



**ABOLITIONIST SANCTUARY**  
Repair. Restore. Rebuild.

# ABOLITIONIST SANCTUARY

REPAIR. RESTORE. REBUILD.

## VISION

We envision a national coalition of churches confronting the struggles of impoverished Black motherhood and the moral crisis of mass punishment. We foresee churches creating spiritual and legal sanctuaries for Black women, mothers, and system-impacted communities.

## ABOUT

The Rev. Dr. Nikia Smith Robert, Founder and Executive Director of Abolitionist Sanctuary. She is an interdisciplinary public scholar, social activist, and ordained clergy in the African Methodist Episcopal Church. Raised in abject poverty in Harlem, New York, to a single Black mother, Dr. Robert and her family struggled to overcome the government's unjust War on Drugs and the interlocking systems of oppression that ravaged her community. Abolitionist Sanctuary emerged from Dr. Robert's lived realities and expands upon her groundbreaking research and forthcoming book.

*Dr. Nikia S. Robert*

*"I envision walking through the doors of the Church, peering into an abolitionist sanctuary with murals painted in vivid colors capturing stories of survival and liberative life-giving possibilities that starkly contrast the monochromatic and melancholic hues of prison and death-dealing circumstances in the carceral state." –Rev. Nikia S. Robert, PhD*

## FACTS:

- Black women are 30 percent of all incarcerated women but represent only 13 percent of women in the U.S.
- Nearly 80 percent of incarcerated women are mothers.
- Single mothers in the U.S. have the highest poverty rates in comparison to those in all industrialized countries
- 8 out of 10 Black mothers are breadwinners, who are either the sole earner or earn at least 40 percent of household income.

## MISSION

Abolitionist Sanctuary empowers Black churches to embody emancipatory theology and abolitionist principles to repair, restore, and rebuild society. We employ transformative justice strategies to ensure the communal flourishing of poor Black mothers and their families. Our nonpartisan approach to public policy equips religious leaders, laity, and communities to redress societal harms caused by discriminatory policing, criminalization, and mass incarceration.

## CORE VALUES

### COMPASSION • CARE • CREATIVITY • COURAGE

We advocate for **compassion** as a theological and communal response rooted in accountability, rather than punishing individuals who are disadvantaged by systemic injustices and targeted as deviant for transgressing dominant social standards.

We illuminate the radical practice of **care** for the most vulnerable by advocating for their fundamental rights to equality, dignity, and freedom.

We affirm the power of **creativity** in individual agency and collective values to imagine new pathways, policies, and programs toward a more just society.

We believe that **courage** will catalyze churches to challenge punitive teachings and practices that diminish the inherent dignity of impoverished Black mothers and galvanize a faith-based abolition movement to end discriminatory policing, criminalization, and mass incarceration.



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