



The Centenary Spirit

Our Connection to God and One Another

February
2015



February is Black History Month in the country and in our church. In this month we reflect upon the very presence of African-Americans among us, those who originally arrived on these shores as human slaves and who, despite this, contributed so much to the economic, political, and cultural wealth of the American Republic, and to our personal lives, as well. I remember a summer roommate in college who



was (is) "black" and was such a scandal in my hometown, over thirty years ago. This would be a "no issue" today, as it should be. How far we have come! Amen.

This reminds me of the testimony of John Hope Franklin, a Tulsa native, and an awardee of the Presidential Medal of Freedom, the nation's highest civilian honor. Dr. Franklin, the first black person to receive a Ph.D in history from Harvard University, was the lead historian in the landmark Supreme Court case of *Brown v. Board of Education of Topeka, Kansas*, which desegregated public schools in 1954. He once told me, after a white woman in the 1990's told him "to check her coat" that, while the USA has come a long way, we still have a long way to go. Indeed.



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This is why we celebrate "Black History Month" every February: not only to celebrate the contribution of black people to American civilization, but also to be reminded that we have a long way to go to achieve the equality of every person, regardless of race, gender, faith, or nation. Why should we, the Christian church, care about the equality of all people? Because the tediously consistent and absolutely redundant message of the New Testament is that all people under God are created equal: that in Jesus Christ we are all one, whether Jew or Greek, whether slave or free, and whether male or female. (Galatians 3:28) At Centenary, we try to live out the reality of equality, not so that everyone will be "alike", but that everyone will be accepted for whom they are, loved as they are by God in Christ. I believe that the greatest hope for the reality of equality is here, in the church, where we consensually submit to the command of God's gospel, and we confess that this Gospel is our common creed. As one of my professors once said, the church is the only place where the janitor can become the leader of the congregation. This, I believe, is the will of God being done on earth, as it is done in heaven.

I'm happy to report that Centenary paid 100% of its apportionments for 2014. This means that this Methodist church is fully engaged in missions beyond the local church in changing lives for Jesus Christ. Thanks to some generous year end gifts we were also able to carry money over to the new year; a wonderful blessing! In addition, 24 families in this church have pledged to give to missions in 2015; that's a record. Finally, the finishing touches on the disability restoration of this old church is nearly complete, the final touches on the 2013 Capital Campaign. This will enable more people in need to worship our God and Father in this sacred place. Thank you, Centenary; and thank you, Lord!



Faithfully, *Pastor Keith*



Philip Comer

Hymn Story: Wade In the Water

African American spirituals, usually with a Christian religious theme, were originally a melody line and sung a cappella. In honoring this authenticity, the choir will sing *Wade in the Water* during February (Black History Month) a cappella, just as spirituals were originally sung.

The terms Negro spiritual, Black spiritual, and African-American spiritual, jubilee, and African-American folk songs are all synonymous. Many times spirituals provided comfort and eased the boredom of daily tasks. They were expressions of both a spiritual devotion and a yearning for freedom from bondage. They often were a means of releasing emotions and of expressing sorrow.

Frederick Douglass, a former slave wrote, "I did not, when a slave, fully understand the deep meaning of those rude and apparently incoherent songs. I was, myself, within the circle, so that I could then neither hear nor see as those without might see and hear. They breathed the prayer and complaint of souls overflowing with the bitterest anguish. They depressed my spirits and filled my heart with ineffable sadness...The remark in the olden time was not infrequently made, that slaves were the most contented and happy laborers in the world, and their dancing and singing were referred to in proof of this alleged fact; but it was a great mistake to suppose them happy because they sometimes made those joyful noises. The songs of the slaves represented their sorrows, rather than their joys. Like tears, they were a relief to aching hearts."



The meaning of the songs were often covert. Lyrics about the Exodus were a metaphor for freedom from slavery. Songs like "Steal Away (to Jesus)" or "Swing Low, Sweet Chariot" signaled that the coast was clear and the time to escape had come. The River Jordan became the Ohio River, or the Mississippi, or another body of water that had to be crossed on the journey to freedom. "Wade in the Water" contained instructions to fugitive slaves on how to avoid capture and the route to take to successfully make their way to freedom. Leaving dry land and walking the water was a common strategy to throw pursuing bloodhounds off one's trail. "The Gospel Train" and "Swing Low, Sweet Chariot," all contained concealed references to the Underground Railroad, and "Follow the Drinking Gourd" contained a coded map to the Underground Railroad. The title itself was an Africanized reference to the Big Dipper, which pointed the way to the North Star and freedom.

Black History month is a favorite of mine. I love to sing spirituals. They move me deeply and speak to my soul. We will be singing a lot of spirituals this month, both as congregation and through special music.

Philip

Upcoming Events:

UMW Superbowl

Bake Sale

Sunday, Feb 1, in the Narthex



Bean Dinner
Tickets go on
Sale the
Second Sunday
in February



February is
Black History
Month



UMM
Sweetheart

Valentine Dinner
Friday, February 13,
at 6:30 p.m.



Lenten Study
Sunday, February 22 at
5:00 p.m.

News Flashes...





UMM Sweetheart Party

Again this year the UMM is planning a Valentine's Sweetheart Party. This year's event will be held at Centenary, Friday, February 13, at 6:30 p.m. and will feature a feast prepared by our own Master Chef, Don Conner. Dinner will be \$10 per person – Single Ladies will be treated by the UMM. Pizza & movies will be available for children in another room. Music, Fun, and Fellowship will make this romantic evening special indeed!

Farmer Brown Bean Dinner

The annual Farmer Brown Bean Dinner is scheduled for March 13, 2015. This familiar event which has become a pillar of the Centenary community started as a fund raiser in 1951 by the Wedding Ring Class. In the years that followed, the dinner became a way to fund some of Centenary's biggest needs, and the whole church pitched in to be sure it was a yearly success. But more than a



fundraiser, the Bean Dinner has become a special time for old friends and new to reconnect, to catch up, to enjoy a fellowship that renews each year over beans and cornbread.

►► Note ◀◀

Ron and Susan Green are once again heading up the Bean Dinner. Let's give them all the help they need!

Please join us at Centenary UMC (631 N. Denver) for our annual Farmer Brown Bean Dinner on Friday, March 13, 2015. It is a come-and-go dinner served between 5:00-7:00 p.m. The Bean Dinner is a "homecoming" for people who live in the neighborhood and/or who attend (or used to attend) Centenary. You can renew old friendships or meet people who once lived in the neighborhood. Or you can simply enjoy

a meal with Centenary's extended family.

The menu hasn't really changed that much over the years: all the beans and cornbread you can eat, plus a salad or coleslaw, a dessert, and drinks. Dinners are reasonably priced at \$7.00 for adults and \$3.00 for children under twelve. Dinners to go are also available.

**Friends, Fellowship, Fun, and Food;
What a great way to spend a Friday evening
(and all for only \$7 per person)**

►► Silent Auction ◀◀

This year during the Bean Dinner, the UMM will have a silent auction. Baskets of goodies may be bid on and the winners announced at the end of the dinner. You do not have to be present to win.



Outreach News

Every Sunday morning at 10:00 the Outreach/Witness Committee meets on the stage in Young Hall for a study/brainstorming

session using Ellen Blue's book , "St. Mark's and the Social Gospel" as the study guide. This is an intergenerational class focusing on the theme of **Blessing, Hope, and Covenant**. We are called to the vision of the Gospel and must be prepared to obtain **life traction** in our response. The study group will explore the vision traction into our communities on a personal level, but also on a corporate and community level. The ongoing cycle of Centenary vision traction will be study, commitment /planning, and mobilization/action.

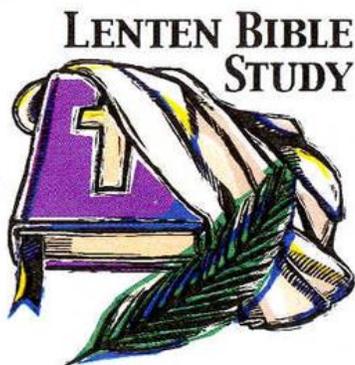
Please pray for us as we embark on the challenges of our response to Jesus and the Gospel. And please pray for your own commitment and involvement in this wonderful opportunity at Centenary. **What is Jesus, through Centenary, calling you to do?**

REMEMBER YOUR CHURCH

When Planning Your Estate

One of our most important acts of stewardship is the final distribution of our life's accumulation. How we share our estate speaks volumes about our values and our concerns for our loved ones.

As Christians we need to be good stewards of that which God has provided us, and this means completing a written estate plan.



Interested in deepening your Lenten experience this year? Our Lenten Study will begin on Sunday, February 22 at 5:00 p.m. The first meeting will be held at Centenary. During the first meeting, future times and location(s) will be discussed by participants. The 2015 Study is entitled "40 Days of Hope" and is from the Uniting World curriculum. It is a six-week study that includes prayer, personal meditation, and discussion; each based on the Gospel and the Revised Standard Lectionary. Materials will be provided; please let Melanie Dewey know if you will be attending.



▶ Watch Night ◀

Great fellowship and a laid-back atmosphere encouraged over 40 brave souls to eat their

way through 10 pots of varying chili recipes (Deer, Veggie, Turkey, White, Street Taco, and 5 "normal" recipes with varying degrees of heat, beans, etc.). Coupled

with a plethora of deserts, everyone left fully stuffed and sated.



February 2015 Calendar



AFRICAN-AMERICAN HISTORY MONTH

FEBRUARIE



Sun.	Mon.	Tues.	Wed.	Thurs.	Fri.	Sat.
1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Outreach 10 a.m. UMW Super Bowl Bake Sale in the Narthex	Eat Healthy nutrition class 6:00 p.m.	Good Timers 10:00 a.m. Craft Group 1:30 p.m. Diane Green	Yoga Class 10:30 a.m. Judy Phillips		Carolyn Naylor	
8	9	10	11	12	13	14
Outreach 10 a.m. Bean Dinner Tickets Available	Eat Healthy nutrition class 6:00 p.m. Lynette Orr	Trustees 6 p.m.	Yoga Class 10:30 a.m. Bible Study 6:30 p.m. Choir 6:30 p.m.		UMM Sweetheart Banquet 6:30 p.m.	Happy Valentines
15	16	17	18	19	20	21
Outreach 10 a.m. Holocaust Museum Tour 2:00 p.m. Margaret Graves Alice Chase Brenda Chase	Eat Healthy nutrition class 6:00 p.m.	Finance 6 p.m. Pam Chambers	Yoga Class 10:30 a.m. Ash Wednesday Service 7:00 a.m. 6:30 p.m.	UMW 10 a.m. Newsletter Deadline		Miriam Wilbanks
22	23	24	25	26	27	28
Outreach 10 a.m. Young Hall Lenten Study 5:00 p.m. dinner provided	Eat Healthy nutrition class 6:00 p.m.		Yoga Class 10:30 a.m. Bible Study 6:30 p.m. Choir 6:30 p.m. Jodi Keller			

Notes:

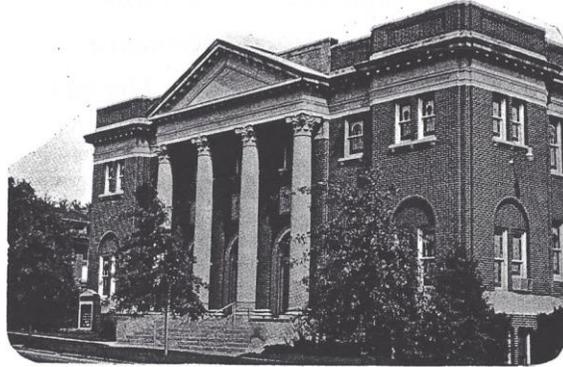
Bean Dinner
And UMW Silent Auction
Friday March 13
5:00-7:00 p.m.

Coming Up

Coming Up

Means of Grace

In an effort to get the Newsletter printed and to the congregation prior to the 1st of each month, the Means of Grace will now be printed on a separate sheet of paper and available in the Narthex as soon as possible after the end of each month. Email subscribers will be sent a copy at the same time.



631 N Denver Ave
Tulsa OK 74106

Phone:
918-583-6988

E-Mail:
centenarymethodist@att.net

We're on the Web!
See us at:

centenaryumctulsa.org
and like us on Facebook:
www.facebook.com/CentenaryTulsa

Centenary United
Methodist Church, Inc.
631 N Denver Ave
Tulsa OK 74106