

The Legislation

Proposed Legislation to the October 5 and 6, 2020 Annual Conference

Whereas African Americans and Native Americans were oppressed, forced from their homes and enslaved in the Greater New Jersey Area; and

Whereas African Americans and Native Americans were segregated and experienced racism by The Methodist Church since its founding and racism continues today toward all People of Color by United Methodists and our organizations and structures; and

Whereas GNJ has committed to be a multi-racial and interculturally competent church and recent events in our nation call the church to be an example and do better by working together to end the sin of racism in GNJ;

Therefore, we courageously support and commit to boldly work together to end the sin of racism in GNJ and create a more racially just, inclusive and equitable church and carry out A Journey of Hope calling, measure and actions.

Transformational Measures and Actions

1. **Resources** to assist leaders, congregations and communities to end racism. 50 trained GNJ trainers and facilitators actively engaged with 150 congregations that are developing and engaging in [A Journey of Hope Plan](#)² by **September 2022**

Actions

- a. Identify an organization that specializes in ending racism to assist GNJ to develop and/or adapt resources and processes and train leaders for ending racism. **March 2021** -assigned to the Journey of Hope Team
 - b. Create [A Journey of Hope](#) planning guide for congregations. **September 2021** -assigned to A Journey of Hope Team
 - c. Provide intercultural competence and implicit bias assessment and training materials for leaders and congregations. **September 2021** -assigned to the Resource Team
 - d. Strongly encourage all GNJ leaders and disciples each year to participate in a study and conversation that helps people continually turn outward and work toward a racially just, inclusive and equitable church. **Start March 2021** - assigned to Church and Society Chairperson
 - e. Post to the website congregational models for creating a racially just, inclusive and equitable congregation. **Ongoing** - assigned to the Director of Communications
 - f. Continue to train clergy and congregational leaders for cross racial and cultural appointments and offer facilitators to congregations with cross racial appointments for learning and conversation. **Ongoing** - assigned to the Dean of the Cabinet
2. **Leadership** that is diverse and culturally competent to lead GNJ and its congregations to end racism.

² All plans within GNJ integrate the mission, priorities and goals of GNJ and the congregation. While a Journey of Hope ACT Plan will include how a congregation will work to end the sin of racism, it also integrates the mission of GNJ - new disciples, transformational leaders, fruitful and sustainable vital congregations (markers of vitality and balanced budget) and a transformed world including the spiritual and justice work of ending the sin of racism.

At least 50% GNJ of agency chairpersons are People of Color by **June 2023** and increase the number of African American/Black and Hispanic/Latino clergy elders each by 8 and increase the number of all Clergy of Color by **June 2025**.

Measures

- a. Increase the number of African American/Black by 8 and Latino/Hispanic by 8 clergy elders. **June 2026 (4 each by 2023)** - assigned to District Superintendents
- b. Engage 20 People of Color in the clergy candidacy program. **December 2022** - assigned to the Cabinet
- c. Engage People of Color for at least 50% of Mosaic Ministry participants. **July 2022** - assigned Next Generation Ministry Student Ministry Coordinator.
- d. Double the number of People of Color in process for pastoral and deacon ministry. **December 2022** - assigned to a member of the cabinet
- e. At least 50% of GNJ elected agency chairpersons are People of Color. **June 2023** - assigned to the Nominations Chairperson
- f. Have 200 people complete intercultural competency and Outward Mindset Training. **December 2023** - assigned to the Director of Human Resources and the Nominations Chairperson

Actions

- a. Create a leadership culture to end racism by training intercultural competence and Outward Mindset with all GNJ staff, newly elected leadership, new clergy and newly appointed clergy within one year of assuming leadership. **Begin July 2021** -assigned to the Director of Human Resources and the Nominations Chairperson
 - b. Develop and implement a program to recruit, financially support, educate, mentor and coach new clergy candidates of color. **June 2021** - assigned to the Dean of the Cabinet
 - c. Develop a program to mentor new leaders with at least half being persons of color for elected GNJ leadership. **Begin July 2021** -assigned to the Nominations Chairperson
 - d. Develop intercultural competence training for students. **December 2021** -assigned to the Next Generation Ministries Executive Director
 - e. Make a public witness of the love and justice of Jesus Christ when there are acts of racism in the community, the state, nation or world. **Ongoing** - assigned to the Bishop and Lead Pastors
 - f. Engage with other faith communities and state-wide organizations, meet with state-wide law enforcement, elected leadership and justice departments to influence policies, practices and laws that are equitable, unbiased and work to end racism. **Ongoing** - assigned to the Bishop
 - g. Report at each annual church conference what the congregation has done to work toward a racially just, inclusive and equitable church. **Ongoing** - assigned to each District Superintendent
 - h. Review all candidates for cultural competence and mentor and develop clergy of promise to develop the intercultural competence. **Starting February 2021** - assigned to the Board of Ordained Ministry Chairperson
3. **Ministry** to develop African American/Black and other congregations of color. 25 new ethnic congregations (at least 10 African American) using new technologies and innovative strategies and strengthen the worship, ministry and finances of 10 existing congregations of color by **December 2025 (10 by 2023)**.

Measures

- a. Develop 25 Hope Centers by People of Color in ethnic communities. **December 2025 (12 by 2023)** - assigned to A Future With Hope Executive Director
- b. Create a justice and equity center in each region to galvanize, inspire and engage clergy and laity in justice and equity ministry. **December 2023** - Regional Superintendent Team
- c. Start, or develop and financially support, five African American and three additional ethnic congregations to increase their vitality. **December 2023** - assigned to a District Superintendent in each region

Actions

- a. Train congregations and community leaders through Communities of Hope to assist congregations to serve the people in their community and/or become a Hope Center. **September 2021** - assigned to Hope Center Developer
- b. Continue to fund and support camping programs and Joshua Generation for students of color. **Ongoing** - assigned to the Next Generations Ministry Board Chairperson
- c. Continue to grow IGNITE Communities with 25% of the participants students of color - **Ongoing** - Assigned to Next Generation Ministries Executive Director
- d. Continue with the lawsuit to desegregate public schools in NJ and update the annual conference each year - **Ongoing** - assigned to Church and Society Chairperson

4. **Policies and Procedures** in GNJ that do not lead to harm or bias against African American/Black or any other racial group

A handbook of all existing GNJ policies and procedures that has been reviewed and updated to ensure GNJ's policies and procedures create a culture of racial justice, inclusion and equity by **February of 2022**.

Action

- a. Review all GNJ agency policies, procedures and rules for explicit or implicit racial biases and racism and recommend changes to the appropriate bodies to ensure racially just, inclusive and equitable policies and rules. **May 2021** -assigned to Religion and Race Chairperson
- b. Review all submitted annual conference legislation to ensure it does not include implicit or explicit bias against People of Color. **February of each year** -assigned to Religion and Race Chairperson

5. **Invest** in leadership, congregations and ministries to repair harm, start new and grow existing congregations, recruit and develop more transformational leaders and work toward ending the sin of racism

\$4.1 million investment in the health and vitality of GNJ through debt forgiveness, equitable salary and shared ministry apportionment and billables in low income communities and an additional \$1 million for Native American sacred land/church preservation. **December 2023**

Actions and Measures

- a. GNJ will permanently forbear collecting on billable debt (pension, health insurance, workers compensation and property insurance) for all African American/Black and Native American congregations and all other congregations that meet the criteria for the forbearance program. This will include unpaid amounts for all years prior to and including 2019, and also any unpaid amounts for the 2020 year if the congregation pays at least what it paid in 2019 on its billings from GNJ. If a congregation that is part of the forbearance program sells its property or discontinues to be a United Methodist congregation, the proceeds will be reviewed by the board of trustees and the cabinet to determine how the funds will be used.

The following is the criteria to participate in the forbearance program for all congregations other than African American/Black and Native American.

- i. The community's household income is below \$55,000.
- ii. The worshipers reflect the people living in the community.
- iii. The congregation does not have reserves/endowment that may be used to sufficiently fund the congregation's budget including billables.
- iv. The congregation does not have other income including rental income to sufficiently fund the congregation's budget including billables.
- v. The congregation does not have sufficient giving by members to fund the ministry including billables for a congregation of its size.

If any of the five criteria are in question, a congregation may request a further review by the cabinet and the council on finance and administration who will jointly make a final determination. **December 2020** - assigned to Council on Finance and Administration Chairperson and the Dean of the Cabinet

- b. Assist four ethnic congregations in paying building debt. Several congregations of color were approved by GNJ for building programs which could not be sustained by the congregation and GNJ did not provide adequate council or financial support for the building projects. In two of the congregations, the debt is not with GNJ and the CFO/Treasurer along with the district superintendent is to review each of these situations and make a recommendation to the next annual conference session. **June 2021** - assigned to the Board of Trustees Chairperson.
- c. Develop and financially support a clergy salary guide and system based on NJ public educators, congregational size and clergy accomplishment to ensure community wealth is not the only determiner of clergy salaries, particularly in Congregations of Color. **December 2020** - assigned to the Cabinet in consultation with the Equitable Compensation Commission
- d. Start in **January 2021** and ensure **by January 2022** that all grants³ to congregations and GNJ supported Hope Centers and organizations have [A Journey of Hope Plan](#) that is appropriate to their context. An additional \$100,000 in grant funds will be set aside in the 2021 budget and based on giving, up to another \$100,000 a year will be added until the fund reaches \$500,000 to assist congregations to develop and implement their [Journey of Hope Plan](#) (See Appendix 1 in the Journey of Hope Report for a guide to developing [A Journey of Hope Plan](#) and guidelines for grants). **January 2022** - assigned to the Connectional Table Chairperson and the Cabinet
- e. Apportion shared ministries and billables to congregations in low income communities using the same criteria in 5.a.i-v as long as the congregation has and is making progress on [A Journey of Hope Plan](#) and gives 100% of their apportioned shared ministry and billables at the following rates.
 - i. Communities with median household income \$50,000 to 55,000 – apportion at 70%.
 - ii. Communities with median household income \$45,000 to 49,999 – apportion at 65%.
 - iii. Communities with median household income \$40,000 to 44,999 – apportion at 60%.
 - iv. Communities with median household income \$35,000 to 39,999 – apportion at 55%.
 - v. Communities with median household income below \$34,999 – apportion at 50%.**January 2022** - assigned to Council on Finance and Administration Chairperson

³ All grants include but not limited to Harvest Mission, Strategic Disciple Making, Equitable Salary, Strategic Salary, emergency need, Hope Centers and Peace with Justice.

- f. Native American Land
 - i. 10% (a tithe) of the sale of all GNJ property and discontinued churches shall be invested through GNJ's Stewardship Foundation until the fund reaches \$1 million for the St. Johns United Methodist Church to ensure the perpetual care of the property. St. Johns is the only Native American Church in GNJ, it is the fifth oldest in the United States and it is a sacred site and burial ground for Native Americans. The funds will be administered through GNJ CONAM (Committee on Native American Ministry) and no more than 5% of the funds may be expended in any given year. **Ongoing** – assigned to the CFO/Treasurer
 - ii. All discontinued congregations in Cumberland County and the eastern portion of Salem County including church property along the Delaware River, shall first through CONAM be offered/returned to the Native American Nanticoke Lenni-Lenape Tribe. The land in this area was originally Native American land before Native Americans were removed from their land and forced to a reservation in the Pinelands. If the Tribe does not want to take ownership and care of the property, the property is to be sold and proceeds invested as directed by the GNJ Annual Conference session. **Ongoing** – assigned to the Property Manager and Board of Trustees
 - iii. In consultation with CONAM, Next Gen Ministries will identify and develop a means to recognize and honor Native American heritage at the Pinelands Center, remembering that Native Americans were forced to move from Cumberland and Salem Counties to the Pinelands. Funds may be used from unused Native American offerings to establish such a heritage. **Ongoing** – assigned to the Next Gen Executive Director and CONAM.
 - iv. Each year GNJ will strongly encourage all congregations to celebrate Native American Sunday, the third Sunday of April unless it is Easter Sunday, and then the fourth Sunday of April, by sharing information of the heritage of Native People and receive an offering for ministry with Native People. **Ongoing** – assigned to the Director of Communication
- g. Congregations of Color Property – when a Congregation of Color is discontinued and the property sold, the proceeds shall be used to develop a new or existing Congregation of Color, first considering a Congregation of Color of the ethnicity of the congregation that was discontinued. **Ongoing** – assigned to the Cabinet and the Property Manager

ACCOUNTABILITY AND HONORING PROGRESS

The above measures and actions shall be for the next five years and modified each year to ensure the aim of creating a racially just, inclusive and equitable church are accomplished. Each year, the executive staff leadership⁴ of GNJ, including the cabinet, will report to the annual conference session the progress and challenges to achieving [A Journey of Hope Plan](#) that includes but is not limited to the following:

1. The number of congregations with [A Journey of Hope Plan](#) and highlight three exemplary plans.
2. The number of African American clergy recruited and in process to be elders in GNJ. Presently there are 10 active African American/Black clergy elders in GNJ with only two under 58 years of age.
3. The number of African American churches that are part of a congregational development cohort and are being resourced to grow congregational vitality.
4. The percent of congregations that have [A Journey of Hope Plan](#) and the overall progress that is being made.

⁴ The executive staff leadership includes the bishop, dean of the cabinet, CFO, connectional ministries director, communications director, and the executive directors of A Future With Hope, Next Generation Ministries and Stewardship Foundation.

5. The number and amount of grants given to African American and other ethnic congregations.
6. Progress on equitable salary where there is income disparity in GNJ communities and what steps were taken to address income disparity.
7. The number of churches that are receiving half billable and half shared ministry.
8. The number of Hope Centers and the percentage in ethnic communities.
9. Progress on the lawsuit to desegregate New Jersey public schools.
10. A census of the percentage of African American/Black, Asian, Hispanic/Latino and Native American congregations' vitality, as compared to Anglo congregations.

Each year, every congregation will be invited to identify an individual from their congregation or community who has demonstrated the aspirational nature of a disciple and/or leader who is leading and working for racial justice, inclusion, equity and ending racism. The individuals will be honored by listing their names in the preconference journal and a certificate from the bishop. Five of the individual's stories will be told at the annual conference session and through the Relay and posted on the website and the individuals will receive a \$1,000 grant to use for racial justice, inclusion, equity and ending racism ministries.

Journey of Hope Team

Sammy Arroyo, William D. Carter III, Judy Colorado, Grant Karsner, Kermit Moss, Enger Muteteke, Natalie Palacio, Ingres Simpson, Joyce Williams and Vanessa M. Wilson

Appendix 1

A Journey of Hope Plan and Grants Guidelines

All plans within GNJ integrate what a congregation is currently doing and working on with the mission, priorities and goals of GNJ. [A Journey of Hope Plan](#) includes how a congregation will work to end the sin of racism and integrates it with the mission of GNJ and a congregation/organization - new disciples, transformational leaders, fruitful and sustainable vital congregations (markers of vitality and balanced budget) and a transformed world including the spiritual and justice work of ending the sin of racism. To reflect on and develop how a congregation will fulfill the mission and end the sin of racism, the congregation will engage in conversation.

[A Journey of Hope Plan Guide](#) (The guide will be modified in the area of congregational vitality for organizations to what makes a Hope Center or community organization vital within its community)

1. A commitment to be a racially just, inclusive and equitable church/organization
2. Measures and action steps
 - h. Ending the sin of racism
 - i. Making new and growing existing disciples (see description under Aspirations, p. 7)
 - j. Developing transformational leaders (see description under Aspirations, p. 8)
 - k. Growing a vital congregation⁵ (see description under Aspirations, p. 8)

⁵ Vital congregations cultivate a deeper relationship with God and meet people's deepest desires through five markers of vitality.

1. Worship cultivates a deeper relationship with God and births hope for living. Marker – grow by one worshiper over a 3-year period of time.
2. Small groups cultivate growth and deeper relationships with God and one another. Marker – 60% of worshipers in a small group experience.
3. Mission through hands on justice and mercy ministries cultivates purpose. Marker – 50% of the worshipers participate in hands on mission in the community.
4. Witness and faith sharing demonstrate our meaning and significance through Jesus Christ. Marker – 1 new profession/reaffirmation of faith for every 20 worshipers in a given year.