Jonathan’s Journals

A White Pastor Reflects on Black History Month

Why should white people care about black history month? Why should people care about history at all? Isn’t that about the past? Shouldn’t we focus on the present and the future? Why keep bringing up the past? Can’t we just move on?

These are among the questions I hear my white friends asking each year during February, Black History Month. And yet, we all know that if we do not learn from history, we will be doomed to repeat our mistakes. It is necessary to have a clear understanding of our history, not only so that we can learn from our mistakes, but also (as Christians) so that we will know how to confess our sins, receive forgiveness, and live into God’s bright new future.

In 2009 the Nigerian writer Chimamanda Adichie did a famous Ted Talk called, “The Danger of a Single Story.” In it, she warns us about how we can get a distorted picture of reality when we listen to only one perspective. If we only listen to one perspective, we tend to dismiss other ideas as irrelevant and consider only those who already agree with us. The danger of living in this kind of echo chamber is that we will never consider the world from a perspective that is broader than just our own personal experience, and thus we will never get to enjoy the rich and beautiful variety of God’s manifold wisdom (Ephesians 3:10).

We in the church need especially to listen to the story of black history and the experiences of our black brothers and sisters in Christ. We have a long history of racism in the American church, and it would be easy to perpetuate those patterns if we do not listen to perspectives other than our own. I know that my understanding and experience of the Christian faith has been significantly enriched by the time I spent being pastor of an African-American church. I’m glad that our confirmation class will this month be going to a worship service in the African American tradition, and I hope all of us will find a way to listen to the voices of those who are different from us. One small way to do this might be to go see the movie, Just Mercy. I confess that I have not yet seen the movie at this time, but I have read the book on which it is based. It is the story of Bryan Stevenson, a civil rights lawyer who dedicates his life to defending black men (and women) on death row. As it turns out, many of these people are innocent of the crimes of which they have been convicted. Bryan Stevenson is also speaking at Davidson College on January 28. I hope to get to hear him in person.

So, if we are going to be faithful to the way of Jesus Christ, we white Christians really do need to pay attention to Black History Month. The town of Cornelius will be having several activities at town hall on Saturday February 1. Read about them at cornelius.org/162/Black-History-Month. I pray that Black History Month 2020 will be a significant time of learning and growth for us all.

Peace,
Jonathan

February Worship

During February we will continue our sermon series on The Apostles’ Creed. We are focusing on the foundational beliefs of Christianity through this ancient creed.

- February 2 - The Apostles’ Creed: Jesus - Virgin Birth
- February 9 - The Apostles’ Creed: Jesus - Passion, Death, Resurrection & Ascension
- February 16 - The Apostles’ Creed: The Holy Spirit
- February 23 - The Apostles’ Creed - The Church: the Communion of Saints

We hope to see you in worship. If for some reason you are unable to attend - watch the live stream of the 11 AM service. The live stream link is found under the Worship tab and past services are also available. You don’t want to miss any part of this wonderful series.
Kids Club @ the Mount/Music with Ms. Shelley - starts back Wednesday, February 26th from 6:30-7:30 PM in Room 201/210 in the Christian Education Building. All children are welcome and we look forward to seeing everyone in just a few weeks!

Meet and Mingle with MOMS - All Moms are invited on February 29th from 12 – 2 PM in the Family Life Center for a Meet and Mingle event. MOMS stands for Mothers Offering Mutual Support. More information and the registration for this event can be found at: https://www.signupgenius.com/go/10c0e4baaaa28a2fb6-meet

Music and Art Camp and Vacation Bible School will be in June. If you are interested in being on the planning or decorating committees for either or both of these events please contact smercuri@mtzionumc.net

“A Place for Us” - This quiet space is located on the first floor of the Sanctuary (same level as where the choir meets and practices) and is open to nursing moms, people with sensory issues and truly everyone. The Live Stream is available on the television. We are so appreciative to the Women of Zion for the newly decorated space that was done in honor of Kendall Davis.

Acolytes Needed Immediately - Students that are in 3rd Grade and above that are interested in being an Acolyte for the 2020 year can sign up at: https://www.signupgenius.com/go/60b094eafa622a2f58-mtzion1. If you have questions or need training please contact Stacey Mercuri at smercuri@mtzionumc.net.

Special Needs Sunday School Teacher Needed for the 2020 Year: We have an immediate opening for an Assistant in the Special Needs Sunday School class. Please contact smercuri@mtzionumc.net if you are interested.

Things are beginning to gear up for the new year in the music area of our wonderful church.

Adult choir rehearsals have resumed on Thursday evenings at 7:00 p.m., and we have plenty of room and extra robes for YOU. With the size of our congregation, there isn't any reason the choir loft is not full on Sundays. Please contact me if you are interested in joining us, or surprise us on a Thursday night for rehearsal in the choir room.

The hand bells have been sent to Schulmerich Bells Manufacturer to be refurbished, and we should have them back to begin rehearsals in March.

Babygarten classes will begin on Wednesday, February 19th, at 10:00 AM. This session will end on Wednesday, March 25th. With the lack of interest on Saturday mornings, we will only meet on Wednesdays this session. For those of you who don't know what Babygarten is, it is a free class for newborns through two years old and their parents/guardians. During the hour, we share music, story time and playtime.

During the Wednesday night music sessions which begin on February 26th at 6:30, children ages 2nd-5th grade will begin working on a musical to present in the spring. I am so excited to work with the children again, and the elementary age children are quite the actors!

A preschool age choir is in the works, with the help of a couple of wonderful volunteers. This will enable the children to sing during the worship services more often, and we would ALL love that!

I have a dream to get a Liturgical Dance group started this year for teens. If you are interested or know someone who might be, please let me know!

That is all I have for now. I look forward to seeing you in church!

Blessings, Shelley
In January we started our study on Ephesians looking at our identity in Christ and new life in him. The youth have been challenged to think about how they have changed since asking Jesus into their lives. We have focused on the fact that our love of Jesus must surpass our love of secular items and sin. We talked about that we as Christians don’t have to earn God’s love because God freely extends his grace to all. This month we also participated in His Ministry’s Winter Ball and went bowling as part of our JEDI (Joy for Exceptionally Developing Individuals) Night.

**Recognition**

“Gaylon the White” Award - Since 2016, Gaylon White, long time youth counselor, in consultation with the youth leaders, presents a patch, created in his honor, to F.U.E.L. students and leaders in recognition of actions strongly demonstrating growth through both adventure and service, such as (but not limited to) speaking or performing at worship services, planning or leading F.U.E.L. meetings, or sharing deeply personal and challenging experiences for the benefit of others.

The patch is an allusion to Gaylon's similarities to Gandalf the White, a character in J. R. R. Tolkien’s “The Lord of the Rings” novels. In addition to some physical similarities, Gaylon shares Gandalf’s tendency to disappear only to reappear just in the nick of time to save the day.

The criteria for being a recipient are loosely based on these two quotes attributed to Gandalf the White: “I’m looking for someone to share in an adventure...,” and “All we have to decide is what to do with the time that is given us.” Mr. Jonathan Boger and Miss Carli Ballantine are the most recent recipients of the “Gaylon the White” award. Both of these youth show tremendous leadership skills, a great love for God and a love for their church community. They are extremely reliable and will do anything asked with a smile on their faces.

**Upcoming:**

Feb 2 - Souper Bowl of Caring Party - 6:30 - halftime - in the gym - bring a snack to share
Feb 9 - Zombie Night - 3:30-6
Feb 16 - F.U.E.L. 3:30-5:30
Feb 23 - F.U.E.L. JEDI Night (Joy for Exceptionally Developing Individuals) 3:30-5:30
March 13-15 - We will be going to Camp Tekoa, a UMC camp in Hendersonville, NC for our spring retreat. This trip is open to all 6th-12th graders. The cost is now $50. All money and registration forms are due by Feb 16th.

**Mission Corner:**

Appalachia Service Project is a Christian Ministry in the rural communities of the Appalachian Mountains. The summer ASP program focuses on making homes warmer, safer and drier. ASP is first and foremost a relational ministry with an emphasis on building. Mt. Zion has the privilege of serving a community in Tennessee from June 21st-June 27th of 2020. We need both high schoolers and adults to serve on this mission trip. (You must be thirteen or older and have completed the 8th grade to attend.) If this interests you please pray about it. If you feel led to serve on this mission trip please go to [https://registrations.planningcenteronline.com/events/318830/details](https://registrations.planningcenteronline.com/events/318830/details) for registration and more information.

Youthworks is our Middle School Summer Mission Trip. This is also open to those who cannot attend ASP but would like to serve in a similar community. Last year was the first year Mt. Zion participated in this ministry and it was such a blessing for all who served and were served. This year we will be ministering to the community of Beckley, WV the week of July 19th-July 24th. This year’s team will be working on painting and yard beautification projects as well as partnering with organizations such as Energy Express, School of Harmony and the Salvation Army. We will also be visiting the Exhibition Coal Mine. There will be fun activities throughout the week such as touring a state park, having a cookout and attending a local youth-led worship service. Priority will be given to those students who have completed 6th grade in spring 2020 through students who finished 8th grade in spring 2020. If you feel led to serve on this mission trip please go to [https://mtzionumc.churchcenter.com/registrations/events/318874](https://mtzionumc.churchcenter.com/registrations/events/318874) to register.

**TESTIFY YOUTH CHOIR**

TESTIFY YOUTH CHOIR meets every Sunday at @ 2 PM in the Family Life Center. Anyone 6th thru 12 grade is welcome! We would love to have you join us!
The 2020 His Ministry Winter Ball was a huge success! It would not have been possible without the many volunteers who served in a variety of ways, including Debbie Jackson who pulled the entire event together! Thank you to everyone who helped to make the Winter Ball such a successful event. What is most important to us in this ministry is that our participants know they are loved by God and by all of us, and that they have tons of fun. It was so clear throughout the night how special they all felt, how loved they were and how much fun they had out on the dance floor! So to everyone who showed up and helped make this possible, we thank you! We cannot wait to do it all again next year! It is an honor to get to serve alongside each one of you in this very special ministry.

Rev. Lauren Hill, Associate Pastor & Brittany Morris, Director of Youth Ministries

**HIS ACTIVITIES IN FEBRUARY ARE:**

- **2/9** - **JUST AS I AM** in the Hut - 4:30 to 6:15
- **2/16** - **THE FEAST** in the FLC - Room #2 - 9:45 AM
- **2/23** - **JEDI NIGHT** in the FLC from 3:30 to 5:30
- **AGAPE SUNDAY SCHOOL** - Modified Sunday School Class in FLC #2 - 9:45 AM
Sonshine Preschool is now enrolling for the 2020-2021 school year! Applications can be found in the Education Building or online at www.mtzionumc.net/ministries/sonshine-preschool. The deadline to enroll is Wednesday, February 12th at 1:00 PM. A registration fee of $75.00 per child is due at the time of registration. Please make checks payable to Sonshine Preschool. Registration fees are non-refundable if your child is placed. The drawing will be held on Thursday, February 13th. Families will be notified of placement within one week. Please spread the word. We would love to welcome new children and families into our program!

City BBQ Preschool Fundraiser on Tuesday, February 11th! Please help us raise money for the preschool by enjoying a meal at City Barbeque anytime during the hours of 10:30 AM to 9:00 PM on February 11th. City BBQ is located at exit 23, in front of Earth-Fare, 15425 Hodges Circle. Sonshine will receive 25% of all meals, including take-out, as long as you mention the Sonshine Preschool Fundraiser to the cashier and/or show them the barcode to scan. Please tell your friends, co-workers and neighbors! *Please note, we cannot pass out the flyer or solicit other diners for the fundraiser on City BBQ property.*

**ROOM IN THE INN**

This is a ministry that Mt. Zion participates in during the winter months in partnership with the Urban Ministry Center. The simple goal is to keep homeless people from freezing on cold winter nights. We are hosting our 10 guests the 1st and 3rd Tuesday of the month, through March 2020!

**WE NEED INNKEEPERS!!**

Please contact:
- Barbara Broadway: 704-996-7000 or email: bbroadway47@gmail.com.
- Richard Little 704-516-9761 or email: littledeepcove@aol.com.
- Mary Isaacs 704-996-8680 or email: misaacs@iaarch.com and
- Sydney Broadway.

We are so thankful to everyone that has stepped up to the plate and volunteered their time and energy to prepare meals, drivers and Innkeepers. We are so blessed as a church and disciples for doing the work Christ asked of us!

**MISSIONS AND OUTREACH**

**SOUPER BOWL OF CARING**

Souper Bowl of Caring is a youth-led, non-profit with a mission to tackle hunger in local communities during the weeks leading up to the biggest celebration in football, Super Bowl. We will be collecting money in soup pots at the end of each service to use towards a homeless ministry we want to start. -- On February 2nd the youth will be standing at the back after each service collecting money for The Souper Bowl of Caring.

**SENIOR LUNCHEON VOLUNTEERS** - Help needed for Senior Luncheon to be held March 4th from 11 to 1 in the Family Life Center. We are in need of Teams to honor our Seniors. Needed are: Greeters/Dining Room Service, Kitchen Clean Up, and Drivers. Drivers will bring guests and carry home after festivities for those who cannot get their on their own. We will also need delivery dinners to a few homebound members. Click on the sign up genius link provided here to sign up - https://www.signupgenius.com/go/60B094DACA82EA1F49-mtzion OR contact Sebra Maines at 704-895-7716 (HOME) or sebramaines@yahoo.com

**MT. ZION HAS REFORMATTED OUR WEBSITE. CHECK IT OUT AT www.mtzionumc.net.**

There is a volunteer tab at the top of the new website with opportunities and links to sign up TO VOLUNTEER. Please check it out and volunteer as you are able. Thank you in advance!

*Operate ustream  *Teach a Children's Sunday School Class  *Teach a Youth Sunday School Class  *Operate Slides for 9:45 Service  *9:45 Hospitality Team (contact Pastor Angela)  *Agape Sunday School Assisant Teacher
We are excited to host this special time together and we look forward to seeing you there!

**UPCOMING EVENTS**

**Mt. Zion Craft Nights**

What's your favorite activity? Scrapbooking? Making cards? Crocheting, knitting or sewing? Maybe painting? Whatever craft it may be, or just to 'get out', come join us in Christian fellowship and spend special time together. Bring a snack to share and feel free to bring a friend as well.

For February, we are meeting on Valentine’s Day, **Feb. 14 from 2 PM - 7 PM.** We will also be meeting on **Feb. 28, from 3 PM to 9:30 PM**, drop in anytime for both.

For any questions, contact Dora Dalmas at 704-737-4859 / dalmas@mi-connection.com or Susie Crump at 704-575-5531 / susancrump@bellsouth.net.

We are excited to host this special time together and we look forward to seeing you there!

**UPCOMING BIBLE STUDIES**

**The Tuesday morning women's Bible Study group** will start a new study on **February 4, 2020 at 10 AM in Room 205 of the Education Building.** We will be studying I Am Loved by Wendy Blight. This is a 10-week study of the book of 1 John as we learn about God's unconditional love for us. We will learn about barriers that keep us from experiencing His complete love and develop a more intimate understanding of God's love that will transform our attitude and actions into reflections of Him. The study will utilize a video and workbook. The workbooks are available in the church library for $11. We look forward to gathering in fellowship as God’s Word draws us closer to Him.

**DISCIPLE FAST TRACK BIBLE STUDY**

Beginning mid-February, we will be offering Disciple Fast Track, a 24-week study taking us through the entire Bible. From February to early May, we will spend 12 weeks in the Old Testament and in the fall, we will complete the study with 12 weeks in the New Testament. We will be offering a daytime and evening class (most likely on Mondays), and would love for you to join us! If you are interested in signing up, please email Pastor Lauren at lhill@mtzionumc.net or call the church office.

**SENIOR LUNCHEON**

Senior Luncheon to be held March 4 from 11 AM - 1 PM in the Family Life Center. If you or your spouse were born in 1950 or earlier, please let us know that you can attend by Feb. 16. Doors open at 11, food served at 11:30. If you need a ride or have food allergies, let us know that too! RSVP to Sebra Maines at 704-895-7716 (h) or sebramaines@yahoo.com

**UNITED METHODIST NEWS**

On January 3, 2020, 16 United Methodist leaders issued a proposed plan for the future of the United Methodist Church called, "A Protocol of Grace and Reconciliation through Separation." While it drew national attention in many different news outlets, it is only a proposal, and it will not even be considered until the General Conference which meets May 5-15, 2020. If you are interested in learning more, please go to the Mt. Zion website, hover over "About Mt. Zion" and then click "United Methodist News." On this website, you will be able to see responses from Rev. Jonathan Marlowe, from our Bishop Paul Leeland, and our District Superintendent, Rev. David Hockett. (Pastor Jonathan’s response was emailed to those on the congregational email list on January 4). Any member or friend of Mt. Zion is welcome to call the church office and set up an appointment with Pastor Jonathan if you have questions or would like to know more.

**WORSHIP AT AUTUMN CARE**

**WORSHIP LED BY MT. ZION AT AUTUMN CARE**

Every Sunday morning at 10:00, worship services are conducted by Mt. Zion members at Autumn Care.

-- Our services each Sunday are part of our mission to reach out to seniors in our church and community. This is a way to bring worship to those who are unable to get out to attend this church or their home church.

February worship will be led by - 2/2 - Sonseeker class 2/9 - Rev. Arnie Corriher 2/16 - Patsy McGill/Dr. Sue Weaver 2/23 - Michael Norman Music by Anna Akins
**CELEBRATIONS AND CONCERNS**

**JANUARY BIRTHS**

Jones Harvey Johnson was born on January 10, 2020. He is the son of Chris and Jessica Johnson, brother of Ivy and grandson of Kenny and Suzie Inman.

Maggie Eveline Jenkins was born on January 16, 2020. She is the daughter of Adam and Jackie Jenkins, sister of Abby and granddaughter of Lawson and Martha Jenkins.

**THANK YOU!**

This month the office staff say Goodbye to Office Assistant Ginny Wilkins who has worked with the Mt. Zion staff for 5 ½ years. We appreciate her contribution of work and support to the staff and members of the church throughout the years. She always has a smile and a kind word for everyone she encounters. Please thank her for her service when you see her and Lee around the church campus. We wish her blessings and happiness in all her new adventures!

**FINANCIAL UPDATE**

**December Financial Report**

Thank you for supporting the mission and ministries of Mt. Zion UMC.

Our 2019 approved budget total is $1,174,805

Total budget income in December= $ 131,837
December’s expenses - $ 98,389

Year-to-Date budget income - $1,004,692
Year-to-Date expenses - $1,017,079
Difference <$12,387>

Total available cash for budget expenses: $111,173

Total designated fund balance is $174,278
This includes:
Capital Fund – $ 7,455.75
Helping Hands Fund – $23,575
Sale of Parsonage - $27,868

Congratulations and Thank you to everyone for you faithful giving during 2019.

We paid 100% of our appointments to the Annual Conference and the Metro District.

Please contact Patti Loner (ploner@mtzionumc.net) if you have questions.

**A SPECIAL GIFT WAS GIVEN**

IN MEMORY OF Rev. & Mrs. Joe Griggs a gift was given to the Budget. IN MEMORY OF Woody and Mabel Washam, Sr. a gift was given to the Budget. IN MEMORY OF Kenneth Cooke and Carol Ann Cooke a gift was given to the Cemetery Fund. IN MEMORY OF Ted Harviel a gift was given to the Cemetery Fund. IN HONOR OF Louise Cashion and IN MEMORY OF Robert T. Cashion a gift was given to the Building Upkeep Fund. IN HONOR OF Gigi Williams a gift was given to HIS Ministry.

**NEW CARILLON CHIMES**

New replacement carillon chimes manufactured by Verdin Company were installed in December 2019. Components for the 2002 chimes were no longer available which lead to this new system need. The church now is able to play chimes that can be heard in the community and across our cemetery. This new system was placed in loving memory of Ervin and Nancy Cook, Ernest Cook, Kenneth and Lib Westmoreland, Howard and Margaret Kimel, and in honor of Ruby Cook.

**ALTAR FLOWERS**

Church Altar Flowers are a way to express your love and gratitude. Flowers may be purchased for $100.00 for two arrangements or $50.00 for one. On your designated Sunday, you may take the flowers to someone of your choice after the 11:00 service. A special notation of your gift will be made in the bulletin. Dates are still available throughout the year. Call the church office for availability.

**ATTENDANCE**

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**Autumn Care Attendance**

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All women of the church and community are invited to join the WOMEN OF ZION small group! Our group meets the first Tuesday of each month at the Galway Hooker Restaurant in Cornelius. We meet at 7:00 pm for fellowship and a devotional program.

Please contact us at mzwoz1@gmail.com if you would like more information and to get the monthly meeting reminders. We look forward to seeing you the first Tuesday of each month!

The ladies of the PRAYER SHawl MINISTRY invite you to join them on Wednesday mornings at 10:30 to knit/crochet prayer shawls and baby blankets. No matter what your skill level may be, there is a place for you. If you are interested in learning how to knit, they can help with that, as well. (Yarn is provided.) They meet in the church Parlor (located on the upper level of the Family Life Center) and hope to see you soon!

NEW BEGINNINGS... We bowl, go to movies, take tours and just have friendship with others that have lost a spouse. We have something going on all the time!

TO RECEIVE OUR MONTHLY NEWSLETTER OR IF YOU WOULD LIKE INFORMATION, PLEASE CONTACT:

Barbara Broadway: email: bbroadway47@gmail.com
704-996-7000 or

Shirley Ranson: email: shirley@ransonteam.com
704-904-0973

Inclement Weather Information
In the situation that a weather event alters the church calendar, any delays or cancellations will be communicated in the following ways:

- Television Channel NBC 6 – WCNC
- Television Channel ABC 9 – WSOC
- Constant Contact email
- Facebook
- Church Website

When Sunday worship is cancelled, if possible the pastors will lead a service that can be viewed online.

HAPPY NEW YEAR!
Please send any articles you would like to have included in the March newsletter to the church by February 25th.

They may be emailed to kfellows@mtzionumc.net

Thank you!!

MEN OF ALL AGES ARE WELCOME to attend a MEN’S COMMUNITY PRAYER BREAKFAST meeting on Wednesdays at 7 AM at IHOP in Huntersville.