

The Calling for the Repair & Reconciliation Alliance and its Support Teams

Calling for the Repair & Reconciliation Alliance and its Support Teams and Support Churches

The Executive Committee of the Pittsburgh Presbytery at their May 2, 2023 meeting approved the following charge to be given to the newly-created Repair & Reconciliation Alliance in support of the Black Presbyterian Churches:

- to engage in a thorough review of the experience of these congregations through history and
- to offer recommendations on actions of repair and reconciliation

This charge is given so that the Pittsburgh Presbytery may become a more harmonious, joyful, and just community within the Body of Christ. The Alliance is expected to report regularly on its progress to the Executive Committee, completing its work within two years.

The recruitment and application process for the Support Teams and Support Churches will continue and applications accepted on an on-going basis.

Information on the Repair & Reconciliation Alliance:

I. Pittsburgh Presbytery Commitment

The Repair & Reconciliation Alliance (Alliance) is charged by the Pittsburgh Presbytery, which encompasses all of Allegheny County and its PC(USA) churches and congregants. Therefore Alliance members *and* their Support Team (ST) and Support Churches (SC) members must:

- Be a member of the Pittsburgh Presbytery (defined as a member of a PC(USA) congregation or a Minister of Word and Sacrament in Allegheny County.
- Demonstrate a strong faith in Jesus Christ, utterly committed to the effort of being the hands and feet of Christ on this earth, and firm in their understanding that throughout Scriptures, Old and New, there is a repeated call for justice among God's people.
- Dedicate time to fully understand and discern the structure and systems of the Pittsburgh Presbytery, including procedures and processes both past and present.
- Be wholly dedicated to repentance, repair, and reconciliation with Black Presbyterians if harm is expressed or determined, and be willing to ensure that the stories and recollections of Black congregants and clergy are heard and, when appropriate, shared with the body.
- If there are past injustices, commit to offering recommendations on actions of repair and reconciliation, guiding the Presbytery body to embrace repentance and contrition, forgiveness and grace, reconciliation and healing.

II. Timeline for the work of the Alliance

- Expected length of Alliance: Two years, approximately 2024 and 2025

III. Accessibility for the Alliance & Support Teams

- Membership requires a willingness to participate fully in the work of the Alliance or the Support Team. All members of both the Alliance and Support Teams agree to address, support, and overcome any barriers to full participation that a willing participant may have. This agreement will mean actively locating the resources needed to address the barriers to participation.

Description & Duties of each of the Support Teams (as of 9/12/2023)

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- I. **Archival Research:** investigate, search, acquire, process, manage, organize, and preserve/maintain historical records, documents and photographs such as but not limited to Presbytery documents, congregational documents, congregational and Presbytery history, minutes from meetings, newspaper articles, etc.
- II. **Historical Review:** study and interpret historical records, use the records and other resources to analyze and interpret, discover responsibilities, draw conclusions, and create narratives about the historical events and trends to help construct a nuanced understanding of the past
- III. **Interviews:** conduct oral history interviews of leaders and members of Black churches, civil rights organizations, community groups, and any other 'key informants;' record and/or transcribe to provide insight into incidents and patterns of harm, including the social, economic, and political conditions surrounding the time of the harm(s)
- IV. **Visual/Media Representation:** produce and organize photographs, videos, charts, graphs, lists, and other visual materials to help contextualize and illustrate historical harm; videotape to take the form of narrative storytelling of individual Black congregations and clergy
- V. **Statistical & Financial Data:** collect and analyze quantitative and financial data to highlight patterns of discrimination and harm experienced by Black congregations and clergy over time
- VI. **Expert Testimony:** gather information and testimony from scholars, historians, and other experts to provide context and analysis of historical harm
- VII. **Digital Recording & Writing:** coordinate all work and documentation by the Alliance and Support Teams on a digital platform easily accessed by the Alliance
- VIII. **Support Church:** actively & regularly pray for and discuss the work of the Alliance, be in regular communication with the Alliance or their designee, and provide support in one or more of the following ways: space to gather, clerical/administrative support, monetary support, support for the work of any of the above named Support Teams