

NEJ Call to Action Report 2017

This draft¹ template is to facilitate the fulfillment of the recommendation from the NEJ Call to Action that states “each Annual Conference provide an annual update on work in all of the above to the NEJ Committee on Episcopacy, the Vision Table and the Multi-Ethnic Center, and share experiences that may be helpful to others in the NEJ.”² These annual updates can be leveraged to meet the quadrennial requirement (“That each Annual Conference provide a written report to be included in the 2020 NEJ Advance Daily Christian Advocate. This report should include its (1) progress within the 2017-2020 Q and (2) plans for the 2021-2024 Q.”³)

Annual Conference: Eastern Pennsylvania Annual Conference

Date Your Annual Conference Began CTA Work: July 2016

What percentage of leaders and faith communities have participated in the CTA to date:

 ? NA % of clergy ? NA % of laity in leadership ? NA % of faith communities

1. Describe your conference's overall strategic approach to the CTA in 50 words or less:

- Education and raising awareness begins at the personal level.
- Address issues of people's hearts and minds.
- Address racism that involves individuals and then institutional and systemic practices.
- Teach and engage clergy and laity in having difficult but enlightening conversations about race and racism, and encourage additional learning.
- Prepare current and future church leaders to address their own issues of racism in order to challenge their congregations and communities

¹ This template is a test for the end of 2017 report and will be perfected for 2018's report.

² Item 7 from the CTA

³ Item 8 from the CTA

2. Briefly describe what difference your conference is seeking to make and how will you know you are making progress? (no more than 2 sentences):

We seek to break the denial and move toward acceptance and appreciation of differences and toward real cultural competency. Our progress will be measured by:

- a demonstrated capacity to engage productively in difficult conversations about race, with progressive understanding;
- evidence of shared decision-making and shared power, where people of color have more opportunities to serve and where their voices are heard and their opinions are valued.
- greater financial equity in employment opportunities, appointment-making and equal pay for equal work across the board.

3. Please complete the following table using as few words as possible. We are seeking to provide a format that is easy to track Annual Conference progress toward the CTA.⁴

These items reference recommendation numbers in the CTA	Primary Strategy (theory of change)	Current Progress (include goal, measurement and results to date)	Next Steps
1. To confront y/our racism, and affirm that Black lives and all lives of color really do matter. Including District Superintendents and AC staff.	Expose ourselves to both historical and current resources to help break our denial of the facts and the impact of racist beliefs and practices whether they be overt, covert, conscious or implicit, institutionalized and systemic.	See Addendum	More of the same

⁴ Some items are not listed above. Number 2 is a COB task and is not appropriate for AC report. Number 3 is included in 1. Number 7 is this report. Number 8 is mentioned in the instructions and clarifies that strategic plans are due in 2020. Number 9 is beyond the AC and appears as question 6 below the tables. The items that are COB tasks need to be reported annually by COB.

<p>4. To initiate ongoing internal and external conversations on white privilege, white supremacy, racism and oppression, including internalized oppression on every district, sub-district and within each local church.</p>	<p>Provide education Create opportunities of exposure and learning. Create measures of accountability</p>	<p>See Addendum</p>	<p>More of the same. Create/offer additional opportunities for exploration of the impact of racism on Euro-Americans and African Americans in separate groupings.</p>
<p>5. To initiate training and transformative conversations about racism, white privilege, white supremacy and racial equity for the District Superintendents, conference staff and lay leadership, including VIM, ACLL, Youth and Young Adult leaders.</p>	<p>Provide education. Create opportunities for exposure and learning. Create measures of accountability.</p>	<p>See Addendum</p>	<p>More of the same</p>

4.

The Goals are Jurisdictional Responsibilities	AC Data Needed	How is/will our AC contribute to this jurisdictional goal?
<p>GOAL 1: Those areas with a significant population of people of African descent should reflect a proportional number of Black Annual Conference leaders, both lay and clergy.</p>	<p>Demographic chart (mission field vs. members vs. leaders) for each Annual Conference See Addendum</p>	<p>To Be Addressed</p>
<p>GOAL 2: Establish at least one new faith community (multiple strategies) with members of African descent focused on engaging black children, youth and young adults. (If you are in an AC which has a ten-mile radius with a Black population of 30,000 or more.)</p>	<p>Each Annual Conference conducts an opportunity scan in MissionInsite or equivalent. Those who meet the criteria of the goal, attach locations and demographic information. ~ To be addressed</p>	<p>To Be Addressed</p>

<p>GOAL 3: Increase the number of viable and sustainable Black churches and ministries in the NEJ.</p>	<p>Each Annual Conference lists all black churches and ministries within its bounds with an evaluation of viability and sustainability. ~ To be addressed</p>	<p>To Be Addressed</p>
<p>GOAL 4: Study the impact of structural and institutional racism on Black people in the NEJ, in particular:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Closing of Black churches • The impact of the ordination process on the number of black persons interested in ordained ministry. 	<p>See Addendum</p>	<p>To Be Addressed</p>
<p>GOAL 5: Encourage UM related seminaries in the NEJ to intentionally recruit and offer resources to more students of color, to offer an Urban Ministries track that is contextual to the Black Lives Matter movement and to initiate training for faculty in the areas of racism, white privilege and white supremacy.</p>	<p>Each Annual Conference with a UM related seminary within its bounds reports on areas of goal 5. ~ To be addressed re: Palmer Theological Seminary Lutheran Theological Seminary Moravian Seminary Lancaster Theological Evangelical Seminary</p>	<p>To Be Addressed</p>

4. What would you celebrate as an exceptional strategy, event, activity or resource person or group you have discovered in the process of engaging the NEJ Call to Action?

Persons: Bishop Johnson, District Superintendents, GCORR staff, Rev. Rodney Smothers, Rev. Jaqui King of Discipleship Ministries ...

Groups: Dragonfly, Blue Door Group, Visions, Inc., Church of the Open Door UMC (Kennett Square, Pa.)

Events/Activities: Viewing and discussion of the 2016 film “13th.” (Filmmaker Ava DuVernay explores the history of racial inequality in the United States, focusing on the fact that the nation's prisons are disproportionately filled with African-Americans.” Viewing and discussion of GCORR's [Vital Conversations Video Series](#).

5. Please name the bodies or individuals providing leadership for the Call to Action in your Annual Conference, and define who was included.

Bishop Peggy Johnson
District Superintendents: Revs. Tracy Bass, Dawn Taylor-Storm, Irving Cotto, Bumkoo “BK” Chung
Director of Connectional Ministries: Ref. Anita Powell
Conference Lay Leader: David Koch
Conference Treasurer: James Brown
Board of Laity
Director of Administrative Services/Executive Director of Pension & Health Benefits: Nancy Jo Fielding
Bishop’s Executive Secretary: Amy Botti
Commission on Religion & Race: Revs. Susan Worrell & Alicia Julia-Stanley, co-chairs
Healing the Wounds of Racism Core Team: Revs. David Brown & Mert Shane
Conference Communicator: John Coleman
Congregational Development Team & Coordinator, Rev. Gordon Hendrickson
Conference Urban Commission: Revs. Lydia Munoz & Robin Hynicka, co-chairs
Coordinator of Urban Ministry: William Brawner
Metro Ministries: Rev. William Gary George, chair
Cross Racial/Cross Cultural Ministries Task Force
Black Methodists for Church Renewal (BMCR): Rev. Shayla Johnson, chair
Black United Methodist Preachers (BUMP): Rev. Herbert Coe, chair
Board of Ordained Ministry: Revs. Gary Knerr & Johnson Dodla, co-chairs
Conference Young People’s Ministries: David Piltz, coordinator
United Methodist Women: Gladys Hubbard & Susan Dziuk, co-chairs
United Methodist Men: Clifton Hubbard, chair
Church & Society Work Team: Barbara Drake, chair
Higher Education & Campus Ministry Board: Rev. Jason Perkowski, chair
Prison Ministries & Restorative Justice Team: Rev. Marilyn Schneider, chair
Camp & Retreat Ministries Board & Staff
District Mission ConneXions & District Transformation Teams

6. How has your Annual Conference identified and developed funding to support this proposal?⁵

⁵ This represents the AC part of item 9 from the CTA “The College of Bishops, the Vision Table, the Multi-Ethnic Center for Ministry and each Annual Conference should identify and develop funding to support this proposal.” The three named entities need to report annually on how they are supporting the funding of the CTA.

Sources within the 2017 budget - \$25,000.00

Conference Budget Projection for 2018 - \$15,000.00

Dewese Grant - \$10,000.00

Addendum:

Question 3

Text Box 1 Column 3:

- a) Bishop Johnson meets with an Intercultural Coach to help her address her own blind spots (4 times a year).
- b) Bishop Johnson took the IDI (Intercultural Development Inventory® to assess intercultural competence) to make herself more aware of cultural issues. A district superintendent also took the IDI in 2016.
- c) Bishop Johnson has committed to visiting every black church in her area.
- d) Bishop Johnson and her two leadership cabinets had an overnight retreat in the fall to address Intercultural Competency for both cabinets (Kaleidoscope Institute)
- e) Bishop Johnson visited the Birmingham Civil Rights museum and 16th Street Baptist Church in December.
- f) Bishop Johnson and the Cabinet viewed and discussed the documentary "13th" (on Netflix) together.
- g) Bishop Johnson converses weekly with people of color intentionally, especially those of African American descent. During her visits to leaders of each district, she encouraged them to have similar intentional cross-racial interactions.
- h) Bishop Johnson spoke with the UMW and UMM about promoting the Call to Action through the "Charter for Racial Justice" (UMW) and the discipling ministries of the UMM.
- i) Bishop Johnson writes blogs regularly on topics of race, privilege and equality.
- j) Bishop Johnson and the Cabinet read and discussed the book "The End of White Christian America." At least one superintendent is using ideas from the book with leadership in her district.
- k) Bishop Johnson e-mailed a statement to conference members (August 13) titled "*Our terrorism: fears within, fightings without,*" that called upon the church to engage in "prayer and witness" while celebrating and committing to its values of diversity, acceptance and love for all.
- l) Bishop Johnson read "Embattled Freedom: Chronicle of a Fugitive-Slave Haven in the Wary North" by Jim Remsen
- m) Bishop Johnson attended a lecture at Georgetown University about the Jesuit ownership and sale of slaves (December 2017)
- n) Bishop Johnson met with the director of the Deaf Autistic Inner City Camp. She is writing a grant to help fund another year of this camp, and she plans to attend. This is a camp for African American children and their parents needing spiritual support resources for education and training in how to parent and support Autistic Deaf children.
- o) All conference staff and superintendents have attended the "Changing Racism" 3-day retreat run by Visions, Inc. The biannual training—mandatory for all pastors, including lay ministers, and staff—is supervised by the bishop and the

conference Commission on Race and Religion. The CORR also cosponsors a voluntary, biannual, follow-up Continuing Conversations seminar for Changing Racism alumnae who want to learn and interact more.

- p) A dedicated [Religion and Race webpage](#) now appears on the conference website, containing helpful information and links to a myriad of resources, including the Call to Action and NEJ Bishops' 2016 statement on racism. The website also includes a Racial-Ethnic Ministries webpages and many other pages that reflect the broad racial-ethnic diversity of our conference and its ministries. Likewise, our quarterly newsletter and weekly newsletter (both titled NEWSpirit) also reflect that rich diversity in their reporting of news, ministries, churches, leadership and concerns.

Text Box 4 Column 3:

- a) All 6 districts (now reduced to 4) held workshops, dialogues and focus groups on white privilege and racism from 2016-2017.
 - 1) Central – “Straight Talk about Racism” conversations.
 - 2) Southwest – Periodic racial justice dialogues led by an interracial team of clergy.
 - 3) Northwest –2017 “Tools for Ministry” workshop and plenary presentation on race and racism.
 - 4) Northeast –3-months of learning and guided dialogues for clergy, using GCORR’s “Vital Conversations” video series.
 - 5) East –a 2-day workshop: “Walking With..” which focused on the African American experience and the film “13th.”
 - 6) Southeast – a white privilege dialogue on the 2016 Martin Luther King Jr. holiday, plus dialogues at historically black Lincoln University to learn the history of this first African-American degree-granting institution and the history of the underground railroad; plus follow-up conversations on racial reconciliation.
- b) All pastors under appointment and CLM’s must take the mandatory “Changing Racism” class as a prerequisite for certification.
- c) All pastors were called on to preach sermons on social justice and racism on Sunday, January 15, 2017
- d) Clergy and laity involved in Cross Racial/Cross Cultural appointments receive annual training. Also CR/CC pastors fellowship together at an annual luncheon with the bishop.
- e) Under the leadership of D.S. Dawn Taylor-Storm the South District hosted “District Dinner Conversations” in August 2017 focusing on Race and the creation of a District Team to facilitate dialogues and discussion opportunities throughout the district. Krystl Johnson is leading this team and working on a template for more Dinner Discussions.
- f) The Rev. Susan Worrell of UM Church of the Open Door led a small group experience “Witnessing Whiteness,” engaging participants from throughout the South District throughout the Spring and Summer of 2017.
- g) Several Eastern PA Conference leaders participated in peaceful local rallies to respond to the racial turmoil and violence that erupted in Charlottesville, Va.
- h) The Rev. Cynthia Skirpak, pastor of Yardley UMC, spoke at a candlelight solidarity vigil and rally at the Garden of Reflection in Lower Makefield, Bucks County following the Charlottesville tragedy.
- i) The Rev. Andrea Brown, pastor of Grandview UMC in Lancaster, reportedly spoke at a rally in the downtown public square following the Charlottesville tragedy.
- j) The Rev. Gregory Holston, executive director of the faith-based social action group *POWER* gathered clergy and laity in downtown Philadelphia August 16. Their march and rally was under the banner of “Unmasking White Supremacy in Philadelphia”.

- k) The Rev. Robin Hynicka of Arch Street UMC held a rally for the community August 16 presenting specific calls to action related to demands around criminal justice reform, public education funding, and living wages."
- l) The Rev. Mark I. Salvacion of Historic St. George's UMC, accompanied by The Revs. Fred Day, Alice Cook and Mark Young, hosted a special worship service August 27 focusing on the history of race relations at that church in the context of the celebration of Rev. Dr. Martin Luther King's "I Have a Dream" speech, which was given on August 28, 1963.
- m) South District Planting Seeds for Ministry (Sept 2017) was focused on how to engage Vital Urban Ministry and how to create vital Urban-Suburban partnerships.
- n) The Rev. Donna Hammell presided over an interfaith Service of Healing, Hope, and Prayer sponsored by Doylestown UMC and Rise Up Doylestown on September 24, 2017 as community members gathered together against racism and hatred, showing solidarity to all people in their neighborhood.
- o) A cluster of 3 churches in the East District under the leadership of D.S. Tracy Bass will hosted a film viewing of "Same Kind of Different as Me" followed by community discussion on October 29, 2017
- p) The Rev. Donna Hammel in a partnership between Doylestown UMC, Rise Up Doylestown and the Peace Center hosted an event designed to explore some of the stereotypes and assumptions around race and how to keep people safe titled "Interrupting Racism" on October 29, 2017
- q) The Rev. Cynthia E. Skripak of Yardley United Methodist Church is partnering with the Interfaith Community of Lower Bucks, (ICLB), and The Peace Center of Langhorne, *Disrupting Racism: Tools for Community Action and Healing* by presenting two films on Sunday, November 5th with discussion following. The films were "Not in Our Town" and "Waking in Oak Creek."
- r) The Rev. Susan L. Worrell of UM Church of the Open Door in Kennett Square led a diverse community & church group discussion of the topics raised in the Delaware County Community College production of *Clybourne Park* depicting the reality of racism in the changing demographics of a city neighborhood.
- s) The Prison Ministry and Restorative Justice Connections of the conference have made connections with local churches on the South District supporting the education and advocacy needed to confront racism in our criminal justice system.
- t) The Rev. David Brown, a retired elder, participated in a panel talk back session with community members following the live dramatic production of the play *Rasheed Speaking* at Allen's Lane Theater in Philadelphia on November 19, 2017.
- u) The Director of Connectional Ministries convened the Cross Cultural/Cross Racial clergy and a task force has been formed (Nov. & Dec. 2017)

Text Box 5 Column 3:

- a) The conference Commission on Race and Religion hosted a second level "Changing Racism" workshop in January and June 2017 with plans to do so twice yearly. All participants in the 3-day Changing Racism Workshop and those who had attended the predecessor, Healing the Wounds of Racism workshops, are strongly encouraged to attend the 1-day follow-up workshop.
- b) The Bishop addressed racism and invited dialogue with the Clergy and the Laity of our Annual Conference on the Bishop's Days on the District in the fall of 2016
- c) St. George's "Time Traveler" confirmation training (3 Saturdays each spring) gives a full description of the treatment of black people at that church that led to the formation of the AME denomination under Rev. Richard Allen.

- d) The Conference Council on Youth Ministry facilitated a diversity retreat in March 2017 and address the issues in its campus ministry initiatives.
- e) The 2016 Annual Conference focused on racial injustice and reconciliation with Native Americans and other people of color. Bishop Linda Lee gave a morning workshop on how to counter racism and build diverse relationships.
- f) Order of Elders Day Apart included a spring dialogue on race and racism, and continued that conversation at another gathering in late 2017.
- g) Order of Deacons also explored "Racial Injustice" and aspects of the call and ways to respond at a 2017 Day Apart.
- h) The Blue Door group began quarterly trainings with the Eastern PA Conference staff in 2017 with a focus on diversity in the workplace. This will continue quarterly.
- i) The executive committee of the Board of Ordained Ministry was challenged to verify that all members of the board, both clergy and lay, have fulfilled the conference requirement to participate in the conference's anti-racism training experiences, either the current Changing Racism training or the former Healing the Wounds of Racism experience.
- j) The youth and young adult ministry leaders included a dialogue and training component on appreciating multiethnic diversity at their regular meetings in 2017.
- k) The EPA Conference continues to require all clergy and laity in appointive, elected, paid or voluntary leadership within the conference to attend the three day training *Changing Racism* led by Visions, inc. This training is offered twice yearly with the most recent training occurring October 27-29, 2017.
- l) A follow up one-day training *Changing Racism: Continuing the Conversations* facilitated by the conference Commission on Religion and Race was held December 2, 2017. This also is offered twice yearly.

Goal 1, Text Box 2

Note: In 2017

- a) The conference has 27 African American Churches out of a total of 415 churches.
- b) African Americans make up 33% of the Appointive cabinet
- c) African Americans hold a number of major leadership positions in the conference: conference associate lay leader, dean of the cabinet, Director of Connectional Ministries, Connectional Table chair, Board of Lay Ministries chair, loan board chair, nomination committee chair, Metro board chair, several district lay leaders and associate lay leaders, Conference UMW co-chair and Conference UMM president, UM Metro Ministries, Inc. president, Black Methodists for Church Renewal chair, Black United Methodist Pastors chair, East District Committee on District Superintendency chair, Scholarship Committee chair, Human Resources chair, Council on Young Adult Ministries chair, Conference Senior Accountant, Coordinator of Urban Ministries, Marketing Consultant Liaison for Camping & Retreat Ministries, Commission on Religion and Race liaison to the Board of Ordained Ministry, Westpath Board Member, Westpath Resource to EPA Board of Pension and Health Ministries, Peace with Justice chair.

Goal 4, Text Box 2

- a) There was dedicated and thorough conversation with the one African American church closing tat Annual Conference 2016.
- b) Bishop Johnson spoke with the chairs of BOOM to emphasize importance of recruiting African American candidates for ministry and to take note of the racial biases that can appear in the interview process for commissioning and ordination.
- c) The Board of Ordained Ministry is implementing a different interview process with the intention of being more culturally relevant and sensitive for all candidates of color. This change also includes explicit understanding of the multicultural reality of the EPAC and the probability of cross cultural/cross racial appointments.
- d) The Eastern PA Conference has contracted with the Dragonfly Partners in concert with the PenDel Conference to evaluate and report on their findings of systematic racism within our practices and policies beginning January 2018.