



for our common life

Thanks for joining us this evening for Session Four of *For our Common Life* with our special guest, the Hon. Byron Rushing. Mr. Rushing served as a member of the Massachusetts House of Representatives from 1983 to 2019. He is a long-standing elected deputy to the General Convention of the Episcopal Church, having been elected in the Diocese of Massachusetts since 1973. He has also served as the Vice President of the House of Deputies since 2012. Mr. Rushing's professional and vocational endeavors have led him to champion a wide range of causes related to civil rights and racial justice both in government and the Church.

Tonight's conversation is, perhaps, the most honest of our series to date. Byron speaks passionately about our society's need -- and the Church's need -- to know and recognize the collective trauma in the history of Black experience in our land that spans over four centuries. Yet in such a great length of time, we have made seemingly little progress in the advancement of reparations and restitution while failing to understand and comprehend the scale and impact of the theft of Black wealth and culture.

To be clear, "we" refers to the White and privileged in America and the Church. These are conversations that especially must take place in the Episcopal Church for (at least) two main reasons:

- 1) demographically, we are overwhelmingly White and often choose not to embrace challenging conversations regarding race, justice, and diversity
- 2) in many times and places throughout our history, we have benefitted from the labor of enslaved Black people and failed to take a stand in opposition to the sins of slavery and racism.

And yet, there is hope! As Byron says to DioBeth, "**keep doing what you're doing...just do it faster!**" With thanks to Chuck Dickerson, Steve Baker, and all of you for making this evening possible, we hope to be doing just that.

SESSION FOUR

MARCH 17TH, 2022

REPENTANCE AND REPAIR A FAITHFUL LOOK AT REPARATIONS

WITH SPECIAL GUEST

THE HON.
BYRON
RUSHING

QUESTIONS FOR DISCUSSION SESSION FOUR

"IF WE BELIEVE THAT GOD IS CALLING US TO FORM A SOCIETY THAT IS MORE JUST, **THAT JUSTICE DOESN'T HAPPEN AUTOMATICALLY.** IT HAPPENS WHEN WE ARE INVOLVED IN A MISSIONARY WORK TO END INJUSTICE."

reparations

the payment for an incredibly terrible and grievous injustice to the people who experienced it immediately and to their descendants

the response to the horror of slavery and the horror of the attitude and treatment of Black people after they were legally free

- **What feelings or emotions does the term "reparations" evoke for you?**
- **As we continue through this season of Lent, how might we talk about reparations and restitution as deeply related to our confessional language of "things left undone" or "things done on our behalf"?**
- **Seminaries, dioceses, and even individual congregations have begun payments of restitution and/or reparations to the descendants of enslaved people. What might a conversation about these topics look like in your congregation or amongst your Vestry?**
- **In your congregation, what examples of intentional representation of racial diversity and inclusion can be found in your sanctuary? Membership? Staff? Music? Budget? Formation?**