

Dismantling Racism Team Report on Reparative Justice Fund Presbytery of Baltimore Meeting on November 20, 2025

On September 13, 2025 the Presbytery of Baltimore voted to establish a Reparative Justice Fund through a series of motions which included the following:

THAT the Dismantling Racism Team, working with the Commission on Reconciliation, be directed to organize working groups to draft Articles of Incorporation and relevant guidelines, the incorporating board composition, and nominees to the incorporating Board for approval by the Presbytery at the 911th Meeting of the Presbytery of Baltimore in May 2026.

and

THAT the Dismantling Racism Team, working with others as appropriate, to provide educational materials and outreach to churches and individuals, encouraging them to contribute to the Reparative Justice Fund and supporting their own efforts toward racial justice.

Since the September meeting the Dismantling Racism Team has approved the charges for 3 working groups, identified chairs and begun recruitment of working group members. A call for working group nominations was also advertised in *Tidings* and posted on the presbytery website: <https://baltimorepresbytery.org/rjf-working-groups/>

The current timeline is to have working group members confirmed by the end of November and begin meeting as working groups in December or January. **A joint Working Group Orientation (hybrid) for all WG members will be offered on Thursday, December 4th at 4:30 - 6 p.m.**

Working Group Responsibilities

The Dismantling Racism Team (DRT) is establishing 3 working groups, each expected to have 5 to 8 members with an initial 6 month commitment. Each Working Group should have strong BIPOC representation and agree to incorporate a racial equity lens to their deliberations and recommendations. The Working Groups will make regular progress reports to the DRT and consult as appropriate. The DRT may seek approval on interim steps from the Commission on Reconciliation (COR) or Steering Cabinet and will compile Working Group progress reports to share with the Presbytery.

The initial timeline for this work is based on presenting the various work products and proposals at the 911th Stated Meeting of the Presbytery of Baltimore on May 14, 2026. Working Groups may seek to extend their time as necessary to complete their work.

Board Nomination Working Group

The Board Nomination Working Group is responsible for defining the size and composition of the incorporating board, including criteria for the incorporating board members, various skills, expertise and representation needed for effective leadership and administration. The Working Group will be responsible for drafting the Board nomination form, proposed timeline and selection process for approval by the DRT and Commission on Reconciliation. Once these have been approved, the Working Group will promote and receive Board applications and oversee the selection process for nominees to be presented to the Presbytery for approval.

Expected Deliverables:

- Description of Board composition that reflects the purpose and spirit of the Reparative Justice Fund and meet the legal & fiduciary responsibilities
- Board Nomination Selection Process – timeline, criteria, nomination form
- Board Nominees Interviewed
- List of Board Nominees and their biographic statements
- Written progress reports
- FAQs related to the Board composition when presenting the nominees to the Presbytery for approval

The Rev. Hal Bennett (Grove) will chair the Working Group with support from Charese Jordan Moore, DRT co-chair.

Legal Working Group

The Legal Working Group is responsible for determining the appropriate legal pathway to establish the Reparative Justice Fund as a separate legal entity from the Presbytery of Baltimore in the State of Maryland. This group will develop the draft Articles of Incorporation for the new entity and other legal requirements necessary to call together an incorporating Board. The legal group will provide assistance to the Board Nomination Working Group on the legal requirements for Board members and officers.

In order to carry out its work, the Working Group may need to research the type of non-profit organization as defined under Maryland law (and U.S. Internal Revenue Service) that best serves the intent and needs of the charitable trust. This includes other existing organizations or charitable trusts with a similar purpose.

The Working Group may consult with other Presbyterian affiliated organizations that have set up similar charitable trusts, including but not limited to the Synod of Lakes & Prairies, Tres Rios Presbytery and the Presbyterian Foundation. In addition, the Working Group will consult with organizations and attorneys specialized in nonprofits and expertise in the establishment and administration of charitable trusts.

Expected Deliverables:

- Draft Articles of Incorporation for filing with State of Maryland
- Complete the EIN and Tax Exempt (IRS 1023) forms to file with the IRS
- List of criteria for incorporating boards (size of board, officers required), legal & fiduciary responsibilities
- Other sample documents as necessary for the Incorporating Board
- Written progress reports
- FAQs related to the legal proposal before the Presbytery

Rev. TJ Denley, Esq. will chair the Working Group and Susan Krehbiel will serve as staff support.

RJF Outreach & Education Working Group

The Outreach & Education Committee will develop the materials and communication strategy to educate churches about this Fund, including promoting financial contributions to the Reparative Justice Fund by churches and individuals. The Working Group will also develop information/guidance for churches on conducting their own historical research. The Working Group will develop appropriate messaging, beginning with churches and individuals within the presbytery as their primary target audiences, with the ability to reach community members as a secondary audience.

The Outreach & Education Committee may draw from the extensive written documents already available for background and possible talking points as well as the use of the *Repentance & Repair* video in their promotional resources.

Expected Deliverables:

- Communication Plan – timeline, resources to produce and dissemination plan
- Brochure or other printable resource
- New text and images for the presbytery website, emails & social media
- Guidance & referrals for congregational research
- Written progress reports
- FAQs related to the legal proposal before the Presbytery

The Rev. Jessie Lowry (Christ Our Anchor) will chair the Working Group

For questions or additional information:

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