

February 2022

The Growing Edge

Harrisburg First Church of the Brethren | 219 Hummel St. Harrisburg, PA 17104



A Prayer for February

Written by Devin Dixon-Rosario

Dear God, We ask this month that you help us open our hearts and minds to the opportunities and possibilities that you lay before us. Give us the courage to take the roads less traveled to reach destinations paved specifically for us. Let us hear your call, loud and clear and begin to prepare for your work. We thank you in advance for all you have done for us and all you have yet to do, Continue to use us as instruments of your peace, loving as despite our flaws; so we may do the same for our neighbors. We pray these things in your name, Amen.

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Selah

Written by Pastor Lexi Aligarbes

As always, there continues to be much going on here at First Church. Sometimes doing ministry on Hummel Street can feel like things are moving a mile a minute! Yet, as I look over my calendar for this month, one of the things that I am eager to start is our Midweek Morning Meditations.

It has been difficult to plan for anything as we enter into the third year of the pandemic. I know that many of us have been itching to get back to the things we have been holding off and it is finally starting to seem like it's a possibility. As we look forward, in just one month the season of Lent will be upon us and God willing, it will also be when we start to bring back more of our usual programs and activities. However, before we jump into our normal routines, I am inclined to take a moment to pause.

In between some of the verses in the book of Psalms, there is a word that appears over and over again, Selah. The assumption is that this word was given as a direction. It is to indicate either to the lyricist or the listeners that they should leave space for a pause. When I'm about to start something new or enter into a season of change, I find it helpful to remember this direction from the Psalmist and take a moment to center down. Centering down for me is a time to reflect on the well-being of my spirituality. In his book, *The Jesuit Guide to (Almost) Everything*, James Martin S.J. clearly and concisely defines spirituality as "a way of living in relationship with God." The idea is simple enough. Yet, we all know that there are many different and unique ways of living life. Just as there are different ways of living, so too are their different ways of living in a relationship with God. For that reason, there exist various spiritual practices to help us find ways of deepening our relationship with God. As I continue to grow and participate in our denomination of the Church of the Brethren, there are ecumenical roots of mine that continue to influence my understanding of spirituality. In different seasons of my life, I have met God in prayer, in silence, in meditative practices, and in contemplative readings of scripture. It never ceases to amaze me how God reveals God's self to me! Yet, the common thread between them all is that God's presence was made known and walked with me forward, into whatever God had planned for me next.

So as we look to take steps forward, my prayer, as well as my invitation, is that somewhere in this next month, you will be able to take a moment to pause. I invite you to deepen your spiritual practices. Whether that is participating in something new or recommitting to your tried and true practice, I hope that centering down will renew your spirit so that you can say yes to the Holy Spirit.

Psalm 46:7 "The Lord of hosts is with us; the God of Jacob is our refuge. Selah"



Excitement

Written by Pastor Josiah Ludwick

This year has begun with a lot of interesting things happening here at First Church. For me, I was out of the country for a little under two weeks this past month participating in church planting trainings in Rwanda with my father-in-law. I appreciate the church's understanding and the go ahead to be a part of this wonderful opportunity. Thank you as well for the prayers leading up to and during the trip.

This year has also begun with an unplanned sermon series, whereby Pastor Lexi and I both were led toward some texts that seemed to fit together with where the Lord has our faith community heading. These messages were around the ideas of unity, counting well the cost of discipleship, using our gifts as members of the body of Christ and the sacrifice required to do so. We are certainly at a tipping point as far as leadership is concerned and God will be calling new people to leadership positions in this season. I must admit that I was a little disheartened by the lack of attendance at our Ministry Team Fair in January. I do want to thank each team leader for preparing a nice display to let people know about our respective teams and how they can get involved. Be on the look out for more opportunities to find what our teams are doing in the life of First Church.

In February, I'm looking forward to us improving our virtual worship experience. I'm thankful for John and Christopher who are on the case and am excited to see what we come up with as we loop in the District Rep who focuses on these sort of things. We have also begun our midweek virtual gathering led by Pastor Lexi as an outgrowth of our Spiritual Life Team. This is a time where we can be "together" and explore different spiritual disciplines, including prayer, meditation, journaling among others. This month, we also welcome Marvin Blenkle from Berlin, Germany as our latest BVS Volunteer. There is much for Marvin to learn about the US and our neighborhood specifically, but we are very excited to see how he uses his gifts here on Hummel Street and are so thankful to God for bringing him here.

In March, we plan to begin a talk back time to directly follow our Worship Service. In keeping with our Brethren heritage, this will give congregants the opportunity to converse around the scripture and teaching for the day. Rather than just sitting and listening to a sermon, we will have the opportunity to converse once service is concluded. The talk back time will be led by pastoral staff as well as other interested lay leadership. This will coincide with Christian Education opportunities for our pre-school and primary school aged children.

The Lord is doing much here in and through God's Church. Please continue to pray for our faith community as we engage with being the body of Christ during these unprecedented times. Our Leadership Team and staff covet your prayers and support.



Our Community Ministries

bcmPEACE

"Serving Allison Hill in becoming a safer, healthier community empowered by God's peace."



Black History Month on the Hill

What can you do this Black History Month to celebrate our Black siblings in our neighborhood?

1. Read the Black Wall Street it offers everything from Black love stories to a reading list and black businesses. There is even overlaps of religion as well.
2. Support black-owned businesses and entrepreneurs. You can see a list of all kinds of businesses in the Harrisburg area and beyond here.
3. Learn about the racist history of Harrisburg by seeing ECHOES OF THE EIGHTH: STORIES OF HARRISBURG'S OLD EIGHTH WARD.

These are only a few of many things you can do to educate yourself and celebrate the beauty of blackness in our community and beyond!

Are You Interested in...

- Being a Board Director
- Volunteering to Mentor people in the neighborhood
- Teaching a Computer Class
- Teaching Spanish
- Becoming a Monthly Donor
- Volunteering with Children
- Construction and Repair work

If your answer was yes to any of these, please contact us at brethren.com.min@gmail.com!

Add it to the Calendar

Upcoming Events

- May 14th - Mental Health Fair
- May 21st - Highmark Walk for A Healthy Community
- June 19th - 23rd - Vacation Bible School
- September 8th (TBD) - Be The Peace Banquet
- November 20th (TBD) - Bowl-a-thon



Good News!



- Agape Satyagraha participants have been quickly moving through the levels as we have celebrated a graduate of the green level and 2 graduates of the white level. We are anticipating the one more green and one more white in the coming month.
- We have gained 2 new Computer Class participants who are on their way to gaining basic computer skills - meanwhile a class regular is about to finish!
- Pathway to Prosperity is impacting 3 individuals right now as we work with them to gain emergency assistance with unemployment, passports, job searches, and more.
- We were so excited to put the Wellness back in Wellness Hub and offer COVID vaccines and boosters after food distribution January 28th. We had at least 4 community members take advantage of the opportunity.

If you did not receive your year-end letter and need it for tax purposes, please reach out to us at brethren.com.min@gmail.com so we can get that for you.

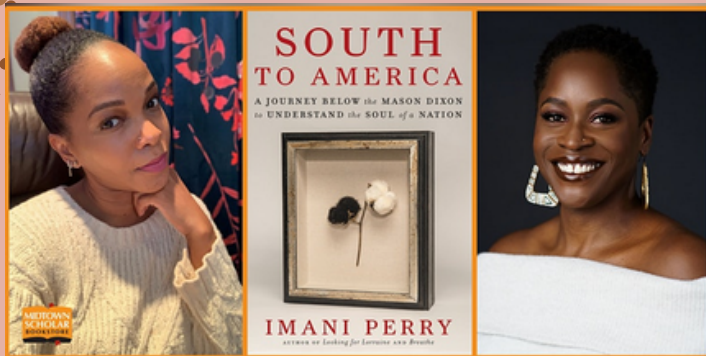


Make sure you are keeping up with all things bcmPEACE by checking out our website www.bcmpeace.org! Also if you are not already receiving our Monthly newsletter, we would love for you to sign up for our mailing list.

Thank you for your continued support as we continue to serve Allison Hill in becoming a safer, healthier, community empowered by God's Peace!



Faith and Justice Corner



IN-PERSON: Imani Perry with Yaba Blay: South to America

Friday, February 18, 2022
7:00 PM 8:00 PM

1302 North 3rd Street
Harrisburg, PA, 17102

The Midtown Scholar Bookstore is pleased to welcome renowned author Imani Perry for an in-person event on her new work, *South to America: A Journey Below the Mason-Dixon to Understand the Soul of a Nation*. Perry will be in conversation with scholar-activist Yaba Blay.

This is an in-person event with a live-stream option via Zoom. Registration is required. Limited seating and tickets available. Doors will open at 6:30pm, and the event will begin at 7:00pm. Virtual attendees will receive the event access link 24 hours and 1 hour before the event begins.

JANUARY 2022 • VOLUME 1

LOVE ME, TOO

Stories from the LGBTQ+ community
By Devin Dixon-Rosario



WHAT DOES IT MEAN TO "COME OUT"?

DEVIN DIXON-ROSARIO

Coming out requires strength, love, and self-acceptance. In a world divided by race, ethnicity, socioeconomic, and much more; we as people struggle with division among sexual orientations. There is a myriad of things to consider when making the decision to come out such as taking safety precautions, being prepared for potential consequences, allowing time for your parent or guardian to adjust, and more. In this edition of *Love me, too*, we will read first-hand accounts of the stories of beauty, heartbreak, and endurance in the LGBTQ+ community.

WHAT YOU'LL FIND INSIDE:

- PERSONAL ACCOUNTS
- ADVICE
- RESOURCES

Love is patient, love is kind. It does not envy, it does not boast, it is not proud. It does not dishonor others; it is not self-seeking; it is not easily angered; it keeps no record of wrongs. Love does not delight in evil but rejoices with the truth. It always protects, always trusts, always hopes, always perseveres. Love never fails.

1 Corinthians 13:4-8

Hello church family! I am coming very close to the completion of the first edition of my newsletter supporting the LGBTQ+ community. If you would be interested in being on the mailing list, please contact me at devindfcbob@gmail.com

Devin Dixon-Rosario
LGBTQ+ Justice Organizer OEP

ECHOES OF THE EIGHTH: STORIES OF HARRISBURG'S OLD EIGHTH WARD

by Sharia Benn

Performance Dates/Times:

7:30 PM: February 11, 12, 18, & 19 // 2:30 PM: February 13 & 20

Voices of the Eighth is a journey that transcends time to connect two African American teens from the same Harrisburg neighborhood. This heartwarming story connects the young and old, past and present, and gone but not forgotten, to celebrate the history-making contributions of African Americans who lived in the Old Eighth Ward. Poetry and music infuse this original play in which Kay, a soon-to-graduate high schooler, finds her voice and value during an encounter with the past. *Voices of the Eighth* is inspired by true stories and history-makers who lived between 1850 and 1920 in the rich and vibrant Old Eighth Ward, which was torn down to make way for the Capitol Complex we see today. During this journey from present to past and back again, Kay and Della meet some extraordinary abolitionists, activists, changemakers, and poets who were all instrumental in fighting for the freedom and rights we enjoy today: and they all came out of Harrisburg.

Get Tickets Now at <https://www.sankofatheatrehbg.com/echoes-of-the-eighth>



Echoes of Voices of the Eighth

STORIES FROM HARRISBURG'S OLD EIGHTH WARD

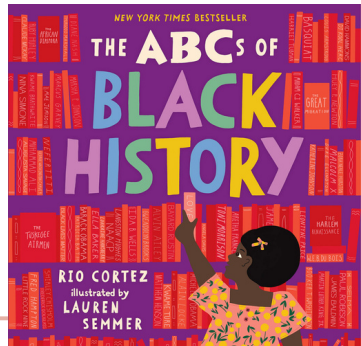
BY SHARIA BENN

The Youth Corner

Social Justice Library Book of the Month!

The ABC's of Black History Month

Written by Rio Cortez
and Illustrated by
Lauren Seemer



This children's book is all about celebrating the beauty, intelligence, and resilience of Black people. You can learn about important people, events, and places that they don't tell you in school! As you move through the alphabet, Black History is connected to each letter through key words to help you learn the history of our neighbors!

Fun Fact: There is an opportunity to learn some words in a new language in this book!

Black History at Vacation Bible School

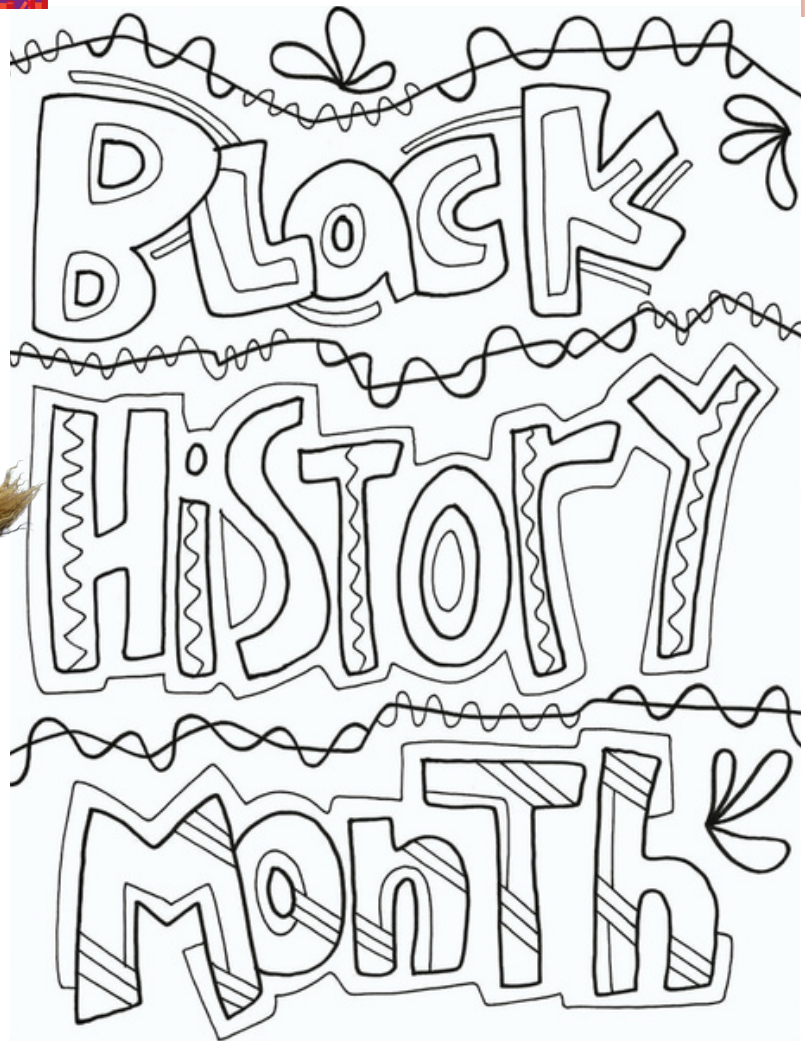
June 19th - 23rd 2022

We will be highlighting Black Athletes
like

- Serena Williams
- LeBron James
- Maame Bailey



and more as we Ready, Set, and Go with God this
summer! Stay on the lookout for more information!



Make sure you come out and join us every other Sunday for Youth Group (grades 6-12)!

The next dates are 2nd and 13th and the 27th

Congregational News and Announcements

"The church is more than just a community of believers. It's a family united by their love for Christ."

Congratulations Mark!

We are excited to celebrate the ordination of Mark Pickens on February 6th, 2022! If you have not already make sure to let him know how proud you are of him - ordination is no easy venture!

Want to Help?

Sign Up to volunteer in March for some important worship roles!

We love having different people volunteer to have these leadership roles. You all are AMAZING!

check what you would be interested in and return the office via hard copy or email

6 ___ Welcome Table ___ Zoom and Video
 ___ Scripture Reading ___ Announcements
 ___ Time for Young Disciples

13 ___ Welcome Table ___ Zoom and Video
 ___ Scripture Reading ___ Announcements
 ___ Time for Young Disciples

20 ___ Welcome Table ___ Zoom and Video
 ___ Scripture Reading ___ Announcements
 ___ Time for Young Disciples

27 ___ Welcome Table ___ Zoom and Video
 ___ Scripture Reading ___ Announcements
 ___ Time for Young Disciples

Praise Reports

- Marvin Blenkle is here as a new BVSer!
- The ordination of Mark Pickens
- The engagement of Sierra Dixon and Zach Neal

Prayer Requests

- Bridgewater College Eagles, staff, and alumni grieving
- Please keep the family of Rosie Fisher in your thoughts and prayers as they grieve the loss of Rosie's brother.

Sunday Bible Study



Same Purpose, Different Format

Beginning March 6 we will resume Sunday Bible Study but it will be in the form of a "talk-back" following the service. This will include going deeper into scripture and discussing the sermon. There will be a primary class available for that age range as well as the Young Disciples continuing past its normal time to accommodate childcare.

Mid-week Meditations



Join Pastor Lexi for a morning meditation every Wednesday at 9am! We will be highlighting different forms of spiritual practices, prayer, and meditation. Look forward to seeing you all there!

More Announcements



Want to purchase some altar flowers in memory or in honor of a loved one?

Contact the church office at office@hbgfirstcob.org for a form!

Upcoming Conferences

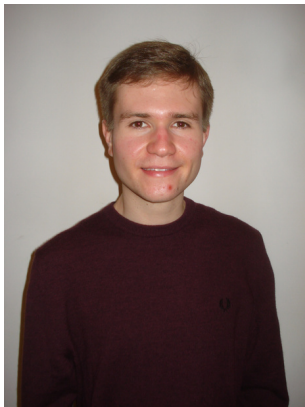
- National Young Adult Conference - May 27-30
 - "I Am Because We Are" (Romans 12:5)
 - Register NOW at www.brethren.org/yya/yac/
- Annual Conference - July 10-14
 - "Embracing One Another As Christ Embraces Us" (Romans 15:7)
 - Registration Opens March 1st at www.brethren.org/ac2022/
- National Youth Conference - July 23 - 28
 - "Foundational" (Colossians 2:5-7)
 - Register NOW at www.brethren.org/nyc/registration/



FOUNDATIONAL



A New Face: Marvin Blenkle



Marvin Benkle is a Brethren Volunteer Service Member comign from Berlin, Germany! He will be volunteering with bcmPEACE and Harrisburg First Church for the next year! Marvin will work as a Program Assistant focusing on our program ministries like the Computer Class, Wellness Hub, and Agape Satyagraha along with administrative tasks. We are so excited to have him here on The Hill! He is already settling in and enjoying his work as he meets and connects with members of the Church, Allison Hill, and Harrisburg! If you see him - make sure to say hi and you will be hearing from him regularly through our newsletter!



Everence®

Everence Stewardship University will be held on March 5th at Calvary Church in Lancaster, PA. This all-day event offers workshops for everyone focused on holistic stewardship. Topics range from biblical stewardship to retirement, mental health, justice and advocacy, and much more. Registration can be done online and the cost of attendance is \$29. For those who may need assistance, the church is able to pay for a limited number of people. If you are interested in signing up for this event and would like the church to pay for your registration, please contact the church office either via phone or email by February 7th. More information about the event and the workshops being offered can be found at <https://www.everence.com/everence-events/central-penn/20220305-stewardship-university-2022>



Even More Announcements

Women's Spring Fellowship Event - Cancelled

"Hello Ladies of the ANE District!

This announcement is to advise you that the In-Person Women's Spring Fellowship Event at the Ephrata Church of the Brethren on March 19, 2022 has been cancelled.

We felt with the recent increase in COVID-19 cases it would be safer not to gather in person at this time.

The Cabinet is busy planning a virtual event and more information will be forthcoming. We appreciate your understanding during these uncertain times."

-From The ANE District Women's Cabinet

Volunteer Education Event

P2H

On February 19 from 11A to 1P, P2H is hosting a special Volunteer Education Event at Christ Lutheran Church.

P2H is collaborating with two like minded organizations, iVoteCounts and New PA Project, to bring the latest information on Voter Engagement!!

The keynote speaker is Jerry Feaser, Executive Director of the Dauphin County Bureau of Elections!! Please don't miss this opportunity!

Lunch will be available to eat in or take out. The program will be in the large Fellowship Hall with plenty of space to stay safe. Stay Tuned for more information on the possibility of a virtual option.

West Shore Symphony Orchestra WEST SHORE SYMPHONY ORCHESTRA PRESENTS

A "Night" at the Opera

SUNDAY, FEBRUARY 20
3:00 PM

Pre-Concert Lecture 2:15pm
Trinity Lutheran Church
2000 Chestnut Street
Camp Hill, PA

 Jennifer Sacher Wiley
Music Director & Conductor

Overtures, Arias, and Choruses by
Verdi, Mozart, Handel, Puccini,
Humperdinck, and excerpts from
Scott Joplin's "Treemonisha"

an All Star cast!

SOLOISTS

 Julie Knott	 Gina Moscato	 Matthew Robinson	 Christyan Seay	 Amy Yovanovich
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Featuring the Capital Area Music Association chorus under the direction of Christyan Seay

SPONSORS:
Hal and Felicity Fox | McCormick Family Foundation

TICKETS:
General Admission \$15 | Senior Citizen \$12
Students with ID & Children 12 & under FREE



CHILI Fundraiser

to warm your belly in support of the programs of
Gather the Spirit for Justice
on Allison Hill, Harrisburg.

Sunday, Feb 27th from 11am - 2pm

Pre-order please by Feb 25 using Cash, Check.

Payments can also be made via Paypal using our [Facebook page](#).
Please indicate that the donation is for chili.

1 Quart Containers of Beef or Vegetarian Chili
Suggested Donations of \$10 per quart or more if you want!
Pick up at the door or by delivery upon request.

All proceeds from chili sales go to community outreach and expanding GTSfJ programs, including the Common Ground Community Center, State IDs, the Youth Kitchen Program, and toiletries being donation to local school students.

Place your orders through any Board member by phone or email
[Ann Van Dyke](#), [Pat Schano](#), [Darlene Kvaternik](#), or [Clay Lambert](#).

if you have something you want included in the
Growing Edge, please send the material in to
the office by

March 20th



February Birthdays & Anniversaries!

4th... Theary Lee
12th... Jennifer Dixon
13th... Laishon Coles
16th... Bob Vroon
23rd... Julie Newsome
25th... Ariana Cruz
28th... Christine Ludwick

District Leadership Nominations

Being a part of the nomination process for District Leadership is so so so important! If you are interested in an open position or know someone whose gifts fit that role, please let Alyssa know so she can bring it to the District Gifts Discernment Team!

Be on the lookout for the nomination forms come out online, but now - be thinking of people that could potentially fill these roles whom we need in our district leadership!

Open positions include:

- Moderator-Elect (Any)
- Program and Arrangements Committee (Lancaster North)
- Standing Committee (ANE West)
- Commission on Church Development and Evangelism (Lancaster North)
- Commission on Nurture (Lancaster South)
- Commission on Stewardship (ANE West)
- Commission on Witness and Outreach (ANE West)



February ANE District Prayer Calendar

Pray for this Church

6 Feb 22	<u>Conewago (Hershey, PA)</u>
13 Feb 22	<u>Swatara Hill (Middletown, PA)</u>
20 Feb 22	<u>Grace Christian (Landsdale, PA)</u>
27 Feb 22	<u>East Cocalico (Stevens, PA)</u>

This Church is Praying for Us

<u>Quakertown (Quakertown, PA)</u>
<u>Mt Wilson (Lebanon, PA)</u>
<u>Brooklyn First (Brooklyn, NY)</u>
<u>Blue Ball (Blue Ball, PA)</u>

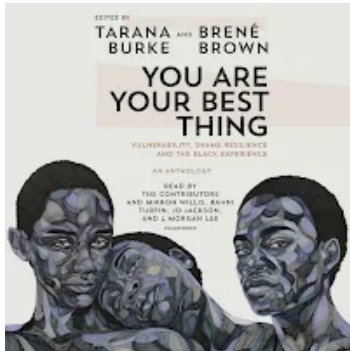


BLACK HISTORY MONTH

Black History Month is celebrated annually in remembrance of perseverance, strength and agility of the African American community.

HOW CAN YOU CELEBRATE BLACK HISTORY MONTH?

Consider donating to the organizations that seek justice for the community such as the Black Youth Project, Amistad Law Project, Lovel and Therapy Fund,



Buy books by Black Authors
Read books by Black Authors
Share books by Black Authors



Support Black Owned Business



RESEARCH THE HISTORY OF WHERE YOU LIVE

Learn about prominent black figures.

CONTINUE FIGHTING FOR JUSTICE FOR BLACK LIVES

ACCORDING TO HISTORY.COM, FEBRUARY WAS CHOSEN TO CELEBRATE BLACK HISTORY MONTH BECAUSE OF THE

BIRTHDAYS OF ABRAHAM LINCOLN (12TH) AND FREDERICK DOUGLASS (14TH, AN ESTIMATED BIRTHDAY BY

DOUGLASS). LINCOLN WAS INFLUENTIAL IN THE EMANCIPATION OF SLAVES, AND DOUGLASS, A FORMER SLAVE, WAS A STRONG LEADER IN THE ABOLITIONIST MOVEMENT, WHICH FOUGHT TO END SLAVERY.



Martin Luther King Jr.



Harriet Tubman



Bessie Coleman

February

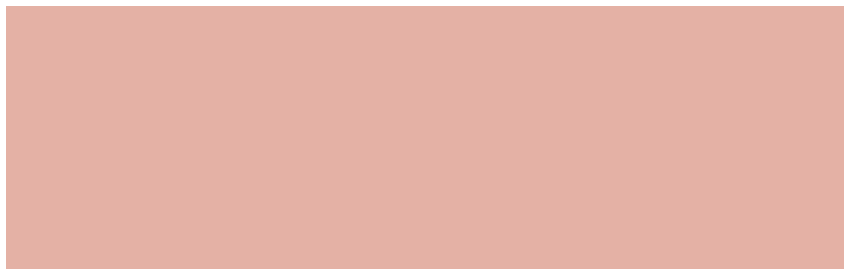
SUNDAY	MONDAY	TUESDAY	WEDNESDAY	THURSDAY	FRIDAY	SATURDAY
26	27	1	2	3	4	5
6	7	8	9	10	11	12 Abraham Lincoln's Birthday)
13	14 Valentines Day	15	16	17	18 Midtown Scholar	19
20	21	22	23	24	25	26
27	28 Presidents Day (BCM office closed)	1	2	3	4	5

INDOOR AND ZOOM WORSHIP AT 10AM	STAFF MEETING @ 12:30PM	AGAPE SATYAGRAHA @ 5PM	PASTOR JOSIAH'S DAY OFF	WELLNESS HUB @10AM
		COMPUTER CLASS @ 10:30AM & 2:30PM	PASTOR LEXI'S DAY OFF	
		MIDWEEK MEDITATIONS @9AM		

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Website: www.hbgfirstcob.org

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CHANGE SERVICE REQUESTED



December 2021

The Growing Edge

The monthly newsletter of the Harrisburg First Church of the Brethren

Josiah Ludwick, HFCoB Co-Pastor

Lexi Aligarbes, HFCoB Co-Pastor

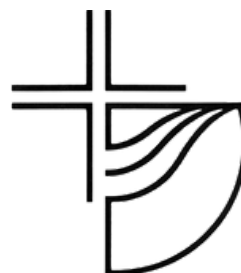
Alyssa Parker, bcmPEACE Operations
Manager

Devin Dixon-Rosario, HFCoB
Administrative Assistant

Don-Valliant Mitchell, Custodian

Our Staff

“ We are called to be a Christ-centered multi-cultural community in the inner city, sharing the love, healing, peace and justice of Christ. ”



The Growing Edge is a publication of Harrisburg First Church of The Brethren for our members, friends, and neighbors.