



Church Women United in Austin P O Box 14336
Austin, Texas 78761-4336

February 2021 Newsletter

Website: www.churchwomenunited.org
Email: cwuaustintx@gmail.com

President's Report

Fabulous, Fearless, Women of Faith

For obvious reasons we have not met since March 2020. Just when we think and pray that things will slow down and get better BAM! We get hit with yet another mess which causes us stress and worry!! We do not yet know when we might be meeting again in person. But until we do, maybe we should fill our newsletter with as much as we can. If anyone has any ideas on this let us all know.

The election is over, and a new administration is beginning to take shape. As for CWU, we have some new administrative members on our board, but we have some places to fill yet. We need to get these places filled before we can compose a new yearbook. Florence Smith Macauley and I went to a zoom CWU Celebrations training program done with power point. It was highly informative. We have ordered the programs and will share as they become available.

I want to honor Black History Month by talking about the BLM movement. When I hear of the injustices that still exist after the 1960s, I get so angry. I asked my elderly aunt why hatred was still an element to be dealt with and she said, "we were raised that way." Since then, I have learned that hatred of individuals for their religion, sexual preferences, or politics has been around since time began. And many times, these things can be hidden by the individual to some degree but that does not make it right. Hating someone for the color of their skin, shape of facial features, etc. is more difficult. The hatred for any of these reasons is learned behavior and we may never completely reverse these teachings, but we should strive to do as much as we can for as long as we can as hard as we can.

Thanks to the courageous Americans from Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. to all the marchers and protesters in the 1960s to bring the attention to the public that inequality severely still exists. The Laws enacted to rectify these problems will not work if the attitude of mankind does not change. We need to work on this everywhere. Peaceful protests will and must continue until attitudes change.

To honor MLK and Black History Month, we are including some recommendations for reading and watching. If you have other recommendations for future newsletters, e-mail me at Bj8smjohns@aol.com. Or call me at 512 447 3682. Or you may send information or suggestions to Karen Grice at kwgrice@grandecom.net. Blessings, BJ

February CWU Meeting Celebrating Black History Month

This year our Celebration of Black History month will be a self-guided tour of recommendations from your Church Women United Board. Some items will be documentaries, videos, books, or podcasts that have interested or inspired us, some will be things we have read or studied in our own churches. One is a book we will discuss in our April Forum. Because these suggestions contain links to various websites, you may want to access the links on contained in this newsletter on the Church Women United Austin website www.churchwomenunited.org.

Books & Articles:

Lynn Bell: *White Too Long, The Legacy of White Supremacy in American Christianity* by Robert P. Jones. Written by a white South Baptist and founder of the Public Religion Research Institute, this excellent history shows that the white American church constructed, sustained, and protected the white supremacy that has framed the entire American story. The author issues “an urgent call for white Christians to reckon with this legacy for the sake of themselves, their Christian faith, and the country.” *NYTimes* book review: <https://www.nytimes.com/2020/08/18/books/review/white-too-long-robert-p-jones.html>

Linda Ellison: *Be the Bridge: Pursuing God’s Heart for Racial Reconciliation* by Latasha Morrison
This is the book that will be studied in the April Forum. The Forum will include a conversation with Church Women United through Zoom. There will be a virtual breakout session into smaller groups to explore together ways to **facilitate spiritual growth and racial healing**. Latasha Morrison is “a leading advocate for racial reconciliation and offers a clarion call for Christians to move toward relationships and deeper understanding in the midst of a diverse culture. With racial tensions high within the church as well as outside the church, it is time for Christians to become the leaders in the conversation on racial reconciliation. This power-packed guide helps readers deepen their understanding of historical factors and present realities, equipping them to participate in the ongoing dialogue and to serve as catalysts for righteousness and justice.” *Christianbook.com*. One can purchase a copy of the book from Christianbook.com for \$10.49 or from Amazon.com for \$8.93. Also from **Linda Ellison:** An article about graduates of HBCU Alums that made history [28 HBCU Alums That Made History | HBCU Buzz](#)

Documentary:

Susan Holman recommends the documentary, **I Am Not Your Negro**, based on the notes and letters of the Black writer and novelist, James Baldwin (1924-1987). It is not a biography of Baldwin but grew out of his unfinished work, “Remember This House,” exploring the lives of Medgar Evers, Martin Luther King, Jr., and Malcom X, all friends of Baldwin’s whose untimely deaths further disillusioned his hopes for racial equality and justice in the United States. This Oscar-nominated work seeks to bring Baldwin’s somewhat controversial legacy into the present, by using his words as background for archival and contemporary film footage which exposes the lack of progress in many areas of race relations.

My interest in Baldwin grew this summer after reading his first novel, “Go Tell It on the Mountain,” when it was on my high school granddaughter’s summer reading list. I did not know that much about him, and while he is acclaimed for his novels, essays, and plays (If Beale Street Could Talk), his opinions are delivered in a frank manner. When in 2020, many Black Americans decided to stop selecting their words so carefully, they were following in the outspoken footsteps of James Baldwin. As Barack Obama said in December interview, “If I spoke the language of James Baldwin as he speaks it...I’m probably not gonna get a lot of votes in Iowa. James Baldwin didn’t have to go out and get votes,” and he did not soften his voice to try to make it heard. As filmmaker Raul Peck explained, “how do I make sure that people today...have a well-needed confrontation with the words he wrote 40, 50 years ago?” **I Am Not Your Negro** helps us understand through the lens of Baldwin why people of color should feel emboldened to speak truths they have kept buried, out of fear of repercussion. The film is available for free on Netflix in their Black History Masters Collection, as well as on other streaming platforms.

Videos and Podcasts: Note, since most of these are videos from commercial websites, you may be required to watch a brief commercial prior to the video.

Florence Smythe Macauley: Amanda Gorman’s very moving Inaugural poem. This link has both the video of the reading the poem as well as the written text below.
<https://www.cnbc.com/2021/01/20/amanda-gormans-inaugural-poem-the-hill-we-climb-full-text.html>

Karen Grice: This podcast is interesting. It is almost an hour and a half, but worth the time. Bishop Michael Curry is interviewed by Brené Brown about his latest Book **Love is the Way: Holding on to Hope in Troubling Times.** It touches on a multitude of topics including the times we are living in.

[Brené with Bishop Michael Curry on Love & Hope in Troubling Times | Brené Brown \(brenebrown.com\)](#)

The link below is to a powerful video about the Black Lives Matter protests last year. I highly recommend watching this short video produced by Vanity Fair.

[Voices from the Black Lives Matter Protests \(A Short Film\) | Vanity Fair - YouTube](#)

Polly Street: This is a video from a 1999 ABC report: Interviews of former slaves about slavery in America

<https://www.unstrippedvoice.com/video/rare-footage-ex-slaves-talk-about-slavery-in-america/>

Johnnie Overton: Black History Trivia: Who Am I? (Answers will appear in our next publication)

1. In 1976 I was the keynote speaker at the Democratic National Convention at which I nominated President Jimmy Carter. ANS: _____
2. I was a pioneer in the field of tennis and the first African American to play at the U.S. Open in 1950. ANS: _____
3. I am a native of Atlanta, TX and the first African American to become a licensed pilot. I received my license on June 15, 1920. ANS: _____
4. Black History Week became Black History Month in 1976. I was the originator of this recognition. ANS: _____
5. I was the first African American mayor of New York City. ANS: _____
6. I was one of the first African American women to earn a college degree and became known as a national activist for civil rights and suffrage. I also help found the National Association of Colored Women (1896) and served as its first national president. ANS: _____
7. I was the first Black woman elected to the United States Congress, representing New York's 12th congressional district for seven terms; and the first woman to run for the Democratic Party's presidential nomination. ANS: _____
8. I was the first Austin city council representative for Austin's District 1 created by the Citizens Districting 10-1 plan. ANS: _____
9. I was raised in New Orleans and became the first gospel singer to receive international recognition. I was called the "Queen of Gospel Song." ANS: _____
10. I have served CWU as the NE Regional Coordinator, National Training Coordinator, and the Personnel Committee. I attend New Life United Methodist Church. Rochester CWU is my home unit. ANS: _____

Editor's note: In today's e-mail, I received notification from PBS announcing a new series beginning February 16, 2021.

PBS Presents: The Black Church. In this intimate four-hour series from executive producer, host, and writer Henry Louis Gates, Jr., we trace how this came to be in the 400-year-old story of the black church in America, all the way down to its bedrock role as the site of African American survival and endurance, grace, and resilience, thriving and testifying, freedom and independence, solidarity and speaking truth to power.