

# Reparations Committee Report for 2024

***“Reparations are not zero-sum. I think of reparations as seed capital for the nation that we are becoming.”*** Writer and activist Heather McGhee (*The Ink*, May 3, 2024)

In 2022, the Assembly congregation made a commitment to heed the long-ignored call from Black leaders over the last three centuries that this nation pay on a debt owed African Americans for the systemic theft of Black wealth, bodies, and histories. This theft, along with the theft of Indigenous land and the erasure of Indigenous Peoples, was carried out in service of the idolatry of White supremacy. White Christians in the United States benefited greatly from this theft, and too often were the instigators and willing accomplices to the crime. In fact, White Christians continue to reap the benefits today.

Our reparation payments are a small but tangible act of repair. They are a way of recognizing the legitimacy of this centuries-old call for justice. We make these payments with the understanding that we are not engaging in charity, nor are we simply making a generous financial contribution. Rather, we are paying on a moral and financial debt, and doing so as an act of repentance.

On the first Sunday of the month, a special “Two-Percent” offering is taken, and roughly half of that offering goes into the Assembly reparations fund. At the end of the year, the Reparations Committee\* disburses this money to Black and Indigenous-led initiatives which address the harm caused by our White supremacist culture.

In 2024, the following payments totaling \$38,319.55 were made:

- **\$18,700: Tolson Center for Community Excellence (Elkhart)**
  - Rooted in the historically African-American Benham West neighborhood, this [community center](#) is an important hub for revitalizing a proud but devastated and neglected community. In the past, Black people were barred from living in Goshen and shunted into this southcentral Elkhart neighborhood.
- **\$9,300: Miami Nation of Indians in Indiana**
  - This nonprofit [organization](#) serves those who continue to live on part of their original homeland and whose federal tribal recognition was “illegally taken from [them] in the late 1800s.” They are restoring their tribal complex in downtown Peru, Indiana.
- **\$7,319.55: Coalition to Dismantle the Doctrine of Discovery**
  - The bulk of this payment went to the Coalition’s [Landback Fund](#) which funds land repair and land return to Indigenous Peoples. The Fund is a means of partnering with Indigenous Peoples “to free sacred lands, soils, water and habitat from systems of oppression.”
- **\$3,000: Miami Tribe of Oklahoma**
  - This is the federally recognized [tribe](#) of Miami Indians, which was forcibly removed in the 19th century from their traditional territory in present-day Indiana, Michigan and Ohio. Our payment supports their efforts at reclamation of culture, language, and education for tribal members living in Indiana.

In the letter that accompanies our checks, the Reparations Committee writes, “*[We are] a community ... committed to following the way of Jesus. This way of Jesus is the way of peace, repentance, and justice. We seek to follow this way while recognizing that we live and participate in a nation which has followed a different way; one that has greatly harmed Black and Indigenous peoples for the benefit and enrichment of white people. ... Our commitment to the way of Jesus calls us to work in concrete ways to repair that harm, [which includes] transferring some of our wealth to Black- and Indigenous-led organizations that seek to repair our nation’s long history of racial inequity. ... We trust you to know best where this money is most needed.*”

Thanks to all of you at Assembly who are committed to paying on this debt, and who make this collective act of repair possible.

\* Reparations Committee: Glenn Gilbert, Deb Johnston, Jason Kauffman (chair), Meribeth Shank, Karl Shelly