

THE
Episcopal
CHURCH

March 12, 2016

Dear Bishops and Deputies,

At General Convention this summer, our church made the strongest commitment in a generation to racial justice and reconciliation. As the leaders of the House of Bishops and House of Deputies, we were tasked by [Resolution C019](#) to lead in this holy work, and thus to enable every diocese, ministry, and baptized person in our church to live and bear witness to the teaching of Jesus to love God and love our neighbors as ourselves (Matthew 22:37-40), by respecting the dignity of every human being, and working to transform the unjust structures of society.

To honor that call, we gathered on February 3 and 4 in Austin, Texas, to share our own gifts and stories, to learn some of the church's historic and current activities, and to begin to discern a way forward. Rather than proceed with quick fixes or instant program, we adopted two essential practices: deep listening to stories and patient commitment to mutual transformation over the long haul.

Today, we write to welcome sisters and brothers in both Houses and ultimately all Episcopalians to join us in this ministry. The pain of racial injustice and division has wracked our church and the many communities where we both proclaim and embody the gospel of Jesus Christ. Our collective prayer and action can begin to heal what is broken and nurture the Beloved Community that is God's dream for all.

At this stage, we look forward to convening one or more church-wide gatherings where many voices can share about racial justice and reconciliation, including the myriad racial, ethnic and cultural realities that play out across Latin America, Europe, Asia and deep into indigenous communities on this continent. We have also asked the Presiding Bishop's staff to research options for the following:

- A gathering for listening with Anglican partners in the Global South, with particular attention to colonial and neocolonial patterns of relationship
- Vehicles for sharing stories, developing relationships, and listening to the Other
- Age-appropriate formation and education opportunities for dismantling racism
- A summary of the church's current ministries and gifts for racial justice and reconciliation
- A census or audit to gain a clearer understanding of the church's demographic make-up and its historic and current participation in systems of racial injustice

Please join us in spending the remainder of this holy season of Lent in prayer, asking God to prepare our hearts to share and to receive the stories and truths that challenge each of us most. Join us in looking to transformation well beyond a single triennium or even the nine years of a primate's term, beyond the United States alone, beyond new statements and policies. We share the longing of our Lord Jesus Christ for *metanoia* – to turn, to be reborn as a Church engaged in behaviors, commitments and relationships that reflect the love of the One who called us to be one.

In the deep love of Christ,

+ *Michael Curry*
Presiding Bishop Michael Curry

+ *Mary Gray-Reeves*
House of Bishops Vice President Mary Gray-Reeves

+ *Dean Wolfe*
House of Bishops Vice President Dean Wolfe

Gay C. Jennings
President of the House of Deputies Gay Jennings

Byron Rushing
House of Deputies Vice President Byron Rushing

Michael Barlowe
House of Deputies Secretary Michael Barlowe

