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

FEBRUARY 2021





### **WORDS FROM PASTOR VERONICA**



In the wake of the January 6 storming of the capital, that threatened our elected leaders and claimed the lives of five citizens, I like you felt dismayed and outraged, but not altogether surprised. For more than five years President

Trump groomed his supporters for this act of violence and insurrection. From his bid for the presidency, Trump invoked MAGA. Thus, having stoked the flames of fear and discontentment, and affirming entitlement, the former president systematically emboldened proponents to emerge from the shadows to assert his lawless agenda, without regard for nation, property, or human life.

As I searched my heart and God's Word for the answer to how we move forward, the words of Chris Rankin-Williams surfaced, "The challenge of this life is not to stay alive. Rather, the challenge of this life to stay in love." These words remind us to tend to our hearts, because as Jesus taught, "Guard your heart with all diligence, for out of the heart flow forth the issues of life." We may have little control over the present circumstances, but Jesus' words confirm that we have power over our own hearts, and our hearts can orients us toward the will of God, or toward our own willfulness, as we witnessed a few weeks ago.

What we saw in the riotous attack on the capital was a complete lack of self-differentiation, herd mentality which is explained in "Cascade Theory." Mathematically, Cascade Theory demonstrates that associating with people who have the wrong answer increases the odds that you too, along with others, will adopt those incorrect attitudes. In the case of the insurrection, the rioters willingly believed the lies, and acted accordingly. The article stresses the dangers of glorifying a non-existent past, and participating in corporate memory failure, "selective amnesia", such as mythologizing the good old days

or waxing nostalgic about "old time religion," or recalling redacted/edited memories of American history.

Cascade thinking pervades our culture as a kind of destructive nostalgia which engenders a longing for what was isolating rather than unifying, alienating rather than healing, discriminating rather than including. This thinking sends its adherents backward, grumbling and murmuring, rather than forward, content, living in an imagined past rather than a realized present, living in fear rather than faith; in despair rather than hope. Corporate memory failure and cascade thinking were the normative mentality in the January 6 riot.

As in the events of 9/11, the events of January 6, will and should remain indelibly etched in our memories— not for purposes of retaliation, but as a cautionary tale on domestic terrorism. Let us not to be misled by feigned calls to unity, but by faith, let us move forward requiring accountability, in order that authentic healing and unity may commence.

Although biblical passages were co-opted by the rioters, it too was false, a vitiation/impairment of the quality and efficiency of the Word of God. As dual citizens of Heaven and earth, specifically America, spiritual discernment will be imperative to faithfully influence the emerging shift for our nation, as we pray. Holy God, "Thy Kingdom come, Thy will be done, on earth as it is in Heaven."

~Grace and Peace, Veronica

### WORDS FROM PASTOR JOHN



On Wednesday, February 17 we enter the season of Lent with our annual service of Ash Wednesday. Last year we gathered in person. This year we will still not be able to come together. (See Lenten schedule) Yet, whether we are together in person or not, each

of us and all of us should enter this season in reflection upon our mortality.

"We are dust and to dust we shall return." It is a season of repentance. "We have all sinned and fallen short of the glory of God."

It is a season of "dust and ashes." We begin the spiritual journey to the Cross and then to the tomb, preparing ourselves for the redemptive promise of Easter and the hope that springs eternal.

Lent is a season we should not overlook. It is a time of great grace, if we are open to it.

Use this period to pray for yourselves and those you love. Pray for our nation. We need to repent and seek redemption. Pray for our church that we will continue to walk in the way, the truth and the light of Jesus Christ.

Lent is a very personal season. However, do not neglect the public acts... the outer works that reveal our inner reflections. Give more, pray more, practice being still so that you can listen for God, love God, be attuned to God.

We enter Lent in a nation torn asunder. We shall not return to civility and unity unless the stand in the light of the truth and put away the lies.

Lent this year is right in the middle of Black History Month. We celebrate and remember the power of those who have given their bodies, blood, sweat and tears in slavery to build this nation and serve this nation and still faced Jim Crow and Mass Incarceration. Brown and Black bodies who still, despite it all, hold out hope that all can live in the light of the promises of our constitution.

White members, use Lent to get better educated. Repent so perhaps someday we can be redeemed. Pray for forgiveness and work for reconciliation. Don't let Black people do your work for you.

This Lent we are still corralled by Covid-19. Perhaps this is the appropriate context for your reflections on mortality, repentance, and redemption for yourself and for our world.

~John

# LENT 2021 A SEASON OF REMORSE, REPENTANCE AND REDEMPTION

Covid-19 may keep us from being together in person but it will not stop us from joining together in fellowship this Lenten season.

<u>Wednesday, February 17 ASH WEDNESDAY at 7:00 pm</u> "Camp Meeting" – a Zoom service of community lament. We invite you to offer an expression of confession, need, angst, hope, joy. It can be a song, a poem, or just the groaning of the spirit. You can prepare or just let the spirit lead you in the moment.

<u>Wednesday, March 3 and Wednesday, March 9 at 6:00 – 7:00 (Zoom)</u> Lenten Fellowship Dinners. Prepare your meal (or not) and join others for an hour of fellowship. Break out small groups will be formed.

### Sunday, February 28 and Sunday, March 28

Home Movie Evenings. Watch two movies on Netflix (whenever you want!) focused on the life of Jesus. "The Young Messiah" – a film exploring the childhood years of Jesus. "Godspell" – based on the well-known musical of the ministry of Jesus shaped by the Gospel of Matthew.

### **GRATITUDE**



As we enter the new era of our Nation's governance, let us give thanks for God's grace and goodness for all Earth Care matters. In the coming months, with new administrators on board in such areas as Dept. of the Interior, EPA, ESA, etc., we would anticipate that good and reasonable decisions will be made regarding

clean air and water, climate change, energy generation, wilderness preservation, and so many other issues which affect the goodness of God's earth----our own share of this planet as well as all the rest, which we indeed do influence with our own actions.

In the coming months we will examine many of these issues in greater detail. In the meantime, let's all look forward to a brighter future!

~Dave Neff Earth Care Leader

### **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 session is February 22 at 7:00-8:15 pm, via Zoom.

Please sign up here: <a href="https://bit.ly/FHCTED">https://bit.ly/FHCTED</a>.

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

### THE BLACK CAUCUS



"Our Black Shining Prince" is how Ossie Davis, renowned actor and activist, remembered Malcolm X when he eulogized him on February 27, 1965. This Black History Month, the Black Caucus remembers and honors El Hajj Malik El Shabazz, better known as Malcolm X.

Malcolm was no stranger to Cleveland. On April 3, 1964 he gave one of his most memorable speeches, 'the Ballot or the Bullet' at the Cory Methodist Church. A year earlier in May, 1963 MLK, Jr also spoke at that historic church. On

February 21, 1965 Malcolm was assassinated at the Audubon Ballroom, in New York City moments before he was to speak. Following is Ossie Davis' Eulogy of Malcolm X.

### **Eulogy of Malcolm By Ossie Davis**

Here—at this final hour, in this quiet place—Harlem has come to bid farewell to one of its brightest hopes—extinguished now, and gone from us forever. For Harlem is where he worked and where he struggled and fought—his home of homes, where his heart was, and where his people are—and it is, therefore, most fitting that we meet once again—in Harlem—to share these last moments with him.

For Harlem has ever been gracious to those who have loved her, have fought for her and have defended her honor even to the death. It is not in the memory of man that this beleaguered, unfortunate, but nonetheless proud community has found a braver, more gallant young champion than this Afro-American who lies before us—unconquered still.

I say the word again, as he would want me to: Afro-American—Afro-American Malcolm, who was a master, was most meticulous in his use of words. Nobody knew better than he the power words have over minds of men.

Malcolm had stopped being a Negro years ago. It had become too small, too puny, too weak a word for him. Malcolm was bigger than that. Malcolm had become an Afro-American, and he wanted—so desperately—that we, that all his people, would become Afro-Americans, too.

There are those who will consider it their duty, as friends of the Negro people, to tell us to revile him, to flee, even from the presence of his memory, to save ourselves by writing him out of the history of our turbulent times.

Many will ask what Harlem finds to honor in this stormy, controversial and bold young captain—and we will smile. Many will say turn away—away from this man; for he is not a man but a demon, a monster, a subverter and an enemy of the black man—and we will smile. They will say that he is of hate—a fanatic, a racist—who can only bring evil to the cause for which you struggle! And we will answer and say to them:

Did you ever talk to Brother Malcolm? Did you ever touch him or have him smile at you? Did you ever really listen to him? Did he ever do a mean thing? Was he ever himself associated with violence or any public disturbance? For if you did, you would know him. And if you knew him, you would know why we must honor him: Malcolm was our manhood, our living, black manhood!

This was his meaning to his people. And, in honoring him, we honor the best in ourselves. Last year, from Africa, he wrote these words to a friend: My journey, he says, is almost ended, and I have a much broader scope than when I started out, which I believe will add new life and dimension to our struggle for freedom and honor and dignity in the States.

I am writing these things so that you will know for a fact the tremendous sympathy and support we have among the African States for our human rights struggle. The main thing is that we keep a united front wherein our most valuable time and energy will not be wasted fighting each other.

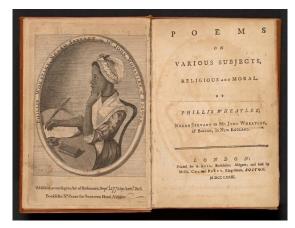
However we may have differed with him—or with each other about him and his value as a man—let his going from us serve only to bring us together, now.

Consigning these mortal remains to earth, the common mother of all, secure in the knowledge that what we place in the ground is no

more now a man—but a seed—which, after the winter of our discontent, will come forth again to meet us.

And we will know him then for what he was and is—a prince—our own black shining prince!—who didn't hesitate to die, because he loved us so.

For those who wish to learn more about this remarkable man here are a few books you may consider reading: The Dead Are Arising: The Life of Malcolm X, by Les Payne and Tamara Payne; The Autobiography of Malcolm X, by Malcolm X and Alex Haley.



### Phillis Wheatley, Poet 1753-1784

The Black Caucus is pleased to highlight the life and contributions of Phillis Wheatley. Born around 1753 in Senegal/Gambia, West Africa, a small, frail, female child was captured by slave traders and brought to America in 1761. Whatever the child's true name, it was

erased with her abduction. This fact brings to mind the tradition of the Nation of Islam members, rejecting their surnames as 'slave names' and substituting it with an X, indicating unknown lineage; ie, Malcolm X.

This child was sold in Boston, Massachusetts to John Wheatley, who was seeking domestic help for his wife, Susanna. The abducted child's first name, Phillis, was derived from the slave ship that brought her to America, "the Phyllis". Her surname was that of her masters.

Remarkably, in little more than a decade after her arrival on the shores of America, the young slave girl, now known as Phillis Wheatley, would become an international literary sensation. She communicated with our nation's first president, George Washington

and other luminaries of the time. Still, Phillis Wheatley's history speaks to the deep racism of America at the time, which sadly continues to this day.

Observing Phillis' keen intellect, Susanna Wheatley undertook to educate the enslaved child. A quick study, Phillis mastered English within 16 months of her arrival in America, She went on to be proficient in both Greek and Latin; and could read and write both.

At the tender age of thirteen, the Newport Rhode Island, Mercury published her first poem "On Messrs, Hussey and Coffin" about two men who nearly drowned at sea. At the age of eighteen, Phillis sought a publisher for her work.

There was general skepticism that Phillis had written her work. This was during a time when the very humanity of Africans was being questioned. David Hume had described us as a 'different species' and Immanuel Kant placed Africa last when ranking nations

Given the foregoing, it is not surprising that most would disbelieve an African was capable of reading and writing; let alone writing creatively and utilizing Greek and Latin imagery, Phillis was called upon to defend her honor, prove her intellect, ability and authorship.

Eighteen leading figures of Boston examined Phyllis to determine if she was truly the author of work attributed to her. (That perception of Black intellectual inferiority exists to this very day. For proof, simply ask one of your Black friends has their intellect ever been questioned.) Among the people who 'tested' Phillis were: John Hancock; Thomas Hutchinson, the governor of Massachusetts and his lieutenant governor; John Erving; Rev. Charles Chauncey; future governor James Bowdoin and the son of Cotton Mather, Samuel. The examiners left convinced that Phillis had indeed authored the work and signed a public declaration to that fact.

Despite the assurance of the above luminaries that Phillis had indeed written the poems, she was still unable to get her work published in the United States. Armed with the public attestation of the eighteen esteemed men, Phillis along with her masters, travelled abroad to England and her book of poetry 'Poems on Various Subjects, Religious and Moral' was published there.

Shortly after her work was published, Phillis was emancipated by her owners. Phillis' life sadly was short and difficult. She married a free Black man and reportedly birthed three children, all died in infancy. She continued to write but surviving off her work proved impossible and she and her husband lived in poverty. Never a stout and healthy woman she died at 31, due to complications from childbirth.

Remarkably, Phillis Wheatley was the third colonial woman to have her work published and the first of African origin. Her life and work dispelled and dispels the myth of our intellectual inferiority. Locally, she is honored as the Phillis Wheatley Association of Cleveland founded in 1911 continues its work to help educate and provide social services for our community to this day.

Sources for this article include:

Stamped From The Beginning, Kendi; 2016

Phillis Wheatley: Her Life, Poetry and Legacy, Stephanie Sheridan; The Smithsonian

Phillis Wheatley, Poems, Quotes and Facts; Jan. 2021: biography.com

Phillis Wheatley, Sondra A. O'Neal, The National Women's History

Museum Poetry Foundation

~Submitted by the Black Caucus Elizabeth Shaw & Quentin Smith Co-Chairs

## OUR BURKINA FASO GUESTS HAVE BEEN WITH US FOR ONE YEAR!

January 13, 2021 marks the first year anniversary of Issoufou, Idrissa, and Emmanuel being released from the Youngstown prison and coming to live in our church's Sanctuary Apartment. Our three sweet, caring, and resilient guests are doing well despite the pandemic restrictions along with the uncertainty of their asylum petitions in the immigration courts. The men, or as we affectionately refer them as "the Burkinabes", express often how very grateful they are for all the support, protection, and generosity they have received over this past year. Idrissa recently expressed this very touching sentiment:

"I am very happy with all of you. Thank you so much for all your help and for the lawyers. Emmanuel and Issoufou are now my brothers because of your help. We are family now. God bless all people for helping us."

The men's English skills have increased greatly, due in large part to our dedicated volunteer teachers. Kathy Boyle, Lorraine Ranchod, Cynthia Lehman, Eileen Vizcaino, Chris Henry, and the Tri-C Aspire ESL program have done a remarkable job conducting their lessons over a donated computer and three Kindles (the generous donors have asked to remain anonymous) due to COVID restrictions. Most weeks they have five lessons.

Emmanuel, Idrissa, and Issoufou love to watch soccer matches on TV, as well as enhance their excellent soccer skills in Forest Hill Park, whenever weather permits. They are most appreciative for Dan Shaner's expertise in keeping their communication systems running. They also appreciate the pastoral care provided by John and Veronica, as well as the loving care of the rest of the FHC staff, especially Antoinette and Anthony.

Through your generosity, they each now have a bicycle, providing them a satisfying level of freedom to explore the greater Cleveland area. Their freedom is especially cherished after our government had unjustly locked them up for so long. The bikes chosen were the result of the work of Gary Lustic and Steve Sedam. In the apartment they now have a donated exercise bicycle and an elliptical machine, which provides them needed workouts during these dark, cold, winter months.

The men work very hard at the church's pantry every Tuesday, which they enjoy. Thanks to Ann Donkin they have also done painting at the church. They wish they could do more, even get regular jobs, but unfortunately the current immigration policies restrict the men from getting work permits. Idrissa, Emmanuel, and Issoufou have done snow shoveling, yard work, moving furniture, and miscellaneous other jobs for members of the church and for our neighbors in Cleveland Heights. You can contact Jeff Smith (jeffsmith2756@gmail.com) if you are interested in having the men do work for you. Donations, given directly to them, for their work are always appreciated.

In the months ahead, the Immigration Task Force will continue to update you regularly on Idrissa's, Emmanuel's, and Issoufou's well-being, activities, and immigration status.

God bless you all for the love and financial support you have provided.





Clockwise from top left: At Neighborhood Family Practice for examinations, Zoom English class, playing music for an AMIS (Americans Making Immigrants Safe) fundraiser, Issoufou and Idrissa blowing out the candles on their birthday cake.

### **FHC Immigration Task Force:**

Gary Lustic Steve Sedam Jeff Smith
Julie Lustic Sharon Shumaker Charity Stock
Ron Register Anne Smith Virginia Weiss

## Reconnecting with God's Creation Offers Inspiration and Renewal

Do you find solace and healing in the natural world? Are you curious about the contours of a Christian relationship with God's creation? Would you like to expand your awareness of environmental issues affecting our community and learn what you can do about it?

If so, Kemp Jaycox and Stephen Sedam invite you to sign-up for "Reconnecting with God's Creation", a course they are co-leading for the fourth year in a row.

Through "Reconnecting with God's Creation", you will:

- Explore the wonder of the natural world from spiritual and scientific perspectives,
- Deepen your personal relationship with nature,
- awaken to its power of healing,
- Better understand how communities of color are adversely affected by the uneven application of environmental laws,
- Become motivated to foster greater harmony with God's creation, and
- Be part of welcoming, inclusive community that learns from each other.

Classes consist of a combination of meditative moments, guest speakers, virtual field trips, thought-provoking readings, mindful observations of nature, and sharing of positive eco-news. A workbook will be provided to help guide you through the experience. The course will culminate with each participant developing their own personal plan of reconnection with nature.

Classes will take place every Sunday, March 14 to June 6, from 4:00 to 5:30 p.m. (though the first and last class will be two hours in length). Classes on Easter, Mother's Day and the Sunday of Memorial Day weekend are optional. Due to the challenges posed by COVID, we

will participate from the comfort of our own homes using Zoom. This format was used in 2020 and it worked very well.

According to Kemp, "It has been a joy to learn from each participant and live vicariously through their nature observations and discoveries."

There is room for 12 participants in the course. Registration is free of charge and is on a first come first serve basis. Register by Sunday, February 21.

If you have questions or would like to participate please email Kemp at <a href="mailto:kempjaycox@yahoo.com">kempjaycox@yahoo.com</a>.

Learn more about the course here: <a href="https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=tvopc4h9wWU&t=53s">https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=tvopc4h9wWU&t=53s</a>



The Seventh annual Evening of African-American Music concert will be broadcast on The Forest Hill Church YouTube and Facebook pages on Sunday February 28th, at 7:30 PM. This annual and lively celebration of black artists, composers and song is a labor of love, presented by the Forest Hill Church Black History Education Committee. This year's concert will feature Forest Hill Church Member, Caleb Wright and his band "Alexander Wright & The Collective". A lively and skilled jazz ensemble encompassing multiple musicians between New York City, Los Angeles, and Cleveland. The event will also feature special guest pianist Jonathan Thomas, and vocalist Malika Turner. All members and friends of Forest Hill Church are encouraged to tune in and keep this tradition alive even in the midst of our current season. Audio recordings of the concert will be available for purchase from the Black History Education Committee. A free will offering will also be accepted digitally and via breeze. Please subscribe to Forest Hill Church on YouTube and like the Forest Hill Church Facebook page for more information.



#### **EXPLORING CHURCH MEMBERSHIP**

Want to learn more about Forest Hill Church? Come enjoy our pressure-free and virtual Exploring Membership Class. Learn more about our history, vision, and what it means to be a member (although you do not have to join - just participate and learn!) Classes will be held virtually on Sunday, Feb 7, and Sunday, Feb 14, from 12:30 pm to 2 pm. Attendance at both classes is necessary for membership (if you have a conflict, please let us know). Participants who decide to join the Church will be inducted on Sunday, Feb 21.

Please fill out the following form here: <a href="https://fhc.breezechms.com/form/98da6c">https://fhc.breezechms.com/form/98da6c</a> if you have interest in attending or questions.

~Church Growth

### WOMEN OF FOREST HILL CHURCH AND IRIS CIRCLE

As you all know we have not been able to enjoy each other's company for a long time. We still showed our generous spirit by giving to others during 2020. At the end of the year, Iris Circle was able to donate to 3 projects:

- 1.) Our own Abundance Pantry, providing groceries to our local community.
- 2.) EDWINS Leadership developing restaurant skills and jobs to those who have been incarcerated.
- 3.) YWCA a specific program for girls who age out of Foster care. Thank you to all who donated to these wonderful projects. Hopefully sometime in 2021 we will be able to gather and greet one another in person again.

~Cathy Ghiandoni and Nancy Burcham

#### Staff Emails

Rev. Carol Wedell

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

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

Parish Associate

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 February 18 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	
January 31 9:30 am: Adult Education course	February 1	February 2	February 3	February 4	February 5	February 6 8:00 am- Men's Group and Tax Prep
February 7 Communion Sunday 9:30 am: Adult Education course 12:30 pm: Exploring Membership	February 8	February 9	February 10	February 11	February 12	February 13 8:00 am: Tax Prep
February 14 9:30 am: Adult Education course 12:30 pm: Exploring Membership	February 15	February 16	February 17 7:00 pm: Ash Wednesday	8:00 am- TOWER DEADLINE	February 19	February 20 8:00 am: Tax Prep
February 21 Last day to register for Reconnecting with God's Creation	February 22 7:00 pm: TED Talk	February 23	February 24	February 25	February 26	February 27 8:00 am: Tax Prep
February 28 7:30 pm: BHT Concert	March 1	March 2	March 3 6:00 pm: Lenten Dinners	March 3	March 4	March 5 8:00 am: Tax Prep
March 6 Communion Sunday	March 7	March 8	March 9 6:00 pm: Lenten Dinners	March 10	March 11	March 12 8:00 am- Men's Group and Tax Prep

### February 2021