

Fluvanna Leaders for Race & Diversity

FLRD

Juneteenth Celebration 2021

A History of African American Churches in Fluvanna County

Juneteenth Celebration 2021

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Juneteenth, which is short for June Nineteenth, is the day federal troops arrived in Galveston, Texas on June 19, 1865. The troops came two and half years after the signing of the Emancipation Proclamation. They came to Texas to take control of the state and to make sure all enslaved people will be freed.

The Emancipation Proclamation issued by President Abraham Lincoln on January 1, 1863, had established that all enslaved people in Confederate states in rebellion against the Union “shall be then, thenceforward, and forever free.” Approximately 5000 enslaved people were freed in Fluvanna County.

Juneteenth honors the end to slavery in the United States and is considered the longest-running African American holiday.

The Fluvanna Leaders for Race and Diversity presents to you the African American Churches in Fluvanna County and their history.

Juneteenth Celebration 2021

African American Churches

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The free African Americans were very serious about their spiritual beliefs. Slave masters believed that slaves were preordained by God and should spend their lifetime in bondage. Many slaves defied their masters and would sneak off late at night to worship God as they saw fit. They would listen to the word of God and sing their praises in songs.

A majority of the African American Churches in Fluvanna started with a brush arbor building in the 1800s. Some churches were built in the form of a log cabin and then they starting building church buildings with church halls. They all have cemeteries close to the churches and some have multiple cemeteries on their properties. The African American church became a sense of community for black people.

Services would begin with Sunday School lessons followed by regular church services on Sundays. Throughout the years churches began to form Deacons and Deaconess, choirs, and ushers. Each church would hold a Homecoming services during the summer with a service and fellowship luncheon. Those who have moved away from the area still come and fellowship with members of the churches during Homecoming. Revival services are also held once a year at each of the churches during the week.

African American Churches, cont.

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Below are a listing of African American Churches in Fluvanna County. With the exception of the Mount Sanai Prayer Temple all of the churches below are still operating on Sunday mornings.

You can click on the link of each church to go to their individual pages or you can continue to play the slideshow if viewed in Powerpoint.

- [Burning Bush Christian Church](#)
- [Byrd Grove Baptist Church](#)
- [Cloverdale Baptist Church](#)
- [Columbia Baptist Church](#)
- [Evergreen Baptist Church](#)
- [Mount Sanai Prayer Temple](#)
- [New Fork Baptist Church](#)
- [Shiloh Baptist Church](#)
- [St. James Baptist Church](#)
- [Thessalonia Baptist Church](#)
- [The Way of the Cross Baptist Church](#)
- [Union Baptist Church](#)
- [West Bottom Baptist Church](#)

Burning Bush Christian Church

198 Little Mountain Rd, Palmyra, VA 22963

Built in 1966

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Our History

Burning Bush started in Kents Store, Virginia and was later moved to Columbia, Virginia. The new church was built in Palmyra Virginia, in May of 1966 and had 50 members at the time of build.

What contribution has Burning Bush Christian Church made to the history of Fluvanna County?

Burning Bush has helped to establish many ministries and pastors, established weekly community food distribution, contributions to Habitat for Humanity and Operation Happy Face in the County of Fluvanna.

Our Pastors

Who was your first pastor? Elder Lee Hughston

Other Pastors

Co-Pastor, Evangelist Lucy Harris

Current Pastor

Pastor Leon Harris

Oldest Male and Female Member

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Deacon James Johnson



Ms. Gloria Miller

Byrd Grove Baptist Church

2365 Cedar Lane Rd, Kents Store, VA 23084

Built in 1872

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Our History

In 1870, Byrd Grove was associated with the Baptist Church of Lyles and reported 241 colored members.

According to Byrd Groves website

The Byrd Grove Baptist Church located in Kent Store, VA is a ministry that has been called and appointed by God to serve this community, the Commonwealth of Virginia and the world for His glory and honor. We are purposed and are committed to fulfilling our mandate and vision. "What we make Happen for someone else, God makes happen for us!"

How many members did Byrd Grove Baptist Church have when it was first built?

Original membership is unknown.

Are there slave graves at the church

There are no slaves buried on the property.



Our Pastors

Who was your first pastor? Reverend Norman Smith, 1st

Current Pastor
Reverend Keith Manual

Oldest Male and Female Member

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E. Leroy Price

Born: 10/3/1939

Adeline Quarles

Born: 11/19/1926

Current Members over the age of 80

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Clara R. White

Christine Jackson - 11/9/1933

Ruth B. Megginson - 1/14/1934

Thelma Jackson - 4/3/1935

Cloverdale Baptist Church

2914 Cloverdale Rd, Bremono Bluff, VA 23022

Built in 1875

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Our History

Cloverdale members shared worship services with West Bottom Baptist Church. A donation made it possible for the Cloverdale Church to be built.

The founder and first pastor was Reverend Scott Huekless. The first log church was built around 1917. The second log building was built around 1917 under Reverend Sam Harris, along with Deacons Foster Christopher, Martin Kingston and Henry James. The third log cabin was constructed around 1921 under the leadership of Reverend Lee Jackson. Both log structures were built on the opposite side of the road. The fourth structure was started in 1930.

Services were held on the 2nd and 4th Sundays of the month. In 1981 services were changed to found Sundays a month.

How many members did the church have when it was first built?

No knowledge at this time. Most of the members came out of West Bottom.

Are there slave graves at the church

No

Three Cemeteries:

Cloverdale Baptist Church Cemetery 1 & 2

Burial site behind the parking lot of the church with marked graves.

Our Pastors

Who was your first pastor? Reverend Scott Huekless - 1st

Other Pastors

Reverend Sam Harris

Reverend Roy Lee Jackson

Reverend Daniel C. Anderson

Reverend John Jasper Nicholas

Reverend William H. Lewis

Current Pastor

Reverend Charles Lewis

Oldest Male and Female Member

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Queen James

Born: 9/13/1929

Husband: Charles James, Sr.

Married for many years

Children: Shirley Mae, Larry, Doris, Charles Jr., Brenda, Rose Marie, Bernice, Robert, Dennis

Parents: William and Dora Anderson



Cornelius Christopher

Born: 9/23/1932

Wife: Mary Christopher

Married for many years

Children: Mary, Felicia, Linwood, Allen and Cornelius Jr.

Parents: James and Bessie Christopher

Current Members over the age of 80

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Curtis Armstrong - 08/31/1935

Lula Johnson - 1/9/1938

Evelyn Tolliver - 8/7/1930

Columbia Baptist Church

116 Rivanna St, Columbia, VA 23038

Built July 9, 1870

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Our History

Columbia Baptist Church members held worship service in a brush arbor tradition before formalizing their church in the Town of Columbia. The land where the church presently sits was purchased in the 1800s.

The church was started in the rock house in the town of Columbia on July 9, 1870. The original building was facing the opposite direction of its current design. The church had a recording secretary, S. D. Anderson; a pastor, Reverend James Barrett; and 4 deacons, Tilman Jeter, Tolton Woodson, James Willis and Henderson Crank.

Services were held on the 2nd Sunday of each month but was later moved to the 1st Sunday of each month. Services are now being held on the 1st and 3rd Sunday of the month.

How many members did the church have when it was first built?

Approximately 100 members

Are there slave graves at the church

Yes, there are several unmarked slave graves at the Free Hill Cemetery.

Two Cemeteries:

Free Hill gravesite located at the church.
Columbia Baptist Cemetery

Our History, continued

What contribution has Columbia Baptist Church made to the history of Fluvanna County?

The Payne family donated the land for the cemetery for poor white people, of Columbia, in 1822. It later became a cemetery for African Americans. West of the cemetery is the free African American burial site called Free Hill, where many African Americans are currently buried. There also was a log Church built on Free Hill that free African American formed. This log church is no longer visible.

For more information about Free Hill please see links below:

- [Free Hill : survey report, 1937 Aug. 3 - Library of Virginia \(exlibrisgroup.com\)](https://www.exlibrisgroup.com)
- [FLUVANNA COUNTY, VA - SURVEY - "Free Hill" files.usgwarchives.net/va/fluvanna/history/freehill.txt](https://files.usgwarchives.net/va/fluvanna/history/freehill.txt)
- [Uncovering the stories within Fluvanna's historically Black cemeteries - Fluvanna Review](#)
- [Columbia Free Hill Cemetery in Columbia, VA - working hours, burials list, pictures and map and GPS locations | People Legacy](#)

Our Pastors

Who was your first pastor? Reverend James Barrett, 1st

Other Pastors

Reverend John Richardson

Reverend Scott Huekless

Reverend William Mayo

Reverend I. A. Hines

Reverend Samuel Lee

Reverend Allen Hughes

Reverend A. Mason

Reverend David Johnson

Reverend Lloyd Martin

Current Pastor

Reverend Bruce Boling

Oldest Male and Female Member

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John R. Buggs

Born: 2/18/1925

Wife: Emily Fields Buggs

Married for 65 years

Children: Emily (Beckie) and Johnny

Parents:

Fred and Harriet Ann Buggs



Estelle Payne

Born: 9/25/1925

Husband: Homer Payne

Married for 65 years

Children: Fermy, Louis, Theresa, and Marshall

Parents:

Guy and Bessie Johnson

Current Members over the age of 80

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Henry Anderson – 5/23/1941

Henry Bland – 5/3/1938

Samuel (Bubba) Hancock – 5/15/1941

Robert Johnson - 3/3/1939

Evergreen Baptist Church

452 Evergreen Church Rd, Palmyra, VA 22963

Built in 1888

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Our History

Evergreen Baptist Church was organized July 27th 1888. The church was originally a one room building with wooden planks, one window and door with a wooden floor. In those days, members walked for miles or rode a horse and buggy to church. Services were held once a month on third Sunday and revival was held all day on the third Sunday in August. Families brought basket lunches that were shared with everyone during that time.

How many members did the church have when it was first built?

Approximately 25-50 members - The church had 25 to 50 members in 1888 and membership increased by 1890.

Are there slave graves at the church?

There are no slaves grave that they are aware of on the property.

Cemetery:

Evergreen Cemetery located across from the church.

Our Pastors

Who was your first pastor? Reverend Scott Huekless, 1st Pastor

Other Pastors

Reverend William J Kerr

Reverend Frank Robertson

Reverend Warne Dawkins,

Reverend Brian Taylor,

Reverend Justin D House

Current Reverend: Reverend Herbert Woodson

Oldest Male and Female Member

FLRD



Bertha Payne

Born: 2/18/1924

Husband: Warren McKinley
Payne

Married for many years

Children: 4 sons

Parents: John and Mary Odie
Holland



William M. Holland

Born: 3/17/1932

Parents: William and Vivian
Payne Holland

Current Members over the age of 80

FLRD

Margaret Brown – 10/27/1936
Robert Brown, Sr. – 10/27/1937
Thelma Bruce – 9/13/1928
Lutrell Franklin – 7/30/1931
Roberta Franklin - 1/17/1929
Nelson Jackson – 8/21/1935
Thelma Jackson – 6/3/1934
Emma Moment – 9/1/1938
Alease Payne – 7/3/1938
Yvonne Payne – 11/25/1934
Esther Smith - 7/18/1935
Geneva Washington - 6/21/1934
Camilia White – 1/14/1936
Evelyn Winston – 12/7/1935
Nora Young – 4/3/1938

Mount Sanai Prayer Temple

Stage Junction Road, Columbia, VA 23038

Built in the early 1900's

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Our History

Mount Sanai Prayer Temple Church was built in the 1900s on Stage Junction Road, in Columbia, Va. Many families living in the area attended this church and some later joined Columbia Baptist Church. Many referred to the church as the Holy Sanctified Church. The church congregation met every Sunday with a majority of them within walking distance to the church.. The pastors of the church were called Elders. The church property belong to Jaspers family and was later sold.

The church and its members did not deal with funeral homes at that time. When a person died and wish to have services in the Church, the caskets would be delivered and placed in the hallway of the Johnson family's home up on the hill above the church until the funeral.

Many family members of the Johnson family would say they could see spirits roaming the halls of their home waiting to be buried. The church ceased to operate after the late 1970's.

How many members did the church have when it was first built?
Approximately 50 members

Are there slave graves at the church
Not sure but there are some unmarked graves down below the church.

One Cemetery:
Jasper Family Cemetery

Our History, continued

Mount Sanai Prayer Temple Church did not deal with funeral homes at that time. When a person died and wish to have services in the Church, the caskets would be placed in the hallway of the Johnson's resident up on the hill above the church until the funeral.

Many family members of the Johnson family would say they could see spirits roaming the halls of their home waiting to be buried.

Our Pastors

Who was your first pastor? Elder Rose Brodnack, 1st

Other Pastors

Elder Betty Richardson

Elder Lee Hughston

Elder Estelle Peoples

[List of Churches](#)

New Fork Baptist Church

16 New Fork Church Rd, Palmyra, VA 22963

Built in 1867

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Our History

New Fork Baptist Church was established in 1867 on a solid rock. The first worship service began in a Bush Harbor under a big oak tree on Route 6 with a few members. Services were held there for two years. The second worship service took place in a church called Look Fork that was previously owned by whites. The old saints worshiped there for 14 years with an increase in membership. It took a long time to build another church, which was completed in 1883. The name was then changed from Look Fork to New Fork Baptist church.

How many members did New Fork Baptist Church have when it was first built?

A few members

Our Pastors

Who was your first pastor? Reverend B. Langhorne, 1st

Other Pastors

Reverend Joseph Jones

Reverend D. C. Anderson

Reverend W. D. Magbie

Reverend B. F. Jones

Reverend B.O. Moody

Reverend Samuel Lee

Reverend Samuel K. Woodson

Reverend Emanuel C. Harris

Current Pastor

Reverend Marcus A. Lee

Oldest Male and Female Member

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Margaret Young

Oldest Male not listed

Current Members over the age of 80

FLRD

Florine Felton
Elinor Jackson
Lillian Logan
Shirley Morris
Evelyn Payne
Ernestine Thomas

Shiloh Baptist Church

620 Shiloh Church Rd, Palmyra, VA 22963

Built in 1868

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Our History

Shiloh Baptist Church was built by five freed slaves in 1868. Shiloh origins began from the Mother church Bethel Baptist Church, which is also located in Palmyra, VA. Members began to worship in a brush arbor before the first construction of the church, in which they named Shiloh to symbolize rock and strength.

Cemetery

Shiloh Baptist church grave site is located directly beside the church.

Our History, continued

What contribution has Shiloh Baptist Church made to the history of Fluvanna County?

The members of Shiloh Baptist church serve the community by working closely with many different agencies and organizations in the county.

Our Pastors

Who was your first pastor? Not known at this time

Other Pastors

Not known at this time

Current Pastor: Reverend Williams Mallory

Oldest Male and Female Member

FLRD

Heartless Payne

William White

Current Members over the age of 80

FLRD

Pearl White

St. James Baptist Church

17227 James Madison Hwy., Palmyra, VA 22963

Built in 1868

FLRD



Our History

St. James Baptist church was established in 1868 by Reverend Jeremiah Yancey.

How many members did St. James Baptist Church have when it was first built?

It is not known as to how members were a part of the church when it was first built.

Are there slave graves at the church

There is no record of any slaves buried on the church ground.

Cemetery:

There is a cemetery located on the church ground.

Our Pastors

Who was your first pastor? Reverend Jeremiah Yancey 1868

Current Reverend: Reverend Tyrone Mealy since 2019

Oldest Male and Female Member

FLRD



Reverend Arlene Perkins

Born: 96 years old

Larry Newton

Born: 11/8/1941

Wife: Elizabeth Newton

Married for 33 years

Children: 7 children

Parent: Leroy and Mary Newton

Current Members over the age of 80

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Members over 90 years old:

Laura McGruder - 96 Years old

Lucy Shephard - 96 Years old

Mary Agnes Anderson - 94 Years old

Nelly Lewis - 91 Years old

Members over 80

Lucy Grooms

Shirley Porter

Carvella Beaver

Thessalonias Baptist Church

677 Thessalonias Road, Brems Bluff, VA 23022

Built in 1868

FLRD



Our History

Thessalonia Baptist Church was built in the Rufus Snead's field near the Fork Union Village on Route 6 around 1868. The original building was torned down and the logs frame the foundation of on 12 x 12 sills and was hauled away from Noah Creasy with his oxen to the present site. The logs form the foundation in which the current church is built. The land was donated by Reverend James Barrett.

How many members did Thessalonia Baptist Church have when it was first built?

No knowledge at this time on the numbers of members.

Are there slave graves at the church

No

One Cemetery:

Thessalonia Baptist Cemetery

Our History, continued

What contribution has Thessalonia Baptist Church made to the history of Fluvanna County?

Reverend James Barrett helped organize the Thessalonia Baptist Church in 1868 and served as its pastor for many years.

In April 1879 he gave three-quarters of an acre of his land to the church for the permanent site of its place of worship. He also organized a beneficial society through the church.

For his assistance the members made a small monetary contributions named it in honor of the Barrett Humane Society.

[Barrett, James D. \(1833-1903\) - Encyclopedia Virginia](#)

Our Pastors

Who was your first pastor? - Reverend James D. Barrett - 1st
Pastor

Other Pastors

Reverend Daniel Miller
Reverend Burton Langhorne
Reverend W. L. Morris
Reverend John E. Willis
Reverend Warner Jones
Reverend Boyd A. Woody
Reverend R. H. Hailstalk
Reverend Wardell Ward
Reverend Allen Hughes
Reverend Carter Wicks
Reverend James Wright
Reverend Charles Sims
Reverend Marvin Warren
Reverend Alvin Edwards
Reverend Robert Strothers

Current Pastor

Reverend Dr. Keven Caleb

Oldest Male and Female Member



Alice Scruggs

Born: 9/26/1929

Husband: Reverend Horace Scruggs

Married for 50+ years

Children: Olivia, Brenda, Vivian, Anita, Sharon, Gail, Patricia, Beverly, Horace III

Parents: Ruben and Harriett Matthews



Clinton Les Lane

Born: 10/3/1932

Wife: Ellen Lane

Married for many years

Children: Lillian, Dorothy, Lisa, Maryland, Gail, Nina

Parent: Clinton Micken and Lillie Lane

Current Members over the age of 80

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Reverend Herbert Adams, Jr. – 1/18/1941

William Armstrong – 8/25/1936

Vera Banks - 3/23/1939

Susie Barnett – 9/23/1937

Ellen Lane – 9/28/1935

Clinton Lane – 10/3/1932

Carol Lewis – 1/16/1937

Hazel Urquhart - 12/14/1936

Ophelia B. Whittington – 8/24/1937

Rosa Woodard – 1/19/1941

The Way of the Cross Baptist Church

579 Haden Martin Rd, Palmyra, VA 22963

Built in 1989

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Our History

The Way of the Cross Baptist Church was built in 1989. The pastor was Rev. Dr. Nan M. Brown.

How many members did the church have when it was first built?

Approximate 25 members

Are there slave graves at the church?

No

Our Pastors

Current Pastor

Reverend Karen Cooper

Reverend Dorothy Payne, Assistant

Our History, continued

What contribution has The Way of the Cross Baptist Church made to the history of Fluvanna County?

Our contribution to the history of Fluvanna County is that this is the only church built, founded and pastored by a Black Woman.

Current Members over the age of 80

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3 Members over the age of 80

Names not listed

Union Baptist Church

174 Union Church Road, Fork Union, VA 23055

Built in 1886

FLRD



Our History

Union Baptist began services in 1886.

Our Pastors

Who was your first pastor? Reverend Samuel Harris, 1st Pastor

Current Pastor
No one at this time

Oldest Male and Female Member

FLRD



Melvin Baskfield

Born: 9/17/1947



Mary E. Smith

Born: 7/5/1931

West Bottom Baptist Church

2757 Bremono Rd, Bremono Bluff, VA 23022

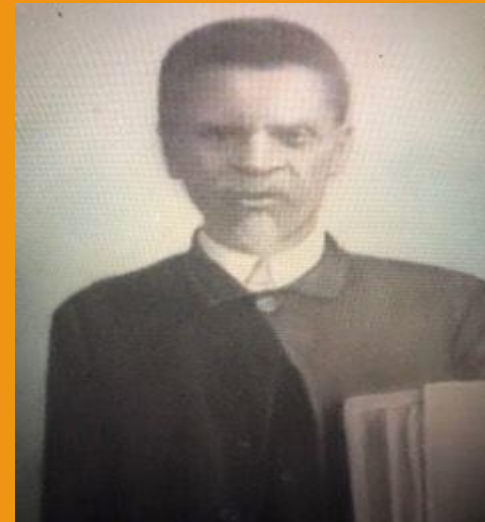
Dating back to 1865

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Our History

According to a brief history of WBBC, the church dates back to 1865. The name of the first pastor is unknown (pictured below) with a few possibilities. The first WBBC services were held under a brush arbor and multiple slave graves are at the church's cemetery (Oak Hill Cemetery), which according to the Fluvanna Review, dates back to the Civil War.



Our History, continued

What contribution has West Bottom Baptist Church made to the history of Fluvanna County?

Food Drives

Giving back to school supplies

Supporting families who have lost homes due to fires

Donated to the Sunday School Union

Sponsored families for Christmas

Assisted elderly residents with home repairs

Made contributions to other churches, Macca and The NAACP

Our Pastors

Other Pastors

Henry Morton and Phillip Gilbert 1872

Reverend James D. Barrett 1878

Reverend Samuel Harris 1894

Reverend Benjamin Franklin Christian 1915

Reverend Dr. John Ervin Fountain 1939

Reverend Dr. John Austin 1946-1949

Reverend Keve 1941

Reverend Woody 1953

Reverend Clarke 1956-1959

Reverend William James Kerr 1960-1965

Reverend J.J. Nicholas 1965-1975

Reverend Lorenzo Kitt 1986

Reverend Wayne Claxton 1996-2015

Current : Reverend Walter Charles Barrett III

Oldest Male and Female Member

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Robert Lewis Edmonds



Francis Hill
Born: Age 96

Current Members over the age of 80

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10+ Members who are over the age of 80

Names not listed

Fluvanna Leaders for Race & Diversity

We would like to thank all of the African American churches, clerks, pastors and members for the history of African American Churches. Most of the information collected are from community members who attended these churches. We hope we have captured the information to the best of our knowledge.

As we receive more information it will be added to this slide presentation.

Thank you and enjoy!

Fluvanna Leaders for Race & Diversity

Email: FluvannaLRD@gmail.com | @2021 Fluvanna Leaders for Race & Diversity

[List of Churches](#)