



• ***Walking Together: My Family's Growing Understanding of Race***

by Lydia Chapdelain, Youth Director

Last week I joined a discussion about race in children's ministry, hosted by Group Children's Ministry. This was an hour Zoom conversation that was honest, blunt and led by people of color in response to what our country is currently experiencing.

There was lots of great information, as well as tips on how to answer questions from families and how to change the conversation. I felt compelled to participate in this discussion when my young children, Charlotte and Spencer, brought the conversation into our home. They were playing a game called "Roblox" on their iPads and they saw a sign within the game that said "Black Lives Matter." Although we have never really talked about race in our household, we practice in our house that everyone is created equally and we embrace everyone's differences, no matter what the differences are. Well, that is not enough.

So when the question came up from Charlotte and Spencer, why is it okay to say "Black Lives Matter" and not really correct to say "OTHER Lives Matter, Too," I knew I needed help explaining the complicated topic of race. When I think back, most of my life has been spent in a predominantly white community. I do not consider myself prejudiced against people who are different from me and I accept that people have different values, opinions and qualities. However, I learned what I was doing was not addressing diversity in my home. I was not watching the news; I was not educating myself on this topic; I WAS living in my little bubble. From watching and listening to this seminar, I learned that in this generation, the one in which my children are growing up, diversity is the present and the future and they are going to have to learn how to navigate through it with comfortable conversation.

What I really took away was the word 'race' itself is not complicated; it is the feelings around it that are complicated. Choosing not to know and not to talk about diversity only makes the problem larger. We need to normalize the language "All God's people are created equal" and keep listening to each other, even when the headlines die down. I learned that "understanding beats the world" and "not saying anything makes you stand out."

In order to communicate to our younger generations, Group Children's Ministry suggested the following steps:

1. Process your own feelings and heal your heart.
2. Create an environment where questions are comfortable and welcomed.
3. LISTEN to children who are asking questions.
4. VALIDATE feelings.
5. Let children know that we are going to "Walk Together."
6. Listen more and speak less.

I am listing the website for the webinar recording in case you want to check it out and some resources the panelists suggested. Again, it was an honest conversation and it has made me want to learn more and be able to have these conversations not just with children, but to hear stories and experiences from all different backgrounds so I may listen and learn.

- [Youtube.com, *Group Publishing Webinar: Time to Talk About Race in Children's Ministry*](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=...)
- [Childrensministry.com: *It's Time to Talk About Race in Children's Ministry: Resources*](https://www.childrensministry.com/...)

• **Sarasota Herald Tribune**
Guest Editorial: Manasota
Interracial Book Club,
Learning to Read One Another

The idea for an interracial book club was born during a discussion at a Faith Focus Weekend presentation by Rev. Paul Roberts in our fellowship hall in February, 2018. Janet and Vicki had served together as elders at FPC, and that contact was the basis for their friendship and for starting the book club.

By Vicki Wacksman and Janet Olshewsky

Posted June 12, 2020

How many Americans can call three people of a different color “friend?” How many are willing to dedicate a few hours of their time to learn about each other, to embrace their differences that contribute to our humanity?

As founders of the Manasota Interracial Book Club (MIBC), we feel it is necessary to speak out clearly about where we stand against hatred and bigotry and for the continual pursuit of equality and justice.

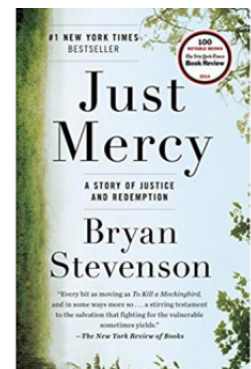
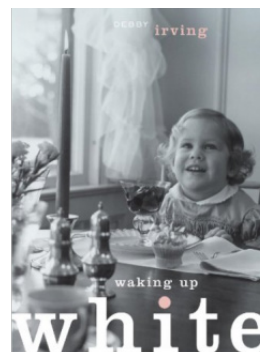
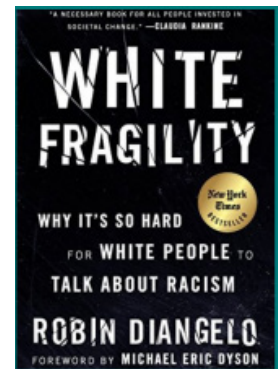
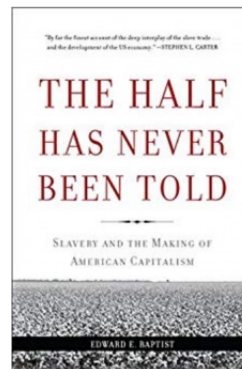
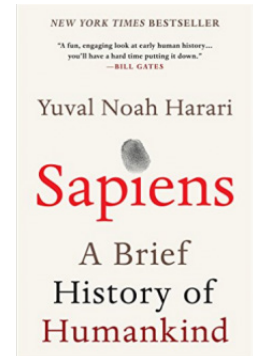
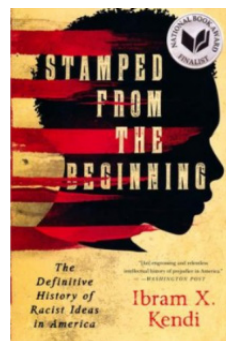
As we watch our country convulsed again with racism, too many white Americans shake our heads sadly and say, or think, “It’s awful what blacks have to endure, but there’s nothing I can do about it.” Black Americans think, “We’ve been down this road before, but not much changes.”

Since organizing in 2018, MIBC now has four book clubs in the Sarasota and Bradenton area. Each is interracially mixed. Our nearly 60 members are enjoying the rewards of “racial reconciliation.” It has been a life-changing experience to re-learn history and make friends of a different color.

Reading *Stamped from the Beginning*, by historian Dr. Ibram X. Kendi, we learned how racist ideas have been developed, disseminated and enshrined in American society. In *Sapiens*, by Yuval Noah Harari, we learned that race itself is a myth, that humans are all the same species. *The Half Has Never Been Told*, by Edward E. Baptist, revealed that our school history lessons failed to tell the most important information about forced migration, physical brutality, and financial exploitation of blacks.

White Fragility, by Robin DiAngelo, and *Waking Up White*, by Debbie Irving, told how white Americans are socialized. White book club members were astonished, and black members couldn’t believe their new white friends had been so naïve. And a movie, *Just Mercy*, written by Bryon Stevenson, revealed the depths of injustice in America’s legal system.

We care deeply about justice and equality for all. Those of us who can are becoming more socially and politically involved. We believe every little step moves us forward. We urge our neighbors to join MIBC — by sending an email to janetolshewsky@verizon.net — or any other activity that will provide continuous experiences of multi-cultural dialogue.





SURE

submitted by Dorothy Murphy
SURE Team Leader

Shared with permission, June 3, 2020
Devotional Message given by Rev. Emily Riley
Campbell, First Presbyterian Church, Plymouth,
Michigan

*Learn to do good; seek justice; correct
oppression. . . . - Isaiah 1:17 ESV*

*Dear First Presbyterian Church, Plymouth
MI, Family and Friends,*

*We are a nation in pain. Frustration,
outrage, shock, sadness, fear: These
emotions overwhelm our hearts.*

*Today, we grieve not only the
senseless death of George Floyd, but the
unnecessary deaths of countless others
including Ahmaud Arbery, Breonna Taylor,
Eric Garner, Trayvon Martin, and countless
others who have died because of racism
and a culture that sees the color of skin as
a marker of worth.*

*Research has suggested that the
emotional and psychological impact of
racism is being “reminded everyday that
you are not enough, being reminded that
you are not seen, being reminded that you
are not valued, being reminded that you are
not a citizen, being reminded that humanity
is not something that applies to you.”*

*This teaching is contrary to the message
and ministry of Jesus Christ who sacrificed
his own life for the sins of the world to
ensure that every child of this world would
know that they are part of God’s beloved
family.*

*As Christians, we are called to “strive
for peace” (Heb 12:14, ESV) but we are also
called to “learn to do good; seek justice,
correct oppression (Is. 1:17).*

*Friends, this is a time for us to recognize
that we are all God’s children. This is a
time to work for change, to do more than
generations before, to love others, seek
justice, stand up for what is right, walking
always in God’s love.*

*By committing to listening, learning,
and changing, we grow as individuals and
as a nation.*

In Christ’s love and mine, Emily

Let us pray:

*Gracious and loving God, we pray today
for the healing of our nation and world.
We pray for the deeper healing of our
hearts and minds. We ask, dear God,
for your help to heal the problems of
systemic racism in our country. Please
bring justice for all who are oppressed,
equity for all people. May we learn to
see and love one another as brothers and
sisters in Christ. We pray for all who are
hurting, grieving, angry, afraid, outraged
at another senseless loss. Transform hurt
into healing, we pray. We pray for an end
to violence, destruction and loss. We pray
for all those who harbor hatred in their
hearts. Shine your brightest light into the
darkest corners to root out racism, fear,
and hatred. We pray for the leaders of our
nation to hear the cries of the people, and
seek real change in the policies and laws
of the land to bring our nation together
in unity, with equity for all. We pray for
those in positions of public trust, that they
may serve justice and promote the dignity
and freedom of every person.*

*Dear God, we have much to fix and much
to heal and we recognize that apart from
you, this is not possible. But with you,
there is grace, healing, and peace in
abundance. Lead us forward, dear God,
in your name and for your sake, Amen.*

• **Dial Hope**

Dial Hope is a daily
devotional program,
founded by the late
Dr. Roger Kunkel,
former parish associate of our church. For
encouragement and hope, every single day,
please dial 941-955-8929 or go to dialhope.org.



Invest in Children



Collection of Supplies
for Brentwood Elementary School Students



JULY 15 - AUGUST 2

Drop off your donations in the designated box at the church office

Monday - Friday, 9:00 am - 12:00 noon

Most needed supplies

Backpacks — Bike Helmets — Dry-erase or Washable Markers
Glue Sticks — Tissues — Mechanical Pencils — 24-pack Crayons
Pocket Folders — Individual Pencil Sharpeners



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• **Advanced Directives Not an Option, a Must**

*submitted by Cheryl Track,
Faith Community Nurse*

In a normal year, I would be sharing this information with you around the holidays, when we are together with family, to have the conversation nobody likes to have. The coronavirus crisis forces the topic of advance medical directives to the forefront.

It's a very scary time and our lives have changed, but it's also important to know that the vast majority of us are going to survive this. This is just a good time to be prepared, have conversations, and recognize the importance of planning ahead.

There are some things we can do to help us be prepared — both for ourselves and the people we care about.

Here are two important things each of us can do, right now, to be prepared.

1 Pick your person to be your health care decision maker.

Choose a health care decision maker (often known as a proxy, agent, or health care power of attorney) — a person who will make medical decisions for you if you become too sick to make them for yourself.

Have a talk with your health care decision maker to make sure they know what matters most to you. Make a plan to talk with your decision maker as soon as possible. Phone calls or video chats are good if you don't live with that person.

Fill out an official form naming your health care decision maker. Give one copy of the filled-in form to your decision maker and one copy to your health care team. Get a free health care decision maker form from your state attorney general website. In a time of social distancing, you may not be able to create an official legal document. That's okay! Writing it down is still better than nothing!

2 Talk about what matters most to you.

Talk with your important people and decision maker about what matters most. The Conversation Starter Kit can help you get ready to talk to others about what matters most. (theconversationproject.org)

If you have already completed the Conversation Starter Kit or have an Advance Directive, review it with your loved ones to see if you want to make any changes or updates. After you talk to your loved ones about what matters, talk to your health care team. Call your primary care provider or specialist to set up a televisit to talk about this. Knowing what matters to you helps your care team provide better care that's right for you.

The pandemic is forcing many families into the impossible position of making the best decisions in the moment of crisis. Having an advance directive in place will provide reassurance that they are making the decision you would make. Your family will thank you for this wonderful gift.

Taken from theconversationproject.org.

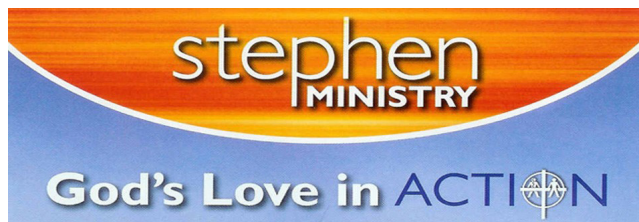
Wednesday, July 22, 11:00 a.m. - 12:00 p.m., Health and Wholeness will be hosting the Alzheimer's Association on a zoom discussion about Advanced Directives. I hope you will join us. Watch the church bulletin for more information.

• **Suncoast Blood Bank**

We will be having a blood drive on Sunday, July 26 from 8:45 a.m. - 12:45 p.m. Contact Cheryl Track for a time slot (941) 320-3828.

• **Called Congregational Meeting to Elect Elders Sunday, July, 5 via Zoom**

Sunday, July 5, 2020 at 12:15 p.m. will be a brief electronic Special Called Meeting of the Congregation. We will hear the Church Officer Nominating Committee's nominees for three open Elder positions and vote. All are welcome to attend this meeting. ***A quorum must be met in order to elect these Elders. It is very important that FPC members participate and vote.*** The meeting will be by Zoom teleconference with the weblink provided in the July 3 News@First newsletter. For those who would like to attend the meeting by phone, arrangements may be made in advance by calling the church office (941) 955-8119.



• **Love Notes**

Dear First Presbyterian Church,

I just wanted to say thank-you for adopting my class this year. I found out the week before Spring Break that you had adopted me and, with three days and two field trips that week, the folder sat on my desk along with a thank-you note that had been started, but never finished because I was going to add a few pictures to the card. Not until last week, did I go to my classroom and see it sitting there. I am so sorry that I did not get this out sooner.

Because I teach four math classes and 83 students, I use dry erase markers all day, every day. Unfortunately, they dry up pretty quickly. I spent your gift of \$100 on dry erase markers, a necessity to teach and learn in my classroom. My students love white board work! It makes life easier to differentiate, and when Mr. Drew Stuart comes into class, he has what he needs to work with his small group.

Please know that I really appreciate your adoption of my classroom. The money was used this year, but my next year's students will reap the benefits of the markers. Expect some class pictures at the beginning of next school year. Thank you again for your generous donation!

Tarra Martello
5th Grade Math, Team Leader
Brentwood Elementary School



Have you ever hurt your arm or hand in a fall, only to cradle the injured body part with your other hand? Remember how, after twisting an ankle, you hopped on the other leg and tried to find a place to safely sit? How many of us, when we burn a finger, instinctively put the finger in our mouths to sooth the burn? These are very natural reactions. Injuries affect the whole body. Why is it that we, who are the “members of the Body of Christ,” choose to suffer in silence when we are hurting? Why does it seem too much to cry out for help?

The apostle Paul uses a powerful metaphor in his letter to the church in Corinth. In his writing he illustrates that we, who are members of Christ's body, not only have wonderful gifts, but also need to serve and to be served. Paul states, *If one member suffers, all suffer together with it; if one member is honored, all rejoice together with it* (1 Cor. 12:26 NRSV). This is the heart and mission of the Stephen Ministry at First Presbyterian Church.

Stephen Ministers are members of our congregation who listen, care, encourage, and provide emotional and spiritual support for people experiencing a crisis or going through a difficult time. Stephen Ministers receive special training to provide one-to-one Christian care to those in our congregation and community experiencing challenges in life—grief, loneliness, divorce, hospitalization, disability, and many other life difficulties.

If you or someone you know needs a Stephen Minister, please call the church office (941-955-8119) to speak with Cheryl Track, Faith Community Nurse or Steven Phillips, Director of Music Ministries/Congregational Care.

If you would like to learn more about the Stephen Ministry program at First Presbyterian Church, go to www.firstpressarasota.org and find our “Stephen Ministry” category in the linear menu. Click on it to learn about this important confidential, one-on-one ministry that is available to you.

Cross Connections is a monthly publication of First Presbyterian Church of Sarasota, Florida, Volume 38 Issue #7. Please submit articles for the next issue by July 15, 2020. Articles submitted are proofed and edited.



Peace River Presbytery

June, 23, 2020

To the congregation of the First Presbyterian Church of Sarasota:

We are five sisters and brothers in Christ from congregations and ministries throughout Peace River Presbytery, appointed by the Presbytery to serve on an Administrative Commission to support First Presbyterian Church. We invited your staff and Session to an introductory meeting on Thursday, June 11. We enjoyed getting to know them a bit and sharing information.

The commission is aware of the pain and conflict that some of you are experiencing, and we are eager to listen to your concerns, find ways that we can walk along side you, assist you in resolving conflicts, and to seek to discern the will of Christ for your church.

During this first gathering, we learned the roles and responsibilities of your staff and Session. In addition, we explained the function and assigned responsibilities of the administrative commission, and our willingness to do all we can to further the peace and unity of your church. A handout was provided that explains the terms used during this process. If you would like a copy, please ask one of the staff or Session member and they will be happy to provide one for you.

An administrative commission is not a punitive body. We are simply coming to work with you in resolving your conflicts. We will also pray with and for you. We all need to be surrounded in prayer.

As we begin this process we are committed to pray for you and would ask that you be in prayer for us. Our goal is that we might all fulfill our "promise to further the peace, unity, and purity of the church."

In Christ,

Elder Rebecca Nicholson (AC chair) - Burnt Store Presbyterian Church

Rev. Dr. Hope Lee (AC Secretary) - Kirkwood Presbyterian Church

Elder Stan Bucher - Buckingham Presbyterian Church

Rev. Chris Romig - Venice Presbyterian Church

Rev. Dr. Holly Wildhack - Westminster Manor

• **General Assembly News**

Our denomination’s national body, the General Assembly (GA), met online June 19, 26 and 27. The theme: “from Lament to Hope” based on Lamentations 5:20-21. GA meets every two years. You can read full reports about the Assembly and its actions by going to <https://ga-pcusa.org>.

On June 20th two Co-Moderators were elected to lead the PC(USA) over the next two years: Rev. Gregory J. Bentley, pastor of the Fellowship Presbyterian Church in Huntsville, Alabama; and Ruling Elder Elona Street-Stewart, Synod Executive of the Synod of Lakes and Prairies -- the first Native American to serve in this role.

“Our personal experiences teach so much about who we are, and they are key to building relations across our differences, experiences and our church through the hope of the Matthew 25 initiative,” Street-Stewart observed. “We believe it will take all that we are, individually and collectively, to continue to take on the important work God has for the PC(USA) to do.”



• **Way to Go, FPC! “Fill the Bus” Was a Huge Success!**

The Mission and Justice Committee—and more importantly, the folks at the Beth-El Farmworker Ministry—thank you for your generous gifts to the farm workers there.

We had planned to use the bus to collect your gifts, then transfer them to a private vehicle, but there were so many donations on Saturday, June 6, we had to drive the bus! We received most items on the needs list, several times over.

Thank you—and praise God from whom all blessings flow!



Facebook post from Beth-El Farmworker Ministry: Thank you, First Presbyterian Church of Sarasota, for the Publix gift cards and two pallets filled with groceries listed on our COVID-19 wish list collected at your “Fill the Bus” event!

• **Thank-You For Your Participation in the All Church Work Day**

Thank you to all who came to the church campus June 6, to help with campus clean-up projects. Approximately 30 participated in a tremendous amount of inside and outside sprucing up. We certainly appreciate your efforts!



• **Birthdays**

1	Greg Knudsen	12	Betsy Marshall	25	Patricia Martin
2	Kathy Herron		Roger Cady		Jayden Adumuah
	Dick Clapp		Susan Sanderson		Andrew Strong
	Hal Serrie	13	Vicki Wacksman		Michael Fingerle
3	Branden Baily		Bonnie Geer	26	Paula Camastro
	Jordan Cook		Nancy Racine		Mike Groninger
	Ethan Alsum		Hope Meyer		Harris Hudson
	Kade Dean	15	Katy Sabin		Janet Griffiths
	Harriette Humphreys		Bob Johnson	28	Scott Carter
	Cynde Mutryn		Shawn Icely		Todd Williams
5	Dorothy Mullen		Heidi Knudsen		Mary Webb
	Ellen Millar		Sam Winship		Mike Swick
6	Peggy Messick	16	Jack Young	29	Lynn Matthews
	Tricia Lewis		Liam Brelsford	30	Jack Hutchens, Jr.
	Jennifer Estes	17	Robyn Collins		Elena Bretoi
	Allison Estes		Alan Nelson	31	Ginny Good
	Zach Martin	18	Kim Becking		
7	Olivia Wright	19	Alma Fleck		
	Nancy Rodriguez		Jean Martin		
	Janet Churn		Al Zappala		
8	Tara Track		Sam Ochi		
	Muffie Ochi		Bill Rice		
9	Michael Taaffe		Todd Rippy		
	Kyle Mendenhall	20	Danielle Hall		
	Becky Fingerle		Allison Mendenhall		
10	Ann Babcock	21	Paige Hougland		
	Lauren Reasoner		Julianne Romanenko		
11	Quigg Warnecke		Maureen Jones		
	Liza Strong	22	Andy Anderson		
	Billy Douglas, III		Anne Bell		
	Kyle Hubert	23	Eddie Burgess		
			Alex Romanenko		

• **Anniversaries**

1	Jack & Susan McDonald	27	David & Debbie Delaney
3	Tom & Pat Jirus		Jimi & Paula Camastro
5	Ryan & Lydia Chapdelain		William Morgan & Jane Rose
6	Tom & Judy Melly		Ron & Jackie Wright
	Rich & Flossie Paul	29	Dick & Mo Aubry
7	Thom & Verna Dederer		Dave & Andrea Householder
9	Charles & Ann Proctor	30	Phil & Jeannette Hohmann
	Jorge & Clara Ordonez		David & Janet Barley
10	Jay & Candy Swick		
11	Jack & Sue Simpson		
13	Don & Ann Opdycke		
14	Rod & Vicky Scott		
	Patrick & Heather O'Neill		
15	Rich & Irene Dulaney		
16	Ward & Anita Brass		
19	Drew & Maryann Stuart		
25	Jeff & Ellen Steinwachs		



**Blessings from
your church family**



Cross Connections

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www.FirstPresSarasota.org

Return Service Requested



ARE YOU READY?

Hurricane season is upon us once again and now is the time to check your hurricane supplies and fine tune your evacuation plans. For information and resources, check out Sarasota County Emergency Services at <https://www.scgov.net/government/emergency-services/hurricane-preparedness>

Here is the list of 2020 hurricane names:

Arthur	Hanna	Omar
Bertha	Isaias	Paulette
Cristobal	Josephine	Rene
Dolly	Kyle	Sally
Edouard	Laura	Teddy
Fay	Marco	Vicky
Gonzalo	Nana	Wilfred