

COMMISSION ON RACE AND RECONCILIATION

The Commission on Race and Reconciliation of the Episcopal Diocese of Pittsburgh is called to work for the annihilation of racism in our church and communities, while fostering healing of all persons.

During the past year, trainers who are also members of the commission conducted two Anti-Racism Workshops.

The commission again coordinated the diocesan Celebration of Life and Ministry of Absalom Jones. The guest preacher was the Rev. Kim Latice Coleman, Rector of Trinity Episcopal Church in Arlington, Virginia.

The commission prepared a banner that was approximately eight feet long that was displayed at Province III Synod. The title of the banner was “A Timeline: Anti-Racism Ministry – The Church’s Effort to Restructure Itself.” Smaller individual copies were reproduced and with supporting materials were distributed to everyone attending Synod. Everyone at diocesan Convention will also receive a packet.

Jointly, Province III and the Senator John Heinz History Center sponsored a one-day White Privilege Seminar at the Heinz History Center on May 2, 2015. The title was “Race and Freedom: How Color has Defined American Freedom.” The keynote presentation was given by Dr. Jacqueline Battalora, author of “Birth of a White Nation.” Funding for the event came from a grant to Province III from the Constable Fund. Members of the Commission assisted in facilitating the event.

Province III conducted two “Training/Refreshing the Trainer Workshops.” The commission sponsored the attendance of two persons at each workshop. These workshops provided the initial training required to become a facilitator for the mandated Anti-Racism Training Workshops.

At the annual “Workday” of the commission, it was decided that in calling people to the work of justice we could draw from Bishop McConnell’s diocesan priorities of Public Gospel, Missional Communities and Leadership Formation. To do this, the commission’s focus will be on deepening our relationships with the bishop, the diocesan leadership and people at the “grassroots” level. The intention is to engage priests, vestries and other leadership groups in dialogue around issues of race, to hear and hopefully allay their concerns and fears. The possibility of a clergy “quiet day” will be explored to provide the opportunity for a conversation among clergy about racism. The commission will ask the clergy to raise up two persons from each parish to support this work. The commission will plan a diocesan event, the focus will be reconciliation and forgiveness.

This year, the commission welcomed two new members, the Rev. Michael Foley, Church of the Redeemer, and Lyle M. Wood, Church of the Holy Cross.

Respectfully submitted,
Nancy Travis Bolden, Chair