

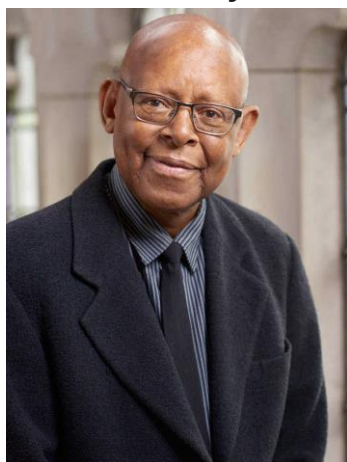
Why Celebrate Black History in Church?

Black History is American History; it is American Religious History; It is OUR history. This month is an opportunity to celebrate and spotlight parts of our collective history that have been belittled, ignored, and outright erased. Despite the horrific atrocities against Black people in this country, and abroad, we find hope in the many achievements, accomplishments, and successes Black people have made. It is especially imperative for Christian churches, to recognize Black History, who must also reconcile their roles in Black oppression through harmful theology & willful ignorance, and complicity in violence.



“Jesus Loves Me” Varnette Honeywood

“The contemporary Church is so often a weak, ineffectual voice with an uncertain sound. It is so often the archsupporter of the status quo. Far from being disturbed



by the presence of the Church, the power structure of the average community is consoled by the Church’s silent and often vocal sanction of things as they are.” – Rev. Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr., “Letter from a Birmingham Jail”

“What people think about God, Jesus Christ, and the Church cannot be separated from their own social and political status in a given society.” -Rev. Dr. James H. Cone, “God of the Oppressed”

*Rev. Dr. James H. Cone
Theologian. Author. Scholar*

The Season of Lent @ MPBC

- **What is Lent?**

- From the Latin *Laetare* (rejoice), this season commemorates the 40 days Jesus spent fasting in the desert before beginning his public ministry;
- Lent begins on Ash Wednesday and ends on Holy Saturday (before Easter Sunday)



- **What is [Ash Wednesday](#)?**

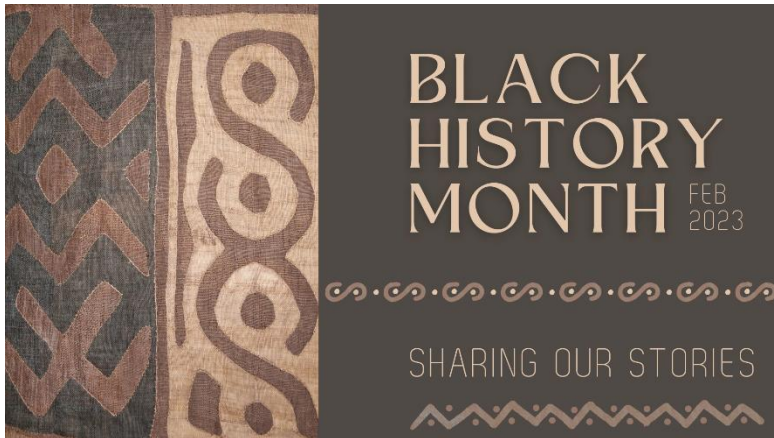
- The first day of Lent ([February 22, 2023](#))
- Many Christians observe the day with prayer, fasting, and ashes on the forehead.

- **Symbols/colors:**

- **Fish**- represents fasting on [Ash Wednesday](#) & Good Friday (April 7, 2023)
- **Purple**- symbolizes pain, suffering, and mourning
- **Ashes**-represents mourning
- **Palm Leaves**-symbolize the palms laid in the road as Jesus entered Jerusalem one week before (Palm Sunday) Easter Sunday

Join Us for Ash Wednesday Service @ 6:30pm In-Person & Virtually!

About Our 2023 Theme: Sharing Our Stories



The Bible itself is a collection of stories about God; for generations it has served as a source and framework for the stories we share within the Black community. This month, we want to share stories from the Word, written and

embodied, that have shaped and sustained us throughout history. We hope you will join us Sundays in February as we share stories of our celebrations, sufferings, healings, and hopes.

Our Proclaimers/Story-Tellers

February 5 th	Rev. Dr. JJ Flag
February 12 th	Rev. Daniel Cobbins <i>Mayfield Memorial Charlotte, NC</i>
February 19 th	Rev. Chalice Overy <i>Pullen Memorial Raleigh, NC</i>
February 26 th	Rev. Tara Gibbs

Find Black History Month resources, podcasts, playlists, and books on our website!

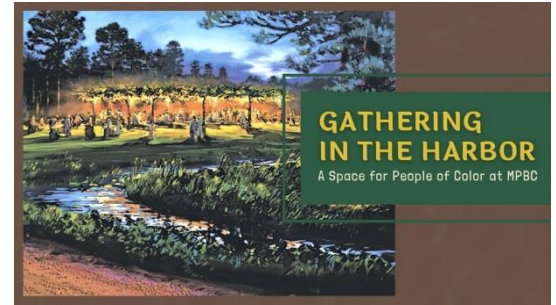
<https://myersparkbaptist.org>



**MYERS PARK
BAPTIST
CHURCH**

What is Gathering in the Harbor?

This is an affinity group designed specifically for and by People of Color at MPBC. Hush harbors & brush arbors have historically been spaces where people of African descent—during & after the antebellum era—have gathered to share in faith with each other. Many marginalized groups have



these spaces—secret gardens & clearings in nature—that are used for retreat for the sake of life & survival. It was in these spaces that the breath of spirituality was embodied & experienced fully—where dreaming & reimagination came alive.

What is an Affinity Group?

Affinity groups provide relief and support for Black people, Indigenous people, and People of Color to talk about and address interpersonal experiences of racism and how they affect each individual personally and professionally without having to explain this experience to white people.

Isn't This Exclusionary?

For every white person feeling excluded from Gathering in the Harbor, the challenge is to remember every Black, Brown, and non-white person excluded from ALL levels at this church, from membership, to leadership, past and present. This group is not about exclusion, but about inclusion, particularly correcting the exclusion of our past. Just as to some men, intentional services/events with all women clergy to correct the centuries long gender imbalance, a few gatherings of POC is not even a dent in the history of racial imbalances. That correction through uplifting a marginalized group, begins to feel like "special treatment" from the majority viewpoint; however the reality is that it's just that: a correction. Lastly, feeling excluded is just that: a feeling. We cannot prioritize feelings of exclusion from a one-off party, over POC's every day tangible exclusions from jobs, promotions, grants, recognition, political office, business funding, scholarships, quality medical care, quality education, fair housing, and so much more.

What If I'm in a Racially Blended Family?

For social events your partners and loved ones are welcome to join. Note that occasionally we have forums and events that we want to honor safe space and prioritize the freedom of our group members. Ask anytime for any event!