

JUSTICE



TRINITY CHURCH
ON TELFAIR SQUARE SINCE 1848

A periodic newsletter of the Justice Team of Trinity Church (UMC), Savannah, GA

Justice Team Planning

by Kelly Crane



Kelly Crane

and Inclusion.

The Justice Team has been working hard this past year to organize three main task teams to focus our work on Education, Homelessness,

The Justice Team is passionate about the issues that are facing us today. We spent time as a group under the leadership of Kody Jones working through the Implicit Bias course. We felt this was a great way to begin our work on racial justice. Implicit Bias focused on our internal thoughts or actions regarding bias. We all agree that we must continue our work on this issue so over the next two months we will look at *Be The Bridge 101* available online.

We all agree that the *Be The Bridge* course would transition to an external focus on biases covering: White Supremacy, White Fragility, White Identity, and White Privilege. This will be a great lead up to our book study that we will begin in January entitled *Church Diversity* by Scott Williams. This will give us action steps we can take after looking at the internal and external studies.

The Justice Team has committed to spending time in scripture and in

study so that we can grow together as leaders for Justice. We are excited about these upcoming studies and would like to invite anyone to join us. We will continue to meet virtually for now, and may move to in person meetings as we are able. The justice Team meets on the 4th Wednesday of each month at 3:00pm.

If you would like to join us for one of our upcoming studies please sign up on our website or email kelcrane@gmail.com for more information.

The 2020 Schedule:

September 23rd – Be The Bridge

October 28th – Be The Bridge

Kelly Crane

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Inclusion at Trinity: Racial Justice



Kody Jones

by Kody Jones

The Justice Team completed a study of Implicit Bias over the summer due to the ongoing racism that our Black & Brown siblings in Christ continue to face in America. The self-

reflection and conversations were enlightening, inspiring, and transforming. At the conclusion of the study, the Justice Team worked on ways to further our commitment to Racial Justice and Inclusion efforts at Trinity. This is the start of our work:

- **Justice Talks:** Designed to reinforce Trinity's core-value of Inclusion, Justice Talks is a new small group sponsored by the Justice Team. Its mission is to facilitate learning and reflection on the diversity of Christ's Creation through the study of books, documentaries, podcasts, or art. We study a wide-range of topics including Race, Disability, Sexuality, Gender, Homelessness, or Poverty.

Justice Talks is unique to Trinity in that it consists of many different periodic studies. Each study differs in content, duration, format, style, leadership, and participants. All Justice Talks studies are open to everyone in the Trinity community. To learn more about Justice Talks visit: <https://trinity1848.org/justice-talks>.

- **Virtual Inclusion Resource:** The Justice Team is developing a virtual guide for the Trinity community of articles, books, children's books, podcasts, etc. on Racial, LGBTQ+, Women's, and Disability Justice.
- **MLK Parade March:** The Justice Team is coordinating for the Trinity community to march in the Savannah MLK Parade every January.
- **Black History Month Anti-Racism Action Week & Museum/Cultural Center Visit:** The Justice Team is coordinating a congregation wide anti-racism action week that will include a group visit to a Black history museum or cultural center every February.

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Denominational Transitions (An Update)



by Ben Gosden

Likely lost in the COVID-19 crisis has been the delay of our United Methodist General Conference which was set for this past May. There we were promised that our denomination would finally vote on a plan to split the denomination over issues surrounding the full inclusion of LGBTQ persons. General Conference has since been rescheduled for August 2021. And, while this is frustrating, it has put us in a bit of a holding pattern until a final decision can take place. That said, you may have read the headlines on the front page of the Savannah Morning News informing our community that Asbury Memorial opted to go ahead and leave the denomination before such a vote could take place. I've received many questions about this news and how it might affect us at Trinity. This brief column is an attempt to clarify what's happening with them and what lies ahead for us over the next year at Trinity.

In the interim before a final decision by General Conference on how to split the denomination our annual conference adopted a Disaffiliation Plan that would allow churches to leave with their property if they paid 2 years of apportionments and their clergy pension liability. This formula is very complex but I know that Asbury raised and paid over \$400K to leave the denomination. Since I helped write this plan I also looked into what it would cost Trinity to follow the same path. It would cost us around \$275K to leave the denomination. After discussing this with a group of church leaders, we felt it made more financial sense for us to wait for the final decision to come from General Conference because the option to separate would come at a much cheaper cost (if not free).

The other tension at play here is that Asbury's Methodist heritage is not nearly as significant as ours. We are the Mother Church of Methodism in Savannah. And this has inspired us to use our historic identity as a platform to advocate for change when it comes to LGBTQ inclusion. Since 1848 Trinity Church has tried to embody the very best of Methodism and this is our goal as we continue to be a voice for change in South Georgia and in the denomination as a whole.

These last few months have taught us that the future is a difficult thing to predict. But I do believe we are on the cusp of change in our denomination. One way or another we will live into the day when we can marry whoever feels God is calling them to commit to the person they love, regardless of gender. And we will soon be able to tell all of our children, regardless of their sexual orientation, that if God calls them into ministry they will have a place to serve openly and faithfully. My grand hope is that such a change will take place in 12 short months. If not, then we will weigh our options for Plan B...

Ben Gosden, Pastor
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Justice Talks small group series



by Allyson Morgan

As part of the Justice Talks small group series, Connie Boole and I are facilitating a study on *I'm Still Here: Black Dignity in a World Made for Whiteness* by Austin Channing Brown in September and October. Austin's memoir recounts her experiences growing up Black, Christian, and female.

The experiences she shares to highlight how many institutions, including churches, have goals for inclusivity and diversity but fall short of those goals because of a mismatch between our words and actions.

Through this study, we hope to continue the necessary internal work regarding racial justice and anti-racism and also think through action steps, and live out what Austin says in the book: "dialogue is productive toward reconciliation only when it leads to action—when it inverts power and pursues justice for those who are most marginalized." We look forward to sharing the work that comes out of this study and others in our Justice Talks series in months to come.

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Do you challenge racism and promote racial tolerance? If so, then you may truly be an anti-racist. Click to [see more](#) for further information and a starting point to learn more.