>

http://www.publicjustice.org/wp-content/uploads/2019/09/JUSTICE_DIVERTED_PJC_DE_C15.pdf

Potential Actions/Goals:

Justice: Partner with an organization working toward providing a major state or City program that will institutionalize the strategy of organizations such as Black Women Build (BWB) by providing funding as a line item in the City and State budgets to enable them to build homes, train a commensurate number of community members in the trades, and establish parallel initiatives locally and regionally.

Continue our current partnership with BWB to establish a preeminent asset building and training institution in zip code 21217 that helps justify the Justice action above.

Establish new standards for landlord/tenant relationships providing a level playing field among other things governing the eviction process and monitoring the behavior of

landlords to ensure they provide a safe, clean environment in the housing they rent and speedy recourse for the tenants whose situation is abused.

Support organizations and efforts that are actively working to protect the human right to safe, healthy, affordable housing; establishing community-controlled development processes such as land trusts, and eliminating the use of tax lien sale for outstanding taxes and fees. We will also support local development that includes retrofitting existing and newly constructed homes and businesses to be energy efficient.

Charity:

Continue and strengthen our relationships with organizations such as the Samaritan Community that help with crisis intervention, eviction prevention, and/or security deposits.

Vision: Central West Baltimore will be a place where all people live in safe and affordable housing, with equitable opportunities for asset building.

4. Criminal Justice Harm – Our ratio of black to white incarcerated people is 5.3:1. The percentage of our prison population that is black is the highest in the nation.

Source:

<https://www.wusa9.com/article/news/local/maryland/maryland-leads-the-nation-with-incarcerating-black/65-072db101-95f1-4a16-b6ff-79a839e7d184>

<http://cdn.cnn.com/cnn/2021/images/10/13/the-color-of-justice-racial-and-ethnic-disparity-in-state-prisons.pdf>

Potential Actions/Goals:

Justice: Eliminate automatic adult jurisdiction for juveniles accused of certain crimes, leaving the determination of whether to charge a juvenile as an adult to the juvenile court.

Work with organizations who aim to end the war on drugs and restore the damage created by those policies including retroactively overturning the convictions of those previously incarcerated for drug offenses that are no longer considered illegal.

Work with organizations who aim to impact legislation in a way that those previously harmed by the war on drugs now have an equitable opportunity to profit from the legalization of drugs such as marijuana at all levels of the supply chain.

Establish a robust restorative justice system to resolve certain bad behavior outside of the criminal justice system. Make restorative or transformative practices a routine part of every public school.

Charity: Partner with community-based organizations that are working to expand reentry services and supports, before and after release, for ex-offenders residing in the 21217 zip code.

Vision: Formerly incarcerated community members will return to a thriving and stable 21217 community with opportunities for growth and employment that will reduce the likelihood of recidivism. People accused of crimes will be free until their crimes are proven, except in the most serious cases. Through true rehabilitation, incarcerated individuals will return home better than when they left, and strong family bonds will be rebuilt.

How We Will Organize

A Steering Committee that consists of 11 members - 4 from Memorial, 2 from St. Katherine's and 5 from community partners. There may be additional non-voting members of the Steering Committee including but not limited to a member of the Memorial Vestry who will serve as a liaison between the Justice Committee and Vestry and the Rector. The Committee will be co-chaired by a Memorial member and a community member. This Committee is accountable for the implementation of the Initiative and will have the authority to approve all Action Team plans and expenditures, with accounting oversight by the Church Treasurer and final approval by the Memorial Vestry.

Four Action Teams will be created: Housing, Education, Environment and Criminal Justice Focus Areas will each have an organizing Action Team comprised of at least five people: The action teams will be co-lead by a member of the Steering Committee and one other person. In appropriate ways, the Justice Organizer will provide coaching, training and support for the team leaders. We will explore the possibility of the team leaders participating in the Industrial Areas Foundation/BUILD organizers training program.

Where We Will Start

1. Complete this initial document that establishes the starting point for the work. We know that our goals and strategies will be dynamic. We will change as conditions require, but we will be able to do so thoughtfully since we start with clear goals and strategies.
2. Provide a detailed on-boarding/orientation strategy--developed by the Rector and the Steering Committee -- so that the Justice Organizer becomes knowledgeable about the Initiative, the church and City's racist history and meets key Memorial and community leaders.
3. Led by the Rector and Justice Organizer, develop the Memorial-centric communication and education plan, designed to engage ultimately the whole congregation. As preparation, the Vestry and the congregation members of the Steering Committee may consider a collective reading/discussion of a relevant book such as Kinde's [How To Be An Anti- Racist](#). This internal campaign plan will be submitted for approval to the Vestry in its leadership role for the implementation of the plan.

4. Led by the Justice Organizer, develop and initiate a well-organized communications plan in the community to do three things:
 - a. Introduce the Initiative to the broader community.
 - b. Develop the opinion data-base to confirm or change our focus areas, if needed.
 - c. Identify people who may be interested in participating and what their areas of interest are and the skills/passions they would bring to the effort.
5. Identify at least five people to serve on each of the four Action Teams and launch the teams.
6. Each Action Team will first study and update the statements of “harm” outlined in the appendix for each focal area.
7. Next, each team will develop a five-year strategic action plan with the first year being very specific and each succeeding year being less so. The plan will be submitted to the Steering Committee for ratification or, if the Steering Committee has suggested changes, for further work by the team.

Each team’s strategic action plan will identify:

- a. Specific outcome goals for Central West Baltimore
- b. Include in the plan:
 - Funding requirements
 - How they intend to build the local power base that will be required.
 - Identify the people and resources they will need to reach the goals.

The role of the Steering Committee in considering each plan will be to determine whether the individual issue strategy fits with the overall Initiative strategy and whether the necessary resources of time, talent and treasure can be secured.

8. Additional resources will be secured over time. One may be a paid part-time position (perhaps a college or graduate student from Central West Baltimore) that would “staff the team” for a defined number of hours. The second resource may be to partner with at least one city or state-based organization that shares our goals and values.

Note: Possible examples include the Maryland Alliance for Justice Reform (MAJR) for Criminal Justice, Blue Water for the Environment, and Strong Schools Maryland for Education.

Financial Structure

The financial commitment from Memorial is \$100,000 annually for five years through 2025. The funds will initially be sourced from the church’s existing financial resources and contributions from Memorial congregants, possibly supplemented by grants from foundations, both public and private.

The Vestry has the ultimate fiduciary oversight and responsibility for the Hollyday funds. We strongly recommend a separate account for the Initiative that provides monthly statements to the Rector, Vestry, Justice Organizer and Steering Committee.

That said, the Vestry empowers the Steering Committee to make financial decisions of the initiative, based on Vestry-approved Action Team plans and budgets, and subject to standard church financial procedures.

Vision: We expect to see and document evidence of increased power, influence, wealth and engagement among black residents in the 21217 zip code and a corresponding growth in racial equity mindset and relinquishment of power among white churchgoers and residents of these neighborhoods.

How Will We Measure Our Success?

Metrics will be created based on the Action Team plans and include data such as home ownership, employment, voting participation, school graduation and other academic outcomes, and civic leadership projects. We believe this work will strengthen our own Memorial Community as well.

We will look for specific outcomes within the Action Teams: Each team will establish yearly implementation and outcome goals. Every meeting of the Steering Committee will include an agenda item that calls for a status report from each team on progress. The Justice Organizer will report to the Congregation annually the status of accomplishment against each of the goals.

NOTE: It is important to clarify that we do not see the Initiative functioning in a way analogous to a foundation making grants. Our intent is to build anti-racist institutional community-based power in 21217 and link that work to city and state power-building bases necessary to accomplish our local goals. Built on the premise that it will take the exercise of power broader than that which is possible from one zip code to achieve the justice outcomes we seek. All funds will be used to support the strategic action organizing plans developed by the teams.