

The background of the top half of the page is a photograph of a church interior, featuring several arched stained glass windows with intricate designs. The text is overlaid on this image.

THE COCHRAN CHRONICLE OUR LIFE TOGETHER

9027 Midway, Dallas 75209 * 214-352-4889 * www.cochranchapel.org * office@cochranchapel.org * February 2019

FROM OUR PASTOR

February is African American/Black History Month, an opportunity, as President Gerald Ford described it in 1976, “to honor the too-often neglected accomplishments of black Americans in every area of endeavor throughout our history.” As a student in integrated public schools in the late 1970s and 80s, I grew up with Black History Month and learned about famous figures like the poet Phyllis Wheatley, the abolitionists Frederick Douglass and Harriet Tubman, and the scientist George Washington Carver. I did not learn about lesser-known figures like George Washington Buckner, a physician and the first African American to serve as diplomatic minister to a foreign country or Harriet Wilson, the first African American of either gender to publish a novel on the North American continent. I did not learn about Benjamin O. Davis, the first black general in the U.S. Army or Sarah Breedlove, aka Madam C. J. Walker, who created specialized hair products for African-American hair and was one of the first American women to become a self-made millionaire.

All of these men and women have fascinating stories to tell. Thanks to movies like “Hidden Figures,” we’re learning about other extraordinary black Americans, like Dorothy Vaughan, Mary Jackson, and Katherine Johnson—mathematicians and engineers in the segregated West Area Computing Unit of the precursor to NASA, who helped make space flight possible. When I married Maria, I began to learn the stories of other African Americans and to make them my own. My late father-in-law, for instance, was a boxer in the U.S. Navy and a member of the 1960 Olympic team. Some of Maria’s aunts and uncles were responsible for hiring a young preacher named Martin Luther King, Jr. at Dexter Avenue Baptist Church in Montgomery, Alabama. My marriage and family has given me the opportunity to hear stories and learn about people I would not otherwise have known—people whose lives greatly enrich my own because they have shared with me an experience often very different from my own.

One of the great advantages to worshipping in a church like Cochran Chapel, a church that embraces whites, blacks, Filipinos, and Hispanics, is the opportunity we have to learn each other’s stories. As February unfolds, we will get to celebrate some aspects of the African American experience in songs, spirituals, stories, and sermons. We do so, recognizing that while there is no longer Jew or Greek, slave or free, male and female because all are one in Christ Jesus, “if you belong to Christ, then you are Abraham’s offspring” (Gal. 3:28-29), i.e. one human family belonging to God the Father through Jesus the Son. Throughout February, I hope that you, whatever color your skin is and whatever your racial background might be, will join me in recognizing and celebrating the African American part of the Cochran Chapel family.



A Church Divided?

For many years, the United Methodist Church (UMC) as a worldwide denomination has been divided over matters of human sexuality, particularly over matters related to homosexual persons. Since 1972, the Discipline of the United Methodist Church (our governing document) has included language that describes homosexuality as “incompatible with Christian teaching,” denies same-sex couples the right to be married by UM clergy or in UM churches, and forbids lesbian, gay, bisexual, or transgender (LGBT) people to become ordained and serve as clergy persons.

As social mores change, as theological understandings shift, and as the legal rights of homosexual individuals have broadened to include employment non-discrimination and the right to marry, questions related to the status of LGBT persons in the UMC have come to the fore. Numerous proposals in this regard have come before a succession of General Conferences (the denomination’s highest governing body), and these conferences have almost uniformly voted to maintain the Discipline’s language and policies. In some parts of the church and in some parts of the country, various candidates for ministry, clergy, churches, bishops, and conferences have broken with the Discipline’s restrictive practices: openly gay persons have applied (and some have received approval) to be ordained as clergy; clergy people have performed and churches have hosted same-sex weddings; and a lesbian has been elected and consecrated as a bishop. While many applaud these actions and urge greater inclusivity, others regard them as an affront to the Bible and a break with tradition. The UMC, as a denomination, is a church divided.

Because the debate was becoming more polarized and the church was threatening to split, the 2016 General Conference voted to approve the Council of Bishops’ request to “pause for prayer” and form a commission to explore options that help maintain and strengthen the unity of the church. What emerged was the Commission on a Way Forward, formed of 32 people from nine countries with a variety of theological perspectives. The commission is one third laity, one third clergy, and one third bishops. Its members were gay and straight, pastors, professors, campus ministers, lay leaders, and persons from advocacy and renewal movements. Members met nine times over seventeen months listening to the church through an open framework for receiving documents, ideas, and testimonies. The Commission received and processed feedback from boards and agencies, local churches, annual conferences, individual lay and clergy persons, candidates for ministry, and seminary students. Conversations took place with individuals and interest groups across the globe. Many commission members additionally spoke to numerous groups throughout the connection.

From the commission's work emerged three sketches or plans proposing how the UMC might go forward as a united denomination. The plans have been summarized by Tom Berlin:

1. The One Church Plan

- Recognizes the diverse theological and scriptural understandings of our global church
- Provides generous unity for conferences, churches, and pastors
- Removes the restrictive language from our current Book of Discipline
- Maintains the current structure of the denomination
- Does not require any annual conference, bishop, congregation, or pastor to act contrary to their convictions
- Allows congregations and pastors greater freedom to reach new people

2. Connectional Conference Plan (conference here refers to a grouping and structure)

- Creates three values-based connectional conferences: traditional, unity, progressive
 - a. Traditional – no one can
 - b. Unity – all can, no one must; some will, some won't
 - c. Progressive – all shall
- Allows for a Book of Discipline within each connectional conference
- Current central conferences have the choice of becoming their own connectional conference
- Council of Bishops is focused on shared learning and ecumenical relationships
- Episcopal oversight, accountability, elections, assignments, and funding occur within the College of Bishops of each connectional conference
- Jurisdictional Conferences choose their connectional conference
- Local churches who desire to join a branch that is different from their annual conference could vote to join another annual conference

3. Traditional Church Plan

- Strengthens the current language of the Book of Discipline concerning human sexuality for greater clarity
- Streamlines the process to enforce penalties for violations of the Book of Discipline related to marriage and ordination of self-avowed practicing homosexual persons
- Maintains the current structure of the church
- Continues the current relationships between the church and all general agencies and commissions

Throughout 2018, persons elected by annual and central conferences as members of the 2016 General Conference have prepared to participate in a specially-called General Conference to be held in St. Louis, Missouri, from February 23-26, 2019. The sole purpose of this conference is to receive, discuss, and vote on the report of the Commission on a Way Forward. The Council of Bishops has voted by an overwhelming majority to share the work done by the Commission on a Way Forward on the three plans and to recommend the One Church Plan as the best way forward for our future as a denomination.

SAVE THE DATE IN MARCH



March 26, April 2 and April 9

6:30 – 8:00 PM

We often joke that the only certain things in life are death and taxes. And we'd much rather talk about taxes than death! We need to talk about death not only because we are all going to experience it at some point but also because not talking about it can result in missed opportunities. Consider that even though 90% of people say that talking about end-of-life issues with loved ones is important, only 27% have done so and that while 60% of people claim that making sure their family is not burdened by tough decisions is important, 56% of people have not communicated their wishes. Talking about death is hard.

What if, instead of pushing away the topic, we talked about death in a way that proved non-threatening, maybe even comfortable? What would it be like to talk about your own thoughts, hopes, fears, and expectations regarding death with friends over a meal around a dinner table?

On three nights—March 26, April 2, and April 9 from 6:30 to 8:00—you and a guest are invited for dinner and discussion. During a catered meal, guests will be guided through several conversations about some significant end-of-life issues using prompt questions. Before each meal, guests will be invited to do a short reading, watch a brief video, and listen to some taped material that should aid the conversation.

Because of the cost involved and the nature of the conversations, registration for this event is required. Please RSVP to Sandra at office@cochranchapel.org or 214-352-4889 by Monday, March 11.

INSIDE THE CHURCH

Cochran Kitchen Update

In January, Cochran Kitchen:

- Served 57 guests 150 plates of food
- Distributed 46 Bags of Grace (non-perishable food items) to guests
- Provided showers for 7 guests
- Gave 37 guests bus passes
- Offered dozens of bags of hygiene products and items of clothing.

VOLUNTEER OPPORTUNITY

Our Next Cochran Kitchen is Wednesday, February 27

3:00 to 4:00 PM – “dress” tables, place condiments

4:00 to 5:00 PM – set up stations (shower, clothing, drinks, greeting); wash fruit, wrap flatware with napkins

5:00 to 5:30 PM – Greet, talk with and listen to guests

5:30 to 7:00 PM (or until food runs out) – serve meals, listen to/talk with guests

6:30 PM until Meaders has been cleaned up

For more information, please contact the church office at 214-352-4889 or email office@cochranchapel.org

North Dallas Shared Ministries

February Need: Mac-n-Cheese



Please leave your donations under the North Dallas Shared Ministries sign in our atrium or, if you prefer not to shop, checks can be made out to CCUMC, noted for NDSM or donations can be made online.

Thank you for helping those less fortunate.

FELLOWSHIP OPPORTUNITIES

CALENDAR AT A GLANCE – FEBRUARY

Monday, February 4 – **Widowed Persons Service Board Meeting** 2:00 Fellowship Hall

Tuesdays, February 5, 12, 19, 26 – **Brown Bag lunch** 12:30 PM, **KnitWits** 1:00 – 3:00 PM – all are welcome (members and non-members, knitters and non-knitters, men and women), Fellowship Hall

Wednesdays, February 6, 13, 20, 27 – **Bible Study led by Pastor Jeff** 10:00 AM, Fellowship Hall

Wednesdays, February 6, 13, 20, 27 – **Choir Rehearsal** 7:00 PM

Tuesday, February 19 – **Finance Committee** 6:00; **Trustee Committee** 6:45, Fellowship Hall

Wednesday, February 27 – **Cochran Kitchen** 5:30, Meaders Hall

Thursday, February 28 – **Reading Circle** 2:00 PM, Fellowship Hall



February Birthdays

7 -- Jim Dempsey

7 -- Karen Kahn

7 -- Brian Powell

11 -- Georgia Nichols

15 - Jody Harmon

16 – Maria Hall

16 - Reed Hoover

26 – Larry Harmon

27 – Jim Caldwell

Ash Wednesday

March 6, 2019

Pancake Supper, 6:00 PM

Service, 7:00 PM

Join us for dinner and worship on Ash Wednesday
featuring Pastor Jeff's late mom's
famous Buttermilk Pancakes!

Please RSVP by March 4 to Sandra at 214.352.4889 or
office@cochranchapel.org.

SUNDAY SCHOOL CLASSES and BIBLE STUDIES

Nursery: 9:00 AM; RM 100 for children 3 years of age and younger.

Children's Sunday School: 9:00 AM: Class meets on 1st floor of Education Building for children ages 4 years of age and older.

Open Door: 9:00 AM in RM 201: Led by Neil Bickley. All adults are welcome.

Seekers: 9:00 AM in RM 201: Led by Pastor Jeff. The class will embark on a journey of intentional faith formation in partnership with the youth of the congregation. Over the next several months, we will work to learn more about each other, form relationships, ask questions and explore what it means to follow Jesus as His disciples. All adults are welcome.

Pastor's Bible Study: Wednesday mornings at 10:00 in the Fellowship Hall. Led by Pastor Jeff. We are studying the Old Testament by following the Disciple Bible Study Fast Track series.