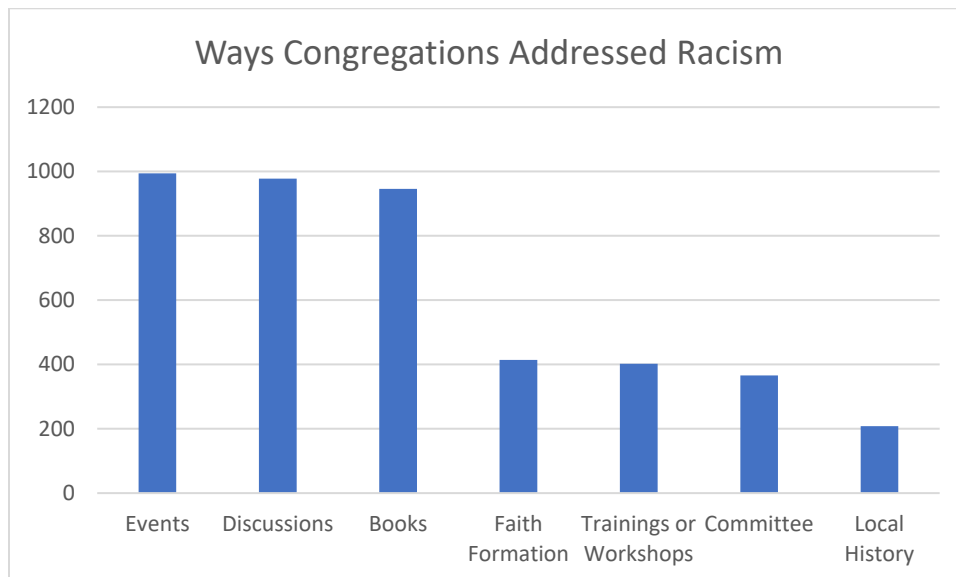


The 2021 Parochial Report included the following open-ended question: “We invite you to tell stories of how you have spent the last year naming, addressing, and dismantling the injustices of racism in yourselves, congregations, and your communities.” 3,732 congregations responded to the question and 3,355 of those congregations provided specifics. Congregations shared stories about what they did in 2021 to educate themselves about the injustices as well as actions they took to oppose racism.

Ways Congregations Addressed Racism

Congregations in the Episcopal Church addressed racism in a variety of ways. Responses ranged from educating themselves on the subject, having discussions, and having a dedicated initiative focused on the issue to attending or hosting events, workshops, trainings and digging into their own histories.

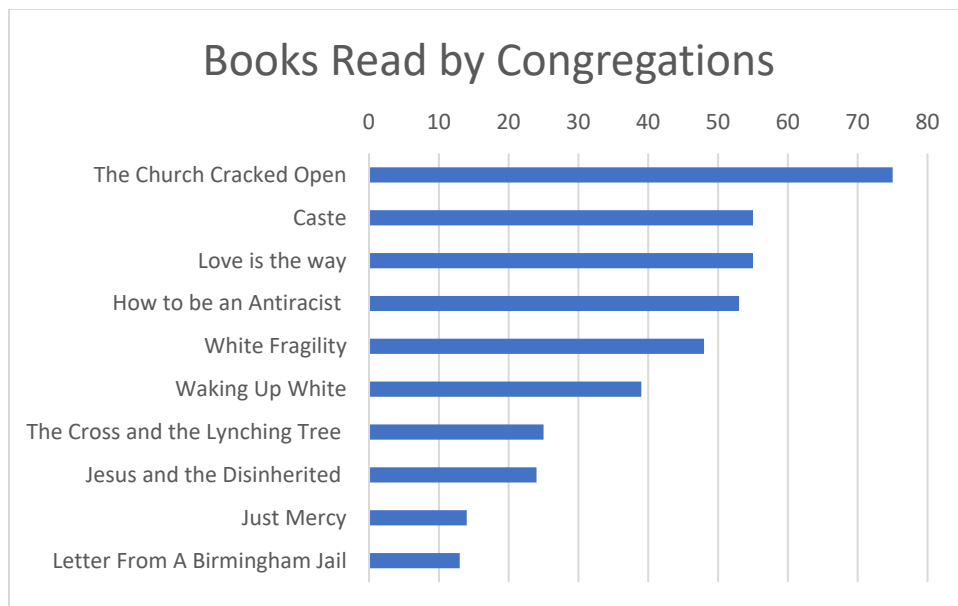


About 10% of responding congregations mentioned having a dedicated committee, ministry, or initiative focusing on issues of racism and equality in their church. Over a quarter of responding congregations mentioned having discussions about topics related to race and a similar number said they hosted or attended an event. 41 congregations talked about organizing a pilgrimage to places related to racial justice, such as Selma, Alabama or a civil rights museum. Around 400 congregations hosted or had attenders or leaders participate in a training or workshop related to the topic.

Books Read by Congregations

Many congregations used 2021 as year to learn and educate themselves about the issue of racism. 946 congregations, about 25% of those who provided an answer to the question, mentioned reading books as part of their response. About half of these congregations provided specific titles and these congregations read nearly 200 unique titles. Books mentioned which were read by more than 10 congregations are as follows:

- *The Church Cracked Open: Disruption, Decline, and New Hope for Beloved Community* by Stephanie Spellers
- *Caste: The Origins of Our Discontents* by Isabel Wilkerson
- *Love is the way: Holding on to Hope in Troubling Times* by Michael Curry
- *How to be an Antiracist* by Ibram X. Kendi
- *White Fragility: Why It's So Hard for White People to Talk About Racism* by Robin DiAngelo
- *Waking Up White: And Finding Myself in the Story of Race* by Debby Irving
- *The Cross and the Lynching Tree* by James H. Cone
- *Jesus and the Disinherited* by Howard Thurman
- *Just Mercy: A Story of Justice and Redemption* by Bryan Stevenson
- *Letter From A Birmingham Jail* by Martin Luther King, Jr.



In addition to reading and holding book groups, several congregations talked about using movies, documentaries, podcasts, and other media as well. For all types of media, some congregations focused on work specifically about addressing racism while some chose to focus on works, fiction and nonfiction, made by authors and creators who are people of color.

Investigating Local History

208 congregations mentioned in their responses that they investigated the history of their church, local community, or both. These efforts were often to uncover if their building was constructed using slave labor, if there were unnamed graves of people of color in their cemeteries, or if their building had any monuments in honor of slaveholders. Several churches who dug into their local history did so in partnership with a local historical society.

Engagement with Materials from The Episcopal Church

Several congregations engaged with materials from The Episcopal Church regarding racism. 727 congregations talked about “Sacred Ground” circles. Most reference to this program were about people doing them in 2021 but there were some mentions to having completed them before but members

wanting to continue the conversation or laying the groundwork to start them in 2022. In addition, 206 congregations used the “Becoming Beloved Community” program. 27 congregations referenced the Absalom Jones Center for Racial Healing and another 25 congregations talked about honoring Absalom Jones in some way. 57 congregations cited their baptismal vows as informing their attitudes about and responses to racism.

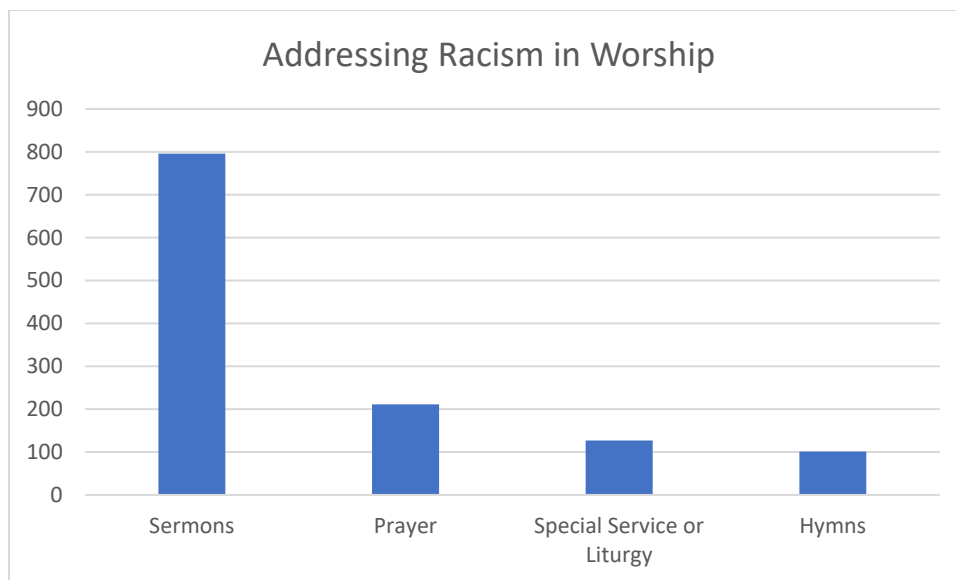
Community Engagement

1,402 congregations, over a third of those who responded, talked about doing the work of naming, addressing, and dismantling racism in connection with their community. This took the form of partnerships with other nearby Episcopal congregations, Christian churches in the area, interreligious groups, or local community organizations. These efforts include activism in local issues, sharing in events or discussion groups, and raising awareness. In addition, 139 congregations specifically mentioned donating to local organizations or scholarships. Further, over 100 congregations mentioned the idea of reparations.

Over 700 congregations referenced their diocese in some way in their response. Dioceses provided trainings, workshops, events, resources, newsletters, and more that congregations used and passed along to their members. For nearly a fifth of responding congregations, their Diocese was a valuable resource when addressing the issue of racism.

Addressing Racism in Worship

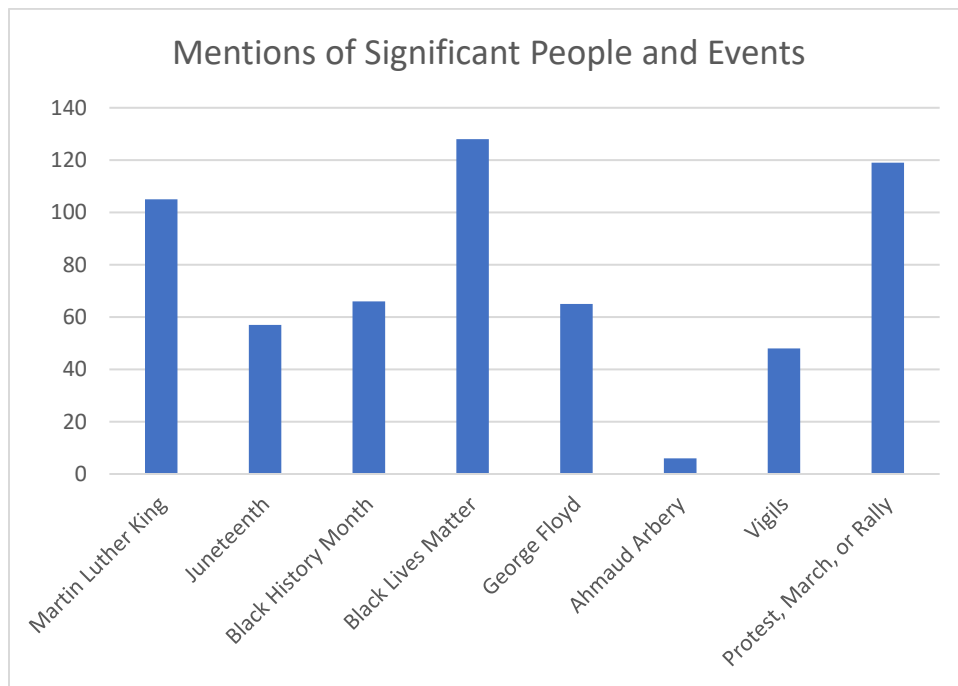
Several Episcopal Congregations used their worship services as times to address the injustices of racism. Almost 800 congregations said the evils of racism had been addressed in a sermon or homily, sometimes with a guest preacher but often by their own clergy leaders. More than 5% of congregations reported praying for matters related to race and about 127 congregations had a special service or liturgy related to racism. About 100 congregations referenced using music, such as African American spirituals, in their worship. Several of these congregations talked about adding the *Lift Every Voice and Sing* hymnal to their pews.



Responses to Significant People and Events

Many congregations discussed significant people and events in the United States as part of their response. 105 congregations talked about honoring Martin Luther King Jr., 57 congregations talked about Juneteenth, and 66 congregations talked about Black History Month.

Further, 128 congregations talked about the Black Lives Matter movement. Several of these mentions were about displaying a banner outside their building to show public support for Black Lives Matter. Many of congregations who mentioned displaying a banner talked about how it was defaced or vandalized. 65 congregations talked about the events surrounding George Floyd and 6 talked about Ahmaud Arbery. 48 congregations participated or held a vigil in 2021 related to racism and 119 talked about protests, marches, rallies, or demonstrations.



Other Responses

Several congregations also mentioned examining the artwork they use to see how racially representative it is. This included bulletin cover art, stained glass windows, nativity scenes used in the Christmas season, picture books shown to children, figurines used in Godly Play, and more.

Many congregations also talked about striving for diversity on their Vestry board and among the employees of the congregation. Similarly, several congregations talked about supporting Black-owned businesses in their community and making sure vendors they use for various events or services have racial diversity.

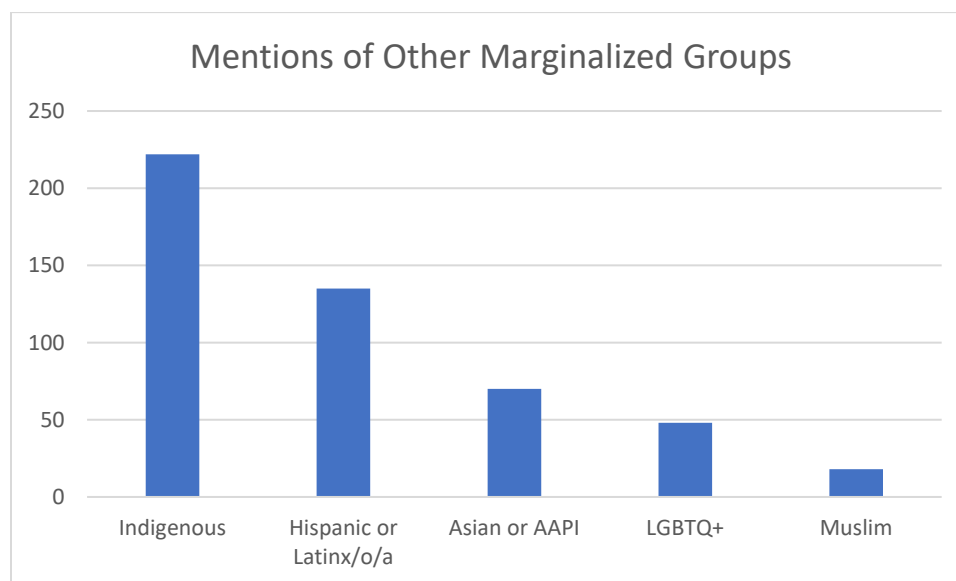
Posting their position on racial justice issues on social media pages was also a common response. Congregations took measures to ensure their stance on various matters related to race were known publicly, not just among their congregants.

Other Groups

While most congregations discussed racism in the context of Black Americans, there were other groups that were mentioned.

The most common other group discussed were Indigenous peoples. Congregations discussed the history of The Episcopal Church with boarding schools and the mistreatment of Indigenous peoples. Of the over 200 congregations who discussed Indigenous peoples, most of them talked about creating a land acknowledgement statement to be used in worship services in order to acknowledge the original caretakers of the land their buildings now occupy.

Some congregations also mentioned discrimination toward Hispanic or Latino peoples, often related to issues around the country's southern border. A few congregations described their response to incidence of hate directed to the Asian or Pacific Islander communities. Finally, a small handful of congregations discussed their responses to racism as being part of a bigger conversation of discrimination and how their efforts extended to LGBTQ+ advocacy and expanding their knowledge of their Muslim neighbors.



General and No Action Responses

Approximately 313 congregations talked about their congregation being welcoming and open to all. About half of these congregations, however, listed that as their only response to racism and did not provide any other details in their response.

310 congregations, about 8% of responding congregations, indicated that their congregation did not address the injustices of racism in 2021. Some of these congregations elaborated further to explain that they did not have the capacity for this work because they were hit hard by the pandemic and were

just trying to survive, or they were without leadership during that year. Among the congregations who said they did not engage in this work this year, a handful indicated they want to make it a priority for 2022. There were congregations, however, who said racism is not an issue they need to address in themselves, their congregation, or their community.

Congregations Outside the United States

177 of the Episcopal Church's congregations outside of the United States provided responses to this question. A large percentage of these congregations, about 26%, said they did not engage in this kind of work in 2021. Several of those congregations cited racism to not be a problem in their country. The international congregations who did say they engaged in discussion or work around the injustices of racism mostly focused on educating the future generations and raising awareness. Most of these congregations focused on emphasizing their welcoming nature and being open to all. About 30 congregations said they preached about racism and about 16 congregations said they attended events. Some of these congregations said they focused on other forms of discrimination which are more prevalent in their context, such as xenophobia or sexism.

Conclusion

In conclusion, 2021 was a year full of education and action regarding the injustices of racism for the Episcopal Church. Many churches engaged in discussions and events, read books, heard sermons, or engaged with their community about the injustices of racism. Many congregations reinforced the importance of this work and expressed a desire to do more in 2022. There were some barriers, such as the ongoing Covid-19 pandemic and leadership changes, which made it difficult for some churches to engage in this work.

The data presented in this report are not an exhaustive list of all the efforts congregations have made in this area. Percentages in this report are based only on the congregations who answered the question in the 2021 parochial report and provided details about their response.