

NEJ Call to Action Report

January 2019 - December 2019

This 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.”¹ 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.”²)

Annual Conference: Eastern Pennsylvania Conference of the United Methodist Church

Date Your Annual Conference Began CTA Work: July 2016

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

The EPAUMC Racial Justice Transformation Process intentionally engages and equips congregations, clergy, ministry candidates, and staff in seeking inclusion and equity while serving their communities. This approach assumes that transformation begins by changing minds, changing hearts and changing behaviors. The purposeful integration of these aspects creates opportunity for changing systems.

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, move toward acceptance, and appreciate differences as we move toward authentic cultural proficiency.

Our progress will be measured by:

- **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, 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.**

¹ Item 7 from the CTA

² Item 8 from the CTA

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.³

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 conference constituents to both historical and current resources to help raise awareness of the facts and the impact of racist beliefs and practices whether they be overt, covert, conscious or implicit, individualized, institutionalized and systemic.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Expose conference constituents to both historical and current resources to help raise awareness of the facts and the impact of racist beliefs and practices whether they be overt, covert, conscious or implicit, institutionalized and systemic. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Continue to create opportunities to expand intercultural competency. <p>See Addendum</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>Provide education by creating opportunities of exposure and learning.</p> <p>Create measures of accountability by soliciting input on the potential impact and progress being made from local church leaders and clergy</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Convened local church conversations on race Increase diversity of leadership Convened small groups: Whites Confronting Racism Implemented CRCC transition support teams <p>See Addendum</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Engage local churches as bodies of accountability Convene small groups for Clergy of Color exploring internalized racism <p>See Addendum</p>
5. To initiate training and transformative conversation in areas of racism, white privilege, white supremacy and racial equity for the District Superintendents, AC staff and lay leadership including VIM, ACLL, YACs and CCYMs.	<p>Provide education by creating opportunities of exposure and learning.</p> <p>Create measures of accountability by soliciting input on the potential impact and progress being made from conference wide staff and ministry teams.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Increased efforts to reflect diversity Continued training on racial dynamics Identified AA churches as historical sites Expanded promotion and reporting on racial-ethnic group events & ministries Encouraged all connection ministries to address these issues in their context 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Connect VIM projects with local AA communities Focus responses to disasters in AA communities Continue to engage all connectional ministries to incorporate emphasis on racial issues

³ Some items are not listed above. Number 2 is a COB task and is not appropriate for AC report and will be reported on directly from the COB in a way in which they determine. 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.

The Goals are Jurisdictional Responsibilities	AC Data Needed for Base-line	How is/will our AC contribute to this jurisdictional goal? How are you engaging SBC21 and other partners in this work?	If this pertains to you, is there something at the jurisdictional level needed to help you make progress?
GOAL 1: Those areas with a significant demographic of people from African descent should reflect a proportional number of Black leaders, both lay and clergy at Annual Conference.	Path 1 provides a demographic chart in consultation with the NEJ Developer of each Annual Conference. (mission field vs. members vs. leaders)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Committee on Conference Leadership continues to address this issue for both lay and clergy leaders. • District committees continues to intentionally identifying diverse leadership. 	
GOAL 2: Establish at least one new faith community (multiple strategies) 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.)	Path 1 provides a jurisdictional map in consultation with the NEJ Developers After identified, relevant areas submit a plan and resource needs are brought back no later than Jan 2019.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Two African-American congregations have initiated a new ministry creating new spaces for new people in the African-American community of Chester, PA - an Empowerment/Education Center and Assisted Living facility with funding from sale of closed UMC church property • A new ministry, The Annex, started in Darby, PA 	
GOAL 3: Increase the number of viable and sustainable Black churches' and ministries in the NEJ.	There is a shared dashboard that shows number of black churches and ministries with a sense of where those churches are in terms of viability/sustainability. This dashboard is owned by the NEJ Developers.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • AA congregation of Wharton Wesley UMC is being revitalized and re-envisioned • Development of a AME/UMC church in Radnor, PA • Granted funding for 7 Urban Alliances and 11 Initiatives for urban communities, many of which are communities of color addressing historic and current inequities 	

<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. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Closing Black churches is not a trend in EPA. Intentional efforts are made to support and sustain Black churches. • The impact of the ordination process continues to be addressed by the Board of Ordained Ministry and the District Committees on Ministry. (This statement was not requested on the submitted report) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • EPA engaged in a facilitated process of evaluating structural racism within the conference with outside consultants. The recommendations and findings are continuing to be gradually implemented. • The Board of Ordained Ministry continues to educate its members regarding racism, white privilege, and oppression 	
<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.</p>	<p>Conversations are continuing with Palmer Theological Seminary, Evangelical Seminary, Lutheran Seminary, Moravian Seminary, Lancaster Theological Seminary. We have alumni and students related to these schools.</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? (This question and answer was not requested on the submitted report)

Persons: Bishop Peggy Johnson; District Superintendents (Rev. Dawn Taylor-Storm, Rev. Steve Morton, Rev. Tracy Bass, Rev. BK Chung); GCORR staff (Rev. Gio Arroyo & Rev. Dr. Grace Pak); Rev. Dr. Anita Adams Powell, Director of Connectional Ministries; Lorraine Mareno and Sarah Halley, Independent Leadership & Organizational Consultants

Groups: Visions, Inc.; Board of Ordained Ministry; Board of Laity; Commission on Religion and Race; Cross Racial-Cross Cultural Ministry Transition Support Taskforce; Whites Confronting Racism Covenant Group

Activities/Events: Racial Justice Transformation Process; Supper and Sharing: Fostering Intercultural Competence and Authentic Community One Meal at a Time; Cross Racial-Cross Cultural Ministry; Celebrating Our Cultures Bar-B-Que;

Resource: “Manual for Cross-Racial/Cross-Cultural Ministry and Appointment Making” which received affirmation and endorsement from the General Commission on Religion and Race

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

Bishop

Black Methodists for Church Renewal (BMCR)

Black United Methodist Preachers (BUMP)

Board of Laity

Board of Ordained Ministry

Commission on Religion & Race

Committee on Native American Ministries (CONAM)

Congregational Development Team & Coordinator

Connectional Ministries of EPAUMC (31)

Director of Administrative Services/Executive Director of Pension & Health Benefits

Director of Communication

Director of Connectional Ministries

District Superintendents

Korean Caucus

Latino Commission

Treasurer

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

Sources within the 2019 budget -	\$20,000.00
Conference Budget Projection for 2020 -	\$15,000.00
CCORR Grant -	\$10,000.00
GCORR Action Grant -	\$ 5,000.00
BOOM Continuing Education Funds -	\$ 5,000.00
Bishop's Discretionary Funds -	As needed

Addendum:

Question #3

- 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.**

Current Progress - Column 3

a) East District DS

- Participated with the Appointive Cabinet, Bishop, GCORR and the Conference CORR in implementing a strategic process for supporting all CRCC appointments.
- Organized CR/CC training 2/23/19.
- Attended CR/CC luncheon 5/13/19
- Participated in CR/CC Mentor Team Training and implementation of the Mentoring Process

b) South District DS

- Participated with the Appointive Cabinet, Bishop, GCORR and the Conference CORR in implementing a strategic process for supporting all CRCC appointments.
- Attended CR/CC luncheon 5/13/19
- Participated in CR/CC Mentor Team Training and implementation of the Mentoring Process

c) West District DS

- Participated with the Appointive Cabinet, Bishop, GCORR and the Conference CORR in implementing a strategic process for supporting all CRCC appointments.
- Convened Racial Dialogues run by a few pastors periodically
- Attended CR/CC luncheon 5/13/19.
- Participated in CR/CC Mentor Team Training and implementation of the Mentoring Process

d) North District DS

- Participated with the Appointive Cabinet, Bishop, GCORR and the Conference CORR in implementing a strategic process for supporting all CRCC appointments.
- Visited AA History Museum in Philadelphia
- Read 'Who Lynched Willie Earle: Preaching to Confront Racism

- Viewed film “Harriet”
- Assisting Elder participated in year-long program “Whites Confronting Racism”
- Supported CR/CC training 2/23/19.
- Attended CR/CC luncheon 5/13/19
- Participated in CR/CC Mentor Team Training and implementation of the Mentoring Process

e) Bishop Johnson

- Continued to read and study issues around white privilege, racism and black history: Philadelphia Tribune, “The Five Faces of Oppression” by Iris Young (article), *Racism: A Short History* by George M. Fredrickson (book), “The Origins of Race” by Willie Jennings (video), “Race: the Power of An Illusion” (video), “Harriet” (movie)
- Continued to meet with a cross-culture coach for conversations about racism and cross-culture appointment making.
- Attended a three-day Council of Bishops Learning Forum: “Power, Privilege and Proceeds: Addressing Race, Ethnicity, Tribalism and Neo-Colonialism.” (November 6-8, 2020)
- Wrote MLK and Black History Month blog articles
- Sponsored luncheons for pastors serving in Cross Racial/Cross Cultural Ministries in both conferences
- Participated in the Butterfly Institutional Racism workshop with the cabinet and Grace Pak from GCORR
- Met with EPA BMCR at one of the monthly meetings and spoke at their scholarship banquet.
- Met with Lutheran Bishop Patricia Davenport (first AA female bishop) who serves in Philadelphia
- Honored Rev. Herb Palmer at AC – Urban Award named in his honor.
- Met with AA pastors to discuss Butterfly program and the 2019 General Conference
- Taught 10-hour course at the Lay Academy on social justice which included much material on racial justice.
- Participated in a conference-wide “Celebration of Culture” and sponsored a black deaf choir from Grace UMC
- Participated in the ribbon cutting celebration at an AA Church: Midtown Parish
- Gave greetings at the “Dismantling Racism” workshop (April and October)
- Helped to craft a federated church plan with a UMC congregation and an AME congregation in Radnor, PA

f) Board of Ordained Ministry

- Published Candidacy Guidelines assuring their clarity & easier accessibility. We call this “The Yellow Brick Road to Candidacy” project & involve the dCOM’s. This work was reviewed by GBHEM.
- Included people of color as interview team chairpersons & presenters.
- Focused on interviewee’s written & oral material with attention to how written expression can be a challenge for some candidates. Looked at the totality of the candidate.
- Employed a *certified* language interpreter for a candidate’s psychological assessment leading to certification.

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.

Next Steps - Column 4

- a) South District DS
 - Attend next level “Changing Racism” EPA Seminar.
 - Engage with CR/CC Ministries and deploy CR/CC Mentoring Team and Training & Resource Team in concert with CR/CC Ministry Support pilot program
- b) West District DS
 - Follow-up with those leading the Dialogues.
 - Engage with CR/CC Ministries and deploy CR/CC Mentoring Team and Training & Resource Team in concert with CR/CC Ministry Support pilot program
- c) North District DS
 - Engage with CR/CC Ministries and deploy CR/CC Mentoring Team and Training & Resource Team in concert with CR/CC Ministry Support pilot program.
- d) East District DS
 - Engage with CR/CC Ministries and deploy CR/CC Mentoring Team and Training & Resource Team in concert with CR/CC Ministry Support pilot program
- e) Bishop Johnson
 - Continue to give leadership to the Dragonfly Partners Institutional Racism process (Butterfly Project) and implementation of suggested action (take-away assignments and follow-up meetings).
 - Continue to support efforts for better Cross-Racial/Cross-Cultural ministry appointments as designed and implemented by the EPA CORR & Cabinet.
 - Continue to see a professional coach 4 times a year that focuses on blind spots with regard to racism.
 - Will continue to meet with clergy/pastors of African descent (elders, deacons, local pastors, lay assigned) for open dialogue.
- e) Board of Ordained Ministry
 - Develop training on Dismantling Racism - advanced levels, 1 CEU required for all clergy per quadrennium

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.

Current Progress - Column 3

- a) All 4 districts held workshops, dialogues and focus groups on white privilege and racism.
 - Under the direction of a young adult lay person, a dinner was held for conference leadership to build relationships, dialogue and share on the issues of white privilege and racism in our communities.
 - Individual local churches engaged in small group conversations.
 - A Tools for Ministry 2019 training on “Local Church Conversations on Race” occurred on 3/2/19 @ Eastern University.
 - Used funds from closure of a Black Church in Chester, PA to support redevelopment of the Black Church in Chester, PA; presentation to Conference Trustees and Cabinet.
 - Supported The Annex in Darby, PA, a new ministry space for Community Education; Ministry Outreach and Children/Youth Programming.
 - Supported the development and funding (through the sale of a closed UMC church building) of a new AA church start in Chester, PA
 - Reviewed all district committees for diversity in leadership.
 - Offered sessions at our Tools for Ministry translated in Spanish.
 - Offered several additional meetings to be translated in Spanish and/or ASL (Bishop’s Day, Worship Workshop).
- b) All pastors under appointment and CLM’s must take the mandatory “Changing Racism” class as a prerequisite for certification.
- c) 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.
- d) The Director of Connectional Ministries and the Commission on Religion and Race convened the Cross Cultural/Cross Racial Ministry taskforce to develop a standardized process for assessing readiness, supporting, resourcing, and determining viability of CRCC appointments. This initiative was captured in the Manual for CR/CC Ministry and Appointment Making.

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.

Next Steps - Column 4

- a) Promote, support and fund “Racism, Post-Traumatic Stress, & Transformation” workshop for both clergy and laity of color
- b) Host, plan and fund the Clergy of Color retreat on May 22, 23, 2020 addressing issues of internalized oppression
- c) Partner with the Prison Ministry and Restorative Justice Team to hold “True Justice: Seeking Equal Justice for People and Communities of Color”, a film viewing and panel discussion event

GOAL 1: Those areas with a significant demographic of people from African descent should reflect a proportional number of Black leaders, both lay and clergy at Annual Conference.

Column 3. How is/will our AC contribute to this jurisdictional goal? How are you engaging SBC21 and other partners in this work?

Note: In 2019

- a) The conference has 27 African American Churches out of a total of 415 churches.
- b) African Americans make up 25% of the Appointive cabinet.
- c) African Americans hold a number of major leadership positions in the Conference: Conference Associate Lay Leader, Director of Connectional Ministries, Connectional Table (chair), Loan 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 (co-chair) and liaison to the Board of Ordained Ministry, Westpath Board Member, Westpath Resource to EPA Board of Pension and Health Ministries, Peace with Justice (chair), and Conference Director of Communication

GOAL 4: Study the impact of structural and institutional racism on Black people in the NEJ, in particular:

- **Closing of Black churches**
- **The impact of the ordination process on the number of black persons interested in ordained ministry.**

Column 3. How is/will our AC contribute to this jurisdictional goal? How are you engaging SBC21 and other partners in this work?

Note: In 2019

- a) 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.
- b) The Board of Ordained Ministry implemented 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.
- c) Consultants from Visions, Inc. and the Race Institute have been partners with the Board of Ordained Ministry in presenting training on Implicit Bias and intercultural competency.