

REPARATIONS COMMITTEE HISTORY

re·pa·ra·tion | \ ,re-pə-'rā-shən \

noun

- 1 a: a repairing or keeping in repair
b: reparations plural : REPAIRS
- 2 a: the act of making amends, offering expiation, or giving satisfaction for a wrong or injury
b: something done or given as amends or satisfaction
- 3: the payment of damages : INDEMNIFICATION
specifically : compensation in money or materials payable by a defeated nation for damages to or expenditures sustained by another nation as a result of hostilities with the defeated nation — usually used in plural

Learn to do good; seek justice, correct oppression; bring justice to the fatherless, and plead the widow's cause.

— Isaiah 1:17

God has told you, O human, what is good; and what does God require of you but to do justice, and to love kindness, and to walk humbly with your God?

— Micah 6:8

Never forget that justice is what love looks like in public.

— *Cornel West*

Won't reparations divide us? Not any more than we are already divided. The wealth gap merely puts a number on something we feel but cannot say - that American prosperity was ill-gotten and selective in its distribution. What is needed is an airing of family secrets, a settling with old ghosts. What is needed is a healing of the American psyche and the banishment of white guilt.

— *Ta-Nehisi Coates*, "The Case for Reparations"

In 2015, after a series of police killings of unarmed black men, First Presbyterian Church of San Anselmo entered a new period of discernment about the current state of race relations in our country. Prayerful acts and Sunday seminars to view and discuss award-winning documentaries were ways in which the congregation began to address this crisis. The Session, the governing body of the church, voted to read books written by and about African Americans, their experience with racism and the work of anti-racists. Each

member volunteered for a specific title, and almost every monthly session meeting someone reported out about their book and how it impacted them. Finding out last year that San Anselmo is the whitest town in all of California, reaffirmed our understanding of our white privilege ([SF Chronicle](#)).

During the summer of 2019, a smaller group of session members began the work of investigating our role in bringing the nationwide discussion of reparations to a much more local, personal level. What could we do as a church, as a faith based community, to publicly address our privilege and productively make amends for that inheritance -- to help repair what has been broken for so long? To that end we have contacted our local leaders on the San Anselmo Town Council and our supervisor at the county office to investigate whether or not our current ordinances and zoning laws are free of any discriminatory language or action (race, gender, sexual orientation). We have also approached Marin City Health and Wellness Center to explore an ongoing partnership that provides both financial support as well as volunteer opportunities. What drew us to this organization is that they are mostly led by a black staff to serve a black community. They would be able to tell us how best to help, to serve, to make amends.

We recognize that this is just the beginning of a journey that is long overdue and possibly never ending. We accept our role in this important work. We embrace the opportunities it brings us as a people of privilege seeking to do justice for our African American brothers and sisters. And, we acknowledge that there is still a great deal for us to learn and that it is imperative that we continue to do so.

San Anselmo Town Council

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37 Merced Avenue
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January 23, 2020

Katie Rice, Marin County Supervisor for District 2
Room 329 Civic Center,
3501 Civic Center Drive
San Rafael, CA 94903

Dear Supervisor Rice,

I'm reaching out to you as a resident of Marin county, a teacher at Drake High School and a member of the First Presbyterian Church of San Anselmo. A small committee at our church is seeking ways to engage in the important work of reparations. We are working both locally and within the greater county. To that end, I wanted to know if there have been efforts by the current or past board of supervisors to review the ordinances of the county to make sure they are all free of bias and discrimination. If it has been done, where might I find information on that process? If this has not been done, how may we help to ensure that it does happen and very soon? We are eager to be of service.

Thank you for your time and your attention to this vital matter. Please feel free to contact me via email, phone or snail mail.

Sincerely,
Raquel Littleton-Nelson
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415-479-1123

What does reparations look like in our work?

What is the criteria for having met it?

Cash payments to individual victims are but a small part of the reparative package under the atonement model wherever it has been implemented. The most effective reparations are "rehabilitative," as they are designed to nurture the group's self-empowerment and community-building. In the case of African Americans, rehabilitative reparations must begin with the lingering effects of slavery and Jim Crow, including the racial gaps in homeownership (43% of African Americans are homeowners, compared with 73% of whites), net family wealth (the median white household owns 86 times the assets of the median black household) and educational funding (predominantly black school districts annually receive \$23 billion less in K-12 funding than similarly sized white school districts).

Forgiveness is the second step under the atonement model. It may not be immediate or automatically forthcoming. And yet, once an appropriate apology and sufficient reparations are provided by the government, the question of forgiveness arrives on each victim's desk like a subpoena; it necessitates a response. Forgiveness evolves over time as the perpetrator and victims negotiate and adjust the reparations.

[LA Times Op-Ed](#) by ROY L. BROOKS - APRIL 23, 2019

[What Reparations for Slavery Might Look Like in 2019](#)

Lent Sunday Seminars

March 1 Facilitated by Raquel Nelson	White Like Me (Part I) Anti-racist educator and author Tim Wise, explores race and racism in the US through the lens of whiteness and white privilege.	What is white privilege? What is an anti-racist?
March 8 Facilitated by Raquel Nelson	White Like Me (Part II)	How does white privilege shape individual attitudes, electoral politics, and government policy?

<p>March 15</p> <p>Facilitated by Rev. Scott Clark</p>	<p>Michelle Alexander's <i>The New Jim Crow</i> TED Talk</p>	<p>How does racism operate within systems and structures? What is structural racism?</p>
<p>March 22</p> <p>Facilitated by Rev. Scott Clark</p>	<p>Notes from the Field by Anna Deavere Smith</p>	<p>How does systemic racism impact the individuals within the system? How do individuals impact the system?</p>
<p>March 29</p> <p>Facilitated by Royce Truex</p>	<p>Facing the Truth: The Case for Reparations - Bill Moyers interview with Ta-Nehisi Coates</p>	<p>What questions does this presentation raise? Any surprises? Are you convinced?</p>
<p>April 5</p> <p>Facilitated by Royce Truex and Rev. Scott Clark</p>	<p>Discussion of entire series and consideration of reparations proposals</p>	<p>What does reparations look like locally, particularly with regard to the work of this congregation?</p>