

Research on History of Race and Race Relations among Churches of the In In the Loop Ministry Group in the Presbytery of Baltimore

Purpose of This Study and Its Potential Uses

As American society (religious, secular and governmental) reckons more clearly and openly about the legacy and persistence of racism and racial injustice, it is necessary to deeply understand the sources of its enduring nature at the micro and macro level of our beliefs and the institutions those beliefs build and sustain—within ourselves, our families, and even our places of worship. While some religious organizations have begun to address these issues on a national level, it behooves us to take a closer look in the very buildings and communities where we practice our faith. Historically, churches have been a reflection of their congregation and leadership, and communities. Churches have been known to support and harbor the less fortunate and despised, and to champion humanitarianism. But, this is not so of all churches, and not always.

Through this research we seek to discover, understand and embrace the origin stories of the ITL churches—for the good and bad, face the history. This knowledge can serve to motivate action and change. Some churches may consider action such as reparations or reconciliation, institutional and individual introspection and change. We need to know where we have been so that we can successfully plan our course for the future.

To this end, ITL proposes to begin this exploration by engaging a researcher to engage its member churches in devising a strategy to help each church begin this journey.

Potential agreement

ITL churches seek an individual to conduct scholarly primary and secondary research regarding the history of the In the Loop churches (twelve Presbyterian churches in Baltimore, Maryland), pertaining their historical experience in regard to race, race relations and policy, membership, location, et. al., that explicate the race related actions and perspectives of the church and its members. This would include review of church documents, local and national media, interviews and other primary and secondary sources. This includes documenting each church's origin story, and its overall journey to its present day status.

This contract is for 100 hours at \$25 per hour, for a total \$2,500. This fee covers the research activities, and writing of a final monograph, that includes the existing research that may have been conducted by individual churches or others prior to this engagement, and additional information gathered using the above methods, and recommendations for potential next steps, as we understand that the initial 100 hours may not be sufficient for a comprehensive report. Interim deliverables include written

descriptions of activity and progress-to-date, presented at monthly meetings (six meetings of 1 and ½ hour each for a total of 9 research hours) of the ITL Steering Committee. And a final presentation in a meeting that will be planned for the ITL and Presbytery-at large (24 hours to develop and present)

Initially, the researcher will meet (in-person or virtually, depending on access due to the current pandemic) with each church's pastor and/or clerk of session to develop an outcome statement that expresses the perspective of the church and its expectations and preferences in participating in this project. Based on these discussions, the researcher will develop a 'work plan' that explains the methods and deliverables think are possible within the context of this limited engagement (deliverables, timeframes and final products). It is expected that this may require up to 10% of the effort or about 10 hours.)

It is anticipated that while each congregation's history will vary, similar aspects of the research would pertain to each church's origin story, (historically black, white or transitioning congregations and communities), along with the evolution of membership, and leadership over time, the churches social/political and economic context, etc., will drive the approach of the research. While it is desirable to maintain usual and consistent methodological approach, we recognize that there will be to be flexibilities to address the needs of each congregation, (availability of historical documents, race and social sensibilities and sensitivity to the issues, etc.)

A workgroup of the ITL will be responsible for guiding the project, overseeing the work of the researcher and intervening as needed to facilitate the progress of the study.

It is desirable for this work to be completed by mid-March and be completed September, 2021.