

Diversity, Equity & Inclusion

A Business Priority

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Dismantling racism in the church

By Ashley Winters
St. Louis American

Dismantling racism and creating equity has been at the forefront in the St. Louis region since the untimely death of Micheal Brown and the Ferguson Uprising. Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion (DEI) training in the workforce and throughout regional communities have helped gather the broad diversity of the St. Louis community to discuss what a more equitable society looks like for our city.

Organizations like the Ferguson Youth Initiative, Black Lives Matter, and Forward Through Ferguson have been involved in community meetings, research, and policy.

Diversity and inclusion are important in creating a welcoming environment at work and in our daily activities.

According to a study by the *Harvard Business Review*, more diverse organizations ranked higher in innovation—by 19%, and financial performance increased by 9%, which helps improve productivity and decrease employee retention.

But did anyone ever think that DEI would be needed in the church?



Aaron Rogers, DEI coordinator of the Episcopal Diocese, sits in the sanctuary of Christ Church Cathedral Aug. 2.

Photo by Wiley Price / St. Louis American

Well, Pastor Aaron Rogers at St. Stephens Episcopal serves as a ministry Developer for the Episcopal Diocese of Missouri, facilitates the Dismantling Racism Commission.

“Dismantling racism and doing that type of work has always been a passion of mine,” said Rogers.

Being a part of creating a more equitable society for all has always been

a passion for the clergy member, Rogers is also a board member of the Racial Healing + Justice Fund. Giving a little bit of history Rogers tells the St. Louis American—Chester Hines started the position

within the ministry 40 years ago, “He did amazing work,” said Rogers. However, after 40 years of time and devotion, Hines was looking to retire and this vacancy created an opportunity for Rogers

to forge a new direction in DEI work in the Episcopalian Church. When Hine retired a fund was created in his honor, the Chester

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