



# EASTERN PENNSYLVANIA CONFERENCE

The United Methodist Church

*Making disciples of Jesus Christ for the transformation of the world.*

## **A Path Towards Wholeness**

A Church for All People Serving All People With Justice & Equity

### **Report to the Eastern PA Annual Conference**

May 20-21, 2022

#### **Executive Summary**

*Besides this, you know what time it is, how it is **now** the moment for you to wake from sleep.*

*For salvation is nearer to us now than when we became believers;*

*the night is far gone, the day is near. (Romans 13:11)*

*As baptized Christians, we commit to renounce the spiritual forces of wickedness, reject the evil powers of this world and repent of our sin. We accept the freedom and power God gives us to resist evil, injustice, and oppression in whatever forms they present themselves. We confess Jesus Christ as our Savior, put our whole trust in his grace and promise to serve him as our Lord, in union with the Church which Christ has opened to people of all ages, nations and races.*

**A Path Towards Wholeness** is an urgent calling to our Conference to adopt a comprehensive strategy in order that all of our churches and communities may experience wholeness. We understand that only through a just and equitable church will wholeness be possible for all of our churches. Racial economic justice is building economic institutions that create an opportunity for people to live in equality in areas of life beyond economics.

As we build upon the past work of generations (see Addendum A), **A Path Towards Wholeness** continues this work to create **a more just, inclusive and equitable church**. We seek to act **NOW** by creating:

- **N**ew ministries and revitalized ministries with churches of color;
- **O**pportunities for advancement with churches of color and clergy of color in leadership and ministry; and
- **W**itnesses in every local congregation who will work to dismantle racism in our churches and communities

**New ministries and revitalized ministries with churches of color:**

**METRICS:**

- Revitalize 10 existing congregations of color by Dec. 31, 2027
- Develop 4 new faith communities of color, including at least 1 new black faith community, by Dec. 31, 2027
- Develop 10 new ministry centers serving with communities of color in Eastern PA between now and Dec. 31, 2027

**Opportunities for advancement with churches of color and clergy of color in leadership and ministry**

**METRICS:**

- \$300,000 Investment in 2023; \$300,000 Investment in 2024, with a conference goal of 1.5M investment by Dec. 31, 2027, in clergy of color and churches of color through equitable salary, reduced apportionments and targeted development funding.
- At least 50% EPA agency chairpersons/co-chairs are People of Color by June 2024.
- Increase the total number of African American/Black; Hispanic/Latino & Korean clergy serving in EPA by 20% by 2027 (13 new recruitments)
- Development of 10 clergy of color transformational leaders measured by increase from ¼-½; ½ - ¾ and ¾-Full-time by Dec. 31, 2027.
- Apportion all EPA churches using median household income formula (see formula pg. 5).

**Witnesses in 90 local congregation who will work to dismantle racism in our churches and communities**

**METRICS:**

- Thirty (30) trained EPA facilitators who are actively engaged with 90 congregations that are developing a Dismantling Racism Plan in their local context

***A Path Towards Wholeness***

A Church for All People Serving All People With Justice & Equity

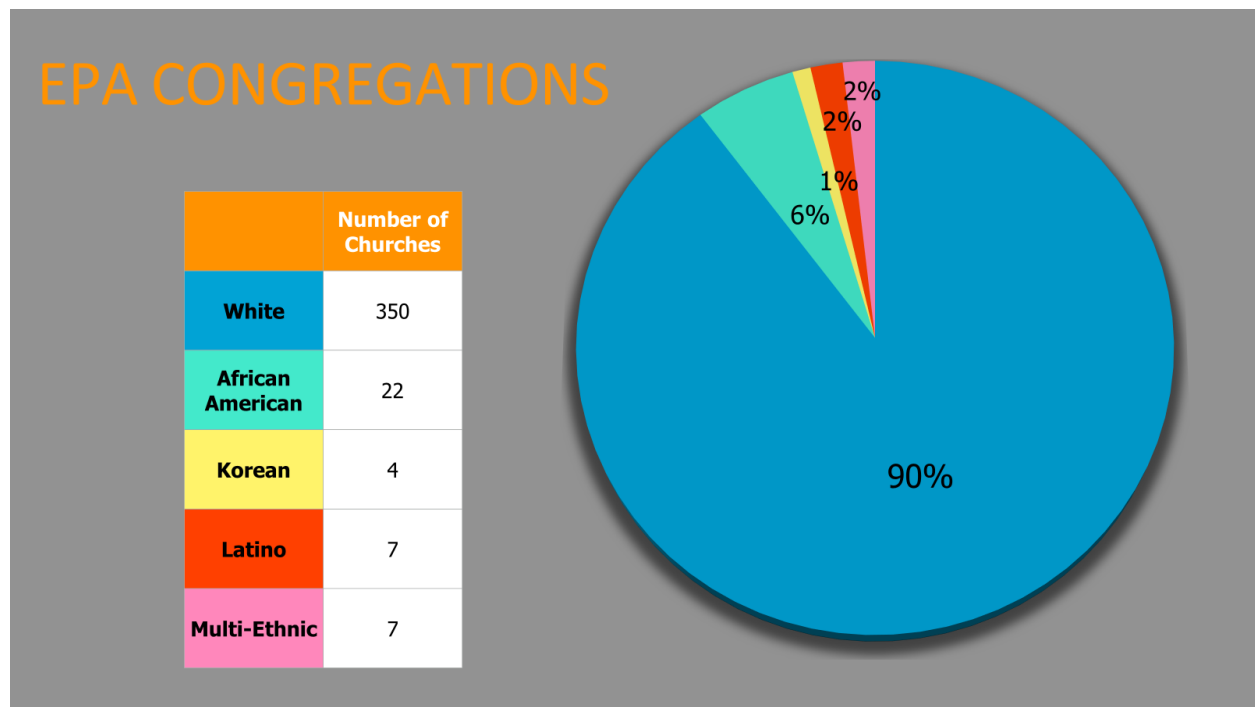
**The Report**

**VISION: Dismantle Racism in EPA**

***EPA will intentionally work NOW to dismantle systems and structures within the church that perpetuate racism***

The Eastern PA Economic Justice Council, under the direction of the Conference Commission on Religion and Race, was formed in 2021, out of a deep concern for the realities facing our racial and ethnic churches. The Council recognizes that if key measures are not taken now to address the current concerns and invest in our racial/ethnic churches and clergy of color leadership, the future of our racial and ethnic churches will be in jeopardy. An equity audit was completed by the Council members looking specifically at compensation practices, apportionments for churches of color, and church property/assets. We believe the time is now to focus as an Annual Conference on:

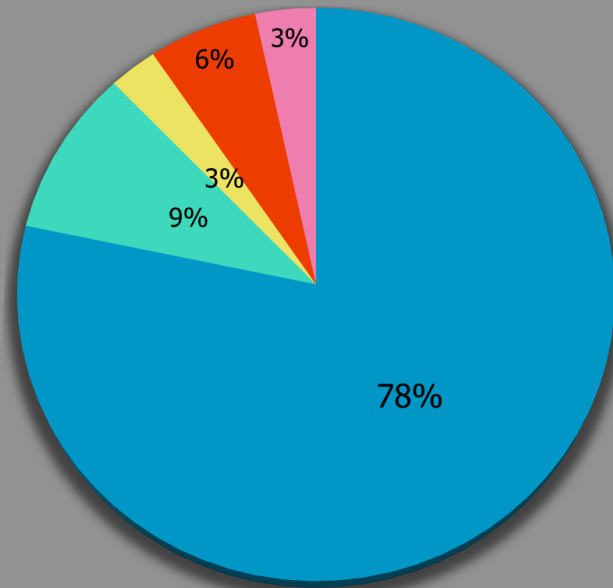
New ministries and revitalized ministries for churches of color. Through the power of the Holy Spirit, we believe God is doing something new (Isaiah 43:19) and this requires us to also be open to the new ways God is moving. Through new technologies learned during the pandemic and new ways of partnering beyond geographical borders, we believe the time is NOW to develop new ministries and revitalized ministries for churches of color. We believe these ministries will be contextually developed; community centered and engage new technologies and innovative strategies.



Opportunities for clergy of color advancement in leadership and ministry. We recognize that the playing field is not level and that years of oppression have continued to perpetuate unjust systems. Our goal is for leadership and membership in each congregation we serve to reflect the wider community.

## EPA CLERGY

	Number of Clergy
White	231
African American	28
Korean	8
Latino	18
Asian	10



Witnesses in every local congregation who will work to dismantle racism in our churches and communities. All congregations and every member of our conference is called to commit to ending the sin of racism in our congregations and communities.

Eastern PA Conference has three focused goals as a conference: new disciples; transformational leaders and fruitful vital congregations that work to transform the world. We believe these goals will only happen when EPA churches engage in community ministry by developing ministries and partnering with others in action and service that transforms lives and conditions particularly in the areas of ending the sin of racism and oppression and ministry with the poor.

### **Who are disciples of Jesus Christ working to end racism?**

A disciple is a follower of Jesus Christ who intentionally serves others and engages in life-long learning. Disciples of Jesus Christ follow Jesus' call to "make disciples of all nations" and as they engage in this multiplication effort, disciples intentionally seek to end the sin of racism in our churches and communities.

### **Who are transformational leaders?**

Grounded in faith, these proactive innovators leverage spiritual gifts, culture & resources to empower teams, navigate change and accelerate growth to cultivate God's preferred future. Transformational leaders empower and equip others to end the sin of racism in our churches and communities.

### **What is a Fruitful, vital congregation that works to end the sin of racism?**

Fruitful, vital congregations follow the Acts 2:42-27 mandate in order to 1) welcome all people as they are 2) Engage in hands-on mission in their communities 3). Create inspiring and uplifting worship experiences 4) Train people to share their faith with others and invite others into the life of the church 5) Provide small groups for learning and discipleship. Vital Wesleyan congregations are congregations that intentionally work to end the sin of racism in the life of the church and the wider community.

### **The Legislation**

#### **Proposed Legislation to the May 20 and May 21 Annual Conference**

Whereas Black/Indigenous/People of Color have experienced racism by the United Methodist Church since its founding and racism continues today in United Methodist organizations and structures; and

Whereas, here in Eastern Pa Conference, African-Americans were segregated and treated unjustly in our congregations and communities; and

Whereas, Eastern PA Conference committed in 1996 to end the sin of racism and continues to work towards this vision; and

Whereas, Eastern PA Conference has committed to being an interculturally competent church and to doing the work of justice; and

Therefore, we courageously commit to work together to dismantle racism in EPA and create a more racially just, inclusive and equitable church by carrying out ***A Path Towards Wholeness*** with yearly reports from conference leadership to the Annual Conference on progress made.

Further be it resolved, that herein named EPA Wholeness Team, with others named to the team by the Bishop, so long as  $\frac{1}{3}$  of the team remains comprised of black and African American persons and no less than  $\frac{1}{2}$  of the team is comprised by persons of color, shall oversee and have decision making authority over all grants, consultants, competency trainings & curriculum development by this legislation.

#### **New ministries and revitalized ministries with churches of color:**

##### **Transformational Measures and Actions:**

- Provide funding and other resources, including but not limited to equitable salary and benefits, technology, training & consultants that will strengthen and increase the vitality

of 10 existing congregations of color by Dec. 31, 2027 (Assigned to CCFA & Extended Cabinet)

- Develop 4 new faith communities of color, including at least 1 new black faith community, by Dec. 31, 2027 by using new technologies and innovative strategies by Dec. 31, 2027 (Assigned to Extended Cabinet & CDT)
- Develop 10 Ministry Centers serving racial/ethnic communities with a focus on locally based missions that intentionally connects, engages, and partners with their community for sustainable transformation. Include Black Indigenous Persons of Color (BIPOC) community leaders/representatives to assess community needs and design a plan to strengthen or resource an identified need(s). Foster relationships with local businesses and organizations in order to operate in an asset based model. Train congregations and community leaders through the Ministry Center in cultural awareness and to assist congregations to serve the people in their communities. (Assigned to Extended Cabinet, CDT & Urban Commission)

**Opportunities for advancement with churches of color and clergy of color in leadership and ministry:**

**Transformational Measures and Actions:**

- \$300,000 Investment in 2023; \$300,000 Investment in 2024, with a conference goal of 1.5M investment by Dec. 31, 2027, in clergy of color and churches of color through equitable salary; reduced apportionments and targeted development funding. (Assigned to CCFA; Cabinet; CDT & Urban Ministries)
- Using Eastern PA median household income, apportion all EPA churches using the following metrics:
  - Communities with median household income \$35,000-40,000 – apportion at 70% of current figures.
  - Communities with median household income \$30,000-34,999 – apportion at 65% of current figures.
  - Communities with median household income \$25,000-29,999 – apportion at 60% of current figures.
  - Communities with median household income \$20,000-24,999 – apportion at 55% of current figures.
  - Communities with median household income below \$20,000 – apportion at 50% of current figures.

With concern to gentrification, we are using the median household income related to that church's specific race or ethnicity.

Those who believe they should be considered for a greater reduction may petition the Cabinet. (Assigned to CCFA & Cabinet)

- At least 50% EPA agency chairpersons/co-chairs are People of Color by June 2027 (currently 16/39) (Assigned to EPA Conference Committee on Leadership)
- Increase the total number of African American/Black; Hispanic/Latino & Korean clergy serving in EPA by 20% by 2027 (13 new recruitment) (Assigned to Board of Ordained Ministry and Cabinet)
- Development of 10 clergy of color transformational leaders measured by increase from ¼-½; ½ - ¾ and ¾-Full-time positions by Dec. 31, 2027.
- Ensuring accountability to equal pay for equal work by conducting regular administrative compensation reviews and consistent adherence to policies. (Assigned to Human Resources)

**W**itnesses in 90 local congregation who are culturally competent to lead EPA and its congregations to dismantle racism and will work to dismantle racism in our churches and communities:

**Transformational Measures and Actions:**

- Thirty (30) trained EPA facilitators who are actively engaged with 90 congregations that are developing a Dismantling Racism Plan in their local context (Assigned to DCM/Commission on Religion and Race)
- Create a anti-racism audit to be used in local churches as part of the charge conference process by June 2023 (Assigned to the Healing the Wounds of Racism Core Team)
- Provide intercultural competence and implicit bias training materials for leaders and congregations by June 2023 (Assigned to the CR/CC Resource Team & EPA Team of Trainers)

**Accountability Moving Forward**

The above measures and actions shall be the priority of the Annual Conference for the next five years and modified as needed to adapt to the changing needs of the conference in order to create a more just, inclusive and equitable church. Each year, the Path towards Wholeness Team, along with the EPA executive staff, shall report to the Annual Conference the progress on the objectives that include but not limited to:

1. The number of new clergy of color recruited and in process towards candidacy in EPA and their retention rate
2. The number of new faith communities of color and how these faith communities are being resourced for future viability

3. The number of ministry centers and plans for future sustainability
4. The number of racial/ethnic churches engaged in a process of revitalization
5. The percentage of congregations in EPA that have taken the step to become Witnessing Congregations
6. The number and amount of grants given to African American and other ethnic congregations
7. The number of racial/ethnic churches that are receiving reductions in apportionments and the percentage of reductions
8. The number of policies that have been reviewed and edited to ensure equity and consistency

Supported by The Extended Cabinet; Conference Council on Finance and Administration; Congregational Development Team; Commission on Religion and Race; Economic Justice Council

Submitted by Economic Justice Council Team:

Members: Rodney Brailsford; Eddie Cameron; Milicent Clark; Johnson Dodla; Greg Impink; Annie Kingcade; Larry Pickens; Tamie Scalise; Keima Sheriff; Alicia Juliá-Stanley

Advisory: Will Brawner; James Brown; Evelyn Kent Clark; Luky Cotto; Steve Morton; Dawn Taylor-Storm



### ***Addendum: Building Upon Generations***

We confess a history of racism that began in the settlement of the land in Eastern PA in the 1700s when Indigenous People were forcibly removed from the land. Due to forced relocation, today there are not any tribes native to Eastern PA. Descendants of Pennsylvania Indigenous Peoples are active in our churches and communities.

Eastern PA Conference's history is marked by centuries of participation in institutional racism. Our actions and activities that support racism include (but are not limited to) segregating African Americans and supporting policies that reduced African Americans to a lesser status in the life of the church; devaluing the gifts of persons of color in leadership, passively and often ineffectively addressing racism in our church and community. We have sinned both by acts of commission and acts of omission.

Richard Allen's forced removal from the altar of St. George's UMC while praying is one example of the countless ways that African Americans have experienced harm and horror inflicted by the church. Until 1864, petitions for black local preachers to be ordained as deacons and elders were denied by the General Conference. The organization of the Delaware Conference in 1864 provided opportunities for advancement of African American clergy and laity. During its century of existence, the conference had 72 presiding elders and district superintendents. The dissolution of the Delaware Conference sought to provide opportunities for African Americans in the full life of the denomination; yet, we are aware that this vision for a just and equitable church was often not fulfilled and racist practices continued a history of disempowerment for African American clergy and laity.

In 1996, Eastern PA Annual Conference passed its *Plan toward the Elimination of Racism* within the Annual Conference. This effort was originally known as "Healing the Wounds of Racism" and later "Changing Racism" and most recently, "Dismantling Racism." In 2018, Dragonfly Partners was hired to analyze institutional racism and white supremacy in the Eastern PA Conference. In a tangible act of justice, in 2019, Eastern PA Conference voted to forgive 3M in unpaid apportionments for black congregations.

Eastern PA Conference began a *Fight for Floyd* movement in 2020 following the horrific death of George Floyd, an African-American suffocated by a white police officer. Rather than a series of workshops, the Fight for Floyd movement sought to provide space for grassroots conversations leading to change in policing; policies and education.

We give thanks for moments when EPA worked to dismantle racism. We give thanks for the founders of the Healing the Wounds of Racism movement and the work that continues to

educate every clergyperson, conference staff and agency chairpersons in the sin of racism. We give thanks for the Cross-Racial/Cross-Cultural work of the past decade and celebrate **54** Cross-Racial/Cross-Cultural appointments in Eastern PA. We give thanks for the ministry of Healing the Wounds of Ministry Core Team; Commission on Religion & Race; Urban Commission; Metro Ministries; Black Methodists for Church Renewal; the Korean Caucus and the Latino Commission who have worked tirelessly for justice and equity. We confess our own failure in not prioritizing the growth of ethnic and racial congregations.