

Dear Editor,

Bishop Greg Rickel often told us at St. James Episcopal in Austin, Texas, "I am a recovering racist". As white members of this historically Black congregation we felt that statement in our core being.

About 10 years ago we were invited to the Proctor Lectures created and presided over by Mrs. Marian Wright Edelman. The conference/revival is held annually in Tennessee at the Haley Farm, home of The Children's Defense Fund. As whites we make up about 5% of the audience. Speakers include great preachers, prominent politicians and many social service providers. It was there we learned of FREEDOM SCHOOLS. We were pleased to bring this idea to St. James and we now have celebrated two years of summer service to low income students. It is a real success for all involved, scholars and servant intern leaders.

Why mention all this? We are now white Episcopalians coming to this tradition from Baptist backgrounds. We looked for years for a community of faith, which is intentional about facing injustices head on with compassion. We found it in St. James Episcopal Church 10 years ago during Advent. St. James' has included us in all areas of worship and service. We often are challenged to address injustice and systemic racism and white privilege in our Central Texas community.

The DIALOG publication is a must read when it arrives. This past issue on FACING RACISM is one we have shared with friends outside of the Episcopal community.

With the selection of Bishop Michael Curry as Presiding Bishop, the Pope challenging our nation to do justice and love mercy and Jews worldwide starting a New Year, we are living in special days.

Again, thank you for challenging us to face racism and other issues we need to confront to become a beloved community.

Fred & Kathy Miller, St. James', Austin