

## WE HAVE A DREAM: A WORLD WITHOUT RACISM

### **SEPTEMBER, 2021 - What Choices Do We Have?**

We opened with prayer.

Two sub-committees reported on possible paths for reducing structural and systemic racism.

The first report presented five principles to guide our selection.

1. Education— Share with the parish community our journey learning the impact of structural and systemic racism and how white people benefited.
2. Resources— Determine the scope of action, since St. Vincent's has limited funds to commit to practical and long-term involvement.
3. Partnership— Work with a black organization grounded in racial equity issues to avoid the “White savior” complex.
4. Geography— Select an organization based on its mission rather than its proximity to the parish.
5. Theology— Choose partners without regard to their religious affiliation.

The second report outlined three potential paths we could follow.

1. Assist, not lead, a black-led neighborhood organization with stable leadership.
2. Engage with white people in power to make inroads to promote progressive legislation.
3. Build awareness in current St. Vincent ministries, such as work with those without a home, The Resource Exchange and Friday night dinners, using an antiracism lens.

We discussed three possible groups we might partner with and their potential limitations.

We discussed another organization, the South Baltimore Community Land Trust. Land is owned by the trust and the houses are owned by the occupants. This enables purchasing houses with less money. Residents develop skills to enable them to remain in residence, and contribute to the stabilization of the community and protect it from gentrification.

We took a straw poll of participants to determine desire for three possible actions: financial contribution alone; financial contribution with some action work; and development of a relationship with a black group. No one wanted to just contribute financially. About half wanted to contribute financially and build a partnership. We discussed that developing relationships takes time and trust, and isn't something we can quickly create. We all agreed to move forward, though the direction was not clear. We hope to proceed not just as individuals but as a St. Vincent community.

We closed with a prayer.