

THE LIGHT RACIAL JUSTICE MINISTRY E-NEWSLETTER

Time to Reflect, Friends!

BY LEA GILMORE

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This is the time of year when daffodils are blooming, robins are chirping and the afternoons are warming up. The world feels fresh and full of opportunity. I'm not tired. Are you tired? Together we are doing this important work.

April is [Celebrate Diversity Month](#). Click the link for resources like [scholarships for black students](#), and a timeline of important events including the first Celebrate Diversity Month in 2004.

Welcome and thank you to our new Co-Chair, Akilah Atkinson! Myra Brosius has been elevated to Chair of the Truth and Reconciliation Sub-Committee. Read more on Myra's work on page 4. She has done a thorough study on the history of the Govans Presbyterian Church and recently shared some discoveries about the history of the stained glass surrounding our sanctuary. If you haven't done so, we are seeking input about the windows to help guide our next steps.

The Racial Justice Lending Library has officially launched thanks to the help of librarian Karen Carter. Located in the Youth Room in the Education Building, the library is a free resource where one can check out donated books that focus on the BIPOC experience, Equity and anti-racism.

Thank you for your commitment to justice, fairness, and equity. If you would like to volunteer with the Racial Justice Ministry, please contact me at: lea@govanspres.org.

Abundant Blessings,
Lea



Racial Justice
Ministry



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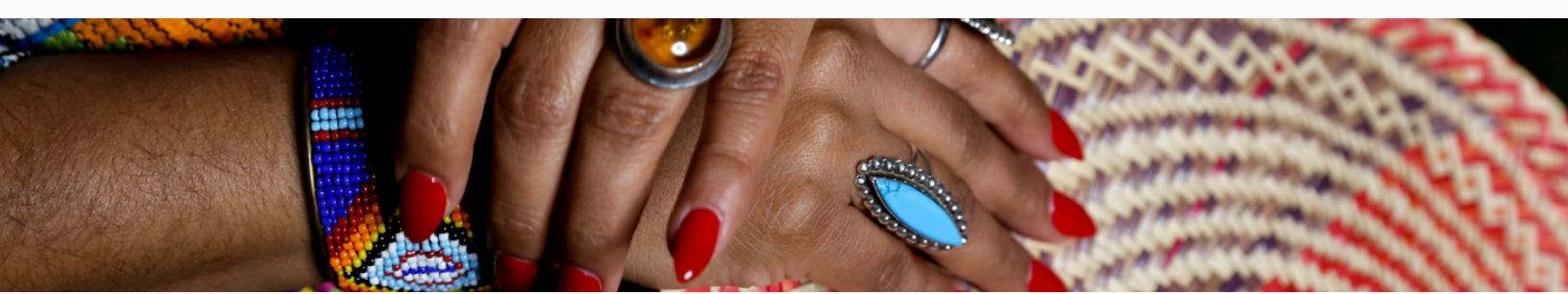
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“When I liberate myself,
I liberate others. If you
don’t speak out ain’t
nobody going to speak
out for you.”

SHIRLEY CHISHOLM



EVENTS

Visit to Harriet Tubman Underground Railroad National Historical Park

Sunday, June 18, 2023

Meet at Govans Presbyterian Church at 9:00 am
We will carpool to Church Creek, Maryland on the Eastern Shore. It is a 2-hour drive. You are welcome to provide your own transportation.

Join us on a field trip to learn more about Harriet Tubman and her life as the most prominent conductor of the Underground Railroad, a secret network of people and places that assisted enslaved people as they sought freedom in Canada and the North.

If you can't join us, check out [The Tubman Byway](#) where you can get information to go on a self-guided tour with an audio guide.



Juneteenth Jubilee

June 12th, 2023

7:00 pm

Govans Presbyterian Church

Musicians from the Baltimore Symphony Orchestra, Govans Presbyterian Church, and community musicians will celebrate Juneteenth in this not-to-be-missed event!

Mark your calendars!





Thoughtful Readings & Resources

Children's Books

- Our Skin: A First Conversation About Race by Megan Madison and Jessica Ralli, Illustrated by Isabel Roxas
- Opal Lee and What It Means to Be Free: The True Story of the Grandmother of Juneteenth by Alice Faye Duncan, Illustrated by Keturah A. Bobo
- I Have a Dream by Martin Luther King Jr., Illustrated by Kadir Nelson
- Yo! Yes? By Chris Raschka
- The Proudest Blue: A Story of Hijab and Family by Ibtihaj Muhammad and S. K. Ali, illustrated by Hatem Aly
- I Am Enough by Grace Byers, illustrated by Keturah A. Bobo
- Thirteen Ways of Looking at a Black Boy by Tony Medina and 13 Artists
- A is For Activist by Innosanto Nagara
- Hands Up! By Breanna J. McDaniel, illustrated by Shane W. Evans
- Skin Again by bell hooks, illustrated by Chris Raschka



Middle School Books

Wendy Smith suggested we check out a blog called [What Do We Do All Day](http://WhatDoWeDoAllDay.com) which lists 25 books appropriate for Middle School aged children that are all by Black authors.

The list includes books about a mixed-race child whose parents have divorced (Blended by Sharon M. Draper), friendship between two girls from different backgrounds (The Kaya Girl by Mamle Wolo), and a story about a boy who is killed by police and comes back as a ghost who can only be seen by the white police officer's daughter (Ghost Boys by Jewell Parker Rhodes).

If you enjoy any of these books, feel free to write a review for our next newsletter.





Sanctuary's Stained Glass' History Requires Pause and Contemplation

On February 26, 2023, Myra Brosius, Chair of the Truth and Reconciliation Subcommittee delivered a report on the history of the stained-glass windows in the church sanctuary to those present at the joint worship service during the Minute for Mission.

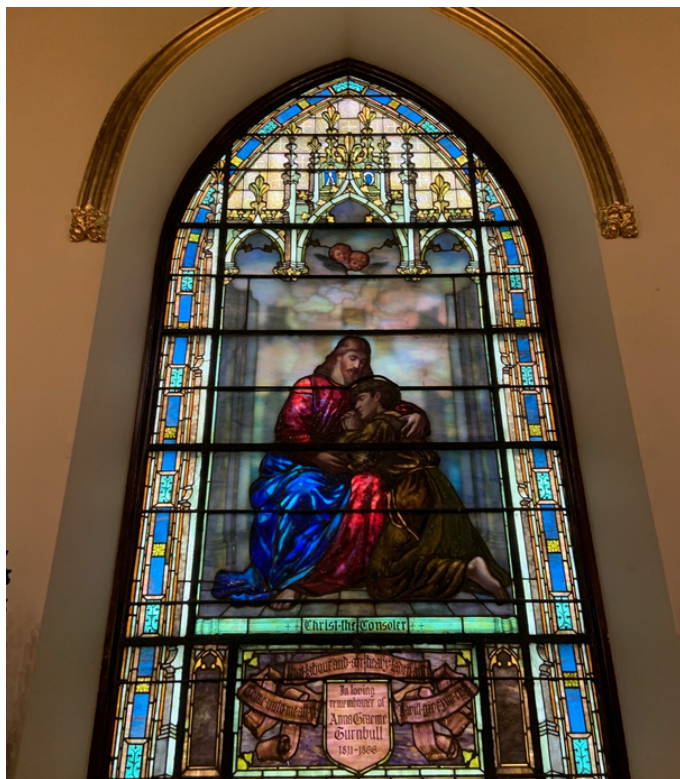
Myra's report focused on the stained glass at the front of the sanctuary, which is titled Christ the Consoler after a painting by Bernhard Plockhorst, a German artist who, like many of his day, depicted Jesus as a European with pale skin, and smooth light brown hair, a White man.

Myra shared a brief overview of the history of stained glass in churches in the United States and said the tradition did not begin here until the early 20th Century and that our church, built in 1844, had no images in the windows for its first 60 years. She went on to share that the stained glass window in the front of the sanctuary was donated by the children of Anna G. Turnbull and Henry C. Turnbull, benefactors of the original Govane Chapel, as a memorial to Anna. Myra reported that Anna's family's wealth was made in the early 1800s by her father, who was in banking. Banks at that time profited greatly from the slave economy. Anna's lineage included slave owners, she and her husband owned two slaves, and they were southern sympathizers during the Civil War.

Several of the other images depicted in the stained glass on either side of the sanctuary are also presumably of Jesus, but all are White, Myra pointed out.

Myra invited the congregation to pause and consider what these images say about us as a congregation as we seek to become an anti-racist church. "The Christ the Consoler window [was] created in the image of European colonists responsible for 400 years of oppression to African Americans," Myra said.

The following Sunday Pastor Harris invited the congregation to walk around and look at the stained glass and afterward asked for comments.



Some pointed out that Jesus, being from the Middle East, would not have looked like the White men in the images. Another congregant, who was Black, shared that the images make her feel uncomfortable and are difficult for her to explain to her children.

The Racial Justice Ministry is very interested in knowing your thoughts and feelings about the images in the stained glass to help them discern how to move forward. Please contact the church by emailing wilson@govanspres.org.



Racial Justice Ministry Working Group

Co-Chairs Akilah Atkinson Julie McDill Secretary Wendy Smith

Members

Kamila Alexander	Shelley Ensor	Tanya Morrel
Myra Brosius	Kaye Gooch	Susan Saunders
Laila Ali	Deletta Gillespie	Keith Snipes
Lisa Beacham	David Harris	Jennifer Williams
Julie McDill	Gwen Lloyd	Maria Wong



Advisory Members Rev. Dr. Heber Brown, III
Professor Ron Williams

Mission

We are Govans Presbyterian people who have come together in response to what we believe is God's call to understand, address, and dismantle racism in ourselves, and our society.

We want to:

- Provide opportunities and a safe environment at Govans where we can openly share thoughts and feelings, and ask questions about racism.
- Educate ourselves about the history and continuing presence of personal and systemic racism.
- Publicly advocate for racial justice in our society.

To generate this kind of learning and action, we will utilize book discussions, films, speakers, museum exhibits, prayer groups, partnerships with other organizations, and other modes yet to be determined. We are open to ideas and suggestions, and would welcome your participation in any aspect of this work.

“Racism is so universal in this country, so widespread, and deep-seated, that it is invisible because it is so normal.”

SHIRLEY CHISHOLM

For more information about the racial justice ministry, please email lea@govanspres.org or go to <https://www.govanspres.org/what-we-do/racial-justice/>.

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