

Racial Healing Initiatives in the Episcopal Church: Report and Recommendations by Research Committee

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Outline

- Research Committee Charge
- Data and Methods
- Background
- Initiatives
 - Diocese of Maryland
 - Diocese of Texas
 - Diocese of Rhode Island
 - Virginia Theological Institute
- Emerging Patterns across Sites
- Recommendations based on Advice and Lessons
- Next Steps



Research Committee Charge



Our charge was to examine the issues of reparations and reconciliation at selected Episcopal Church sites

- Gather insights from Episcopal dioceses and other entities involved in reparations and reconciliation activities
- Capture the history, process, lessons learned, challenges, and outcomes from those experiences
- Make recommendations to inform a direction for the Diocese of Michigan
- Share the results of this report with those we interviewed and other interested parties

Data and Methods

The sites included three dioceses and one seminary



Diocese of Maryland



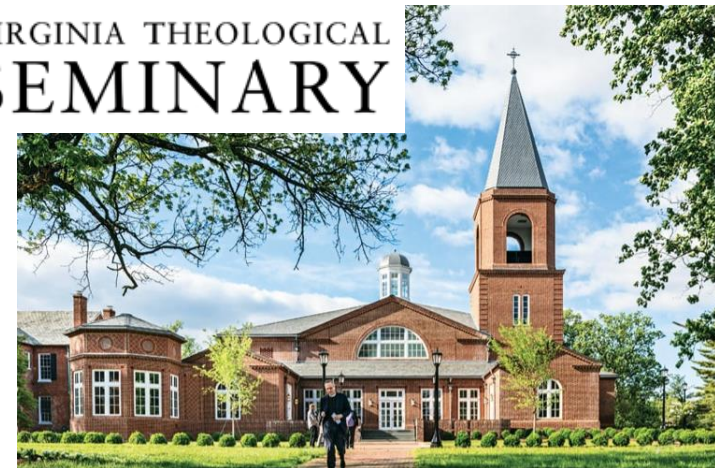
Diocese of Texas



Diocese of Rhode Island



VIRGINIA THEOLOGICAL
SEMINARY



Two members of our team conducted each interview by Zoom

	PBO*	MD	RI	TX	VTS	Total
Number of Interviews	1	3	1	4	1	10
Number of Interviewees	2	5	2	4	1	14
Average Interview Length (in min.)	52	57	55	57	48	55

Interviewees were members of the

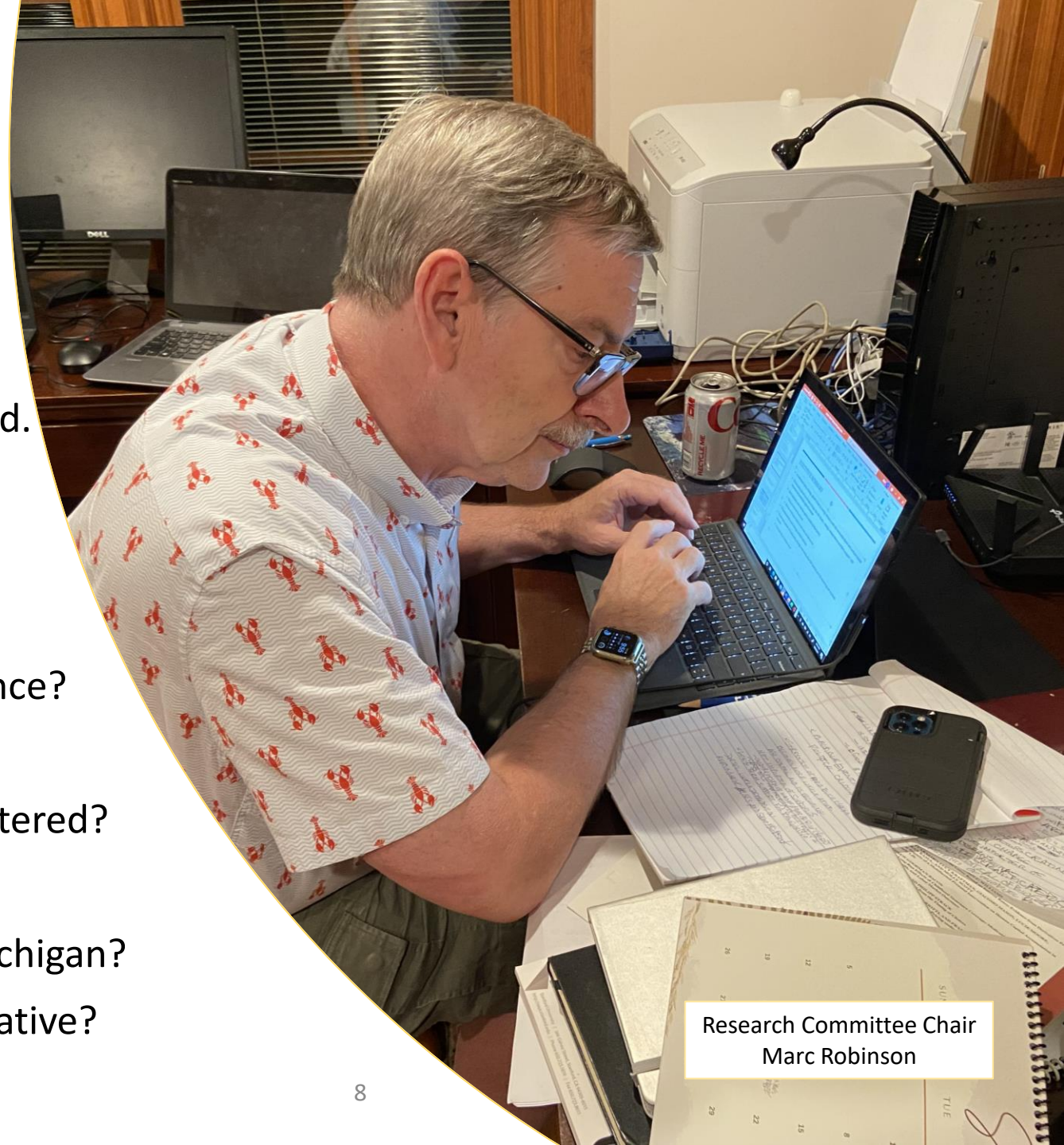
- Clergy (2 Bishops, 6 priests)
- Laity (1 staff member, 2 members of Diocesan Council, 1 committee chair, 1 consultant, 1 spouse)

- Among the clergy interviewees were 4 Blacks and 4 Whites
- Among the lay interviewees were 5 Blacks and 1 White

*Presiding Bishop's Office

Our key questions focused on the initiative, including its goals and the work and people involved

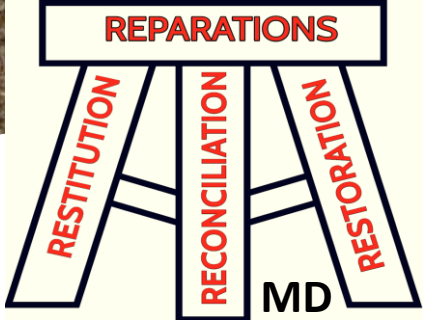
- Tell us the story of how reparations and reconciliation in your diocese/institution started.
- How were you connected to this effort?
- What kind of work was involved?
- Talk to us about the people involved.
- What were the reactions, including any resistance?
- What are all the things that worked well?
- What were some of the difficulties you encountered?
- What resources do you wish you had had?
- What advice do you have for the Diocese of Michigan?
- What would you advise us not to do in our initiative?



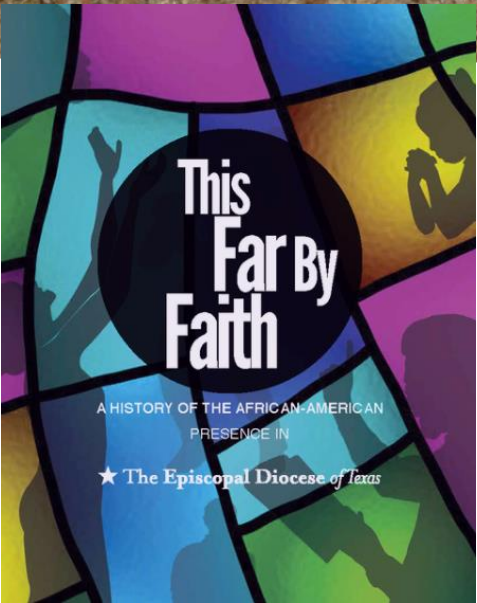
Research Committee Chair
Marc Robinson



Trail of Souls - MD



We gathered other documents to supplement the interviews



Janitor's grand-daughter received \$2,100 from VTS



VTS Janitor, John Samuel Thomas Jr.

Cathedral of St. John, RI



Background

General Convention Resolution 2006-A123, “Study Economic Benefits Derived from Slavery,” led to many initiatives



Resolved, That the 75th General Convention of The Episcopal Church declare unequivocally that the institution of slavery in the United States and anywhere else in the world, based as it is on “ownership” of some persons by other persons, was and is a sin and a fundamental betrayal of the humanity of all persons who were involved, a sin that continues to plague our common life in the Church and our culture; and be it further

Resolved, That The Episcopal Church acknowledge its history of participation in this sin and the deep and lasting injury which the institution of slavery and its aftermath have inflicted on society and on the Church; and be it further

Resolved, That we express our most profound regret that (a) The Episcopal Church lent the institution of slavery its support and justification based on Scripture, and (b) after slavery was formally abolished, The Episcopal Church continued for at least a century to support de jure and de facto segregation and discrimination; and be it further

Resolved, That The Episcopal Church apologize for its complicity in and the injury done by the institution of slavery and its aftermath; we repent of this sin and ask God’s grace and forgiveness and be it further ...

The Presiding Bishop's Office continues to offer guidance to its dioceses and institutions

Core Questions: “What’s our connection been around slavery?”
“What’s our complicity been and what do we want to do about it?”

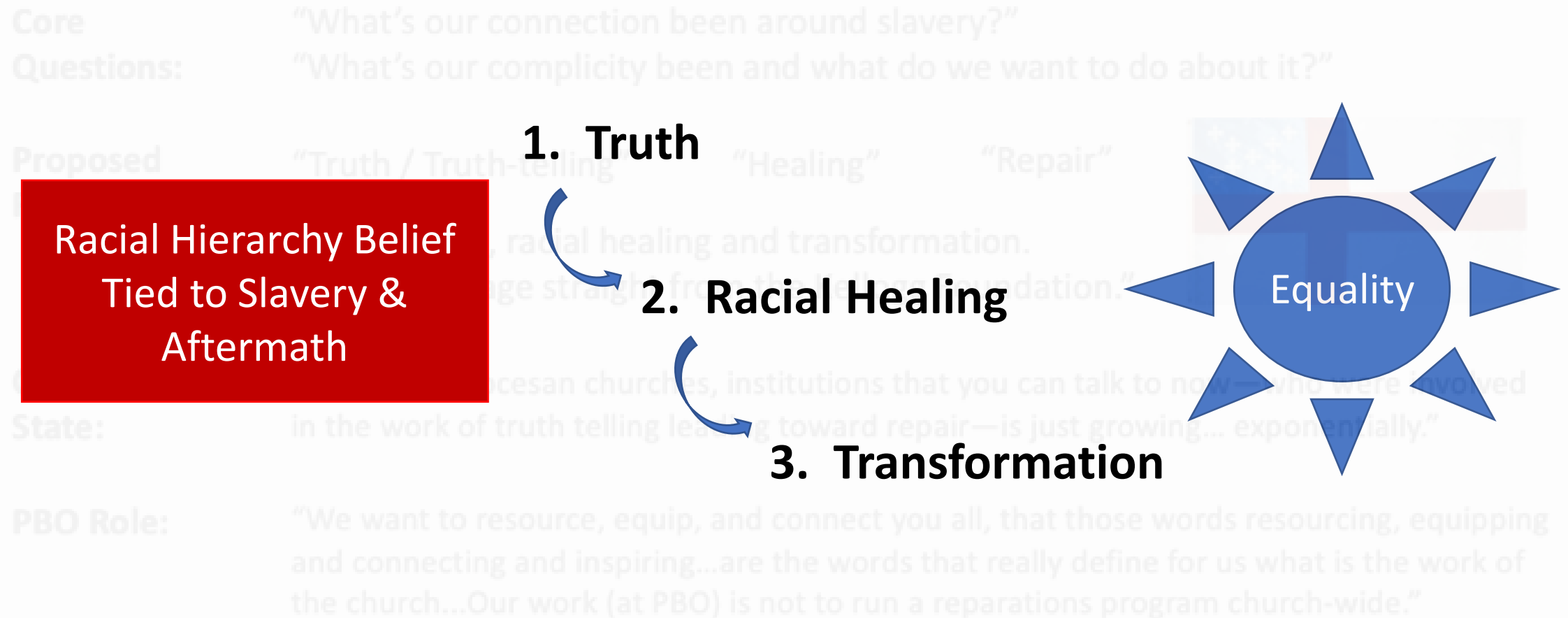
Proposed Framework: “Truth / Truth-telling” “Healing” “Repair”
“We’re truth, racial healing and transformation.
That’s language straight from the Kellogg Foundation.”

Current State: “The list of diocesan churches, institutions that you can talk to now—who were involved in the work of truth telling leading toward repair—is just growing... exponentially.”

PBO Role: “We want to resource, equip, and connect you all, that those words resourcing, equipping and connecting and inspiring...are the words that really define for us what is the work of the church...Our work (at PBO) is not to run a reparations program church-wide.”



The Presiding Bishop's Office references a three-phase progression "to do our reckoning"

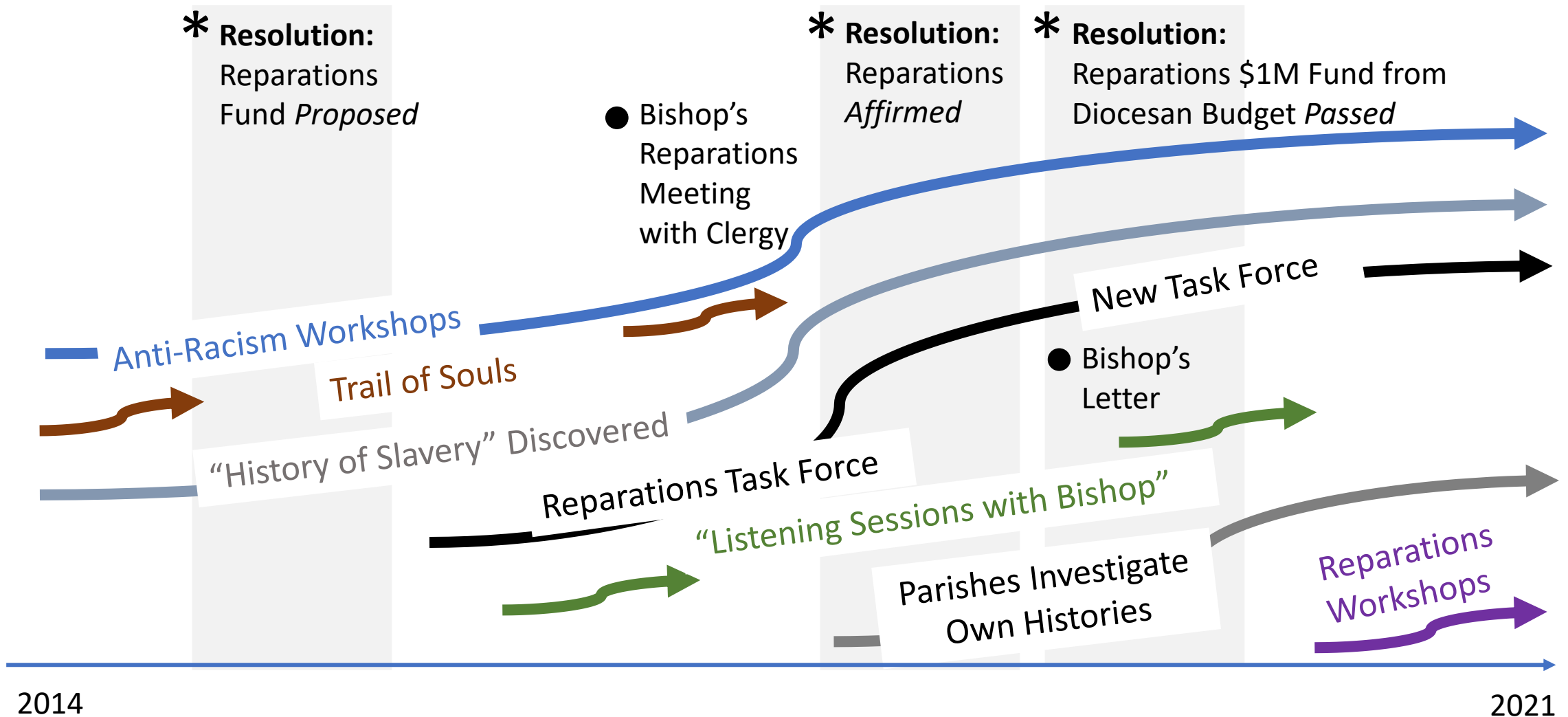


Initiatives

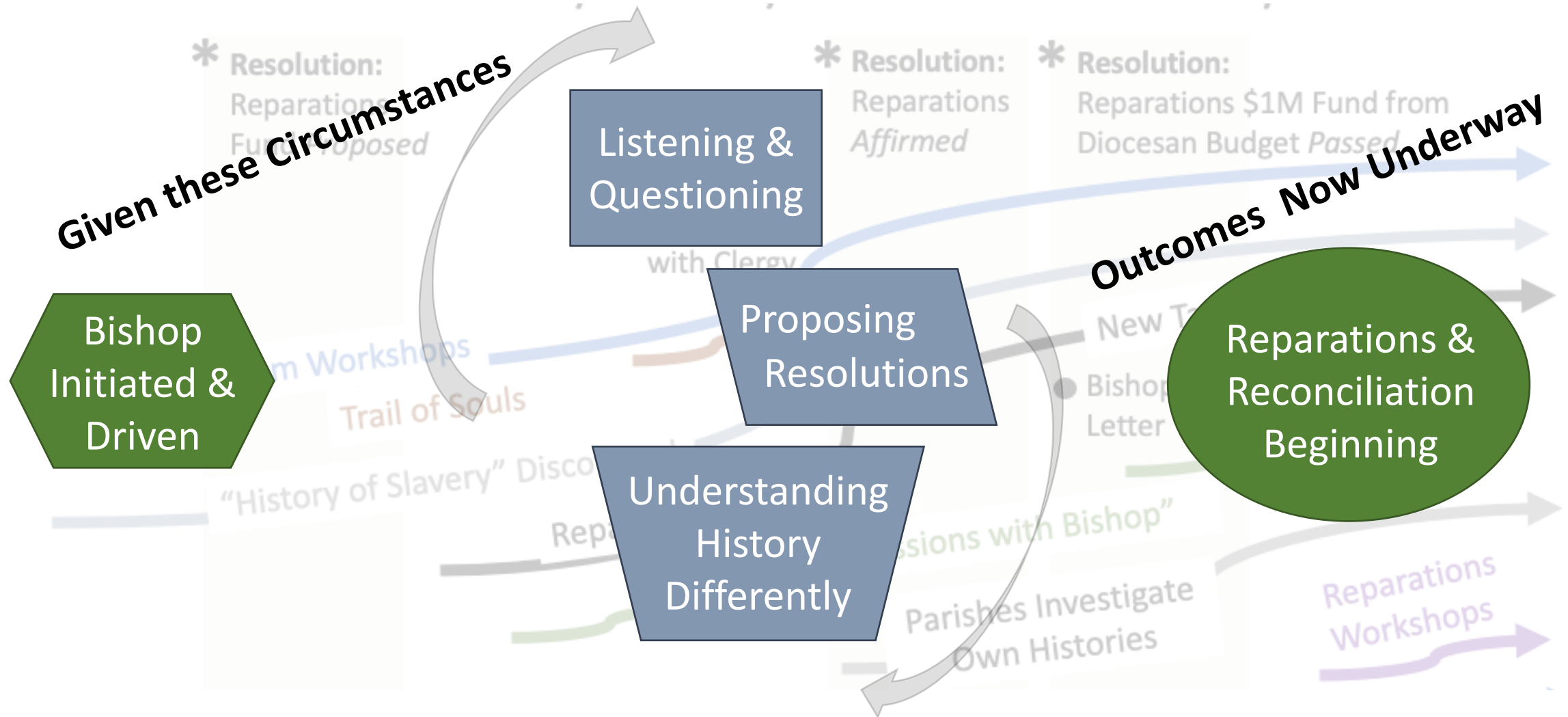
Diocese of Maryland

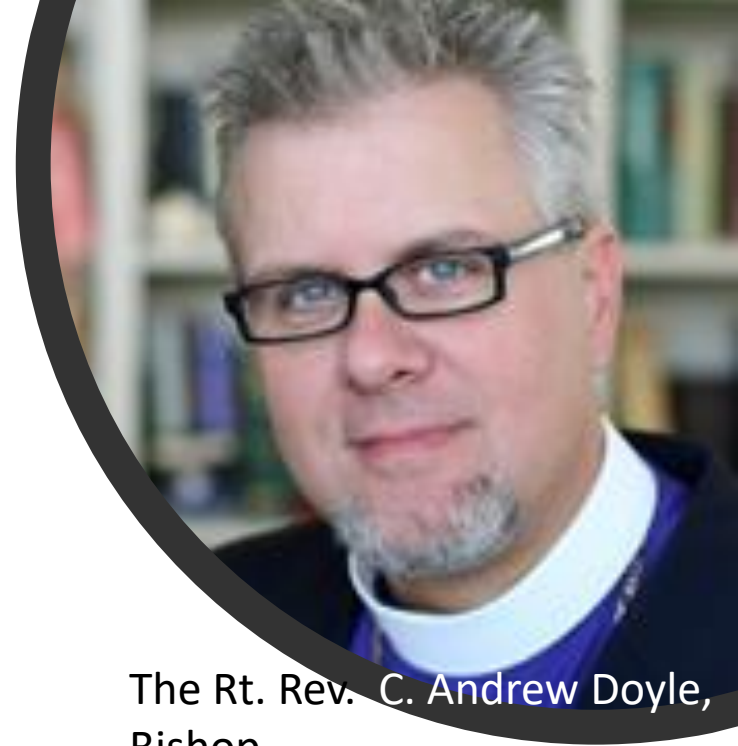


A process and policy “journey” epitomizes the Diocese of Maryland’s work



It stresses a continuing dialogue about racial justice





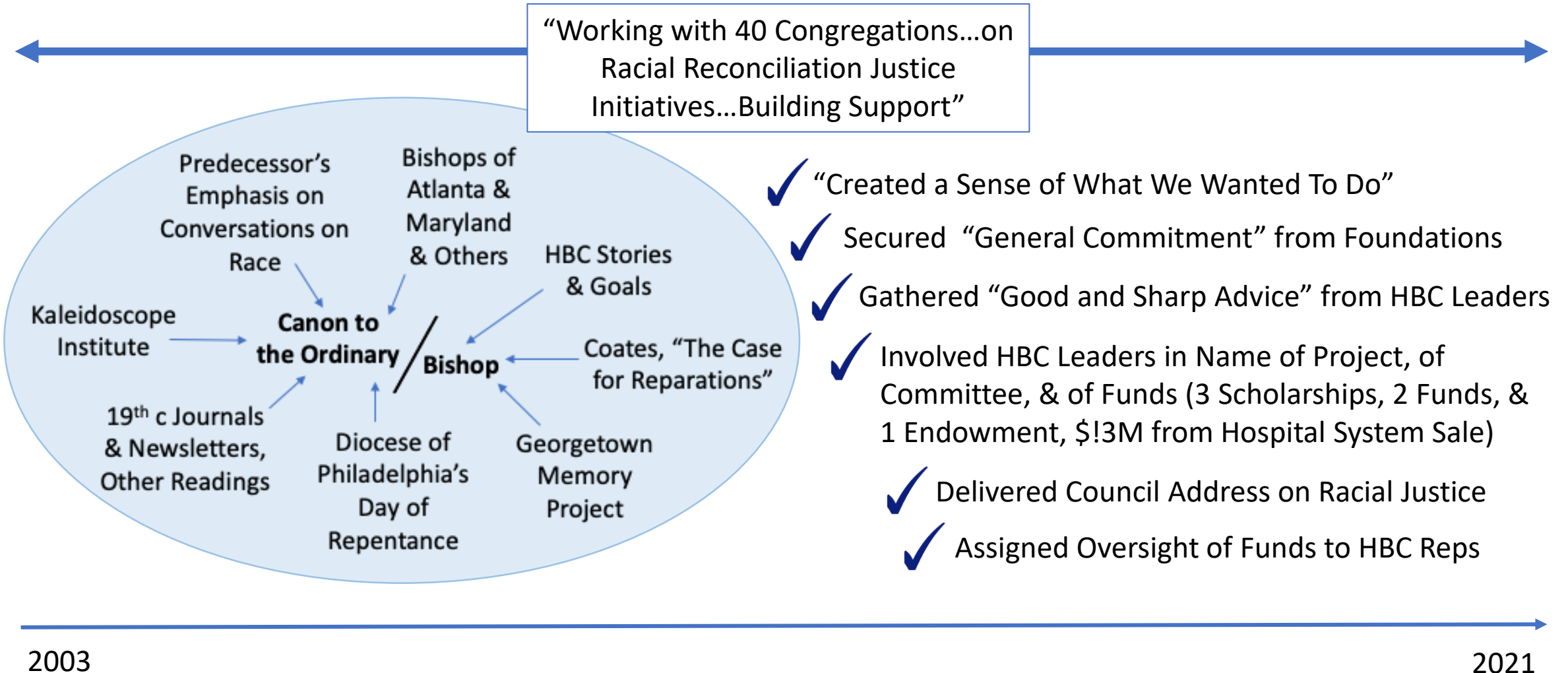
The Rt. Rev. C. Andrew Doyle,
Bishop



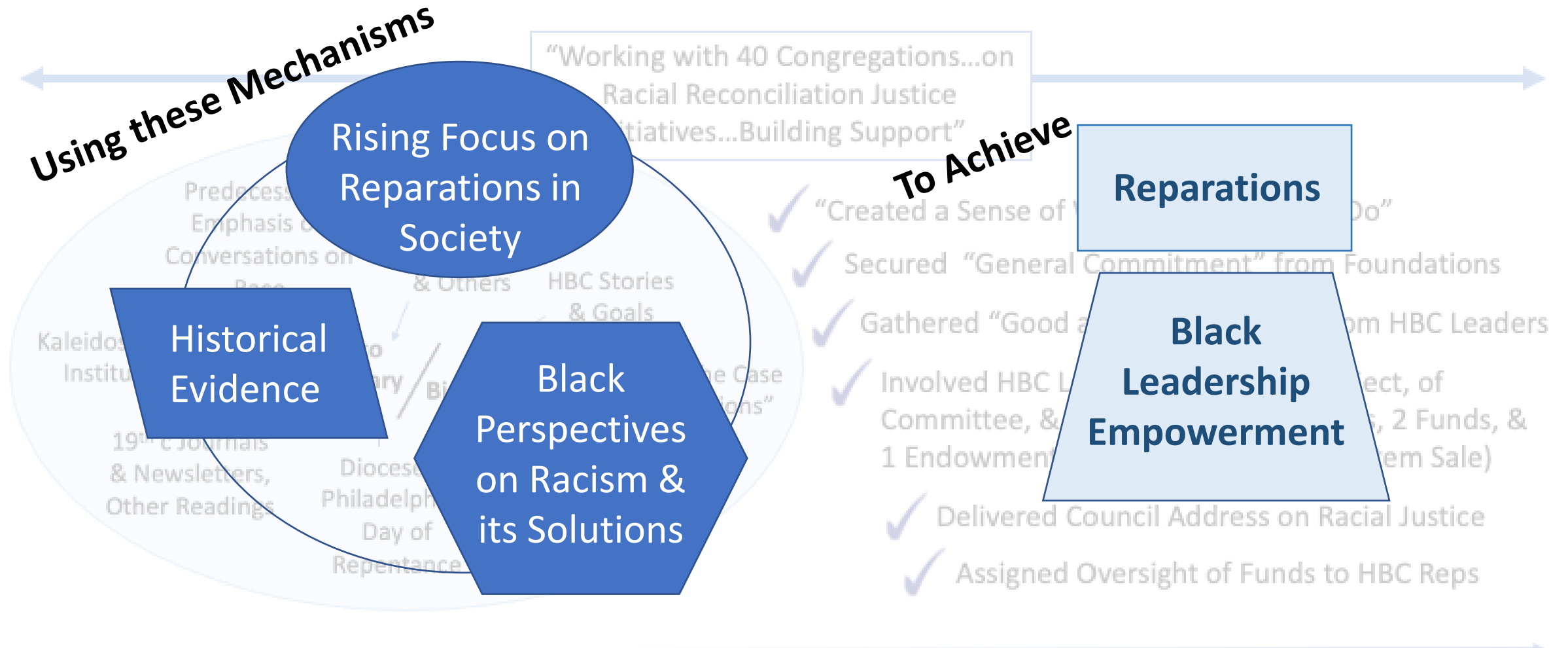
Diocese of Texas



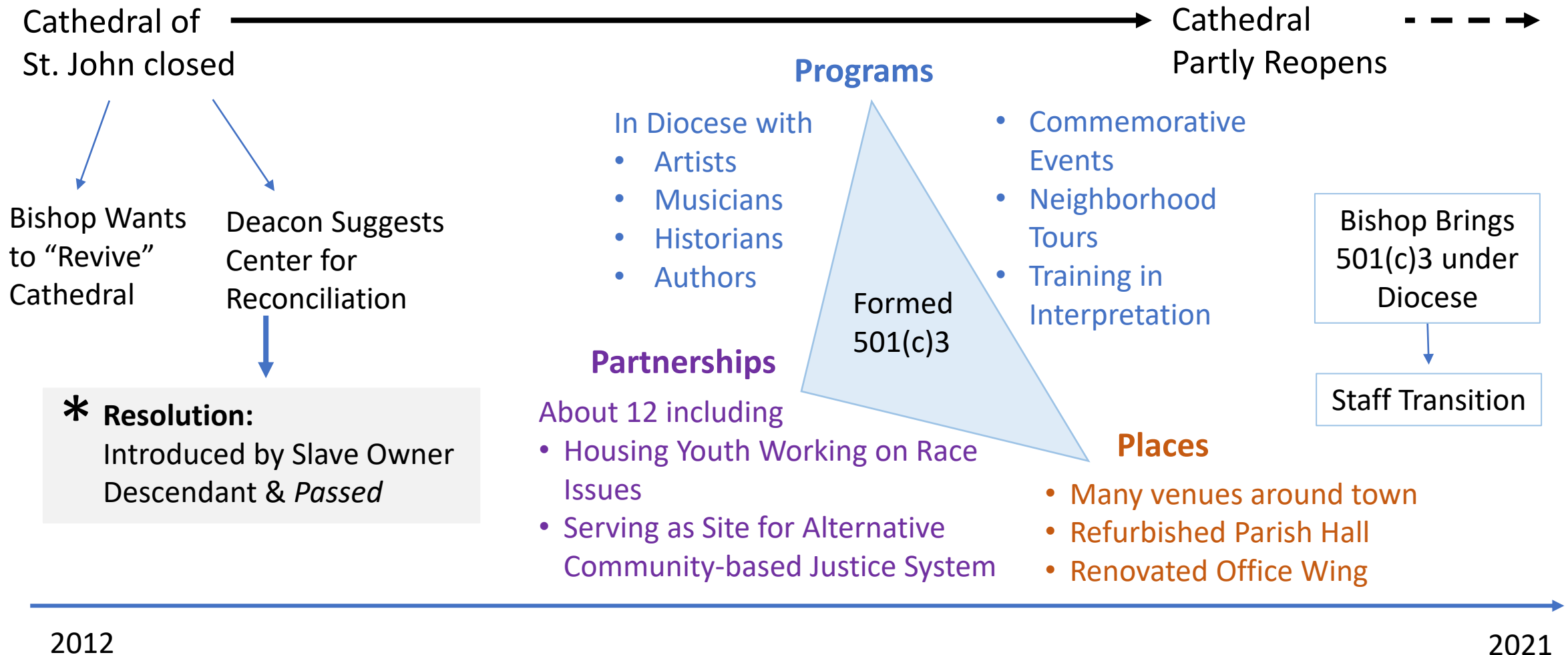
Vision-Driven Leadership is reflected in the Diocese of Texas



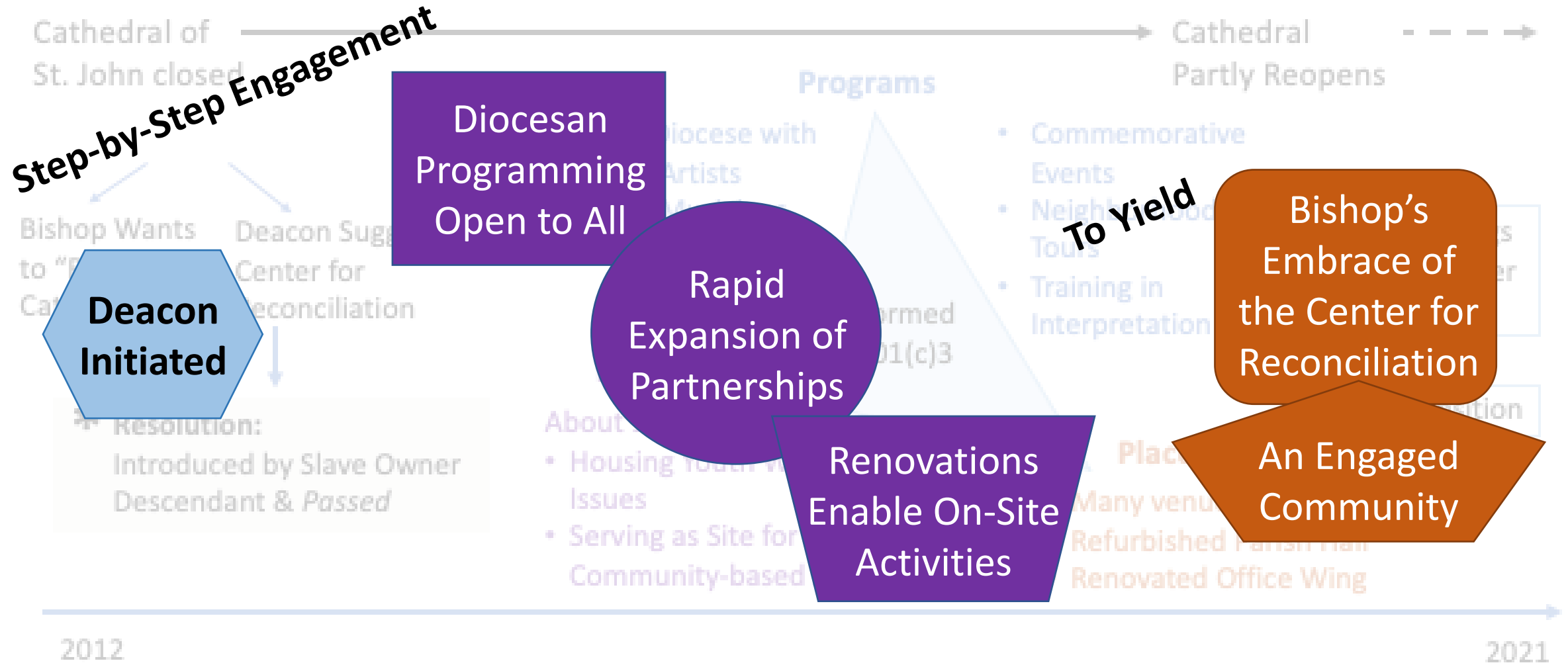
Its key goal involved “trying to right an injustice” through extensive funds



Diocese of Rhode Island combines programming with partnerships in numerous places



Newly-formed networks benefitted the Diocese and the local community





Char McCargo Bah
Oral Historian



Virginia Theological Seminary

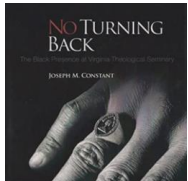


Virginia Theological Seminary has been focusing intensely on its historical and cultural context

During
Antebellum – Reconstruction – Jim Crow,
Hundreds of Blacks Not Compensated for
their Labor at VTS

Since the 2000s

Book Commissioned:



*No Turning Back:
The Black Presence at Virginia
Theological Seminary* (2009)

Training Programs Offered:
Intercultural Competency and Anti-Racism

Policy Changes for Neighborhood Residents
(e.g., Borrow Library Books, Audit Courses)

VTS Bicentennial 2023

Aspiring to
Present a
“More
Accurate”
Understanding
of VTS History
and the
Experience of
“People of
Color”

Dean-Driven Reparations Initiative (2019)

- Build Relationships with Descendants
- Include Descendant Stories in VTS History
- Make Payments to Descendants Annually

Reparations Contingent on History

“We say the research is bi-directional...talking
to... people in the area who know they have a
connection to the Seminary”

Looking at records...to trace forward to find
living descendants”

Its work is connecting the past with the present and future

Authority and Expertise Required

VTS Leadership
Decisions

VTS
Program &
Policy
Changes

Research
Involvement

To Accomplish

Improved VTS/
Neighborhood
Integration

Dean-Driven Reparations Initiative (2019)

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- Include Descendant Stories in VTS History
- Make Payments to Descendants Annually

Reparations

"We seek to... people who have a

Looking at records...to trace forward to find living descendants"

Emerging Patterns across Sites

Welcome

Thanksgiving
Food Donation
for Paul's Place

Thanksgiving
Food Donation
for Paul's Place

Thanksgiving
Food Donation
for Paul's Place

*We identified some
common patterns
across the four sites*

- Shared slavery as a common historical feature
- Grounded initiative locally
- Secured buy-in from white and black Episcopalians
- Relied on external connections with selected experts

Distinctive goals account for much of the variation

Pattern		MD	RI	TX	VTs
Place Is a Focal Point	Initiative's key activities occur in a specific location		X		X
Discussions Are Core	Tackling challenging conversations about race energizes spiritual growth and learning	X			X
Partnering Potential	Partnerships with those beyond the site are helpful in accomplishing site goals		X		X
Value Gets Redefined	Money for reparations was already "there" as part of the budget (or Foundations)	X		X	X

Recommendations based on Advice and Lessons

Planning and Preparation

- Vision:**
- The Episcopal Church is called to lead in dismantling racism and atone for its role in racial injustice and inequity
 - Doing racial justice work—both as a full community and in separate identity groups—is what we are being called to do now
 - A better future can be built through reckoning with the past and using scripture

- History:**
- Take time to learn about the past, including the role of Episcopalians/Diocese
 - Gather stories from local community of color
 - Work with the history you have in MI (e.g., redlining, urban renewal, brutality, Underground Railroad)

- Bishop's Role:**
- Listen to community of color on their needs and priorities
 - Identify a path for EDOMI and take people on the journey with you
 - Engage all stakeholders (e.g., UBE), ensuring that their composition is as diverse as possible
 - Recognize how essential you are for initiative's impetus, definition, funding, persuasion and launch, but not administration and ongoing maintenance

- Naming:**
- Avoid use of the word “reparations,” particularly at initiative's outset
 - Consider language like “truth, racial healing, and transformation”

Initiative Execution

- Mindset:**
- A journey takes time and people are starting in various places, so you have to thoughtfully equip them for the road ahead
 - Initiative will neither happen quickly nor be easy; ambiguity and some failures will emerge
 - Do not be fearful or second guess yourself or wait for the perfect time
 - Difficult conversations and some pushback will occur
 - Initiative will keep evolving and morphing because of the 1) research, 2) relationship building, 3) administrating, 4) staffing, 5) spiritual self-care of those running initiative

- Approach:**
- Create experiences (e.g., tours, researching stories, dialogues) to engage people in a reckoning
 - Keep the initiative's focus "front and center" through ongoing communications and updates
 - Use diocesan-wide focus groups – What do they hear? What do they fear?
 - Choose Committees with as much racial diversity as possible
 - Seek expertise from external partners to strengthen initiative's goals

- Money:**
- Wait to raise/allocate funds until you know how you want to use them
 - Goal-driven development is essential. Try to avoid overlap with other capital campaigns
 - With any expenditures, ensure transparency and avoid appearance of conflict of interest

Suggested Next Steps

Suggested Next Steps

- Name our Committee and the upcoming planned initiative
- Plan for a Diocesan Convention presentation
 - Proposal: Joint Committee presentation of this deck except recommendations and next steps
 - Suggested framework: Research based on need for racial justice and 2006 GC Resolution
 - Role for Bishop/Canon? Discussion/next steps?
- Report back to Presiding Bishop's office and interview sites
 - Proposal: Schedule one Zoom presentation and send deck (with recommendations?)
- Convene a Diocesan Racial History Committee and appoint members