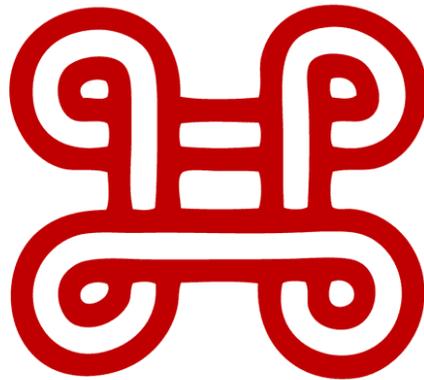


Repentance, Reconciliation & Healing



A liturgical resource for congregations



Repairers of the Breach Task Force
Episcopal Diocese of Southern Virginia
www.diosova.org

In 2010, Bishop Hollerith appointed a Task Force in response to 2010 Resolution R-1 that called for a Diocesan response to the sins of slavery and racism and a service of reconciliation.

The Task Force determined early in its existence that before they could make recommendations to Council in response to Resolution R-1, it would be necessary to do some difficult personal work amongst themselves. They engaged in an intensive process of telling their own stories, with an emphasis on the areas of their lives where their views and beliefs concerning the sin of racism were forged, challenged and/or repudiated by families and the culture, as well as by friends and adversaries. Over time, the group created a listening environment and established trust and safety with shared stories often filled with shame and pain. The Task Force developed genuine affection and respect for each other and broke down barriers that freed them to name hatred, anger and bitterness, love and reconciliation. In this environment, they pursued their work even as the personalities of the group changed through attrition and addition.

The Task Force sought education about the conditions in the past that shaped the crushing effects of racism in our culture and through this knowledge gained a more objective understanding of the present. They recognized the illusiveness of organic racism within particular groups and the need to disrupt the shell of normalcy, which hides it. They reflected upon what was learned from the small group experience and translated that into a process for other groups in the diocese.

Eventually the task force adopted the name, "Repairers of the Breach." They developed a curriculum for parishes to form conversation groups modeled upon the work they did together. Additionally, the "Repairers" produced a video to assist in the launching of these groups.

Many parishes have participated in this work and the reported results have been positive. We remain available to consult and facilitate the formation of groups with parish families.

In 2013, The Repairers of the Breach reached the point of introducing a Service of Repentance, Reconciliation, and Healing. The service, held on November 2, 2013, included excellent liturgy and music, stories and scriptures, a moving sermon by The Reverend Canon Stephanie Spellers, and a heartfelt and powerful apology on behalf of the Diocese of Southern Virginia by Bishop Hollerith.

By resolution 2013- R-1, the Diocese of Southern Virginia urges and reminds the parishes of the Diocese to continue to form conversation groups and to recognize the process of Repentance, Reconciliation, and Healing with their own congregational services annually in the Octave of All Saints.

The Repairers of the Breach continues as a facilitating group and a source of resources for this effort. The work of racial reconciliation is critical to the future of our parishes, the Diocese of Southern Virginia and to the broader church. Christ called everyone into community. Yet, community cannot be formed until the wounds inflicted by past injustices are identified, acknowledged and addressed.

At the same time, it is incumbent upon us as people of faith to commit ourselves determinedly to guard against the recurrence of racism in our present lives. Genuine inclusion requires diligence and self-examination on a periodic basis. The sin of racism is insidious and must be met with periodic sustained resistance and a united resolve to do better for one another.

The Repairers of the Breach offer these resources as tools to employ toward that end. May the grace of God and the guidance of the Holy Spirit provide us all with the courage and creativity to eradicate racism in our lives and through our liturgies.

Repentance, Reconciliation, and Healing

I. O God, who didst make us in thine own image and redeemed us through Jesus your Son: Look with compassion on thy whole human family; take away the arrogance and hatred which infect our hearts; break down the walls that separate us; unite us in bonds of love; and work through our struggle and confusion to accomplish thy purposes on earth; that, in thy good time, all nations and races may serve thee in harmony around thy heavenly throne; through Jesus Christ our Lord.

II. O God, you made us in your own image and redeemed us through Jesus your Son: Look with compassion on the whole human family; take away the arrogance and hatred which infect our hearts; break down the walls that separate us; unite us in bonds of love; and work through our struggle and confusion to accomplish your purposes on earth; that, in your good time, all nations and races may serve you in harmony around your heavenly throne; through Jesus Christ our Lord

Lessons

Year A

Amos 5: 14-15, 23-24

James 2: 8-13

Matthew 7: 21-29

Psalm 46 or 133

Year B

Micah 6: 6-8

I John 4: 16b-21 or

I Peter 1: 17-31

Luke 6: 27-31

Psalm 27 or 30

Year C

Isaiah 58: 6-12

Galatians 3: 26-28 or

II Corinthians 5: 18-21

John 8: 31-36

Psalm 116

Psalms 103, 121, 145 are optional for all years.

Litany of Healing and Forgiveness
(See page 4)

Litany of Healing & Forgiveness

Celebrant

God of mercy, we are your people. You show us your love in Christ Jesus and want us to live lives filled with the power of the Holy Spirit. We come here to acknowledge that for generations we have fallen short of your designs for us. We recognize and repent of our church's responsibility in the injury done by slavery and its reverberations. Keeping in mind your goodness, we acknowledge our sins so that we may receive your merciful forgiveness.

The litanist continues

God almighty, we acknowledge that our church stood by when African-American brothers and sisters were treated as less than human, both as fellow citizens of the world and as the beloved of God. Our church ignored the cries of the innocent. Lord in your mercy

Forgive us our sins

Our church stood by when families were forcibly separated and segregated, when God's children were treated as property. Lord in your mercy

Forgive us our sins

The Church accepted the favors and economic benefits of the subjugation of African-Americans. In shame, the Church acknowledges that clergy and dioceses owned slaves. In shame, the Diocese of Southern Virginia benefitted from the monetary rewards of physical and financial oppression. Lord in your mercy

Forgive us our sins

For much of the Church's history, African-Americans were refused admission to Episcopal seminaries; circumvented as candidates for ordination to the priesthood; denied employment in white churches; and frequently deployed to depressed and resource-barren parishes. Lord in your mercy

Forgive us our sins

Crosses were burned, neighbors were killed, and children were denied equal access to the resources of our society. Instead of caring for others, our church answered in the words of Cain, "Am I my brother's keeper?"

Lord in your mercy

Forgive us our sins

We have failed to seek and serve Christ in all persons. We have not "strived for justice and peace among all people. We have not respected the dignity of every human being. Lord in your mercy

Forgive us our sins

May our prayers be as incense before you, O Lord. Hear us and cleanse the stains of our souls. Purify us so that your Word may find a clean abode in us.

Hear us, Lord.

Burn down the walls of division among us and drive out the demons of our past.

Hear us, Lord.

Inspire us with courage to embrace the truth and banish fear from our hearts.

Hear us, Lord.

Fill us with love and empower our feeble faith so that we are not found wanting.

Hear us, Lord.

Light our path, rekindle our fervor, and set our hearts aflame.

Hear us, Lord.

Celebrant

Brothers and sisters, we have been given opportunity today to let go of the sins of the past and walk freely into the future. May Almighty God have mercy on you, forgive you all your sins through our Lord Jesus Christ, strengthen you in all goodness, and by the power of the Holy Spirit keep you in eternal life. **Amen.**