

The image shows the interior of King's Chapel Memorial, a grand neoclassical church. The space is filled with tall, fluted columns supporting a high, vaulted ceiling. A large, ornate chandelier hangs from the center. The pews are arranged in a long, narrow aisle leading towards the front of the church. The entire image is overlaid with a semi-transparent red filter.

King's Chapel Memorial
Congregation Engagements

Engagement Session II - Summary

SESSION 2 - AUDIENCE: OBJECTIVES

The meeting began with an introduction by the King's Chapel Memorial Committee and MASS gave a brief overview presentation of the Session 1 Engagement about Context. MASS then described the agenda for an Audience Persona Development exercise in the Zoom Breakout Rooms.

Following the introductory presentation, 43 attendees were divided into four Zoom Breakout Rooms, each of which included a MASS facilitator and at least one member from the King's Chapel Committee. In the Breakout Rooms, the groups began by identifying potential Audience Groups for the Memorial to Enslaved People at King's Chapel. The groups then prioritized that list and developed 3-4 Personas from the Audience Groups by answering a series of questions.

The facilitators prompted Breakout Room comments and discussions and took notes, which have been edited for clarity, but not for content. The notes are intended to reflect the full range of opinions expressed in the Breakout Rooms.

Notes from the breakout sessions are as follows:

1. ***What is this Persona's relationship to King's Chapel?***
2. ***When does the Persona engage with King's Chapel?***
3. ***Why is this memorial relevant to the Persona?***
4. ***How might the memorial engage the Persona physically, emotionally, or spiritually?***

SESSION 2 - AUDIENCE: TABLE OF CONTENTS

- 1. Summary of Priority Audiences
- 2. Key Takeaways & Questions Raised
- 3. Full, Combined List of Audience Groups
- 4. Group 1 Overview
- 5. Group 2 Overview
- 6. Group 3 Overview
- 7. Group 4 Overview

SESSION 2 - AUDIENCE: SUMMARY OF PRIORITY AUDIENCES

With only minor variation, all four Breakout Rooms identified the following categories as key Audience Groups that should be prioritized when considering the design of the new memorial:

- Young people, including families and future congregants
- African American communities, and other communities of color, local and non-local
- Visitors & tourists, with existing ties to King's Chapel or without
- Current congregants

SESSION 2 - AUDIENCE: KEY TAKEAWAYS & QUESTIONS RAISED

What did we learn about how the memorial should engage key audiences – physically, emotionally, or spiritually?

How can the memorial's design balance these orientations?

- Overall
 - The memorial must have **universal accessibility**; themes/experience/intention must be understandable regardless of age, literacy, education, etc.
 - Centrality of the **“call to action”** – for some, the memorial may ‘push buttons’ or be surprising, and for others it will engage and inspire. For all, it is revealing the journey of the church, and if visitors engage, it speaks to their journey as well.
- Programmatic Opportunities
 - **Online / virtual content and engagement** is important to attract young people, and provide broader accessibility
 - **Inter-organizational relationships** could be developed or strengthened through knowledge, archival research and curricular exchanges between groups such as our CAC partners as well as schools and colleges
 - Internally, the memorial could support better **integration of racial justice/action** within KC church committees and their areas of work
- Primary Orientation - internal & external
 - For some in the congregation, this memorial can be a substantive draw to **increase membership**, particularly of young people, families, and the African American community.
 - For others in the congregation, this memorial's primary focus should be that of creating a space for the **existing church community** – those who spend the most time in the space.
 - Despite this debate, many agreed that this memorial is King's Chapel's **responsibility and service to the community as it shares this story with the world**, i.e. surrounding and general publics, Boston communities and those beyond.

SESSION 2 - AUDIENCE: FULL, COMBINED LIST OF AUDIENCE GROUPS

- King's Chapel
 - Parishioners/Worshippers/Members
 - Legacy Congregants
 - Recent Congregants
 - Virtual Congregants
 - Leadership & Successors
 - Morning Light Worshipers
 - Morning Prayer Worshipers
- Prospective Congregants
 - Families with Children
 - Questioners / Seekers
- Bostonians (potential visitors, but without existing connections)
 - Youth & Children
 - African American Community
 - Other Communities of Color
 - Neighbors / Local Residents
 - College Students & Young Adults
- Visitors
 - Freedom Trail Tourists (Domestic & International)
 - Local/Regional Tourists
 - School Groups, K-12 Students
 - Historians
 - Wanderers / Passers-by
 - Family Members of KC Congregates
 - Allied Organizations
 - Community Leaders (civic, community, governmental, corporate, decision-makers who are talking about equity and justice)
 - Pilgrims, e.g., UU Youth Groups on Pilgrimages/ Believers
 - Events-related
 - Weddings & Milestone Markers
 - Music Lovers / Concert Goers
- Other Congregations
 - African American Congregations
 - Unitarian Universalists (other churches)
- Descendants
 - of enslaved people
 - of enslavers

Group 1 Takeaways: (Bibb,y Chris & Joy)

- **Who is the target Audience / Group for this memorial project?**

- African American children
- Youth in Boston
- Freedom Trail tourists
- Internal and External groups
- Ourselves (KC worshipers/ congregants/members/successors)
- Serious visitors to KC (family, neighbors, public)
- Youth UU visitors to KC who know nothing about this history
- UU churches that send teens to KC on pilgrimage/history of Unitarians - “milestone” trips
- Larger UU audience for whom KC is meaningful, significant in religious development
- Questioners (People who want to question long held narratives, who might be attracted to our open theology)
- Visitors who are tourists
- Concert Goers
- People marking milestones in their lives (weddings, baptisms, etc)

- “My distant, wide-eyed grandchild who visited KC” (who will return at some point a more mature young person and who will see that we can change. She looks forward to a walkabout with this future grandchild. This extends to all visitors)
- People who are KC visitors for substantive reasons
- Seekers (Future worshippers who might want to be a part of a truth telling community)
- Descendants of slaves who have been disenfranchised.

- **Are any of the listed groups a priority?**

- Youth (both individuals and groups)
- African American Community
- Congregates / Current Parishioners

Persona 1: Youth Seeker Named Archer

- Persona Bio
 - Archer is a 10 year old girl who has grown up as a digital native and expanded understanding of media and technology.
- What is their relation to King's Chapel?
 - Her grandmother attends Kings Chapel. She is waking up to this history (racial) in Boston and the history of the country. She is beginning to grow curious about what spirituality means for her and seeing it impact the lives of those around her.
 - When do they engage with King's Chapel?
 - She attends when she visits her grandmother. She finds that the KC interior service is an experience of immersion and suspension of the outside world. She does not attend alone because of her age, so there is always someone who she can dialogue with and express her curiosities to.
- Why is this memorial important to them?
 - She is beginning to learn about history in a manner she may not have received anywhere else to this point. She is learning not only KC history, but a racial history that shaped our society, and she is accessing that knowledge from a young age. The memorial shows her that people and society do change with time, that betterment is possible, that cruelty and injustice can be recognized and addressed by a church. Here she sees that a small part of the arc of history is bending towards justice.
- How might the memorial engage the persona physically, emotionally, or spiritually?
 - Archer is a digital native, and the KC experience is so different. This suggests an opportunity to reach Archer in another way - a connection between what is on the wall and what is in her hand. Kids are smart and know when things are dumbed down, so she should be respected. The church can be "softened" for a young person by a memorial that is accessible. KC's interior and its variety of spaces are an opportunity for a young person to explore and feel the past.

Persona 2: Young African American Male Named Amari

- Persona Bio
 - Amari is a 17 year old high school student who lives a few blocks away from King's Chapel. He is a Christian and his family attends a historic African American Church in Roxbury.
- What is their relation to King's Chapel?
 - There is no direct relationship between Amari and KC other than living in the same neighborhood. He walks past the building multiple times a week on his way to the commons or T stop and feels uneasy and unwelcomed as he passes because KC is surrounded by a steel fence and does not look like a church. He has always feared or been intimidated by the presence of the church.
- When do they engage with King's Chapel?
 - Amari walks by KC regularly, but finally visits with a group from his school history program who has been invited to tour the crypt space which is used as a learning center.
- Why is this memorial important to them?
 - Amari is too a Christian, though from a different tradition, he still connects in that way. He sees that someone once considered property is being honored today because as a society we failed to do so in the past.
- How might the memorial engage the persona physically, emotionally, or spiritually?
 - The memorial is able to speak to Amari and shows him that to King's Chapel these 219 black lives matter, and they always will. He learns their names and is able to go out into the world and speak them too.

Persona 1: Youth Seeker Named Archer

- Persona Bio
 - This Parishioner is a white male in his mid 50's.
- What is their relation to King's Chapel?
 - The Parishioner is a life long member of the King's Chapel and has attended service here from a young age.
- When do they engage with King's Chapel?
 - The Parishioner attends service regularly every sunday, and occasionally during the week.
- Why is this memorial important to them?
 - The memorial reflects the humility necessary in the face of complicity. It is different from "the wallpaper" he sometimes refers to of the existing memorials in the sanctuary. The memorial is a "portal" through which one passes as a worshiper or someone else and makes you begin to notice something that you can't not notice.
- How might the memorial engage the persona physically, emotionally, or spiritually?
 - A well of grief has been opened by the awareness of complicity. Wonder and awe are appropriate responses to the magnitude of slavery in our history.

- **Who is the target Audience / Group for this memorial project?**

- Visitors - those who don't have prior knowledge of KC, people not coming to worship
- Can provide a fresh view of American history, may not have understanding of slavery in general
- Tourists who come to KC through the Freedom Trail
- Some local community, others visitors from out of town
- Visitors - those who have prior knowledge or relations to KC
- May come to Sunday services but is not a member of the church
- May attend free Tuesday concerts and other cultural events
- Includes people who host an event using the space: weddings, funerals
- This group include future or prospective congregant members
- Includes the Unitarian Universalist (comes from out of town)
- The memorial is very important to this type of person; need to see a more contemporary view of KC as opposed to KC as old-fashioned
- Students
- Youth / Children
- Historians / Academics
- Residents of Boston
- Current congregant members
- Those who are in the memorial committee and are more involved in decision-making within the congregation.
- Those who are not in the memorial committee and are not involved in decision-making.
- Future congregant members
- Descendants of enslaved people

- **Who is the target Audience / Group for this memorial project?**

- Descendants of enslaved people
 - Concern: how can we design something for a group of people who we haven't engaged with?
- Community leaders (civic, community, governmental, corporate, decision-makers who are talking about equity and justice)
- OTHER NOTES:
 - This memorial is speaking to enslaved people to and before God - this should be apparent.
 - Overall, the memorial must have the ability for universal understanding, regardless of age, literacy, education, etc.

- **Are any of the listed groups a priority?**

- Visitor - prior knowledge/relation to KC
- Visitor - no prior knowledge/relation to KC
- King's Chapel congregant
 - This is the closest group of people to the memorial and will interact with it most frequently.
- Descendants of Slaves
 - This is the closest we can get to a living audience who we are trying to heal with and for.
- Youth
 - This is a priority group - our broader culture is trying to impede the process of educating our children on our history. The memorial could be a chance to combat this through truth-telling.

Persona 1: Tourist and Descendant Named Theresa

- Persona Bio
 - She is a mother in her late thirties with two young kids. Theresa is a descendant of enslaved people. She is visiting from Nashville with her family and read about Kings Chapels on the Freedom Trail Guidebook. Theresa is in a hurry, she needs to find lunch for her kids.
- What is their relation to King's Chapel?
 - She read about it on the Freedom Trail Guide. She heard about Unitarianism in her hometown and her friend told her she ought to visit KC.
- When do they engage with King's Chapel?
 - Over Spring break with her kids
- Why is this memorial important to them?
 - Theresa hopes this can be a teachable moment for her kids. She, herself, is a descendant of enslaved people.
- How might the memorial engage the persona physically, emotionally, or spiritually?
 - The memorial slows her family down for a bit and provides space for reflection and respite. Theresa feels a sense of humanity and connected to her past in a new way, but also a sense of grief and loss.

Persona 2: Visitor Named Gregg

- Persona Bio
 - Gregg has occasionally come to KC on Christmas. Gregg is in his 50s and his mother used to attend the church. He was a student at Berkeley - Gregg plays the piano. He is very active in the community as a social activist.
- What is their relation to King's Chapel?
 - Gregg comes a few times a year, mostly just on the big holidays, to enjoy the music. His mother used to bring him as a kid.
- When do they engage with King's Chapel?
 - Christmas time especially, he may bring some relatives to this mass to see KC.
- Why is this memorial important to them?
 - He is a social justice warrior and is impressed that a historic institution is confronting their past.
- How might the memorial engage the persona physically, emotionally, or spiritually?
 - Gregg feels a part of a much larger, complex narrative after visiting the memorial. He wonders what the role of enslaved people had in the church - did they sing any of the old hymns, were they involved in the music?

Persona 3: Congregant Named Mary

- Persona Bio
 - A recently retired 65 year old woman who has been a member of the church for 10 years. Not really a part of the committee, hasn't been paying attention. She learned about the memorial in the Globe. Mary is an active volunteer
- What is their relation to King's Chapel?
 - Existing congregant
- When do they engage with King's Chapel?
 - Comes to mass once a month for Sunday Service
- Why is this memorial important to them?
 - KM is important to her, but the memorial is not a priority for Mary. She questions the memorial - what is the need? What does this have to do with now? Where is this money coming from?
- How might the memorial engage the persona physically, emotionally, or spiritually?
 - Overtime, Mary grows intrigued by the memorial. It becomes important to her the more she interacts. It connects her to her own humanity and to current forms of injustice which helps Mary understand the relevance of the memorial. But the question here is HOW will the memorial capture the interest of people like Mary?

- **Who is the target Audience / Group for this memorial project?**

- Current congregation members
 - Older people: Many have been left out in the education in this process
 - Members of the church who attend regularly and those who come from time to time.
- Future Congregation Members
 - Families with children
 - Young couples with children
 - Young people
 - under the age of 45. We need to think and focus on young people to grow our church.
 - K-12
 - College
 - Young adults
 - Website visitors, remote visitors
- African American Community
 - Boston African American Congregations.
 - Communities
- Tourists. Freedom trail tourists, duck boat tourists.

- Tourists. Freedom trail tourists, duck boat tourists.
- Neighborhood at large / passerby. People who wander in. Fellow Bostonians who might be interested in learning more about KC.
- Concert-goers
- Parish House / Little Chapel / Morning Light members

- **Are any of the listed groups a priority?**

- Young People
- African American Community
- Tourists
- Passerby

Persona 1: Future Congregation Member / Young Person Named Malcolm

- Persona Bio
 - Malcolm is a Black 35 year old male who works in the Tech industry in downtown Boston. He is just starting a family, has a 5 year old child. He's not affiliated with any church and is currently seeking a congregation with children.
- What is their relation to King's Chapel?
 - He walks by King's Chapel frequently while going to work and has become curious about it and wants to learn more.
- How/When do they engage with King's Chapel?
 - On a Sunday morning, he was walking by with his child and decided to enter the church
- Why is this memorial important to them?
 - He's interested in the history and wants to learn more and the work done by King's Chapel
 - He's interested in teaching his son about this history
 - He wants to learn what the memorial message is
 - He wants to learn and understand why a White church is doing this
 - He is impacted by the story the memorial tells
 - He is impacted by the memorial's connection to the larger national issues
 - He's interested in seeing if this becomes a national tourist destination
- How might the memorial engage the persona physically, emotionally, or spiritually?
 - He's engaged by the story the memorial tells
 - He's engaged by how seriously other people take it
 - He's engaged by seeing that there is a large mission that stands behind it
 - How will the memorial communicate that there is a mission standing in support behind it? How might this memorial be emblematic of a national issue? How might there be acknowledgement?

Persona 2: Future Congregation Member / Young Person Named Alice

- Persona Bio
 - Alice is a young college student who just moved to Boston from the Southern US (either Texas or Louisiana). She spends most of her time busy with schoolwork. She is studying the history of slavery in the Northeast United States and has been researching the Boston area to better understand the context. She is seeking a church but is unsure where to go yet.
- What is their relation to King's Chapel?
 - In her studies and online research, she came across King's Chapel as a historic site and was impressed by the information available online.
- How/When do they engage with King's Chapel?
 - She started becoming engaged with KC by attending the online sermons.
 - After learning everything she could from the website, she decided to visit in person.
 - "Wow, this church is something!"
- Why is this memorial important to them?
 - She is drawn to this memorial because she believes it is important work that leads to learning and reckoning with history. She is also hopeful that this is a step in the right direction.
 - She is constantly exploring constitutional, economic issues and was shocked to discover this history, its present-day effects, and impacts by the memorial as a site for reflection on past and present suffering
- How might the memorial engage the persona physically, emotionally, or spiritually?
 - She is impacted by the memorial's testament to the church's holistic approach
 - The memorial offers a holistic experience. She is engaged in all senses and realms. There is a physical acknowledgment to be in the presence of this memorial which is echoed in the music she hears inside KC and in the liturgy.
 - She is engaged in community because she looks around and sees other people also engaged by the memorial
 - The memorial has a strong linkage from the exterior to the interior of KC

Takeaway notes/questions from this breakout room:

- Is the memorial meant to build church membership? Or is it meant to be KC's responsibility and service to the community by telling this history?
 - For some in the congregation, this memorial can be a huge draw to increase membership, particularly of young people and the African American community.
 - For others in the congregation, this memorial's primary focus should be that of creating a space for the community with great responsibility.

- Some members expressed that the context discussion could use further refinement:
 - Telling the history of slavery as part of KC's history is only telling one side of one story
 - We should be telling the story of the enslaved, enslavers, abolitionists, Free people. Be holistic about it.
 - Is the slavery message being put at the front and center of the pulpit? How much emphasis do we put on the memorial? It should not take over. It's not all that we're about. The messaging needs to be appropriate. We need to clarify this. We should do this within the context of KC being a community of faith.
 - KC was groundbreaking in bringing unitarian faith and values. The memorial should be in that long history of being at the forefront movements of faith and justice in the community.
 - Importance of the living memorial: to underwrite college scholarships for African American students for 10-15 years

- Why and how does KC want to engage the African American community? Does KC want African American Membership? Is it purely educational?

- **Who is the target Audience / Group for this memorial project?**

- Internal

- Legacy Congregants & New
- Virtual membership!
 - virtual experiences to consider and amplify programmatically
- Fewer children, youth, younger adults than older // Families
- Committees

- External

- Freedom Trail visitors
 - Northerners & southerners
- Communities of color – near and far
- Local Residents
 - local tourists!
 - suburban audiences + city
 - "white collar workers" + blue
 - unhoused neighbors on the Common

- *External cont.*

- International tourists
- School Groups (connected to curriculum)
 - Esp k-12 but also college
- Allied orgs/groups
 - Unitarian Youth Groups (30+/yr pre COVID)
 - UU ministry, roxbury youth group tour guide exchange
 - Peace Institute
 - Common Cathedral
- Potential congregants
 - esp FAMILIES

- **Are any of the listed groups a priority?**

- VISITORS, freedom trail and students who come for the history
- WORSHIPERS - those on a faith journey
- Local residents, especially groups of color
- Families!! potential congregants

Persona 1: Visitors // History-Seekers

- Persona Bio
 - We considered two major groups here – k-12 school groups and adult visitor or family groups seeking to learn about history along the Freedom Trail.
- What is their relation to King's Chapel?
 - Prepared for a visit to the Freedom Trail via school curriculum or historical interest, and experience KC through this lens.
 - May also be interested in the church architecture and/or in the UU religion
 - ex/ may want to experience the booths and imagine the services in that context
- How/When do they engage with King's Chapel?
 - While on a trip – either on vacation or with a school.
 - Tours or self-guided
- Why is this memorial important to them?
 - They are curious about our journey from past to present and our future, so it is important to communicate who we are and are becoming, not simply who we were.
 - Relates to their personal or collective education about race in America
 - Provides otherwise rarely experienced historical content about slavery in the North
 - Provokes a personal reflection in a surprising way
 - The memorial is important in that it encourages them to identify with their own journey, a thought that led to many programmatic ideas such as partnering with a church from the Black community in Boston for exchanges, etc.

Persona 1: Visitors // History-Seekers (cont.)

- How might the memorial engage the persona physically, emotionally, or spiritually?
 - The memorial should inspire visitors by connecting to their individual journeys
 - Invites contemplation and models compassion through a thoughtful reconciliation with past harms.
 - For students and their teachers our resources provide a ready archival site which might support their research inquiries – and may be an opportunity for exchanging historical resources
 - ie connecting to other sites along the Freedom Trail and vice versa
 - ex/ creating a "FAQ" for guides, curriculum add-ons
 - Memorial should SURPRISE and be provocative re: content – inspiring an emotional response, and perhaps even spiritual, although they may not have come to the memorial for those reasons.
 - “some visitors likely come to the church with a vision of colonial New England being white and not having connections to slavery. I think KC might end up playing a role in bringing an "aha" moment that could shock/dismay/intrigue some visitors and result in a variety of reactions (emotional as well as intellectual, perhaps spiritual)”
 - Agitation in order to heal!

Persona 2: Worshipers

- Persona Bio
 - This group includes existing congregants as well as external pilgrims who are on a faith journey.
- What is their relation to King's Chapel?
 - On a journey of healing, wanting to heal.
 - They are interested in the church as a spiritual place to connect with the divine.
 - They want a church community that engages them – as adults and children – and fosters both spiritual growth and development and participation in related meaningful initiatives. They want a church that ‘speaks’ to them, regardless of their station in life.
- When do they engage with King’s Chapel?
 - Seeking a deeper, more continuous engagement with all aspects of the church, from the theology to our community engagement, and our journey
 - In-person services
 - Virtual services
 - Non-service hours, ex/ passers-by, wanderers
- Why is this memorial important to them?
 - The memorial reckons with harms of the past and demonstrates how the church has undergone spiritual growth
 - Spiritual leadership

Persona 2: Worshippers (cont.)

- How might the memorial engage the persona physically, emotionally, or spiritually?
 - For those who are congregants it is important not only to teach, but to continue to engage and inspire, perhaps augmenting the memorial itself with continuous programming, e.g., annual concerts focus on the journey, linkages with the Athenaeum and participation in the Minns lectures.
 - Forging connections between different congregations via programming, including:
 - Service exchange
 - Church histories
 - Twelfth Baptist - David is connected to and dialoguing about living memorial possibilities with Rev Willie Bodrick, II whom he knows from seminary
 - UU Urban Ministry Roxbury Youth Program, which includes after school programs with connections to Roxbury Community College mentors among other college mentors from what I understand
 - “If you see someone else tackling the problem -- people start to identify with this process and making their own journey”
 - Models truth-telling
 - Q: How to integrate racial justice/action within each KC committee?

Takeaway notes/questions from this breakout room:

- For some, the memorial may ‘push buttons;’ for others engage and inspire. For all it is revealing our journey, and should they care to engage, theirs as well - a call to action.
- How can the memorial support KC committees to integrate racial justice/action within each of their areas of work?
- Can the memorial function to encourage new membership (esp. families?) Can/should it be a "FEEDER"?

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