



Beloved Community Team Plan of Action for 2022

Outline of Plan

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Overview of Plan Development

Despite the persistence of the pandemic, we must continue the earnest struggle against racial and social injustice through our work as the Beloved Community Team (BCT) of Christ Church. The BCT offers educational events, public worship, prayer, communication, and community engagement with partnering organizations. Planning for 2022 began with a Day of Discernment and Planning in August 2021 and subsequent meetings during the fall. Key questions we considered include:

- What is the overall purpose and messaging of the BCT?
- When is appropriate to speak with a strong prophetic voice, to act pastorally and to educate?
- How can we provide expanding room for other voices?
- What does it mean to go deeper into solutions with some degree of measurable results?
- How can we expand to considering economic inequity in addition to racial inequality?
- What can we do to stay focused on loving our neighbor as ourselves?
- How might we provide the safe space for people to share their own experiences?

The BCT is also at a time of changing leadership as Ed Leidel has stepped aside as team leader. What, in this moment of change, is God calling us to do as we look to the year ahead? This plan of action is the result of our day of listening, discerning, deliberating and volunteering to take on appropriate tasks and initiatives.

Participants in Planning

Attendees of Day of Discernment and Planning: Helen Benton, Jim Benton, Rev. Oswald Bwechwa, Rev. Seth Dietrich, Betsy Head, John Haydon, Tom Herbstreith, Mark Hilgendorf, Deacon Nancy Hills, Susan LaBudde, Rev. Mary Trainor, Rev. Jim Trainor

Facilitator and note taker: Greg Bell

Purpose of the Beloved Community Team

As a result of this planning process, we refined our purpose.

Becoming beloved community is a vision of God’s kingdom for all people. Becoming beloved community is also a national, long-term campaign launched by the Episcopal Church in 2017. The Beloved Community Team of Christ Church was created out of that endeavor. We strive for racial healing and social justice in our own community, prayerfully drawing upon our Christian faith, with these aims:

- Bridge racial and economic divides by fostering respectful awareness among ourselves and our community of issues of racial and social justice.
- Build stronger relationships with others by participating as a congregation in reconciliation efforts in the community.
- Explore and learn together ways to counteract racism, which include sponsoring and participating in community-wide programs.

Proposed Actions

Actions for the BCT Team

- Become a resource group for the congregation providing an ongoing list of possible racial justice actions, books and organizations for individual members to become involved with as individuals or with the team.
- Refine the four points of our purpose statement. Develop a brochure about the BCT for the congregation and others. ***The Team decided with these actions to keep the name Beloved Community Team.***
- Focus on one (or two) key tasks: Some suggestions include:
 - **Christ Church Forums and Events** – Continue to host a variety of presenters that educate and challenge us to action. Incorporate opportunities for participants to share their own experiences and journey, perhaps in small groups. Be willing to take on tough topics such as structural racism and teaching Black history from various perspectives.
 - **Opportunity Neighborhood Network and Other Fair Housing Initiatives** – Partner with Bay Bridge to advance this program in Whitefish Bay sponsored by the Milwaukee Fair Housing Council. It subsidizes low-income renters so they can move into neighborhoods with better schools, safer streets and more. Bay Bridge has decided to also include advancing initiatives that help people buy homes as well.

- **Monthly articles for the Weekly Broadcast** – The BCT, with input from others, will identify various topics on racial justice. Full articles will include brief summaries so that people who may not read the whole piece can get the essential points.

Actions for and with the Congregation

- **Outreach Committee** – Work with the committee to differentiate our work with theirs. Outreach is specifically charged with helping to alleviate poverty financially by moving 10% of Christ Church’s annual operational budget to selected organizations, as well as recruiting others to offer their time and capabilities in participating in the work of select organizations. The BCT is charged with helping ourselves and others become enlightened and engaged in education and community engagement specifically around racial justice issues.
- **Resources for Racial Justice Awareness and Action** – Become a provider of the materials (books, articles, etc.), information about educational programs, and opportunities for personal involvement to Christ Church members.

Actions for and with the Community

- **Continued Engagement with All People’s Church** – Explore with the pastor and previous contacts what projects they’re involved with that we can do together.
- Offer occasional book and movie discussions. Provide opportunity for personal reflection and sharing. Add John Haydon’s new book, *I Was Wrong, But We Can Make It Right: Achieving Racial Equality*.

Specific Actions with Timelines and Assignments for 2022

Current roster of BCT members includes: Bishop Ed Leidel, Rev. Oswald Bwechwa, Tom Herbstrieth, John Haydon, Helen Benton, Rev. Mary Trainor, Rev. Jim Trainor, Susan LaBudde, and Greg Bell

- Write and publish a tri-fold. Work with Julie Thauer in the church office to design and produce. Update as needed. Completed by Nov. 7 and distributed to the congregation in the bulletins and at other events. (Jim and Mary)
- Continue to search for possible Forum speakers. Ongoing. (Jim and Mary)
- Revitalize the Monthly Movie discussion group in early 2022. (Jim and Mary)
- Continue to explore and advance fair-housing issues in WFB in partnership with Bay Bridge. Monthly meetings. (Greg)
- Partner with Bay Bridge on the repudiation of racial covenants in existing home deeds. (Greg)

- Research such covenants and other communities doing this
- Evening event and panel discussion planned for April 27, 2022, at Christ Church
- Explore hosting a Forum or public panel discussion in March at Christ Church on teaching Black American history. Invite head of history department or teacher of African-American history at Whitefish Bay High School to be member of panel. (Greg)
 - Met with Mark Hilgendorf and Jim Benton in Nov. 2021 and early January to plan, scheduled for March 27, 2022 and currently called: *What 's Being Taught in Schools About Racial History and Where Are We Going from Here?*
- Begin contacting other organizations to develop a list of volunteer opportunities for church members. (Tom)
- Continue to research and develop a presentation that highlights how learning to play a musical instrument rewires and develops the brains of children focused on academic achievement in underprivileged areas. (Tom)
- Organize Weekly Broadcast articles, recruiting writers and identifying topics. (Susan)
- Complete some research on “restrictive covenants.” (Susan)
- Maintain and update a prayer list. Ongoing to be shared with the BCT, Pastoral team and the Weekly Broadcast. (Helen)
- Continued liaison with the Outreach Committee. (John)
- Finish, publish and promote the new book by John Haydon, *I Was Wrong, But We Can Make It Right: Achieving Racial Equality*. Available Dec. 7, 2021. (John)
 - Book group discussions set for February 3, 10, 17, evenings on Zoom

Measures for Progress

Key measures will be summarized in an annual report of the BCT for the Annual Parish Report published every January and corresponding to the annual meeting. Summary of year-long actions include:

- Speaking engagements at forums and evening events
- Published materials, articles for the Weekly Broadcast
- Community engagement activities with such organizations as Bay Bridge
- Partnerships with other religious organizations, especially All People’s Church
- Liturgical and prayer actions

A cautionary note: Measuring the impact that any of our efforts have on healing racial divides or effecting economic and racial justice is very difficult and can be ultimately self-serving. However, when someone beyond us recognizes our actions and openly cites them, that may be noteworthy, but even, then with reservation.