

# The Peoplestown Partnership

*Will you strive for justice and peace among all people?'*

*The Book of Common Prayer*



‘Don’t go to the margins to make a difference, go there so that the folks at the margins make you different.’

*Fr. Gregory Boyle S.J.*

Today marks the beginning of the Peoplestown Partnership, a new opportunity for All Saints’ to be in and for the city. In the Fall of 2020, All Saints’ Vestry commissioned a steering committee to discern how our parish might strive for justice and peace in our place and time. During the year that followed the committee met with black and white leaders from Atlanta to learn about existing city initiatives and organizations working for justice and peace. As the committee listened and imagined the kind of role All Saints’ might have in the work we were learning about, the following core values emerged:

- ✦ To draw from the wisdom of our decades-long commitments to our Core Ministries of Covenant Community, Midtown Assistance Center, Refugee Ministries, and Threads, by building relationships for the long-term.
- ✦ To bring our best selves to this work by identifying strengths we have as a parish, focusing on three areas: education, justice and the arts.
- ✦ To offer ourselves to this new endeavor with humility, recognizing that others will know how to strive for justice and peace across racial communities better than we will know by ourselves. ✦

Accordingly, the committee recommended and the Vestry agreed that All Saints' will serve the work of justice and peace in Atlanta by committing to a long-term relationship with a particular place and a particular people. We identified the neighborhood of Peoplestown as the place and Emmaus House as our primary partner.

## Peoplestown



Peoplestown is a historic community located about four and half miles south of All Saints'. During the second half of the last century, the community suffered significant population loss and disinvestment. Today, Peoplestown is a vibrant community seeking to incorporate neighbor-

hood interests in residential and commercial development. Some 83% of the approximately 2,000 residents are black with a median household income of \$35,000. A majority of residents rent their homes and a third of the community live below the poverty line.

## Emmaus House

Emmaus House was formed in 1967, when Episcopal priest and social advocate Austin Ford moved into a two-story home in Peoplestown along with two nuns and a seminary student. From those humble beginnings and still under the auspices of the Diocese of Atlanta, Emmaus House has grown to incorporate multiple programs aimed at building social and economic capital in the community, including:

- + **Freedom School:** Children's Defense Fund 6-week summer program.
- + **Youth on the Move:** after-school program for middle and high school students.
- + **Muriel Lokey Help Center:** drop-in help center for emergency rent and utility assistance, medical crisis aid, and help with applications for benefits.

- + **Food Pantry:** client-choced food distribution with produce, dairy, meats, and baby supplies.
- + **Supports for Success:** intensive case management promoting economic success.

We believe we are called to enter into this partnership in the spirit of friendship with, rather than service to our neighbors. This year's discernment taught us that the most effective model for sustained change is one of trust and mutual relationship with others. We do not seek to bring our pre-determined solutions to the complex challenges of racial injustice. Instead we wish to bring ourselves, seeking to learn and grow and be changed in kinship with others.

With that orientation at the forefront of this partnership, Emmaus House has named two initial programs that All Saints' parishioners can get involved in:

- + **Bridge of Hope:** a national neighboring program that pairs a case manager and 6–10 trained volunteers with a local family facing challenges. Volunteers offer friendship, encouragement, and practical support such as help with transportation, household furnishings, and food. Using personal and professional networks, volunteers might help a family find housing, medical providers, employment, job training, or other resources that support the family's long-term success.

**Emmaus House Contact:** Tanisha Corporal,  
*Director of Community Partnerships*







† **Tutoring:** for first and second grade students in reading and Math at the Barack and Michelle Obama Academy, an Atlanta public school in Peoplestown. Tutors work with students once or twice a week for approximately an hour.

**Emmaus House Contact:** Ann Fowler  
*Director of Education Services*

### Future Ministry Opportunities

† **The Food Pantry:** stocking and distributing supplies and helping to establish relationships with new clients who then can access other services.

**Emmaus House Contact:** Adam Seeley  
*Director of Social Services*

† **Children's After-School Program:** tutoring assistance, food preparation, transportation, art instruction, field trips, and other forms of enrichment.

† **Arts Initiatives:** woodworking, pottery and other arts enrichment classes.

**Emmaus House Contact:** Ann Fowler  
*Director of Education Services*

To help shape the evolution of this shared ministry, a **Peoplestown Partnership Guiding Coalition** will be formed consisting of equal membership of All Saints' parishioners and Peoplestown community workers and members. In addition, All Saints' will seek to equip and offer ongoing support to ministry volunteers by engaging them in a **School for Ministry**, a theologically-informed and practically-inclined year-long training.

**Your invitation is to consider faithfully how you might 'pray with your feet' and find a way to contribute yourself to this work. You might prayerfully consider:**

- † Participating in one of the current or future ministry opportunities in Peoplestown.
- † Joining the efforts of the Guiding Coalition.
- † Offering material support to this new venture in our church's life.
- † Praying for the success of this partnership and for the welfare of the city. ♦

# Steering Committee Members



Deaja Dunbar



Comer Yates



Arturo Lindsey



Virginia Schenck



Sheffield Hale



Natosha Reid Rice



Jason Payne



Sarah Hill



Nadia Fountain



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Sydney Cleland



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To learn more about  
The Peoplestown Partnership visit

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