

Reparations Advisory Committee and Stewards

The guiding spirit of the choice to cede control of decision making to Black and Indigenous leaders who are already engaged and partnering in ECM's ongoing work was shaped by our desire for a process grounded in relationship, trust, and moral responsibility, not transactional charity. We heard again and again in our early interviews with Black and Indigenous leaders that reparations must address more than just material loss and include spiritual and relational repair, mental health, and the need for ancestral reclamation as part of a deeper, ongoing healing process.

The goal was not perfection or completeness, but faithful participation in repair, guided by those closest to the harm and to the work of liberation. ECM's hope was to grow renewed relationships based on trust and solidarity. We also wanted to acknowledge the emotional and spiritual weight of this role given the nature of these decisions and the reality that necessitates the repair. Over 500 years of egregious exploitation of life, labor and theft of land – and the ongoing profound injustices targetting Black, Indigenous and communities of color and perpetuating racial wealth and health gaps in this country – make this task heavy and emotionally laden. We are grateful for the leadership of Cynthia Perry, Lead Consultant, and the wholeheartedness with which the RACS members held this responsibility.

The group holding responsibility for distributing the \$2.75mm set aside for reparative payments were known as RACS: Sequoria Dickerson, Khalil Howe, Noemi Ramos, Rev. Dr. Althea Smith, John Smith and Kara Smith. ECM has been in relationship with these six impressive leaders for several years as Burgess Urban Fund grantees and/or as members of the Finding Our Way Home Wisdom Council. The group process and meetings were organized and led by Cynthia Perry, Lead Consultant.

RACS Discernment and Decision Making

Team Formation and Rhythm

Began with retreat to build relationships and explore shared values, met monthly and concluded with a decision making retreat

Focused on group process including decision making and conflict resolution

Criteria and Recipient Identification

Identified 11 social justice buckets reflecting harms to be addressed and opportunities for repair

Named specific justice-oriented organizations and projects within social justice buckets

Recipient Application and Selection

Invited organizations to share work through video

Developed rubric for selection criteria

Evaluated and selected recipient organizations based on videos, values, and alignment with rubric

Social Justice Buckets

1. Economic & Financial Inequities

1. Poverty & Income Inequality
2. Access to Banking & Credit
3. Employment & Fair Wages
4. Wealth-Building Opportunities

2. Housing & Urban Development

1. Affordable Housing and homeownership
2. Homelessness & Shelter Systems
3. Housing Discrimination & Historical Redlining
4. Urban Planning & Gentrification

3. Environmental and Land Justice

1. Climate Change Impacts
2. Pollution & Toxic Exposure
3. Land Rights & Indigenous Land Protection
4. Conservation & Sustainable Practices

4. Food Nutrition & Security

1. Food Deserts & Nutritional Inequity
2. Community Gardens & Urban Farming
3. Food Assistance Programs
4. Agricultural Equity & Sustainability

5. Health & Wellness

1. Access to Healthcare & Insurance--including mental health and substance use support
2. Environmental Health Risks
3. Stigma around Eastern medicine modalities
4. Spirituality/Spiritual well-being
6. Childcare

6. Education & Knowledge Access

1. K-12 Education Disparities
2. Higher Education & Vocational Access
3. Literacy & Lifelong Learning Programs
4. Curriculum Inclusion & Cultural Representation

7. Technology & Digital Access

1. Broadband & Internet Access
2. Digital Literacy & Skills
3. Online Safety & Privacy
4. Equitable Access to Education & Employment Tech

8. Cultural & Community Development

1. Cultural Preservation & Revitalization
2. Language Access & Preservation
3. Community Centers & Shared Spaces
4. Arts, Music, and Heritage Programs
5. Loss of connection/access to ancestral wisdom
6. Barber shops and Beauty salons, nail salons, etc. better support regarding mental health.

9. Criminal Justice System

1. Mass Incarceration & Sentencing Disparities
2. Alternatives to Traditional Policing
3. Rehabilitation & Reentry Support
4. Restorative & Reparative Justice Program

10. Impact of Local & National Politics

1. Voter Access & Suppression
2. Political Representation
3. Civic Engagement & Advocacy Opportunities
4. Protection of Civil Liberties

11. Impact of Philanthropy & Business Models

1. Access to HR, Operations, and logistical Support
2. Access or connection to resources
3. Application Process
4. Restricted Grants

12. List of Other Buckets

1. Youth voices/Youth Organizing
2. Senior Voices/Senior Organizing
3. Indigenous Communities



Guidelines and Assumptions for ECM's Reparations

As a predominantly white Christian organization embedded in the Episcopal Church, which played a role in the colonization of this country, we have a responsibility to acknowledge, atone, ask forgiveness and take steps to repair for our roles in this history that denied the sacredness of lives, land, and relationships.

As we live into a more liberatory organizational approach – internally and externally – reckoning, acknowledgement, atonement and repair give us an opportunity for our own transformation.

The following assumptions and criteria were developed to guide our reparations work. They have been drawn from ECM's partnership with Black, Indigenous and People of Color leaders in the racial and economic justice and reparations space, those who are a part of the Reparations Interfaith Coalition and other grassroots and Episcopal contexts. They were also shaped by ECM staff conversations.

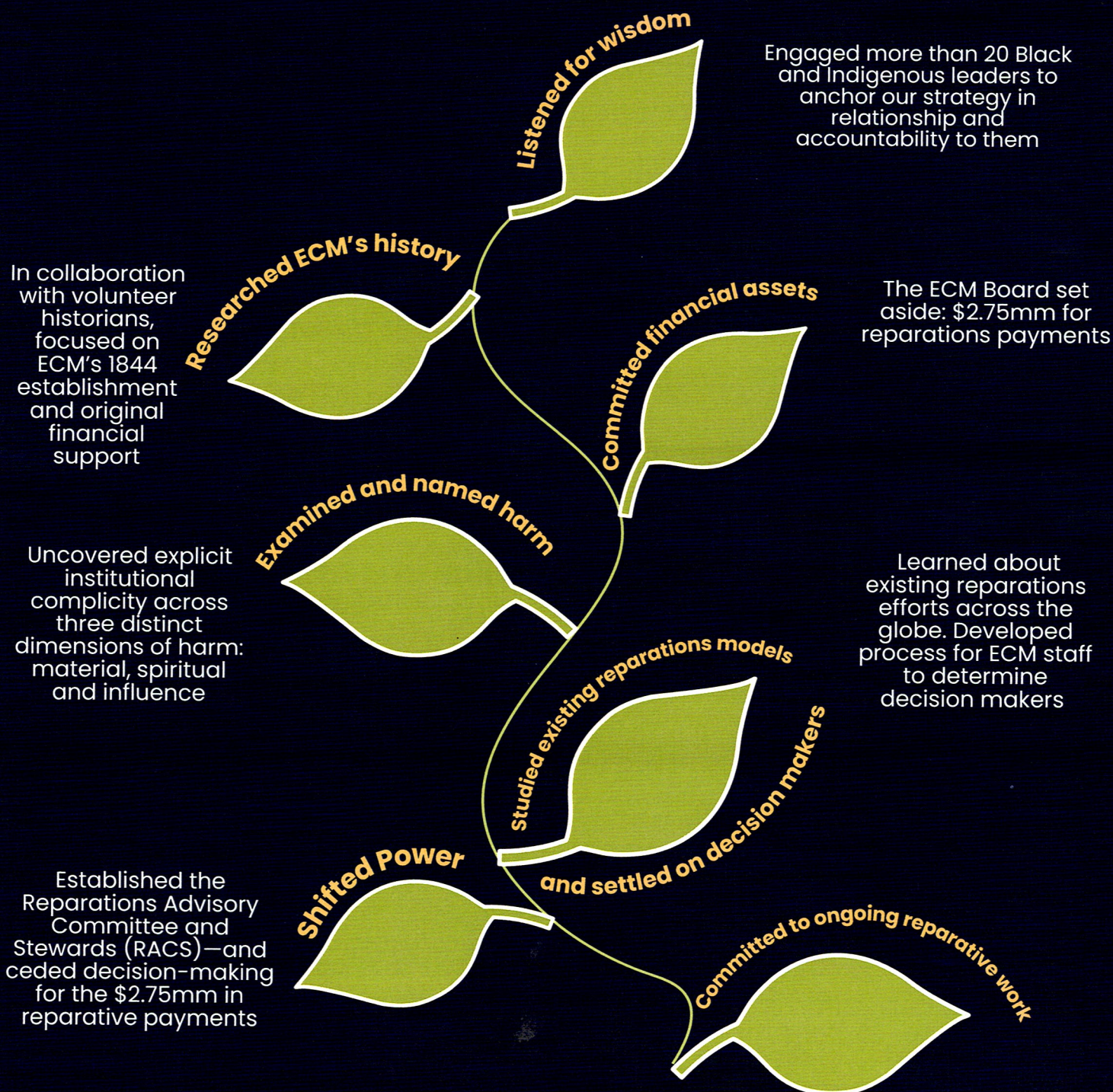
Reparative solidarity is ECM's approach. The historical exploitation of Black and indigenous people played a foundational role in the economy and wealth generation of the United States. While the federal government has failed to acknowledge, apologize and repair for this egregious history and violence against Indigenous and Black Americans, we as a faith-based organization will not.

Guidelines and Assumptions for ECM's Reparations

1. **We understand reparations as a response** to the call by Black and Indigenous communities to redress centuries old and ongoing harm to their communities.
2. **We intend robust repair that is not only economic but also spiritual and relational in nature.** Reconciliation is cited as the primary purpose of the Episcopal church – our organizational faith heritage and grounding compels us to do the work of repair, repentance and restoration.
3. **We understand reparations as a process toward reconciliation rather than a one-time action.** We recognize that reparations are nested in transformed personal and institutional relationships between ECM and Black and Indigenous-led organizations.
4. **We will cede control of decision making** with the release of reparative payments in hopes of building renewed relationships based on trust and solidarity.
5. **We will contribute to collectives over Individuals:** ECM's reparations are intentionally directed to community-controlled entities and collectives.
6. **We commit to practices to ensure non-repeat:** Systematically attending to internal governance, asset allocation, spending policy, and grantmaking models to prevent the preservation or reproduction of white-led paternalistic dynamics.

These guidelines and assumptions set in motion ECM's Reparations Journey

This milestone event is the culmination of deep prayer and spiritual reflection, a rigorous, multi-year, community-led discernment and institutional reckoning process structured across key developmental phases.



Learning to grow a future rooted in dignity, mutuality, and shared power by partnering with impacted communities. We organize Episcopalians for accompaniment and solidarity as well as support financially and mobilize additional resources for the flourishing, spirituality and healing of BIPOC communities.

Leaders interviewed



1. Jason Boyd, MA Black Coalition, MA Black Reparations Collective
2. Courtney Brunson, tBF, Dir., Greater Boston Ptrshp to Close the Racial Wealth Gap
3. Rashelle Centeio, Sponsor of MA Reparations Bill
4. Nadav David, Center for Economic Democracy
5. William Dickerson, MCAN and Bwete Root Joy
6. Lucy Duncan, Reparations Works
7. Penny Gamble Williams, Chappaquiddick Tribe of the Wampanoag Indian Nation
8. Stephanie Girand, The Black Response Cambridge
9. Jemadari Kamara, Professor, UMASS Amherst
10. Dr. Filipe Maia, Professor, Boston University School of Theology
11. Dr. James McCarty, Professor, Boston University
12. Alison Peaceful Deer Miller, Pocasset Wampanoag Tribe of Massachusetts and RI
13. Senator Liz Miranda, Sponsor of MA Reparations Bill
14. Yvette Modestin, MA Black Coalition, MA Black Reparations
15. Rob Peagler, Reparations Works
16. David Ragland, Founder and ED of Truth Telling Project, Prof., Harvard Div School
17. Honorable Byron Rushing, former state senator
18. Dr. Joyce Hope Scott, Prof., Boston University and international reparations leader
19. The Reverend Dr. Althea Smith, UU Minister and Lead of Joshua Smith Legacy Fund
20. Kara Smith, Chappaquiddick Tribe of the Wampanoag Indian Nation
21. Dr. Mafaz Al-Suwaidan, Hutchins Ctr for African & African American Rsch, Harvard
22. Aaron Tanaka, Center for Economic Democracy and UJIMA advisor
23. Alexie Torres-Fleming, Soul of Movement
24. Woullard Lett, Co-chair, New England chapter, NCOBRA

Themes and Insights on Reparative Justice Interviews

The following themes emerged consistently across the interviews with leaders in the field of reparative justice, highlighting a shared vision that moves beyond simple financial restitution.

- **Holistic Reparations Beyond Financial Compensation**

- Reparations must address more than just material loss. A consistent emphasis was placed on spiritual and relational repair, mental health, and the need for ancestral reclamation as part of a deeper, ongoing healing process.

- **Community-Centered Approaches**

- Interviewees advocated for collective healing rather than individual benefits. Key strategies include restoring land, supporting education, and building communal wealth to ensure reparations foster long-term investment in community leadership.

- **The Role of Faith and Spirituality**

- Spiritual traditions—both Indigenous and Black—are viewed as central to the process. There is a strong call for faith-based organizations to engage in active reconciliation, moving beyond past roles in oppression toward a supportive role in healing.

- **Systemic and Long-Term Transformation**

- There is broad agreement that reparations must be a permanent, system-level commitment rather than a one-time act of charity. This includes shifting power dynamics within institutions and directly addressing structural harms like economic injustice and the prison industrial complex.

- **Educational and Narrative Shifts**

- Building public awareness is critical. Leaders emphasized the importance of developing educational programs that focus on systemic oppression, restorative justice, and reclaiming historical truths to ensure sustainable, informed change.

"Reparations are a spiritual practice, not just a transaction, and go hand-in-hand with truth telling. They are a relational practice of healing from spiritual, moral, and material harm."

Dr. David Ragland and Dr. Melinda Salazar

Truth Telling Project, Co-Directors

"For inasmuch as faith is about partnering with God to mend an unjust earth, and thus to move us toward a more just future, then faith communities by definition are accountable to that future." "What is needed in our faith communities, as Ta-Nehisi Coates has written, "is an airing of family secrets, a settling with old ghosts," lest those old ghosts continue to haunt us."

The Reverend Canon Kelly Brown Douglas, PhD

Canon Theologian