

This is the first time the House of Bishops has met as a body since the MeToo movement began last fall, bringing to light the reality of sexual harassment, gender-based violence, and the cultural stronghold of gender bias and inequity. We continue our own work of reconciliation within our branch of God's Church, honoring what we have learned and accomplished, as well as acknowledging the distance we still must travel. Reconciliation is the long work of healing offered by the Spirit, made possible by grace, which requires our truth-telling and repentance.

Many of us have experienced sexual harassment and perhaps sexual violence. Bishops who are women know the "me-too" experience. Some bishops who are men know it as well. We live with different experiences of the cultural endowment of power. We know the Church has fallen short of our responsibility to listen and respond. In this time of heightened awareness it is with greater intention that we now invite the church to a deeper examination of what God intends for our relationships.

This work will take courage. As many women bravely come forward to speak the truth of their experience, courageous men will listen, where appropriate repent, and take an active role in repairing the brokenness, working to change the culture of our church.

We will offer a listening process in an open meeting at General Convention to more fully hear the stories of those who have been victims of sexual harassment and violence in the church. The date and time is July 4th, 5:15 pm to 7:00 pm in the House of Bishops convention meeting space. The design of this process is being developed. Further details will be posted via social media and through Episcopal news outlets.

Together women and men can form partnerships for reconciliation. We seek a more faithful, just and holy life together. We welcome the Spirit's renewing work among us as we seek to faithfully walk in the way of Jesus.

House of Bishops, Spring, 2018