

The LINK



UNITED METHODIST CHURCH OF PATCHOGUE

Since 1791

February 2023

Celebrate In February

Grace and peace be unto you. I hope 2023 is treating you well. The month of February ushers us into two important events that I would like to talk about: Black History Month and the season of Lent.

Black History Month embraces the celebration of the achievements and history of African Americans. As an African American, I truly feel that Black History Month often gets lost in translation. I came across an article that I want to share with you written by Kay Boatner which summarizes the “who, what and whys” of Black History Month.

How It Started

In 1915, in response to the lack of information on the accomplishments of Black people available to

the public, historian Carter G. Woodson co-founded the Association for the Study of Negro Life and History. In 1926, the group declared the second week of February as “Negro History Week” to recognize the contributions of African Americans to U.S. history. Few people studied Black history and it wasn’t included in textbooks prior to the creation of Negro History Week.

This week was chosen because it includes the birthdays of both Frederick Douglass, an abolitionist (someone who wanted to end the practice of enslaving people), and former U.S. president Abraham Lincoln. President Lincoln led the United States during the Civil War, which was primarily fought over the enslavement of Black people in the country.

Many schools and leaders began recognizing the week after its creation.

The week-long event officially became Black History Month in 1976 when U.S. president Gerald Ford extended the recognition to “honor the too-often neglected accomplishments of Black Americans in every area of endeavor throughout our history.” Black History Month has been celebrated in the United States every February since.

What It Honors

Black History Month was created to focus

WORSHIP IN FEBRUARY

Feb. 5—Rev. Dr. Debbie San Pablo, Psalm 112:1-10

Feb. 12—Rev. Dr. Debbie San Pablo, Psalm 119:1-8

Feb. 19—Ed Klingel, Psalm 99

Feb. 22, 7:00 p.m.—Ash Wednesday Service

Feb. 26—Rev. Dr. Debbie San Pablo, Psalm 32

attention on the contributions of African Americans to the United States. It honors all Black people from all periods of U.S. history, from the enslaved people first brought over from Africa in the early 17th century to African Americans living in the

Continued on Page 2



Circle of Concern

Healing

DeAnna D'Amelio who has been diagnosed with ALS and is praying for a treatment. (Kathy Halliwell)

Continued prayers for **Niall Morrissey**, the 47 year old brother in law of Sandi Morrissey, who is desperately in need of God's healing hand. Prayers are needed for his family, especially his two sons. (Linda Werner)

Eddie Weiss suffered a severe leg injury and is in need of an amputation. (Bob & Eleanor Prince)

Mary Prince has heart problems. (Bob & Eleanor Prince)

Jill Kiefer Chaskin is undergoing treatment for cancer. (Barbara Becker)

Joy

Lucy is tolerating her cancer treatments. (Dave Hollowell)

Continued Prayers

Brian McMurray (pancreatic cancer), Allen Barth (stroke), Leslie Gray (diabetes complications), Roberta Young, Helen Smith, James McHugh, Elvis Victor, Patricia Walsh, Jim Cornwell, Nolan Horn, Brenda Gibbs, Mark Barasch, Jason, Jim Pew, Claudia Mirzaali (accident injuries), Marcus (heart problems), Danielle (brain tumor), Johanna Zeigler, Jim Brown, Louis Lopez, Joanne Clinton Nared, Gracie, Kerry, Joe Tuzil, Kimberly Helfst, Suzanne Tierney

—Kathy Keating
Keats1002@gmail.com

February (From Page 1)

United States today.

Among the notable figures often spotlighted during Black History Month are Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr., who fought for equal rights for Blacks during the 1950s and '60s, Thurgood Marshall, the first African-American justice appointed to the United States Supreme Court in 1967, Mae Jemison, who became the first female African-American astronaut to travel to space in 1992 and Barack Obama, who was elected the first-ever African-American president of the United States in 2008.

Black History Month Today

Since the first Negro History Week in 1926, other countries have joined the United States in celebrating Black people and their contribution to history and culture, including Canada, the United Kingdom, Germany, and the Netherlands.

Today Black History Month continues the discussion of Black people and their contributions through activities such as museum exhibits and film screenings, and by encouraging the study of achievements by African Americans year-round.

The season of lent is the preparation for commemorating the death and resurrection of Jesus Christ at Easter. The Lenten season consists of forty days, not counting Sundays, which begins on Ash Wednesday and ends on Holy Saturday. It is a time of repentance. It is a time for us to fully recognize our brokenness as humans and our need for a Savior.

As we journey through Lent, let us reflect, repent and grow as we open our hearts to Jesus. It is imperative that we try to focus on the following three things:

Repent of sin: Confess your sin to God (not humans) and then ask God for repentance.

Set a prayer time: Let us be intentional with spending time with God. Pick a time each day or a day of the week that you will pray and spend time with God.

Choose something to fast from: Fasting is traditionally associated with food, but you can fast from anything that you ordinarily allocate lots of time to. An example would be fasting from video games, junk food, television, etc. You would then replace the time spent on that activity with prayer and contemplation.

To summarize, let us focus on our relationship with God, growing as disciples and extending ourselves, often choosing to give up something or to volunteer and give of ourselves for others during this season.

I want to personally invite you to come start your Lenten journey with us in Patchogue on Ash Wednesday, February 22 at 7 pm. This will be a joint Ash Wednesday service with the United Methodist Church of Bayport and Sayville United Methodist Church. I truly hope to see you there.

Blessings to all of you during your Lenten journey.

—Pastor Debbie

United Methodist Church of Patchogue

February 2023

Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
			1 7:30 p.m. – Pentecostal	2 7:00 p.m. –AA	3 10:00 a.m. – ESL 7:30 p.m. – Pentecostal	4
5 10:00 a.m. – Worship/ Sunday School 6:30 p.m. – Pentecostal	6 Office Closed 7:00 p.m. –AA	7 10:00 a.m. – Noon–Food Pantry 7:00 p.m. –AA	8 7:30 p.m. – Pentecostal	9 7:00 p.m. –AA	10 10:00 a.m. – ESL 7:30 p.m. – Pentecostal	11
12 10:00 a.m. – Worship/ Sunday School 11:30 a.m. – Church Council 6:30 p.m. – Pentecostal	13 Office Closed 7:00 p.m. –AA	14 10:00 a.m. – Noon–Food Pantry 7:00 p.m. –AA	15 7:30 p.m. – Pentecostal	16 7:00 p.m. –AA	17 10:00 a.m. – ESL 7:30 p.m. – Pentecostal	18
19 10:00 a.m. – Worship/ Sunday School 6:30 p.m. – Pentecostal	20 Office Closed 7:00 p.m. –AA	21 10:00 a.m. – Noon–Food Pantry 7:00 p.m. –AA	22 7:00 p.m. – Ash Wednes- day Service 7:30 p.m. – Pentecostal	23 7:00 p.m. –AA	24 10:00 a.m. – ESL 7:30 p.m. – Pentecostal	25
26 10:00 a.m. – Worship/ Sunday School 6:30 p.m. – Pentecostal	27 Office Closed 7:00 p.m. –AA	28 10:00 a.m. – Noon–Food Pantry 7:00 p.m. –AA				

Pay Attention To Jesus

The dictionary defines the word “miracle” as, “a divine act, supernatural event, a marvel, a wonder.” George Bernard Shaw said it was ‘an event which creates faith – that is its purpose.’ And Walt Whitman called ‘every cubic inch of space’ a miracle.

I confess that miracle stories sometimes make me a little twitchy, figuratively speaking. Do I believe them as literal truth? Do I understand them as symbolic tales? The New Testament is full of miracles performed by or associated with Jesus. The turning of water into wine, feeding 5000 with 5 loaves and 2 fishes, restoring sight to the blind, walking on water, raising Lazarus from the dead, and many more.

I grew up in an educational and intellectual context of rationality, of using our minds to analyze facts and events, as well as an understanding that the natural world operates on certain basic laws and principles, such as gravity, laws of motion, aerodynamics, etc. In other words, the earth and universe operate in an orderly manner.

So, when I read one of the miracle stories in the Bible, I think there are several ways of looking at it : The first, of course, is that God, creator of this and all worlds and universes, immensely complex and only slightly understood by us, did in fact, suspend the laws of the material, physical world to allow Jesus to perform the miracle.

The second is that those people who were present or heard about the event misunderstood or only saw the

end result. If we consider what a person from the first century would think if they were transported to Patchogue in the 21st century— everything would seem a miracle to them. People flying the skies in huge metal birds, electricity, people moving and talking across flat screens, and, craziest of all, being able to talk and see people thousands of miles away through a little plastic device. Not to mention the existence of plastic—what is that?

The third possibility is that the writers of the New Testament created the stories—made them up.

And the fourth possibility is that we don’t know as much as we think we do. That there were and are exceptions and variables in the natural laws that govern the world and universe.

So, after giving myself a headache, I ask myself, what is the point of these stories, no matter what the causal option? And the answer I get is: we are to focus on Jesus. We are to look at Jesus, listen to Jesus, pay attention to Jesus. For he has something to teach us, a message of profound importance. A message that is transforming. Just as the water was transformed into wine, the blind man transformed from darkness to light, Lazarus from death to life, so can our lives be transformed into what the Rev. Robin Meyers calls “a new way of being in the world.”

So what is this new way of living? Jesus lays the foundation in Mark 12 when he states the two greatest commandments—“Love the Lord your God with all your heart, with all your soul, with all your mind, and with all

your strength, and “Love your neighbor as yourself.” These are interconnected and require a commitment and practice that will manifest in the way we live our lives.

Throughout the Gospels, Jesus expands on how we are to live in God pleasing ways: in Luke 6, Jesus said, “Love your enemies, do good to those that hate you, bless those who curse you. Turn the other cheek; give to everyone who begs from you, do to others as you would have them do to you.... Do not judge and you will not be judged. Forgive and you will be forgiven. Give and it will be given you—a good measure, pressed down, shaken together, running over, will be put in your lap, for the measure you give will be the measure you get back.”

What a vivid image of abundant generosity, of a loving giving heart rewarded with an abundance of joy. We see this in both the story of the Good Shepherd and the Prodigal Son. In the first, the Samaritan transcends societal and religious norms to render loving kindness to a stranger, and in the second story, the father welcomes the prodigal with open arms and a heart overflowing with love and acceptance. Just as God does.

And finally, in the Sermon on the Mount, Jesus emphasizes behaviors and mind sets pleasing to God—humility, peacemaking, mercy, pureness of heart and a hunger for righteousness.

All this often puts us in contradiction to what human society says is important. And we must be aware of these contradictions, but not waver in our determination to try to live in God pleasing ways. Faith is not just a matter

of belief, of ritual, of dogma or doctrine, it is a way of being. It is a huge and difficult task to try to live in harmony with the Divine, but when we do in spite of failures and shortcomings, that really is a wonder, a marvel, a miracle. Let us every day pay attention to Jesus.

—Barbara Becker

Slave Or Free, Disaffiliate Or Stay UMC?

Many of us can quote John 3:16: “For God so loved the world that he gave his only Son, so that everyone who believes in him may not perish but may have eternal life.” These wonderful words remind us that God’s love is too vast for human understanding. God not only loves me; God also loves those that I or the world may deem as unlovable.

God has chosen to create a kaleidoscopic family of many and diverse colors, languages, nationalities and understandings. God has created people who love God with all of our hearts. We are straight, gay, LGBTQI+, and we are all loved by God, though not understood by each other.

We are empowered to accept John 3:16 as profound truth when we fully embrace John 10:16. This is Jesus’ statement: “I have other sheep that are not of this sheep pen. I must bring them also. They, too, will listen to my voice, and there shall be one flock and one shepherd.” We do not get to choose who is in and who cannot be in the sheep pen because the sheep pen does not belong to us. We are but caretakers, “undershepherds” at

best. The pen, the fold, belongs to God.

No one needs to disaffiliate from The United Methodist Church because the thought of worshipping with and loving those whom we have demonized and criticized makes us uncomfortable. Look at me! My people, African Americans, were once considered to be three-fifths human because we were different. To think of us as less than human allowed and promoted our enslavement, rape and dehumanization.

Look at me! Since African Americans were deemed less than human, we were chattel. We could not be licensed to preach in the Methodist Church.

Look at me! Women, no matter the color of our skin, slave or free, could not be licensed or ordained or even lead a Bible study session. We are still here, lay and ordained, investing in and challenging the church. Please do not do to our LGBTQI+ siblings what you have already done to me, to us. God’s sheep pen is no great human experiment with which to toy. God’s sheep pen is a mirroring of God’s heaven; it is for everyone whom Jesus chooses to bring in.

If you are a part of The United Methodist Church and are reading this post, in your heart, you have already decided that you want to stay UMC. However, you may be struggling with how others will view you if you stay. You may have been told that if you stay, your congregation will die. That is a lie. You may have been told that you will receive a pastor whose theology is contrary to

your congregation’s beliefs. That, too, is a lie.

The clergy appointment process includes the voices of the laity via the pastor-parish relations committee. Your committee will continue to work with your district superintendent, who works in tandem with colleagues and the bishop to make missional appointments. Granted, appointment making is not an exact science because no perfect congregations and no perfect pastors exist. However, bishops and cabinets throughout The United Methodist Church have nothing to gain by sending congregations pastors who are not a missional fit. If your pastor wants to disaffiliate, celebrate the time you have had with them, shake their hands and let them go. Call your district superintendent and tell them, “We are staying, and our pastor is going, so please include our congregation in the appointment process.” You do not need to leave because your pastor does not want to stay.

Slave or free, disaffiliate or stay UMC? The choice is not your pastor’s; it is yours.

No matter what you decide, the world will continue to challenge you. I can promise that if you choose to stay United Methodist, we will continue to see the world as our parish. We will continue to be in ministry with all the world, even when it makes us uncomfortable.

—Commentary by Rev. Dr. Beverly L. Wilkes-Null, UMNS

ASSOCIATE'S GOURMET MARKET



Experienced Butchers & Caterers for over 20 years
Also providing Groceries, Dairy & Produce
1699J Rte. 112, Medford, NY 11763
Phone (631) 475-1749
Fax (631) 447-5086
www.associatemarketli.com



88 Waverly Ave.
Patchogue, NY 11772

(631) 758-1550
(631) 289-2176 Fax

Rick Braile, CIC
Rick@Bayharbourgroup.com

Ruland

FUNERAL HOME, INC.

500 North Ocean Ave.
Patchogue, NY 11772
631-475-0098

Free Estimates

Cell: 631-578-8322
Tel: 631-475-0764

ABEL-F Licensed & Insured # 44868-H
LANDSCAPING

- Landscape Design
- Sod & Seed Lawns
- Planting & Pruning
- Seasonal Clean-Ups
- Top Soil & Grading
- Lawn Renovations
- Snow Blowing
- Weekly Lawn Maintenance

T.J.'s HERO SHOP II

60 Washington Ave. Patchogue



289-5560

HOT BAGEL PLUS DELI

100% Boiled Bagel Store

57 South Ocean Ave., Patchogue | 631-475-4751



Moses misunderstands his doctor's orders.

Save Your Old Magazines

Dave Hollowell would very much appreciate your saving the magazines you have read and passing them on to him. He takes them for the enjoyment of adult and nursing home residents and shut ins. They can be dropped off in the church office.

The deadline for the March issue
of **The Link** is February 24.

Please email your copy to gbhoag@optonline.net.

Methodist Doctor: Revise UMC Abortion Policy

As several countries are liberalizing abortion restrictions — countries like Kenya, Argentina and Ireland — that is not the current American trend. As a result of the reversal of *Roe vs. Wade* by the U.S. Supreme Court's decision in *Dobbs vs. Jackson Women's Health Organization*, Tennesseans are now living under the most extreme abortion law in America.

And physicians like myself are criminals by legal definition for saving the life of a pregnant patient by providing standard, evidence-based, patient-centered care.

I ask you to understand that the *Dobbs* decision should not cause your Methodist heart to rejoice. When laws are this extreme, there is no room for grace.

Our 2016 Book of Discipline instructs: "Our belief in the sanctity of unborn human life makes us reluctant to approve abortion. But we are equally bound to respect the sacredness of the life and well-being of the mother and the unborn child. We recognize tragic conflicts of life with life that may justify abortion..."

I am not a theologian. I cannot cite Scripture as easily as many in my congregation. Luckily, in the Methodist faith, we rely on tradition, experience and reason to support our interpretation of Scripture. I have been raised in the Methodist tradition and am trying to shepherd my own family down the Methodist path. However, with my experience as a physician and my reason as a pragmatic practitioner of medicine, I can tell you celebrating the

Dobbs decision is unconscionable, especially as state actors are inhumanely regulating health care decisions. As a physician, I see many conflicts of life with life.

For example, in Tennessee after the *Dobbs* decision, surgically removing an ectopic pregnancy is criminal, even though the physician saves a life by performing an abortion. A pregnant mother can experience life-threatening conditions during pregnancy — such as preeclampsia, eclampsia or cancer. Treating the mother with appropriate medical care results in hurting the life inside her.

When physicians care for pregnant patients, we do the best we can for each life involved, but we cannot save every life that we encounter. Some unborn children develop in their mother's womb without a skull or brain, a condition called anencephaly. This is an unsurvivable fetal anomaly, and these families' treatment options are severely limited in Tennessee at this moment. A physician performing an abortion in this situation would be engaging in a criminal act.

In these examples, our Tennessee laws are unjust and inhumane. The laws under which I practice medicine are inappropriately burdensome for physicians and patients. As a result of these abortion restrictions, some physicians are leaving my state, and some patients are deciding against having a family, worried that their medical treatment options are limited.

As I bear witness to this new reality in my home state, I lament our repeated failures to learn from our past. How have we forgotten the his-

tory of our pre-*Roe* America? Do we not recall women dying of infections in septic abortion wards, making their other children orphans?

Do we not recall the actions taken by the Rev. Howard Moody and the Clergy Consultation Service on Abortion, a national network of Protestant and Jewish clergy who helped women find safe, confidential and compassionate abortions before they were legal? In *Renewal* magazine, he wrote:

"It is hard to draw any other conclusion from the background and history of the present law than that it is directly calculated, whether conscious or unconscious, to be an excessive and self-righteous punishment, physically and psychologically, of women. This example of severe sanction against women may have been understandable when men were convinced that women were witches and demons, but in the latter part of the 20th century, it is a cruel travesty on equal justice and a primitive form of retribution unworthy of both our theological and democratic traditions."

As I try to reason through these conflicts of life with life and as I try to understand our history, I also know this abortion topic has always been hard for me — I recognize that I am internally conflicted at baseline about this topic. But I realize that I am only lucky enough to never have needed such medical care.

My own path to motherhood is full of near misses and close calls. At my mid-pregnancy ultrasound with

Continued on Page 8

10 Church St., Patchogue, NY 11772

The Rev. Dr. Debbie San Pablo, Pastoral Minister
 Camille Flynn, Administrative Assistant
 Office Phone: 631-475-0381 | Fax: 631-475-3132
 Email: PatchogueUMC@Yahoo.com
 Office Hours: Tues-Friday, 9 a.m.-2 p.m
 Worship Video Livestreaming at PatchogueUMC.Org
 Previous services available.



**UMC Abortion Policy
 (From Page 7)**

my second child, concerns over a possible fetal abnormality subsided with more advanced imaging of the baby inside me. I should be thankful for my journey and only want to lift others up along the path as we all try to find our way in this world. It’s taken time for me to understand that abortion is health care — really. Politicians will turn up the heat of the conversations surrounding controversial health care topics, but let’s take each other’s hands and walk toward the light — as white hot as it may be.

I call on our United Methodist General Conference to revise the Social Principles and update the Book of Discipline. I urge our Protestant denominations to again ally with our Jewish brethren at this time. Contro-

versy is just an opportunity for community — a community we desperately need to rebuild.

Until the Dobbs decision, I only knew a world where important health care decisions like abortion were made by a woman in consultation with her family, faith and physician. As the state seeks to take control, it is not just taking freedom away from the individual, but The State is claiming authority over The Church. I urge The Church to declare this State overreach an unwelcome intrusion into our faithful practices. I urge our faith leaders to stand up for women and families and their physicians. In these times of controversy, silence is deadly.

—Commentary by Dr. Amy Gordon Bono, UMNS

Birthdays In February

- Feb. 10** Jonathan Alvarado
- Feb. 11** Joan Curtis
- Feb. 15** John Yarshuck
- Feb. 18** Robbie Pearson
- Feb. 20** Lilianna Amgelina Mangano
- Feb 21** Valerie Ward
- Feb. 24** Lili Rogers

