

2011 report to diocese: ANTI-RACISM TASK FORCE

1. What are the highlights of your ministry since the 2010 Diocesan Convention?

The Anti-Racism Task Force organized the annual service held in Kansas City in honor of Absalom Jones, the first African-American to be ordained a priest. The service, which is in its ninth year, takes place on the second Saturday in February and is followed by a reception catered by Culinary Cornerstones. The 2011 service was held at St. Paul's and featured as its speaker The Rev. Mary Jacobs, Priest in Charge, St. Augustine's. The service was officiated by the bishop and also included liturgical dancers from St. Augustine's and St. James United Methodist.

The task force occasionally provides seminars at national and diocese conventions. In 2011, the members are conducting a workshop at The Gathering entitled "The New Face of Racism."

The task force also leads one-day anti-racism workshops throughout the diocese as well as upon request in the community. While no workshops were held this year, the task force encourages anyone interested in participating or holding a workshop to contact us.

2. How have these activities furthered the work of the diocese and strengthened parishes and congregations? (include number of people served)

Last year, approximately 60 people attended the Absalom Jones Service, with more than 400 attending over the last nine years. More than 140 clergy and lay leaders have participated in the anti-racism training since the training began several years ago. By keeping the subject of racism on the minds of our church, and by recognizing the work of those who came before us, we hope to fulfill our mission of "launching thoughtful dialogue on how racism manifests itself among the people of God and encourage church-led initiatives to recognize and combat racism through heartfelt prayer, earnest study and honest communication."

3. What are your plans for ministry in 2012?

- To increase attendance at the Absalom Jones service by 15%.
- To conduct at least two anti-racism workshops.

4. How will you measure success in 2012?

- Quantitative: Measurement of service attendance and workshop offerings.
- Qualitative: Anecdotal information from survey attendees; post-workshop surveys.

5. How does your ministry reflect the promises made in the Baptismal Covenant?

The Covenant speaks directly to our responsibility to end racism by striving "for justice and peace among all people" and by respecting the "dignity of every human being." While much progress has been made, we must continue to study and acknowledge how racism has been manifested in ourselves and in our church in both subtle and not-so-subtle ways. Honest and respectful dialogue is key to our progress.

*Respectfully Submitted by Meg Townsend and Drew Brown,
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