

## **THE EPISCOPAL DIOCESE OF LOUISIANA COMMISSION FOR RACIAL RECONCILIATION Convention 2016 Report for Events and Programming Between November 2015 through October 2016**

Mission Statement:

“Since racism works against our Baptismal covenant, we are committed to promote racial reconciliation in our diocese. We seek God’s help to work in healing our woundedness and to forge a life together where unity overcomes estrangement, forgiveness heals guilt, and joy conquers despair. In our ongoing spiritual formation, we will use prayer, worship, advocacy, intentional action, and education to become the Beloved Community.”

### **Commission Members 2015-2016**

Lindsey Ardrey (St. George’s Episcopal Church)  
Orissa Arend (Trinity Episcopal Church, New Orleans)  
Michelle Benoist (St. Margaret’s Episcopal Church, Baton Rouge)  
Trevor-David Bryan (St. Luke’s Episcopal Church, New Orleans)  
Edgar Cage (St. Patrick’s Episcopal Church, Zachary)  
Patricia Corderman (Trinity Episcopal Church, New Orleans)  
Maggie Dawson, Deacon (St. Martin’s Episcopal Church, Metairie)  
Holly Heine (St. Augustine’s Episcopal Church, Metairie)  
Joe Hicks (St. Michael’s and All Angels Episcopal Church, Baton Rouge)  
Reverend Dan Krutz (St. Francis Episcopal Church, Denham Springs)  
Elishia McAllister (Church of the Holy Comforter, New Orleans)  
Reverend James Morrison (St. Andrew’s Episcopal Church, New Orleans)  
Rachel Nicolosi (St. George’s Episcopal Church, New Orleans)  
Richard Saxer (Trinity Episcopal Church, New Orleans)  
Susan Spillman (St. James, Baton Rouge)  
Reverend Edward Thompson (All Souls Episcopal Church, New Orleans)

### **Significant Changes and Forward Movement**

At the beginning of 2016, co-chair Reverend William Patrick Edwards prepared to leave the diocese and answer a call to serve as the rector of St. John’s Episcopal Church in Southampton, New York. In late February, Lindsey Ardrey was appointed to join Trevor-David Bryan as co-chair. Throughout the year, a strong initiative was made to take deliberate steps towards cultivating a group of commission members who were grounded in spiritual formation. With this task in mind, monthly meetings were established and churches around the diocese were invited to host. St. George’s, St. Paul’s, St. Patrick’s, St. James, and St. Augustine’s Episcopal Churches were all grateful contributors to celebrating the Eucharist and participating in thoughtful dialogue during monthly meetings. The commission also sought to expand its reach by developing a social media presence and acquiring marketing materials.

The commission also prioritized implementation of The National Church’s *Seeing the Face of God in Each Other* training program by partnering with the Diocese of Atlanta’s Commission for Dismantling Racism. Atlanta’s commission, *The Beloved Community*, shared their story of transformation and helped to cultivate a new direction for Louisiana. In December 2015, Atlanta’s chair, Dr. Catherine Meeks, facilitated the annual retreat and invited members to visit Atlanta for a training workshop. Commission members Reverend Dan Krutz, Lindsey Ardrey, Trevor-David Bryan,

and Patricia Corderman were welcomed guests in Atlanta and upon return to Louisiana began structuring a tailored *Seeing the Face of God in Each Other* training. The group looks forward to implementing the program in 2016.

### **Special Events and Services**

- The Feast of Blessed Frances Joseph Gaudet held at Historic St. Luke's Episcopal Church on December 27<sup>th</sup>, 2015.
- Participant vendor during the Union of Black Episcopalians National Conference.
- Service of Lament for Baton Rouge held in October 2016.

### **Programming**

- On January 22<sup>nd</sup> and 23<sup>rd</sup>, 2016 the commission partnered with local community organizing coalition *Justice and Beyond* for a workshop facilitated by *The People's Institute for Survival and Beyond*.
- On April 9<sup>th</sup>, 2016 the commission and thirty parishioners from around the diocese toured the Whitney Plantation and engaged in conversation afterwards.
- Mardi Gras Indian Queen Cherice Harrison-Nelson performed a one-woman play at St. George's Episcopal Church on April 19<sup>th</sup>, 2016.
- On Sunday July 10<sup>th</sup>, 2016 after the shooting of Alton Sterling in Baton Rouge, commission members and other motivated parishioners joined young people of the WAVE in a march to the State Capital Building.
- On October 23<sup>rd</sup>, 2016 a screening of *Traces of the Trade* and a discussion facilitated by creator and director Katrina Browne was held at St. George's Episcopal Church. On October 25<sup>th</sup>, Katrina Brown guided a workshop on movement and dance for racial healing facilitated by Katrina Browne.

Respectfully submitted by co-chairs Lindsey Ardrey and Trevor-David Bryan on October 4, 2016