UNITED METHODISTS
OF GREATER NEW JERSEY

A Journey of Hope

A Just, Inclusive and Equitable Church
Working Together to End the Sin of Racism

The Executive Summary

The death of George Floyd, an African American suffocated by a White police officer, draws attention to present and past racism against African Americans in our nation and The United Methodist Church, including GNJ and its congregations.

Native Americans, were removed from their land, including in the GNJ Area and forced onto a reservation in the Pinelands. African Americans and Native Americans and all other People of Color in the GNJ Area, including within The United Methodist Church have experienced racism in the past and racism continues today.

Today, God calls United Methodists to do better in ending racism, privilege and oppression in the church and world.

This report and its goals were developed in consultation with leaders and experts from across the country and guided by a group of 10 GNJ laity and clergy. Nine different GNJ groups, including ethnic caucuses, GNJ leadership and GNJ staff including the cabinet reviewed and provided input into the report and its goals and measures. More than 100 people assisted in the development of the report.

GNJ has been a leader in diversity, and yet GNJ still has more journey to travel. It is evident after talking with people who have experienced racism and harm that GNJ has the opportunity at this moment to go deeper in its work to end the sin of racism and take action to repair past harm.

A Journey of Hope report sets forth a bold plan for GNJ to work together to end the sin of racism as we build on our past progress and go deeper in our ministry to create a more just, inclusive and equitable church. It calls us to **ACT** by creating compelling **A**spirations to end the sin of racism, deepening **C**omprehension and understanding of racism and how to end racism, and **T**ransform the church into a vital and dynamic witness of God's grace through Jesus Christ and live out our baptismal vows.

The Plan's cornerstones include the following actions.

- Equity in how we apportion and use our resources.
- Acknowledge, repent and address past harm.
- Build on our 10-year intercultural competency plan to deepen understanding of racism and how to work to end the sin of racism.
- Strongly encourage and support every congregation to develop A Journey of Hope **ACT** plan. This plan integrates ending the sin of racism and the mission of GNJ.
- Implement 5 keystone measures that are central to ending the sin of racism and implementing the other measures and actions in the report.

An Urgent Calling

Honor the humanity, racial identity, uniqueness and sacred worth of everyone as we live out our baptismal vow.

As baptized Christians, we renounce the spiritual forces of wickedness, reject the evil powers of this world, and repent of our sin. We accept the freedom and power God gives us to resist evil, injustice, and oppression in whatever forms they present themselves. We confess Jesus Christ as our Savior, put our whole trust in his grace, and promise to serve him as our Lord, in union with the Church which Christ has opened to people of all ages, nations, and races.

Goal: End the sin of racism in GNJ

GNJ will dismantle systems and structures within the church that perpetuate racism.

5 Keystone Measures

1. 50 trained GNJ trainers and facilitators who are actively engaged with 150 congregations that are developing and engaging in A Journey of Hope Plan by **September 2022.** (150 congregations that self-identify, represent 25% of our congregations and a number that will become a tipping point for ending the sin of racism)

2. At least 50% of GNJ agency chairpersons are People of Color by **June 2023** and the number of African American/Black and Hispanic/Latino clergy elders are doubled, and the number of all Clergy of Color is increased by **June 2025**. (While the goal is to increase the number of all clergy of color, we have set a goal of doubling two groups because GNJ has less than 10 African American/Black Elders with more than 40 African American/Black congregations and only 8 Hispanic/Latino clergy elders with the Hispanic/Latino community being the fastest growing population in GNJ)

3. 25 new ethnic congregations (at least 10 African American) by using new technologies and innovative strategies, and strengthen the worship, ministry and finances of 10 existing congregations of color by **December 2025**. (This goal requires us to think differently and creatively about congregations and new faith communities and will impact our future development of all congregations)

4. A handbook of all existing GNJ policies and procedures that have been reviewed and updated to ensure GNJ's policies and procedures create a culture of racial justice, inclusion and equity by **February of 2022**. (Presently the policies and procedures of GNJ are not contained in one place and they have never been reviewed for any bias on injustice to a group of people)

5. $4.1 million investment in the health and vitality of GNJ through debt forgiveness, equitable salary and shared ministry apportionment and billables in low income communities by **December 2023.** (For all African American and Native American congregations and all other congregations in low income communities, this investment equals $2.8 million in debt forgiveness for past billables and loans, $700,000 in reducing shared ministry and billables in low income communities and $600,000 in grants for ministry and clergy salary in low income communities)

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A Journey of Hope

A Just, Inclusive and Equitable Church
Working Together to End the Sin of Racism

The Report

The Urgency of Our Time
The death of George Floyd, an African American suffocated by a White police officer, draws attention to present and past racism against African Americans in our nation and The United Methodist Church, including GNJ and its congregations. For centuries GNJ has participated in institutional racism. Our actions and activities that support racism include (but are not limited to) to segregating African Americans, under valuing the gifts of African Americans in leadership, passively and ineffectively addressing racism in the church and society and allowing social and church systems to suppress and oppress African Americans.

New Jersey was originally Native American land before Native Americans were removed from their land and forced to a reservation in the Pinelands. Native Americans, particularly the Nanticoke Lenni-Lenape Tribe, experienced oppression, discrimination and disregard for their sacred land. United Methodists while witnessing and discipling Native Americans, did not honor their culture and heritage. Today there is one Native American United Methodist congregation in GNJ, St. Johns in Cumberland County, the fifth oldest Native American Church. Our congregations in Cumberland and Salam County are built on Native American land.

History portrays that in GNJ, attitudes and behavior allowed racism to go unchecked at times and diminished our witness of the grace and justice of God through Jesus Christ.

We thank God that there have been times when United Methodists in GNJ engaged in addressing and making progress to end segregation and racism. We can point to 1964 when GNJ became one of the first conferences to merge African American/Black and primarily Anglo conferences and became one of the first primarily Anglo conferences in the denomination to be led by an African American Bishop, Prince Taylor. Today, GNJ has one of the highest percentages of multi-racial congregations and cross racial appointments in the denomination.

Today, God calls United Methodists to do better in ending racism, privilege and oppression in the church and world.

A Journey of Hope calls us to an urgent and spiritual journey and our destination is the transformation of minds, hearts, actions and systems so that we eliminate the sin of racism in GNJ. We move with a sense of purpose and urgency because people are being harmed, discriminated against and even killed because of their skin color.

What Is Racism

Racism is a belief or value that an individual or a group of individuals feel superior to people of another race and then use those beliefs and values to create practices, systems, structures and organizational policies to create supremacy, privilege, power and economic standing over another race. In the United States, when White people arrived in this land, they used their beliefs and values of superiority to conquer, enslave, marginalize, oppress and victimize People of Color using them as objects. White people used their beliefs and values to teach and create systems and structures that reinforce the belief that one race is better than another. While many of these immoral practices have been ruled against the law, they cast a deep divide among people and have disadvantaged People of Color that continues to this day as evidenced in income, education, housing inequities and church inequities in appointments, shared ministry, salaries, and other ministries. Ending the sin of racism is not merely ending racist belief and values. It is not merely making friendships or cross racial appointments or depicting more People of Color in church literature. Ending the sin of racism is working together to dismantle employment, education, housing, economic and, yes, church systems that disadvantage People of Color.

> **Stop judging by appearances.**
>
> -John7:24

Examples of systemic racism include school and housing segregation and hiring policies and school admission practices that favor people of the majority race. Systemic racism is not always overt. It is embedded into the culture, values and beliefs of an organization. Racist beliefs and values built into policing has led to the deaths of many African Americans. Racism is the participation in such behaviors and systems. Not actively working to end racist behaviors and systems is also a form of racism.

Three Ways People Have Engaged

1. Segregation and Oppression – from the beginning of our nation, African Americans and Native Americans were segregated, oppressed, marched off their land and enslaved because of their skin color. Racism is a sin is as it treats people differently because of their skin color.
2. Assimilation – the belief that People of Color are inferior or are a lessor culture to White culture and by assimilating People of Color with White culture will help People of Color to become better people. Any view that a group of people are inferior to another group of people is a sin. While we seek inclusion and integration, it is because we are all children of God. God does not see any group as inferior.
3. Anti-Racism – the recognition that racism is a sin and we must all work together to end the sin of racism within the church, society and individuals. As believers of Jesus Christ we are called to do the ministry and work of anti-racism. As we work to end the sin of racism, we seek change in four areas.

    a. *Individual racism* is personal beliefs, values, stereotypes, prejudices and attitudes, consciously or unconsciously, that devalue and/or hurt the humanity and God's giftedness of People of Color. This is the first step of racism and leads to the others.

    b. *Interpersonal racism* builds on individual racism and is when people use slurs, biases, hateful and hurtful words or actions against People of Color. *Interpersonal racism* effects the relationships or lack of relationships we have with people of a race different than one's own.

    c. *Institutional racism* occurs when an organization, like the church, has discriminatory policies or is biased in treatment and practices based on race that results in inequitable outcomes for African Americans, indigenous people or people of color. For example,

when the White people of The United Methodist Church organized separate conferences for African Americans in 1939 through 1968, this church policy was solely based on race and eliminated African Americans rights to resources and opportunities within the larger church.

d. *Structural racism* is a system of racial bias that stretches across cultures, organizations and institutions. The system establishes the biases implicitly and explicitly and society accepts these biases. For example, when an African American is killed by a police officer, many White people think it is because the person did something wrong and deserved to be killed. Similarly, courts sentence African Americans to longer prison sentences than White people because society has been conditioned to believe African Americans are more dangerous than White people. Society has established biases against communities of color over the years through housing policies, hiring practices and income disparities particularly between African American and White people. For instance, communities of color have been created over the years through housing policies and hiring and income disparities particularly between African American and White people through a practice known as redlining. Redlining increased fees and rates for African American home purchasers that limited wealth by restricting access to higher valued properties based solely on the color of one's skin.

A Spiritual Discipline

Ending the sin of racism is a spiritual discipline that is practiced and engaged individually and together. As we work together and work toward ending the sin of racism, our faith is deepened, and we grow spiritually – *closer to God and closer to one another.* Significant to the ministry and work are the tools of spiritual disciplines: praying, reading and understanding scripture, lamenting, confessing, repenting, worshiping, fasting, encountering and sharing the grace of God through Jesus Christ, engaging in small groups and serving in mission and acts of justice. The Journey of Hope is a spiritual discipline that ultimately changes and shapes beliefs, values, systems and actions.

Those Who Have Been Harmed

Our nation has a more than 400-year history of racism with African Americans and Native Americans who are Children of God who were forced off their land and in the case of African Americans forced to come to the US against their will. African Americans and Native Americans were tortured, enslaved, beaten, oppressed, segregated and seen as less than human. Others, of Latino/Hispanic, Asian, Middle Eastern and Mixed-Race heritage and Blacks who came following slavery, also experienced the sin of racism. The color of one's skin became a standard for how we viewed, differentiated and treated people in the United States. The sin of racism has been embedded in our nation and in The United Methodist Church since its founding more than 250 years ago through sins of commission and omission. The White people of the United Methodist Church have a responsibility to continue to repent, repair the harm and make right our relationship with God and those who have experienced racism, particularly addressing our long history of racism and oppression with African Americans and Native Americans. Ultimately, our progress to end the sin of racism is a change of heart involving repenting and turning toward God, and the transformation of systems, structures and organization so that GNJ is more just, inclusive and equitable.

Referring to People
Over the years a variety of terms have been used to identify people, races, nationalities and cultures. The terminology and names continue to evolve and change. In this document, we use terms as imperfect as they are to identify the people of different races, ethnicities, nationalities and cultures. It is recognized that any term used has limitations and imperfections and will continue to evolve and change.

African American/Black – people including but not limited to having origins in Sub-Saharan Africa, and other nations such as Haiti, Jamaica, Dominican Republic. African Americans/Blacks are sometimes referred to as the African Diaspora and Afro Caribbean.

Asian – people having origins in any of the original peoples of the Far East, Southeast Asia and Indian subcontinent including but not limited to Filipinos, Indians, South and North Koreans, Japanese and Chinese.

Hispanic/Latino – people having their origins primarily in Spanish speaking nations and includes but is not limited to portions or all of Latin America, Central America, South America, the Caribbean including but not limited to Cuba, Puerto Rico and Dominican Republic.

Middle Eastern – people having origins in the Middle East and parts of North Africa.

Mixed Race – people whose heritage is two or more races.

Native Americans and Native People – the original people of North America that include but are not limited to the American Indian, Eskimos and Pacific Islanders.

People of Color – people of the races, culture and nationalities of African American/Black, Asian, Hispanic/Latino, Middle Eastern, Mixed Race and Native American.

White - people having origins in Europe who are often called Anglos.

The terms have their limitations, and in the family of God we are all part of the same humanity being one and unique at the same time. We honor others by listening and understanding and using terms that people want to be called.

How will A Journey of Hope End the Sin of Racism
A Journey of Hope is based on **ACT: A**spiring to something different, **C**omprehending and understanding that we are called to live and act differently, and **T**ransforming our beliefs, values, policies, actions to be a more racially just, inclusive and equitable church.

ASPIRE – Through the Holy Spirit, imagining what the community of God looks like, a vision for a racially just and inclusive church.

- Envision the type of disciples, leaders, congregations and organizations our church needs to be racially just, inclusive and reconciling.
- Develop and pursue actions and accountability to achieve the vision.

GNJ has four aspirations, new disciples, transformational leaders, fruitful vital congregations and a transformed world all of which are working to spread the Good News of Jesus Christ and do justice including ending racism.

Who are disciples of Jesus Christ working to end racism?
Disciples are life-long learners and followers of Jesus Christ who passionately serve God in the church and in the world with competence to engage cross culturally/racially and are actively working to end racism.

Who is a transformational leader?
A transformational leader, through the guidance and power of the Holy Spirit, casts a compelling vision and challenging goals, and whose leadership inspires change and growth and is actively leading others to end racism.

> I saw a new heaven and a new earth for the former passed away.
> -Revelation 21:1

What is a fruitful vital congregation?
A fruitful Wesleyan vital congregation is a Holy Spirit-led community of passionate disciples who are connectional and Wesleyan in their beliefs and practices that work together to 1) extend radical hospitality and make new and grow all disciples, 2) create inspiring worship, 3) intentionally grow faith through small groups and children and youth ministries, 4) engage in risk taking community witness, mercy and justice mission, and 5) increase generosity and giving to mission. (Acts 2:42-47), and in all of its ministry is actively developing cultural competence in its members and a congregation engaged in ending racism within the congregation, its community and GNJ.

What is world transformation?
A community where lives are changed, hope abounds, diversity is embraced, the spark of the Gospel is ignited, justice is for all and all have the opportunity, knowledge and skills to live to their full God-given potential and is ending racism in its community and structures and welcoming all people (Micah 6:8, Luke 10:27)

COMPREHEND: LISTEN TO LEARN AND UNDERSTAND - listening with the heart of God and being culturally competent.[1] This work will build on and incorporate GNJ's 10-year intercultural competency plan.

- Learn and understand about racism and recognize biases, privileges and fragilities - where they came from and how to live differently.
- Listen to people of color share their story and validate the feelings and experiences of African Americans and people of color.

[1] Cultural competence is 1) being aware of one's own world view, 2) developing positive attitudes towards cultural differences, 3) gaining knowledge of different cultural practices and world views, 4) developing skills for communication and interaction across cultures, and 5) addressing prejudice and racism in yourself, in others, in the church and in societal values, beliefs, actions and systems. Cultural competence requires more than becoming culturally aware or practicing tolerance. Rather, it is the ability to identify and challenge one's own cultural assumptions, values and beliefs when they inhibit or dishonor other's cultural experience.

GNJ will use existing and/or develop materials to assess an individual's and a congregation's understanding of and progress toward ending racism and teach for understanding and change that will at a minimum include the following content:

1. The history of race and racism within society and the church.
2. First-hand stories and experiences of people who have been affected by racism.
3. Material and illustrations of how the Bible and Christian theology have been used to continue racist practices, privilege, implicit bias, internalized oppression, the systemic nature of racism, white supremacy, the difference between equality and equity, genuine repentance, intercultural competence, how to have an outward mindset and the four types and uses of racism – individual, interpersonal, institutional and structural racism.
4. Specific strategies for ending racism, including how to engage in the work of ending racism.

TRANSFORM - the change God is expecting of us.

- Work together to end racism by challenging and changing behaviors and discriminatory systems and begin to repair the damage racism has done to African Americans and Native Americans, Hispanics/Latinos, Asians and Pacific Islanders.
- Develop and demonstrate individual, congregational and organizational values, beliefs, priorities and actions that are just, inclusive and equitable.

Let justice roll down like waters and righteousness like an ever-flowing stream.

-Amos 5:24

While a **Journey of Hope** invites individuals, congregations and organizations to aspire to a new way of living and being the church, it is also a call to repentance, a complete turnaround. The hope of ending racism begins by repenting from the sin of racism. The sin of racism is engaging in racist behavior and systems and not addressing racist behavior and working to end racism. True repentance is embracing God's vision for racial justice, inclusion and equity and working relentlessly to end racism.

The Legislation

Proposed Legislation to the October 5 and 6, 2020 Annual Conference

Whereas African Americans and Native Americans were oppressed, forced from their homes and enslaved in the Greater New Jersey Area; and

Whereas African Americans and Native Americans were segregated and experienced racism by The Methodist Church since its founding and racism continues today toward all People of Color by United Methodists and our organizations and structures; and

Whereas GNJ has committed to be a multi-racial and interculturally competent church and recent events in our nation call the church to be an example and do better by working together to end the sin of racism in GNJ;

Therefore, we courageously support and commit to boldly work together to end the sin of racism in GNJ and create a more racially just, inclusive and equitable church and carry out A Journey of Hope calling, measure and actions.

Transformational Measures and Actions

1. **Resources** to assist leaders, congregations and communities to end racism.
   50 trained GNJ trainers and facilitators actively engaged with 150 congregations that are developing and engaging in A Journey of Hope Plan[2] by **September 2022**

   Actions
   a. Identify an organization that specializes in ending racism to assist GNJ to develop and/or adapt resources and processes and train leaders for ending racism. **March 2021** -assigned to the Journey of Hope Team
   b. Create A Journey of Hope planning guide for congregations. **September 2021** -assigned to A Journey of Hope Team
   c. Provide intercultural competence and implicit bias assessment and training materials for leaders and congregations. **September 2021** -assigned to the Resource Team
   d. Strongly encourage all GNJ leaders and disciples each year to participate in a study and conversation that helps people continually turn outward and work toward a racially just, inclusive and equitable church. **Start March 2021** - assigned to Church and Society Chairperson
   e. Post to the website congregational models for creating a racially just, inclusive and equitable congregation. **Ongoing** - assigned to the Director of Communications
   f. Continue to train clergy and congregational leaders for cross racial and cultural appointments and offer facilitators to congregations with cross racial appointments for learning and conversation. **Ongoing** - assigned to the Dean of the Cabinet

[2] All plans within GNJ integrate the mission, priorities and goals of GNJ and the congregation. While a Journey of Hope ACT Plan will include how a congregation will work to end the sin of racism, it also integrates the mission of GNJ - new disciples, transformational leaders, fruitful and sustainable vital congregations (markers of vitality and balanced budget) and a transformed world including the spiritual and justice work of ending the sin of racism.

2. **Leadership** that is diverse and culturally competent to lead GNJ and its congregations to end racism.
   At least 50% GNJ of agency chairpersons are People of Color by **June 2023** and increase the number of African American/Black and Hispanic/Latino clergy elders each by 8 and increase the number of all Clergy of Color by **June 2025**.

   Measures
   a. Increase the number of African American/Black by 8 and Latino/Hispanic by 8 clergy elders. **June 2026 (4 each by 2023)** - assigned to District Superintendents
   b. Engage 20 People of Color in the clergy candidacy program. **December 2022** - assigned to the Cabinet
   c. Engage People of Color for at least 50% of Mosaic Ministry participants. **July 2022** - assigned Next Generation Ministry Student Ministry Coordinator.
   d. Double the number of People of Color in process for pastoral and deacon ministry. **December 2022** - assigned to a member of the cabinet
   e. At least 50% of GNJ elected agency chairpersons are People of Color. **June 2023** - assigned to the Nominations Chairperson
   f. Have 200 people complete intercultural competency and Outward Mindset Training. **December 2023** - assigned to the Director of Human Resources and the Nominations Chairperson

   Actions
   a. Create a leadership culture to end racism by training intercultural competence and Outward Mindset with all GNJ staff, newly elected leadership, new clergy and newly appointed clergy within one year of assuming leadership. **Begin July 2021** -assigned to the Director of Human Resources and the Nominations Chairperson
   b. Develop and implement a program to recruit, financially support, educate, mentor and coach new clergy candidates of color. **June 2021** - assigned to the Dean of the Cabinet
   c. Develop a program to mentor new leaders with at least half being persons of color for elected GNJ leadership. **Begin July 2021** -assigned to the Nominations Chairperson
   d. Develop intercultural competence training for students. **December 2021** -assigned to the Next Generation Ministries Executive Director
   e. Make a public witness of the love and justice of Jesus Christ when there are acts of racism in the community, the state, nation or world. **Ongoing** - assigned to the Bishop and Lead Pastors
   f. Engage with other faith communities and state-wide organizations, meet with state-wide law enforcement, elected leadership and justice departments to influence policies, practices and laws that are equitable, unbiased and work to end racism. **Ongoing** - assigned to the Bishop
   g. Report at each annual church conference what the congregation has done to work toward a racially just, inclusive and equitable church. **Ongoing** - assigned to each District Superintendent
   h. Review all candidates for cultural competence and mentor and develop clergy of promise to develop the intercultural competence. **Starting February 2021** - assigned to the Board of Ordained Ministry Chairperson

3. **Ministry** to develop African American/Black and other congregations of color.
   25 new ethnic congregations (at least 10 African American) using new technologies and innovative strategies and strengthen the worship, ministry and finances of 10 existing congregations of color by **December 2025 (10 by 2023)**.

   Measures
   a. Develop 25 Hope Centers by People of Color in ethnic communities. **December 2025 (12 by 2023)** - assigned to A Future With Hope Executive Director
   b. Create a justice and equity center in each region to galvanize, inspire and engage clergy and laity in justice and equity ministry. **December 2023** - Regional Superintendent Team
   c. Start, or develop and financially support, five African American and three additional ethnic congregations to increase their vitality. **December 2023** - assigned to a District Superintendent in each region

   Actions
   a. Train congregations and community leaders through Communities of Hope to assist congregations to serve the people in their community and/or become a Hope Center. **September 2021** - assigned to Hope Center Developer
   b. Continue to fund and support camping programs and Joshua Generation for students of color. **Ongoing** - assigned to the Next Generations Ministry Board Chairperson
   c. Continue to grow IGNITE Communities with 25% of the participants students of color - **Ongoing** - Assigned to Next Generation Ministries Executive Director
   d. Continue with the lawsuit to desegregate public schools in NJ and update the annual conference each year - **Ongoing** - assigned to Church and Society Chairperson

4. **Policies and Procedures** in GNJ that do not lead to harm or bias against African American/Black or any other racial group
   A handbook of all existing GNJ policies and procedures that has been reviewed and updated to ensure GNJ's policies and procedures create a culture of racial justice, inclusion and equity by **February of 2022.**

   Action
   a. Review all GNJ agency policies, procedures and rules for explicit or implicit racial biases and racism and recommend changes to the appropriate bodies to ensure racially just, inclusive and equitable policies and rules. **May 2021** -assigned to Religion and Race Chairperson
   b. Review all submitted annual conference legislation to ensure it does not include implicit or explicit bias against People of Color. **February of each year** -assigned to Religion and Race Chairperson

5. **Invest** in leadership, congregations and ministries to repair harm, start new and grow existing congregations, recruit and develop more transformational leaders and work toward ending the sin of racism
   $4.1 million investment in the health and vitality of GNJ through debt forgiveness, equitable salary and shared ministry apportionment and billables in low income communities and an additional $1 million for Native American sacred land/church preservation. **December 2023**

   Actions and Measures
   a. GNJ will permanently forbear collecting on billable debt (pension, health insurance, workers compensation and property insurance) for all African American/Black and Native American congregations and all other congregations that meet the criteria for the forbearance

program. This will include unpaid amounts for all years prior to and including 2019, and also any unpaid amounts for the 2020 year if the congregation pays at least what it paid in 2019 on its billings from GNJ. If a congregation that is part of the forbearance program sells its property or discontinues to be a United Methodist congregation, the proceeds will be reviewed by the board of trustees and the cabinet to determine how the funds will be used.

The following is the criteria to participate in the forbearance program for all congregations other than African American/Black and Native American.

i. The community's household income is below $55,000.
ii. The worshipers reflect the people living in the community.
iii. The congregation does not have reserves/endowment that may be used to sufficiently fund the congregation's budget including billables.
iv. The congregation does not have other income including rental income to sufficiently fund the congregation's budget including billables.
v. The congregation does not have sufficient giving by members to fund the ministry including billables for a congregation of its size.

If any of the five criteria are in question, a congregation may request a further review by the cabinet and the council on finance and administration who will jointly make a final determination. **December 2020** - assigned to Council on Finance and Administration Chairperson and the Dean of the Cabinet

b. Assist four ethnic congregations in paying building debt. Several congregations of color were approved by GNJ for building programs which could not be sustained by the congregation and GNJ did not provide adequate council or financial support for the building projects. In two of the congregations, the debt is not with GNJ and the CFO/Treasurer along with the district superintendent is to review each of these situations and make a recommendation to the next annual conference session. **June 2021** - assigned to the Board of Trustees Chairperson

c. Develop and financially support a clergy salary guide and system based on NJ public educators, congregational size and clergy accomplishment to ensure community wealth is not the only determiner of clergy salaries, particularly in Congregations of Color. **December 2020** - assigned to the Cabinet in consultation with the Equitable Compensation Commission

d. Start in **January 2021** and ensure **by January 2022** that all grants[3] to congregations and GNJ supported Hope Centers and organizations have A Journey of Hope Plan that is appropriate to their context. An additional $100,000 in grant funds will be set aside in the 2021 budget and based on giving, up to another $100,000 a year will be added until the fund reaches $500,000 to assist congregations to develop and implement their Journey of Hope Plan (See Appendix 1 in the Journey of Hope Report for a guide to developing A Journey of Hope Plan and guidelines for grants). **January 2022** - assigned to the Connectional Table Chairperson and the Cabinet

[3] *All grants* include but not limited to Harvest Mission, Strategic Disciple Making, Equitable Salary, Strategic Salary, emergency need, Hope Centers and Peace with Justice.

e. Apportion shared ministries and billables to congregations in low income communities using the same criteria in 5.a.i-v as long as the congregation has and is making progress on A Journey of Hope Plan and gives 100% of their apportioned shared ministry and billables at the following rates.
   i. Communities with median household income $50,000 to 55,000 – apportion at 70%.
   ii. Communities with median household income $45,000 to 49,999 – apportion at 65%.
   iii. Communities with median household income $40,000 to 44,999 – apportion at 60%.
   iv. Communities with median household income $35,000 to 39,999 – apportion at 55%.
   v. Communities with median household income below $34,999 – apportion at 50%.

   January 2022 -assigned to Council on Finance and Administration Chairperson

f. Native American Land
   i. 10% (a tithe) of the sale of all GNJ property and discontinued churches shall be invested through GNJ's Stewardship Foundation until the fund reaches $1 million for the St. Johns United Methodist Church to ensure the perpetual care of the property. St. Johns is the only Native American Church in GNJ, it is the fifth oldest in the United States and it is a sacred site and burial ground for Native Americans. The funds will be administered through GNJ CONAM (Committee on Native American Ministry) and no more than 5% of the funds may be expended in any given year. **Ongoing** – assigned to the CFO/Treasurer
   ii. All discontinued congregations in Cumberland County and the eastern portion of Salem County including church property along the Delaware River, shall first through CONAM be offered/returned to the Native American Nanticoke Lenni-Lenape Tribe. The land in this area was originally Native American land before Native Americans were removed from their land and forced to a reservation in the Pinelands. If the Tribe does not want to take ownership and care of the property, the property is to be sold and proceeds invested as directed by the GNJ Annual Conference session. **Ongoing** – assigned to the Property Manager and Board of Trustees
   iii. In consultation with CONAM, Next Gen Ministries will identify and develop a means to recognize and honor Native American heritage at the Pinelands Center, remembering that Native Americans were forced to move from Cumberland and Salem Counties to the Pinelands. Funds may be used from unused Native American offerings to establish such a heritage. **Ongoing** – assigned to the Next Gen Executive Director and CONAM.
   iv. Each year GNJ will strongly encourage all congregations to celebrate Native American Sunday, the third Sunday of April unless it is Easter Sunday, and then the fourth Sunday of April, by sharing information of the heritage of Native People and receive an offering for ministry with Native People. **Ongoing** – assigned to the Director of Communication

g. Congregations of Color Property – when a Congregation of Color is discontinued and the property sold, the proceeds shall be used to develop a new or existing Congregation of Color, first considering a Congregation of Color of the ethnicity of the congregation that was discontinued. **Ongoing** – assigned to the Cabinet and the Property Manager

Accountability and Honoring Progress

The above measures and actions shall be for the next five years and modified each year to ensure the aim of creating a racially just, inclusive and equitable church are accomplished. Each year, the executive staff leadership[4] of GNJ, including the cabinet, will report to the annual conference session the progress and challenges to achieving A Journey of Hope Plan that includes but is not limited to the following:

1. The number of congregations with A Journey of Hope Plan and highlight three exemplary plans.
2. The number of African American clergy recruited and in process to be elders in GNJ. Presently there are 10 active African American/Black clergy elders in GNJ with only two under 58 years of age.
3. The number of African American churches that are part of a congregational development cohort and are being resourced to grow congregational vitality.
4. The percent of congregations that have A Journey of Hope Plan and the overall progress that is being made.
5. The number and amount of grants given to African American and other ethnic congregations.
6. Progress on equitable salary where there is income disparity in GNJ communities and what steps were taken to address income disparity.
7. The number of churches that are receiving half billable and half shared ministry.
8. The number of Hope Centers and the percentage in ethnic communities.
9. Progress on the lawsuit to desegregate New Jersey public schools.
10. A census of the percentage of African American/Black, Asian, Hispanic/Latino and Native American congregations' vitality, as compared to Anglo congregations.

Each year, every congregation will be invited to identify an individual from their congregation or community who has demonstrated the aspirational nature of a disciple and/or leader who is leading and working for racial justice, inclusion, equity and ending racism. The individuals will be honored by listing their names in the preconference journal and a certificate from the bishop. Five of the individual's stories will be told at the annual conference session and through the Relay and posted on the website and the individuals will receive a $1,000 grant to use for racial justice, inclusion, equity and ending racism ministries.

Journey of Hope Team

Sammy Arroyo, William D. Carter III, Judy Colorado, Grant Karsner, Kermit Moss, Enger Muteteke, Natalie Palacio, Ingres Simpson, Joyce Williams and Vanessa M. Wilson

[4] The executive staff leadership includes the bishop, dean of the cabinet, CFO, connectional ministries director, communications director, and the executive directors of A Future With Hope, Next Generation Ministries and Stewardship Foundation.

Appendix 1

A Journey of Hope Plan and Grants Guidelines

All plans within GNJ integrate what a congregation is currently doing and working on with the mission, priorities and goals of GNJ. A Journey of Hope Plan includes how a congregation will work to end the sin of racism and integrates it with the mission of GNJ and a congregation/organization - new disciples, transformational leaders, fruitful and sustainable vital congregations (markers of vitality and balanced budget) and a transformed world including the spiritual and justice work of ending the sin of racism. To reflect on and develop how a congregation will fulfill the mission and end the sin of racism, the congregation will engage in conversation.

A Journey of Hope Plan Guide (The guide will be modified in the area of congregational vitality for organizations to what makes a Hope Center or community organization vital within its community)

1. A commitment to be a racially just, inclusive and equitable church/organization
2. Measures and action steps
    h. Ending the sin of racism
    i. Making new and growing existing disciples (see description under Aspirations, p. 7)
    j. Developing transformational leaders (see description under Aspirations, p. 8)
    k. Growing a vital congregation[5] (see description under Aspirations, p. 8)
    l. Transforming the world (see description under Aspirations, p. 8)
3. Guided conversation with a facilitator/trainer
    a. Complete the congregational assessment to identify your congregational vitality and engagement in being a racially just congregation and working to end racism. This assessment will identify areas for learning and grown in the areas of racism and vitality which shall be incorporated into a congregation's plan.
    b. Identify who is living in your community, what are their hopes and joys, abilities and strengths, challenges and needs and spiritual aspirations.
    c. Identify the ministries that are going well, particularly the ministries that are growing congregational vitality and are creating a more racially just church. What are evidences that this is occurring, and the congregation is making progress?
    d. Identify where and how you can you do better. What would be evidences that you are doing better?
    e. Identify who your congregation Aspires to become.
    f. Identify what your congregation needs to Comprehend - learn and understand to end the sin of racism and become more vital.
    Transformational Engagement

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[5] Vital congregations cultivate a deeper relationship with God and meet people's deepest desires through five markers of vitality.

1. Worship cultivates a deeper relationship with God and births hope for living. Marker – grow by one worshiper over a 3-year period of time.
2. Small groups cultivate growth and deeper relationships with God and one another. Marker – 60% of worshipers in a small group experience.
3. Mission through hands on justice and mercy ministries cultivates purpose. Marker – 50% of the worshipers participate in hands on mission in the community.
4. Witness and faith sharing demonstrate our meaning and significance through Jesus Christ. Marker – 1 new profession/reaffirmation of faith for every 20 worshipers in a given year.
5. Giving generously, extends our purpose, significance and making a difference for God. Marker – 18% of a congregation's budget is giving to mission.

g. Identify the specific engagement the congregation take to connect with and serve with the people in your community?
h. Identify how you are you engaging and improving worship, small groups, giving, mission engagement and inviting new people and creating a more racially just church and community.
i. Identify specific steps measures and actions your congregation will take this year to grow vitality and work to develop the congregation's cultural competence?
j. Identify specific steps will your congregation take to meet with elected officials, community leaders and the police department to influence your community to be racially just and work to end racism?
k. The above material is translated into a plan that includes specific measures and actions over 1-3 years.

GNJ Grant Guidelines

GNJ makes grants to further the mission and goals of GNJ and a congregation/organization. Grants are made to congregations that are demonstrate the congregation is engaged in the mission and priorities of GNJ.

1. A completed Journey of Hope Plan
2. A commitment to be a racially just, inclusive and equitable congregation/organization and demonstrating being just, inclusive and equitable in one or more of the following areas women in leadership, disability access, LGBTQ inclusion or ministries with low income persons in rural, urban and suburban areas.
3. Achieving 3 or more of the markers of vitality or demonstrating progress toward achieving 3 or more markers of vitality.
4. Giving 100% of shared ministry and billables or demonstrating progress to give 100% within 2 years, 3 years maximum.
5. Subsequent grants in following years must demonstrate progress in all areas of A Journey of Hope Plan.