

WE HAVE A DREAM: A WORLD WITHOUT RACISM

JANUARY, 2021 - Didn't We End Slavery?

We opened with prayer.

The group discussed Frederick Douglass and we learned of his connection to Baltimore and his amazing story.

We discussed the events of the January 6, 2021, insurrection and the prophetic relationship to the content of our October session with our two speakers. We recognized how St. Vincent's Sunday liturgies reflect the concerns for equity, mirroring this group's work.

We dove into reparations, defining it, then asking what the group learned from the article, *The Case for Reparations*. It is not enough to think black people deserve reparations because of slavery, we need to explore what happened after slavery as well.

We covered the history of attempts to eliminate slavery during the first Congress in 1790 and the failed attempts after the Civil War to stop the oppression of black people. There were attempts at reparations in 1846 and 1861 but efforts failed. Even after the Emancipation Proclamation in 1863 and the Freedman's Bureau Bill in 1865, there was little progress and white supremacists and Southern Legislators always found a way to subvert any progress made. The Civil war ended, but the supremacists' mindset did not change as the next historical events showed.

The 13th Amendment abolished slavery but was immediately followed by the Jim Crow era. The 14th Amendment granted equal protection to former enslaved people and the 15th Amendment the right to vote, but the savagery of white supremacists escalated to shut down change. Individual states could have made the decision to end slavery sooner, but white people controlled voting. States established voting criteria to roll back voter rights, a practice that continues today. White paramilitary groups organized against freedmen and fashioned the post-war South just like the pre-war South. State and local laws legalized racial segregation. We covered the appalling history of lynchings, massacres, red lining, contract buying and intimidation to keep black people from integrating white neighborhoods. We began discussing the role government agencies played.

We asked the group to research Harriet Tubman and find a House or Senate bill in the Maryland legislature that helps change a racist system or policy, to share with the group.

We ended with prayer.