Rev. Dr. Veronica R. Goines, Rev. Dr. John C. Lentz, Co-Pastors Discovering God's call, celebrating the Spirit's presence Witnessing to Christ's transformative power!



The TOWER

JANUARY 2021



WORDS FROM PASTOR JOHN

I am writing this on Thursday, December 17, 2020. Fifteen days from now we will be awakening to a new day, a new year, and a new hope. 2020, oh my! I will certainly remember the weekend of March 13-15. Deanne and I were heading to New York to meet Jack, Meg and Sarah. It was Deanne's 60th birthday and we were going all out. "We may not eat for a month when we return," we jokingly said to each other (sort of!), but we are going to have a splurge! We had two hotel rooms reserved and five tickets to Broadway to see "Hamilton." Meg was flying in from the west coast. Sarah and Jack taking the train up the East Coast from Philadelphia and Washington, D.C.

Driving across the state of New York our excitement was growing but also our worry. We kept hearing stories that NYC was going to shut down due to this virus that seemed to be spreading uncontrollably. We stopped for a night in the Adirondack area and there we heard the news: Broadway was closing due to Covid-19. Jack, Meg and Sarah all said they didn't feel comfortable converging on a city that was shutting down. Deanne and I hunkered down for the weekend in a pretty nice place! Thankfully we got a full refund for the tickets, and most of our money back from the hotel. At least we could eat when we returned to Cleveland.

"What do we do?" I asked Veronica when she called me to discuss the unfolding drama. We decided not to have in person service that week. Veronica led the service. It was only audio. Tom Zych's adult education class was cancelled, so too almost everything.

And just as Christmas didn't stop when the Grinch stole all the Who's gifts and decorations, Covid-19 didn't stop Forest Hill Church.

As I reflect upon the year past, it was hard!

And yet, I am filled with thanksgiving for a God who keeps giving abundantly. Attendance at church actually increased through the live stream services. The Pantry continued to do its work and cars lined up around the block to receive food. The Deacons reached out as never before to those who are isolated. Veronica and I got pretty good at livestream services and zoom and YouTube classes. Meetings continued. All the ministries stepped it up. The Session passed the Covid-19 relief fund and about \$100,000 was distributed to individuals and to small businesses.

We said "good bye" to Anne Wilson and David Wigger and said "hello" to Qin Ying Tan and Amy Wheatley.

I am not trying to deny or diminish the horrific toll the virus took. The deaths of George Floyd, Ahmaud Arbery, Breonna Taylor, Rayshard Brooks, Casey Gooden Jr., and the 200+ others Black and Brown people shot by police give horrific witness to the systemic and institutional racism in our country. The divisive manner in which our sitting President acted to drive wedges of conflict between us revealed a wound in the soul of America. I know that some of you are really struggling. I have had more than one person say to me, "How could God let this happen?" I don't have an answer. Sadly, we didn't gather at Memorial services to say "good bye" to beloved friends.

It seems we are always caught in between "OH NO!, Please no!" "Help!" and "Thank you;" between horror and happiness, sadness and joy.

I do, however, want to witness to my faith that God comes in the midst of the sins and brokenness of our lives and our world and calls us to be the body of Christ: "to bring good news to the poor, to proclaim release to the captives, and recovery of sight to the blind, to let the oppressed go free, and to proclaim the year of the Lord's favor." (Luke 3:18-19)

Forest Hill Church sought to be faithful to this call of God to be the Beloved Community: to welcome all, to point towards the Kingdom of God, to struggle and wrestle with what it means to be church. And, even to try to make the best out of a difficult season of life.

So, thank you for being on the journey with us! Please continue to support our mission and ministry with your prayers, your presence, your time, talents and treasures! Please support us as we walk into this New Year.

God bless you! Yes, Happy New Year! ~John

A NEW CHRISTMAS STORY



Taking a break from the usual Earth Care message: T'was the night before Christmas, and all through the barn, the animals were stirring, for they'd heard a new yarn.

A babe was a coming, and soon to be born, right there among them, before the new morn.

The babe would become mighty, a King among Kings, the animals all thought, 'what a marvelous thing!'

Just then two travelers arrived, named Joseph and Mary, entered the stable and began to make ready.

For they were sent by God, their mission sublime-- the straw and the stable, would suit them just fine.

And shepherds in fields, tending flocks by night, knew that something was up, when they saw a bright light.

A star in the heavens was moving quite fast, and appeared to grow larger as it beckoned them past.

They knew in an instant, they'd better be quick, and follow the star, 'cause this wasn't a trick.

Soon they arrived at the most simple stable, and were met with a sight that history would fable.

The star shown above them, giving light down below, creating for all a most special glow.

The baby was birthing, the donkey was braying; the cattle were lowing, the sheep were baa-baaing;

Now wise guys from afar—no, not the ones from New Jersey---were moved to consider, how <u>they</u> could be worthy.....

So they followed the Star, and went straight to the stable, each bearing gifts of which they were able

Melchior with gold, Gaspar with myrrh, Balthazar with frankincense----but scholars concur---

They came not that night, but later in time--- though that is quite useful in completing this rhyme.

And everyone wondered, just what the birth meant—but soon the whole world, would know this event.

The Angels on high began a great chorus, exclaiming God's son, was now 'ere before us

Yes Jesus had come, the point of this story, sent to earth by God, to proclaim all His glory.

The wise guys then knelt, before the babe in the manger, for they knew then that He, had come as their Savior. And they were heard to exclaim as they rode out of sight, Merry Christmas to all: God's gift for this night.

By Dave Neff, Bard of Willoughby (reprise from 2014)

RACIAL EQUITY BUDDIES

We hope you will join us to build our own racial equity knowledge AND connect with the Forest Hill Church community.

We'll be watching short, engaging presentations - TED Talks -- to help us have meaningful content to discuss together. **ALL ARE WELCOME.**

Upcoming sessions are on January 25 and February 22. Both are 7:00-8:15 pm, via Zoom. You can come to one or come to both. We will email you the link to the TED Talk and the Zoom link.

Please sign up here: https://bit.ly/FHCTED.

Come share your thinking, reflect on new ideas, and meet other Forest Hill Church members & friends interested in racial equity conversations in our community. Questions, comments, or ideas? Please share them on the registration form.

Committee Members:

Lisa Vahey (Co-Chair), Chiquitia Montgomery (Co-Chair), Quentin Smith, Elizabeth Shaw, Kermit Lind, Mark Joseph, and Vikki Nowak

ADULT EDUCATION

"Blessed Are You"
The Beatitudes of Jesus in Scripture and Life
Sundays 9:30 a.m.
January 3 - February 14

Come join us for a deep dive into some of the most important passages of the Bible for Christians - the teachings of Jesus known as the "Beatitudes." What did Jesus mean when he said: "Blessed are the poor"? Why do the gospel writers Matthew and Luke have different accounts of the words of Jesus? How are you and I to understand what Jesus was saying and live by them?

<u>Please click here to sign up for this exciting class.</u>

You will join one of two groups led by Kathryn Eloff and Tom Zych, Dave Bell and Pat Jenkins.

Soon we will announce our program for Lent and then there will be another exciting zoom class called "Lord Teach Us To Pray". This study based on one of the greatest treasures of faith will explore the key phrases of the Lord's Prayer and as they lead us to a greater spirituality and growth.



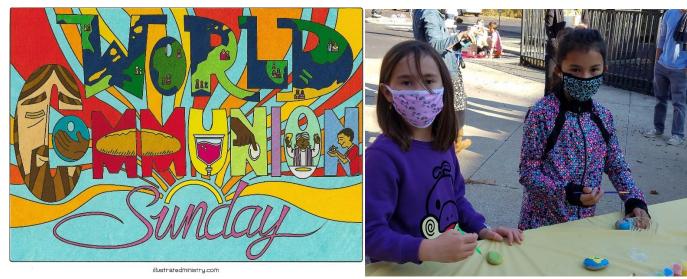


Family, Youth, and Children Ministries

NURTURING FAITH AND CONNECTION IN CHALLENGING TIMES!

On Sunday, Oct 4th, families found a bag at their front door with an invitation to participate in live-stream worship, along with a dozen donut holes for World Communion Sunday!









On a bright, warm Sunday morning in November, parents, children, and teens gathered outdoors at the church for socially distanced followship, deputs, outdoors agrees, and exafts.

fellowship, donuts, outdoor games, and crafts.





On the first Sunday of Advent, volunteers delivered "ADVENT AT HOME" gift bags to 32 homes. Every family received the book, Faithful Families for Advent and Christmas.

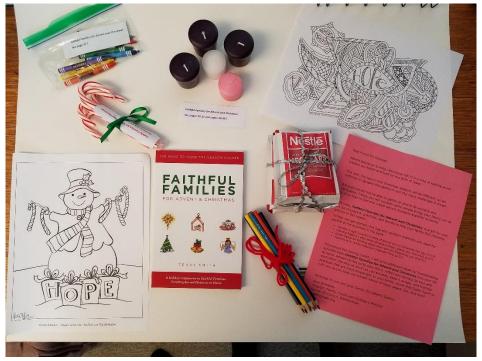


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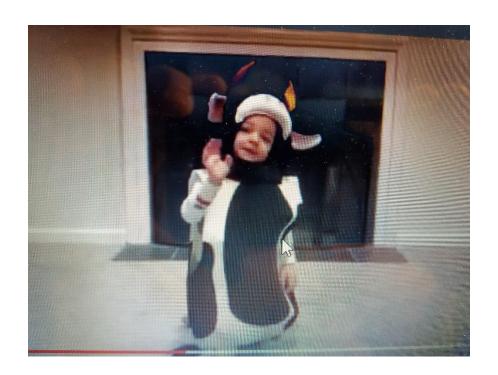


Each week in Advent, families received materials to support spiritual practices and activities they could do together at home to find

meaning in the season.



Families participated in Advent worship, lighting the Advent Candles each week. Youth added their beautiful voices to worship and children were delightful as animals in an anthem during the Lessons and Carol's service!





THE NOMINATING COMMITTEE - 2021 NOMINATIONS!

Barbara Hansen has been a member of FHC for 62 years. Barb was married in FHC and had four children, seven grandchildren. She served as an Elder, Deacon, Clerk of Session, Stephen Minister, and Commissioner to General Assembly. Also served on Stewardship, Worship, Personnel Committee, Nominating, Discernment, Accessibility, Long Range Planning, Centennial Planning Committee, and various search committees and anniversary celebrations. Member of Bell Choir, Iris Circle, and The Group.

Jenny Himmelman has been a member of Forest Hill since the fall of 2002. During this time, she has served as a Deacon, Elder on Education & Spiritual Formation, on Nominating Committee, and also has been a participant in the Faith leader Program. Jenny is a resident of Richmond Heights along with her husband Mark and daughter Caty. In her spare time, she enjoys cooking, baking, gardening, keeping up with family & friends, laughing, and socializing when safe to do so. She looks forward to serving the Forest Hill Church community.

Laurie Rose is a long time resident of Cleveland Heights and joined Forest Hill in 2017. She has worked in publishing. Her interests include hiking, biking and reading, especially history. She enjoys walking her 15 year old lab Rose around the Forest Hill neighborhood.

Lisa Vahey joined Forest Hill Church in 2016. She's volunteered with our sanctuary and Labre work, and over the past two years, has joined racial equity work at FHC - organizing racial buddies learning, attending book clubs and most recently, leading a cohort of church members reading me and white supremacy (Layla Saad) and striving to support each other in raising their voices to avoid white silence. She believes book clubs are important, but that learning + action go hand in hand. Lisa works with schools, districts and nonprofits across the Midwest on literacy, teaching and learning, leadership coaching

and equity. She also teaches at the University of Illinois at Chicago. A graduate of Northwestern and Lesley University, she's lived in Boston and Chicago and is still sometimes surprised she's back "home" in Cleveland, where she grew up long ago. She's on two nonprofit advisory boards and is an active volunteer in Shaker Heights, as well. Lisa's married to Doug and has two young adult children, Ellie and David, who were both confirmed at Forest Hill Church. She would love to talk with more church members about their ideas around justice and mission, and racial equity, too. Reach out to her any time!

SLATED NOMINATIONS – 2021 December 21, 2020

DEACONS

Deacon Elder (2023): Dean Sieck

Deacons (2023): Laurie Rose, Kathy Hanna-Stauffer, Sharon Wiggins

FAMILY YOUTH & CHILDREN

Elder (2021): Kurt Haas Elder (2023): Dara Elliot

JUSTICE & MISSION

Elder (2023): Lisa Vahey

Elected Leaders: Jack Lentz, Jessica Owusu, Virainia Weiss

STEWARDSHIP

Elder (2023): Jenny Himmelman

Elected Leaders: Jamie Allen, Chris Henry

TRUSTEES

Elder (2021): Elizabeth Shaw Elder (2023): Jessica Kelley Trustee (2021): Zelma Sharp Trustee (2022): Marina Grant

Trustees (2023): Jim Seeders, Nancy Lyon Stadler

WORSHIP

Elder (2022): Dave Bell

Elder (2023): Derry Stauffer

Elected Leaders: Deb Erwin, Twanda Patterson, Linda Martin

CHURCH GROWTH

Elder (2022): Mark Wedell

Elected Leaders: Ahren Stock, Amanda Mervine Horan, Karen Smith

Wong

NOMINATING COMMITTEE

(2021): Barb Hansen, Deedee Pim, Leslie Clement, Kate Burleigh, Kemp Jaycox, Zelma Sharp (Trustees), Jennifer Blakeney (J&M), Pat Jenkins (Education)

UPDATE FROM BLACK CAUCUS

Saturday morning, January 30, from 10:30 a.m. to noon the Black Caucus - - via ZOOM - - will hold its second book club discussion. We will be discussing Ibram Kendi's best seller 'How To Be An Antiracist'. All people of goodwill are welcome. The zoom link to join the discussion appears below this notice. There is no need to preregister.

Join us and explore a number of issues, including whether there is a difference between, 'I am not racist' and 'I am an antiracist'. Are the two different and if so, how?



Antiracism is a transformative concept that reorients the conversation about racism- and, even more fundamentally, points us toward liberating new ways of thinking about ourselves and each other. At its core racism is a powerful system that creates false hierarchies of human value; its warped logic extends beyond race, from the way we regard people of different ethnicities or skin colors to the way we treat people of different sexes, gender identities, and body types. Racism intersects with class and culture and geography and even changes the way we see and value ourselves. In How To Be An Antiracist, Kendi takes readers through a widening circle of antiracist ideas- from the most basic concepts to visionary possibilities - that will help readers see all forms of racism clearly, understand their poisonous consequences and work to oppose them in our systems and in ourselves.

Kendi weaves an electrifying combination of ethics, history, law, and science with his own personal story of awakening to antiracism. This is an essential work for anyone who wants to go beyond the awareness of racism to the next step: contributing to the formation of a just and equitable society.

This discussion promises to be as informative, educational, enlightening and entertaining as our first discussion on Rev. Dr. Martin Luther King's book, *Strength to Love* was. We hope you will join us as we continue on our path of becoming the Beloved Community of Forest Hill Church and beyond.

FHC Black Caucus is inviting you to a scheduled Zoom meeting.

Topic: How To Be An AntiRacist Book Club Discussion

Time: Jan 30, 2021 10:30 AM Eastern Time (US and Canada)

Join Zoom Meeting

https://us02web.zoom.us/j/82073754106?pwd=MWV0dWtjclBFQzM4RF U3aERMcGhUZz09

Meeting ID: 820 7375 4106

Passcode: 723056 One tap mobile +1-646-558-8656

Reflections on the African American Journey A pictorial overview of African American history, struggle and journey

"We are not what we ought to be. We aren't what we want to be. We ain't what we gonna be. But, thank God, we are not what we once were." Rev. Dr. Martin Luther King

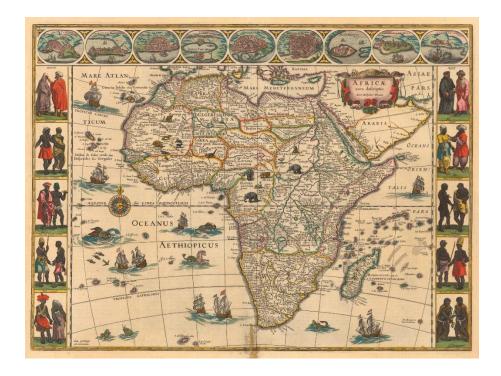
This January, we shall witness a Black woman inaugurated as Vice President of the United States. Twelve years ago, America made

history by electing its first Black person as President. However, these achievements are not exclusively personal. Rather, it is through the dedication, determination, struggle and sacrifices of the unnamed masses which made possible these and other milestones.

The Black Caucus takes this opportunity to give thanks and reflect on the struggles and sacrifices made over the centuries which led us to this historical moment. We acknowledge the advancements our people have made since 1619, when we first arrived on these shores in shackles and chains. We are forever grateful and in debt for the undying courage and commitment demonstrated by our ancestors which led us to this historical point.

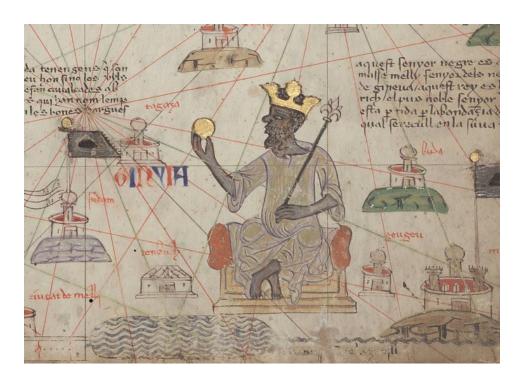
With deep gratitude, we present this pictorial historical overview of African American history. It begins with a map of Mother Africa and highlights some of her ancient civilizations. We then turn to the advent of the transatlantic slave trade and the Middle Passage it embodied. Moving on to our existence in America, we look at slavery and the Black abolitionists who supported its defeat. Following the Civil War and abolition of slavery, we take a look at American Reconstruction and the inflow of Jim Crow and the Black Codes. Our pictures conclude with our current struggle for total and complete equality.

Still, as Dr. King noted, 'We are not where we ought to be. But thank God, we are not where we once were". The struggle is ongoing!



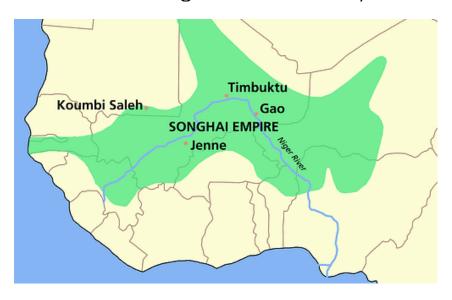
A Few Notable Ancient African Civilizations Kingdoms of Mali, Kush, Songhai and Zimbabwe

A 1375 illustration of Mansa Musa (believed to be the world's richest king) who ruled the Mali Empire from 1312-1337.





The Nubian kingdom of Kush, a rival to Egypt exuded power and wealth between 2000BC through the 4th century AD.



The Great Zimbabwe

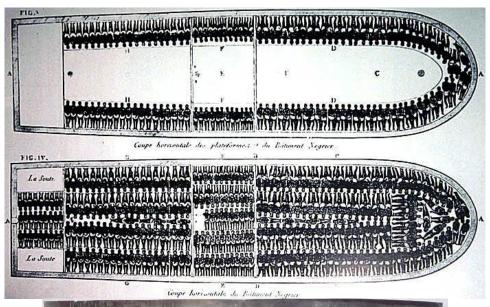


Check out the website

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The Middle Passage

This detailed drawing of the slave ship Brookes was distributed by the Abolitionist Society in England and dates from 1789. It is probably the most iconic image of the Atlantic slave trade. It shows each deck and cross-sections of decks and tight packing of captives. The Brookes was allowed to carry 454 captives. However, in four earlier voyages (1781-86), she carried from 609 to 740 enslaved Africans; thus, crowding in the decks was much worse than shown here. For example, in her 1782 voyage with 609 Africans, there were 351 men, 127 women, 90 boys, and 41 girls crammed into its decks.





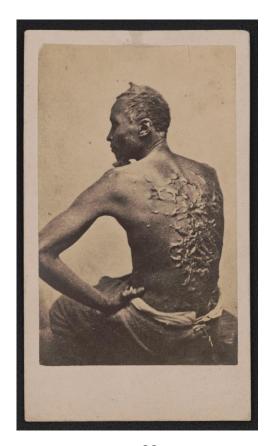
A painting of the slave deck of the ship Albaroz by British Naval Officer, Lt. Francis Meynell, 1845.

Drawing of an insurrection on a slave ship.

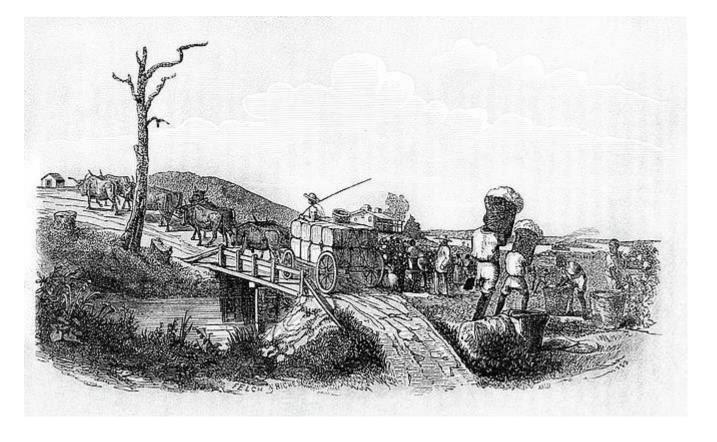


Slavery in America 1619-1865

Whipped mercilessly and worked to the bone (in the words of Malcom X '...worked from can't see in the morning to can't see at night'), African slaves were the center of America's economic engine and arguably their nearly 300 years of free labor is responsible for America's great wealth.



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Black Abolitionists: Sojourner Truth, Harriet Tubman, Frederick Douglass & Nat Turner



Unknown Photographer, Sojourner Truth, 1864. Carte de visite (seated). Source: Gladstone Collection, Prints and Photographs Division, Library of Congress. Reproduction Number: LC-USZC4-8165 (3-11b)

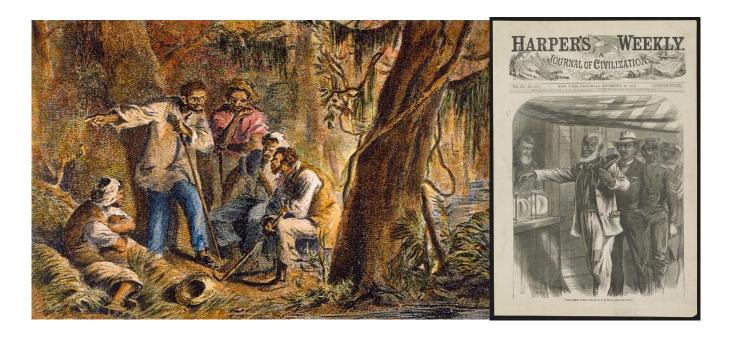


There is no
Negro problem.
The problem is
whether the
American people
have loyalty
enough, honor
enough,
patriotism
enough, to live up
to their own
constitution.

Frederick Douglass

ourtango

Below Nat Turner plotting rebellion, Virginia 1832. There were a number of other uprisings in the United States but Turner's is the most known. Other American slave rebellions include: Stone Rebellion, 1739; the New York City Conspiracy 1741; Gabriel Prosser Virginia, 1800; German Coast Uprising, 1811



Black Reconstruction 1865-1877 (above)
Drawing the First Vote Harper's Weekly 1867 (above)

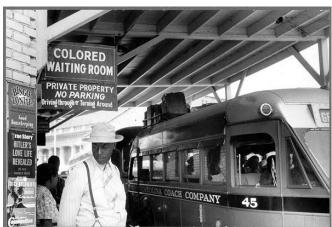
Freedmen's Industrial School (1866)



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The Black Codes & Jim Crow

The Black Codes were a series of laws designed to limit the freedom of Black people after slavery was abolished. Jim Crow was a stereotypical image of Black people, depicting us as lesser, lazy, childlike but happy. The character was portrayed by a white southerner in minstrel black-face, named Thomas 'Daddy' Rice. Jim Crow laws were designed to marginalize African/Americans by denying the basic human rights granted by God and civil rights given by the U.S. Constitution. Jim Crow and the Black Codes were enforced by murder, lynching and other terrorist acts.







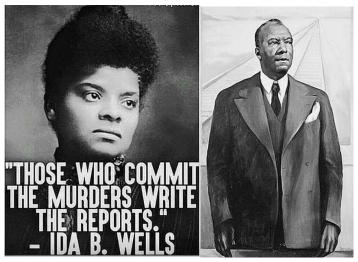




Ida B. Wells, above, was born into slavery in 1862 in Mississippi. She died in Chicago in 1931. Her life was one free of fear and determination. She became a prominent journalist, activist and researcher. She battled racism, sexism and violence. In the 1890's she published 'Southern Horrors: Lynch Laws in all its Phases' where she exposed and documented the horrors of lynching; which had never been done before.

Universal Negro Improvement Association (UNIA) parade through Harlem 1920. The UNIA, founded by Garvey, remains the largest Pan-African mass movement in American history.

A. Philip Randolph was one of the most influential African American leaders of the twentieth century. From 1917 until his death on May 16, 1979, Randolph worked as labor organizer, a journalist, and a civil rights leader. As a labor organizer he formed the first ever black union, the Pullman Porters. Randolph threatened Truman with a protest march on Washington leading to the desegregation of the armed services.

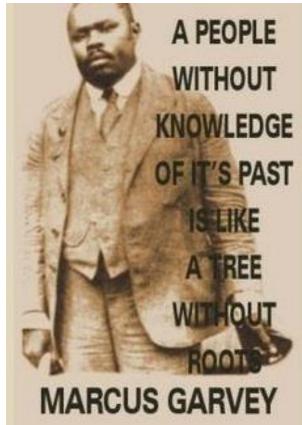




Stokely Carmichael, aka Kwame Toure, popularized the slogan Black Power at the March against fear, in Mississippi on June 16, 1966. Stokely spoke at the rally shortly after being arrested and released. 'This is the 27th time he said (referring to the number of times he had been arrested) in disgust. We have been saying 'Freedom' for six years. What we are going to start saying now is Black Power.' The crowd erupted. October, 16, 1968, at the Olympic Games in Mexico City, Tommie Smith and Juan Carlos raised their fists during the medal ceremony in silent protest of the systematic racism in the United States.

Angela Davis, firebrand activist and powerhouse feminist as well as educator and author was born (1944) and raised in Birmingham, Alabama around 'Dynamite Hill' so named due to the frequency of Ku Klux Klan attacks. Well acquainted with racism from an early age, in her teens, Angela organized interracial study groups. She also knew several of the children murdered in the 1963 bombing of the 16th Street Baptist Church. One of Angela's most quoted sayings is "I no longer accept the things I cannot change. I change the things I cannot accept".

Black Lives Matter founded in 2013 in response to the acquittal of Trayvon Martin's murderer George Zimmerman by the three women pictured below (Alicia Garza, Patrisse Cullors, and Opal Tometi). Time Magazine recognized the three as one of the 100 most influential persons in 2020. BLM may well be the largest human rights movement in American history. On June 6, 2020. More than 500,000 persons participated in demonstrations in close to 550 places across the United States! The movement became so large it spread internationally. One of the below photos show demonstrators holding a sign in Portuguese, translated reads 'all Black lives matter'.















With gratitude and love, The Black Caucus: Co-Chairs Elizabeth Shaw & Quentin Smith

Care Group (Group Leader-Deanne Lentz): The Eden Care Group will assist our pastors in meeting members' needs during January. Please call the church office to report an illness, hospitalization, family emergency, birth or death. Information will then be passed on to the Care Group leaders.

Thank You to all office volunteers!

The office volunteers for putting in 60 hours of volunteer time: Lynda Bernays, Betty Clark, Ellen McChesney, and Cathy Ghiandoni.

Are you interested in becoming part of our Forest Hill Church Community? If so, please email churchgrowth@fhcpresb.org.

Staff Emails

Antoinette Richardson	Administration	office@fhcpresb.org
Genetha (Nita) Clark	Finance	finance@fhcpresb.org
Ann Donkin	Building Mgr.	adonkin@fhcpresb.org
Stavros Gazis	Head Custodian	<u>custodian@fhcpresb.org</u>
Rev. Dr. Veronica Goines	Co-Pastor	pastorgoines@fhcpresb.org
Rev. Dr. John Lentz Jr.	Co-Pastor	pastorlentz@fhcpresb.org
Peg Weissbrod	Outreach/Breeze	pegw@fhcpresb.org
Dr. Amy Wheatley	Family, Youth, Childr	en <u>CE@fhcpresb.org</u>
Dr. Qin Ying Tan	Music	music@fhcpresb.org
Rev. Carol Wedell	Parish Associate	

3031 Monticello Blvd, Cleveland Hts. OH 44118 216-321-2660 Fax: 216-320-1214 Pastoral Care Emergencies: 216-319-3596

Email: office@fhcpresb.org Website: www.fhcpresb.org

Rev. Dr. Veronica R. Goines, Rev. Dr. John C. Lentz, Jr., Co-Pastors Dr. Amy Wheatley, Dir. of Family, Youth & Children's Ministries Dr. Qin Ying Tan, Interim Director of Music Rev. Carol Wedell, Parish Associate

Next TOWER deadline: 8 am on January 14 Custodians' cell phone: 216-217-5257

Giving/donation options- Friends of FHC, during this time, you may give monetary gifts/donations by texting 216-400-5300 or give online using either <u>our BREEZE Giving Page</u> or via <u>PayPal</u>. You may also mail in a check to the church bookkeeper (3031 Monticello Blvd. Cleveland Heights, Ohio 44118).



Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
Regularly scheduled events: meet every week unless noted	6:00 pm -AA: Progress not Perfection 7:00 pm -AI Anon: Now There's Hope -Book Group 7:30 pm -AA: Borton Group -Boy Scout Trp. #403 -OA Big Book	11:00 am -Abundance Pantry 5:00 pm -Fitness Fusion exercise class -Bulletin and Weekly email Deadline	7:30 am -Bible & Bagels (virtual) 12:00 pm -Staff Meeting (virtual) -AA: Wednesday -Women's Group 7:00 pm -Guest Group: Speak Life Bible Study	1:30 pm -English Dance 5:00 pm -Fitness Fusion exercise class 6:20 pm -Voices in Bronze 7:30 pm -Chancel Choir	9:30 am -Al Anon: Hand in Hand	
Pecember 27 9:30 am: Adult Education course	December 28	December 29	December 30	December 31	January 1 Office Closed	January 2 8:00 am- Men's Group
January 3 Communion Sunday 9:30 am: Adult Education course	January 4 OFFICE CLOSED	January 5	January 6	January 7	January 8	January 9
January 10 9:30 am: Adult Education course	January 11	January 12	January 13	January 14 8:00 am- TOWER DEADLINE	January 15	January 16
January 17 9:30 am: Adult Education course	January 18 OFFICE CLOSED FOR MLK	January 19	January 20	January 21	January 22	January 23
January 24 9:30 am: Adult Education course	January 25 7:00 pm-Racial Equity Buddies TED Talk	January 26	January 27	January 28 Antoinette out of the office-the office will be open.	January 29 Antoinette out of the office-the office will be open.	January 30 10:30 am- Black Caucus Zoom Book Club
January 31 9:30 am: Adult Education course	February 1 Antoinette out of the office-the office will be open.	February 2	February 3	February 4	February 5	February 6 8:00 am- Men's Group

January 2021