



Westchester

United Methodist Church Newsletter

VOLUME 11, ISSUE 2

FEBRUARY 2021

Black History Month

February is Black History Month. Black History Month is an annual celebration of achievements by African Americans and a time for recognizing the central role of African Americans in U.S. history, past and present. Since 1976, every U.S. president has officially designated the month of February as Black History Month. Other countries around the world, including Canada and the United Kingdom, also devote a month to celebrating Black history.

Each Black History Month has a different area of focus. According to the Association for the Study of African American Life and History (ASALH) site, themes for the last decade have included The Emancipation Proclamation/March on Washington (2013), Civil Rights in American (2014), Sites of African American Memories (2016), The Crisis in Black Education (2017), African Americans in Times of War (2018), Black Migrations (2019), African Americans and

the Vote (2020), and this year's theme, The Black Family: Representation, Identity, and Diversity."

According to the ASALH site, this year's theme will share how the Black Family has "been stereotyped and vilified from the days of slavery to our own time." It will also focus on the ways in which Black families were separated from their birth places through the atrocities of slavery, and the effects this has had.

A number of societal factors have had an impact on Black families throughout American history. From families being separated during slavery to the modern unequal criminal justice system taking Black fathers out of the home.

Did you know that 2020 was the 100th year anniversary of the 19th and the 15th Amendments, which gave women the right to vote and African Americans the right to



vote, respectively? Sadly, Black Americans still experience voter suppression, which is a racist tactic to prevent People of Color from voting.

You are invited to enrich your life by celebrating Black History month. One way to celebrate is to watch performances at the Playhouse Square, located in Cleveland, Ohio. This performing arts center is offering a pair of virtual performances. The first is Step Arfika!'s "Stono," premiering February 1st and running through February 14th. This dance performance retells the story of the 1739 slave rebellion on the banks of the Stono River in South Carolina.

Visit: playhousesquare.org for more information.

"I HAVE DECIDED TO STICK WITH LOVE. HATE IS TOO GREAT A BURDEN TO BEAR."

- MARTIN LUTHER KING, JR.

Dates to Remember . . .

02/01—Black History Month begins.

02/01—Zoom Small Group, Anxious for Nothing at 7pm

02/07—Zoom Breakfast Church at 10 a.m.—Communion Sunday

YouTube Worship: God is Holding Your Life: Whole Heart Hallelujah

02/08—Zoom Small Group, Anxious for Nothing at 7pm

02/14—Zoom Breakfast Church at 10 a.m.

YouTube Worship: God is Holding Your Life: The One is Shining Forth

02/15—Zoom Small Group, Anxious for Nothing at 7 pm

02/17—Drive-Thru Ashes: Contact Free!

YouTube Worship: Ash Wednesday Reflection Service

02/21—1st Sunday of Lent

Zoom Breakfast Church at 10 a.m.

YouTube Worship: Holy Vessels:

Treasure

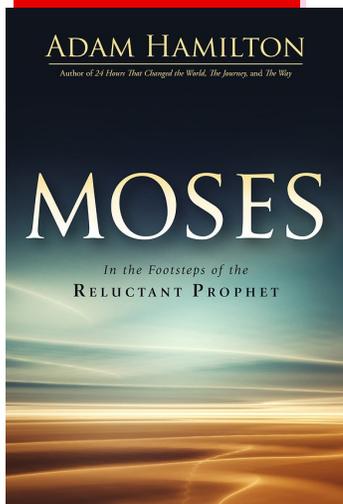
2/22—Lenten Small Group Book Study, "Moses: In the Footsteps of the Reluctant Prophet

02/28—2nd Sunday of Lent

Zoom Breakfast Church at 10 a.m.

YouTube Worship: Holy Vessels: Safe Keeping

Moses: In the Footsteps of the Reluctant Prophet



Our small group Book/DVD study for Lent is “Moses: In the Footsteps of the Reluctant Prophet” by Adam Hamilton, which will begin on February 22nd at 7:00 p.m.

Retrace the life of Moses from his modest birth and rescue as a baby to the courts of Pharaoh, from herding flocks in Midian to leading his people out of Egypt.

Join author Adam Hamilton as he travels from Egypt to Mt. Sinai, the Nile, the Red Sea and the wilderness exploring the sites of Moses’ life. Using historical information, archae-

ological data, and biblical text, Adam Hamilton guides us in the footsteps of this reluctant prophet who grew in his relationship with God and by the end of his life had successfully fulfilled the role he was given. Turn your own reluctance into boldness as you examine the significant challenges facing Moses and how God shaped his character and life in powerful ways.

Our Lent small group study will begin on Monday, February 22nd and continue through March 29th. All

sessions will begin at 7:00 p.m., and will take place on Zoom.

To reserve your book, please RSVP to Pastor Lyda at: lyda@wumcla.org. Books are available at the church for \$7.00 each, or you can purchase a book on Amazon.com.

“Let us always meet each other with a smile, for a smile is the beginning of love.”
- Mother Teresa



Drive Thru Ash Wednesday—February 17th

Ash Wednesday, February 17th, marks the beginning of Lent. A common Lenten practice is to “give up” something during this holy time before Easter ... sometimes it’s a favorite food (chocolate!) or a decision to give up watching television—knowing that after Easter Sunday, we can once again enjoy what we have given up.

This year, instead of giving something up, you are invited to make room for something new.

This Lent, make some space for God. Find a few minutes at the end of your day to sit quietly. Thank God for your day. Think about all the things that happened, and all the things you did. Take a

moment to reflect—where did you see or feel God’s presence during your day? What did you observe and how did you feel? Take a deep breath and give the day, with all of its blessings and challenges, to God. Be at peace.

Ash Wednesday gets its name from the practice of placing ashes on the foreheads of adherents as a sign of mourning and repentance to God.

This year, due to safety concerns, our Drive-Thru Ashes will be contact free!

It only takes a few minutes to receive a Blessing and an Ash Wednesday Kit to take home. Each Kit contains:

The Sanctuary for Lent 2021-Daily Devotions; Ash Cross Temporary Tattoo; Ash Cross window cling for your car or home; and an Ash Wednesday Meditation.

In addition to Drive-Thru Ashes, we will also offer an Ash Wednesday Service on YouTube.

This Ash Wednesday, drive through Emerson Ave. on Wednesday, February 17th at the following times:

7:30 a.m. to 10:00 a.m.

11:30 a.m. to 1:30 p.m.

3:00 p.m. to 5:00 p.m.

OnLine Extras this Month ...

Lenten Reflections

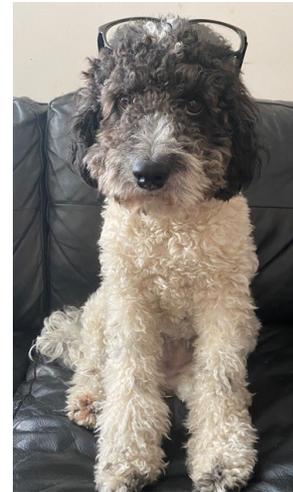
In addition to Breakfast Church and our YouTube worship series, Holy Vessels, we are offering a couple of “online extras” this month.

We will offer weekly Lenten Reflections on our YouTube channel, which will be released mid-week. These Lenten Reflections will use the poetry of Mary Oliver from her book, “Devotions.”

We will share a scripture reading, a poem, a brief meditation, and a prayer each week, starting on Ash Wednesday.

Puppy Pastor Molly

This month, Molly will share a few of her favorite stories highlighting Women of Color. Molly loves Black History Month, and is looking forward to celebrating the lives of women who have changed the world!



Puppy Pastor Molly has her reading glasses ready!

Holy Vessels Worship Series

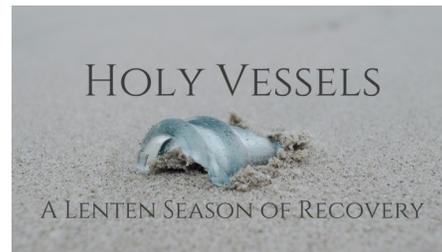
Holy Vessels: A Lenten Season of Recovery worship series begins on the first Sunday of Lent, February 21st.

Each of us is created a precious and holy vessel of embodied love. We have been through a harrowing time since last Lent that has shattered our sense of wholeness—body, mind, and spirit—like a glass vessel fractured into pieces. In this Lenten “season of recovery” for our physical, communal, mental, intellectual, and environmental health, we will explore the healing narratives of Jesus that tell of di-

vine solidarity with human suffering and remind us that we can begin a journey toward making something beautiful from that which is seemingly broken. Beach glass offers us a multifaceted symbol of this transformative process.

As part of this worship series, individual packets of “beach glass” will be available to take home and create your own symbol of transformation and healing this Lent.

You will also be sent individual Reflection pages for each week of our Lenten series. These pages



are meant to invite you to contemplate what you feel (inward journey) needs to be healed in your life and the life of your family/ community. And then, to imagine what you could do (outward journey) to help in the recovery of your health and the health of your church and community. We will look at these categories of health: physical, community, mental, intellectual, environmental, and integrated health.

Support Westchester UMC When You Shop at Ralphs

Did you know that you can support the work of Westchester UMC when you shop at Ralphs? Well ... you can!

If you have a Ralphs Reward Card, you can donate to Westchester UMC every time it's scanned when you shop at Ralphs. If you have a Rewards Card, here are the easy steps

to support Westchester UMC:

Visit the Ralphs website at:

<https://www.ralphs.com/>

1. If you have an account, sign in. If you don't have a digital account, you can create one by entering your email address and creating a password.
2. Sign in to your account

3. Under “Community Contributions” select View Community Contributions.
4. Search for Westchester United Methodist Church and select as your organization for your community contributions.

It's an easy way to help Westchester UMC continue to be “a place where love works.”

Westchester United Methodist Church

a place where love works

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February 17th is Ash Wednesday—join us
for “Drive Thru Ashes—Contact Free!”



We are a Reconciling church!
ALL are welcome here.



From Lyda . . .

Each week in our current worship series, “God is Holding Your Life,” we have been asking the question, “How have you felt the love and support of others, of God, in this time of pandemic?” It has been such a gift to ask people this question and to hear and share their responses.

These responses have ranged from stories of acts of kindness from friends and strangers alike, to a new awareness that love is all around us ... even in the chaos, trauma and sadness of this pandemic.

In her book, “Holy Chaos,” author Amanda Henderson writes, “Life is chaotic. Life is also holy. I have come to believe that finding peace in the midst of chaos is what our lives must be about. Finding connections in the midst of the division. Experiencing healing between the breaths of exhaustion and suffering. Working for ways of loving—personally and systemically—in the midst of overwhelming fear, anger and division that

swirl around us. When it comes down to it, I believe we must seek to LOVE in challenging spaces. I do not think there are easy answers to this monumental, lifelong task, only a standing invitation to muddle through the holy chaotic task of living together.”

Love exists in challenging spaces. Love exists in the chaotic moments of our lives. God is love, and Jesus came into the world to share that message with each and every one of us.

We are born to be in relationship with God, with each other and with all of creation. Jesus taught that we are to love the Lord with all your heart, all your mind, all your strength, and know that God loves you ... in the brokenness, in the wholeness; in the chaos, in the peace. God is with us, loving us. As Amanda Henderson wrote, “This is the key to liberation and the key to moving into our shared humanity—to look beyond

oneself, to connect to God, and to the liberation of one another.” To love your neighbor as you love yourself.

During this pandemic, I believe that our definition of “neighbor” has changed ... for the better. It’s grown wider and reaches farther. It includes those who live next door, and strangers whose names we will never know. Perhaps we are learning to see the angels all around us ... and how to be the “better angels” of ourselves.

I hear stories of angels delivering groceries and hot meals. Of nameless neighbors who do wellness checks on people they’ve only seen, but never spoken to before. Of strangers who offer help during times of distress. Of families who put aside divisions to say “I love you” on Zoom.

Life is chaotic. Life is also holy.

Accept the God-invitation to muddle through this holy, chaotic task of living together and doing the holy work of love.