

FIRST BAPTIST NEWS

APRIL 2021



John Lewis and Peoria

By Barb Drake

As part of our racial justice project I have wanted to write about the late Congressman and extraordinary civil rights leader John Lewis. The son of sharecroppers, he faced racial discrimination from birth – and spent most of his life trying to lead the nation away from it. He was an early Freedom Rider, chaired the Student Nonviolent Coordinating Committee for several years and was the youngest speaker at the 1963 March on Washington (he was 23). Arrested 40 times, he was severely beaten after crossing the Edmund Pettus Bridge during the Selma to Montgomery march to win Blacks the right to vote in the South. He survived and triumphed! In 1987 he was elected to Congress, serving there until his death from cancer last July. He was the last living member of Martin Luther King's inner circle.

Much of his passion to change things came from his experiences at the American Baptist Theological Seminary in Nashville, Tenn. There he learned about nonviolent protest and helped organize lunch counter sit-ins. And there he grew as the sort of Christian I can only aspire to be. He was an ordained Baptist minister.

Speaking just last year at the National Prayer Breakfast, Lewis urged delegates to “be a blessing to our fellow human beings.” Here is what he said when giving the benediction: “As a people of faith, as a people of hope, we need the blessing of God Almighty.”

This is reason enough to write about him, but my special interest stems from the opportunity I had to listen to him seven years ago when he spoke at Bradley University. I was overwhelmed by what he said then and how he said it – his spirit, his graciousness and his obvious kindness. All of that was much evident at a special program earlier in the day when a Hines School kindergartener read him a story about Dr. King. I wasn't alone in shedding tears.

Here is some of what he said at Bradley:

“In the Civil Rights movement we were taught to wear peace, to wear non-violence, to find a way to respect every human being, to love every human being.... You see something that is not right, that is not fair, that is not just, you have to speak up, speak out and work with others to bring about change.”

“Is it possible for people in the academic community, in the business community, in the political arena to just come together and just be human? Are we afraid to say, ‘I love you brother? I love you, sister?’” Wow!

But I had no idea what new meaning those remarks would convey when I went back to look at them in mid-January, just one week after a wholly different march on Washington. It is almost as if he foresaw something like that happening – and was urging us in a different direction. Some examples:

“As citizens of this piece of real estate called America, we must work together to create a beloved world. We're one people, one family, and we all live in the same house. We must never give up, never give in, never become bitter or hostile. We must keep our eye on the prize and keep the faith.”

And this:

“Leaders must be a headlight, not a taillight.”

I shall try to keep that in mind during these difficult times, and I hope you will too.

Our focus on John Lewis this month continues onto the books and movie we normally recommend as part of our racial justice project. You will find those on page 2 of the newsletter.

Contact Us:

Dr. Robert Collins, Sr. Pastor

(309) 682-5491

rob@fbcpeoria.org

Mark Grizzard, Music Dir./Youth. Leader

(309) 310-9927

mark@fbcpeoria.org

Dr. Joshua Russell, Organist

(319) 400-8920

joshua@joshuarussellpianist.com

Leigh Grizzard, Bell Choir Director

(309) 682-5491

Leigh.Grizzard@gmail.com

Sandy Johansen, Church Secretary

(309) 682-5491

office@fbcpeoria.org

First Baptist Church of Peoria

411 West Lake Avenue

Peoria, IL 61614-6093

Phone: (309) 682-5491

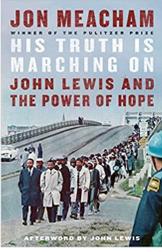
Fax: (309) 682-5450

E-mail: office@fbcpeoria.org



Racial Justice Reflections: Good Books

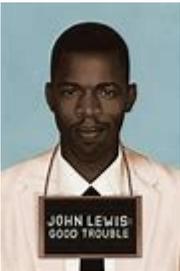
By Barb Drake



“His Truth Is Marching On: John Lewis and the Power of Hope” by Jon Meacham tells of Lewis’ early aspirations to be a minister and his time at the theological seminary but mostly focuses on the 1960s, taking the reader from Lewis’ time in a notorious Mississippi prison to his work with the Freedom Riders and his successes in winning passage of laws forbidding discrimination in public accommodations and voting. Unfortunately, the book ends in 1968 with the assassination of Robert F. Kennedy, whose presidential campaign Lewis was working on. “Walking with the Wind,” Lewis’ memoir, published in 1998, covers much of the same ground. A full biography is being written by historian David Greenberg but is yet to be published.

Racial Justice Reflections on Film

by Barb Drake



The documentary “John Lewis: Good Trouble” was released just last year and is available on various streaming networks. The title stems from the civil rights leader’s advocacy of what he called “good trouble.” As Lewis explained when he spoke in 2014 at Bradley University, “The teaching of Gandhi and Martin Luther King Jr. inspired me to get in good trouble, necessary trouble. If you see something that is not right, that is wrong, that is not fair, that is not just ... you must speak out.” He says you must do this even when those in trouble would prefer you to stay silent. The film traces Lewis’ story from his rural Alabama roots to his role in civil rights protests and his Congressional career. It’s fun seeing him practice his preaching skills to a flock of chickens. As one reviewer put it, “Even then he had what it took to hold an audience.”

Ensuring Racial Justice in Policing

By Wayne Nowlan

Several predominantly-white faith communities and individual members from other churches met recently to develop a statement of proposals for hiring a new police chief to replace recently retired Loren Marion. Among several other things, our statement says the new chief should commit to:

- Improving communications and interaction between patrol officers and residents through “community policing.”
- Supporting intentional deployment of conflict de-escalation protocols and techniques.
- Holding officers accountable for violating department policy.
- Using an officer hiring process that improves diversity and prevents hiring white supremacy and militia affiliated candidates.

We have forwarded our statement to City Council members and City Manager Patrick Urich. On January 27 our Racial Justice Group met virtually with the city manager. He said an advertisement has been sent to a national search agency seeking resumes from interested candidates. The hope is to have a new police chief by mid-summer.

We have also met with NAACP President Marvin Hightower and Pastor Martin Johnson, chairman of the Mayor-Black Pastors Group. Other members of that group include State’s Attorney Jodi Hoos, Sheriff Brian Asbell, Federal Prosecutor Darilynn Knauss and several black pastors.

When it seems safe to do so, I intend to hold a Contemporary Issues Class to present and discuss this critical issue of Racial Justice in Peoria with our members.

Board of Education Plans for Easter



The Board will deliver baskets to our church children sometime during the week before Easter. On Easter Sunday we will also have baskets for our children visitors.

**Happy Easter,
Pat Sheikh**

HOLY WEEK 2021

Are you excited for Easter? I am! I knew that missing last year's Easter celebration would be historical and unfortunate. I did not realize that it would be painful. None of us did, not really. How could we have known the price being paid? Never before in my life had something like this occurred, and I was unsure of where the end would be. I have missed being able to hug the ones I love. I have missed traveling and eating out with my family. But I have really missed worship. I hope you are you excited for Easter, because I am!

As our worship series continues, "The Cozy Classic of the Gospel of Jesus" takes us to two very important words during Holy Week—Hosanna and Raised. These words represent the central themes of Palm Sunday and Resurrection Sunday. They remind us of the grand story, the enormous cost, and the death-destroying ending. Of course, right in the middle, we will be celebrating Good Friday as well.

Good Friday will be a service packed with worship, hymns, and reflection. It's a special service where we look at what Jesus had to say about the cross and why he journeyed up that hill. This service will have plenty of singing, scripture reading, and a short message. Good Friday takes place on Friday, April 2nd at 6:30 pm. I hope you'll be there.

We expect Easter Sunday to be a wonderful day filled with inspiring music, reflective prayers, and a sermon message that guides us to remember the resurrection of Jesus the Christ. Along with this wonderful service we are also expecting to see many people on that morning. In order to maintain safe distancing and create the most opportunity for people to attend with their families, we are offering two identical worship services for Easter Sunday. Each service will feature the same music, scripture readings, and sermon message. We are asking all members and regular attenders to contact the church office, via phone or email, to reserve a spot in either the 8:00 a.m. or 10:00 a.m. Easter worship service. Childcare for 3 and under will be available during the 10:00 a.m. service only.

There will be 80 spots available for reservation in each service, so please contact the church office and let us know your name, which service time you wish, and how many people will be attending with you. We look forward to seeing you on Resurrection Sunday!

Serving Together,
Dr. Rob Collins, Senior Pastor

CHURCH LIBRARY

Do you want something to read? Jim Ashton had written several volumes of short stories during the past several years.

Volumes 4 and 5 are in our church's library in the Fiction Section. As books are placed on shelves alphabetically according to the author's last name, these volumes are at the beginning of the first shelf in the Fiction Section.

Bev Searcy
Co-Librarian

SPRING YARD CLEANUP

We will be having our Spring church yard cleanup on Saturday April 17. The rain date will be Saturday April 24. The Trustees would welcome any and all help as we work to keep our church property looking beautiful! A light breakfast of donuts and fruit will be available to all who come. Please feel free to bring lawn refuse bags, garden gloves and garden tools. The food should be available around 8:00. Come whenever you can that morning. Hope to see you there!

Janet Middleton
Trustees Grounds committee

A NOTE OF THANKS

I would like to thank all those who sent me cards and flowers. So many people have called to check on me and prayed for me during the time Tom was in the hospital and after his passing, and I thank you.

My family and I want to thank those that made food for us and supplied us with all the paper goods we would need. Everything was delicious. I have to say a special thank you to Cindy Courtney for being the one to facilitate us getting the food.

My church family means the world to me, and I will never forget your many kindnesses.

Debbie McGlothlen



First Baptist Church

411 W Lake Avenue
Peoria IL 61614

NONPROFIT ORG.
U.S. POSTAGE
PAID
Peoria, Illinois
Permit No. 677

THE MISSION OF FIRST BAPTIST CHURCH IS TO MINISTER TO OUR CONGREGATION, THE COMMUNITY AND THE WORLD, SO THAT ALL MAY EXPERIENCE THE LOVE AND GRACE OF GOD.

PRAYER CONCERNS

Tom Maulding	Char Austin	Sharon Polakow
June Fredell	Joyce Clarke	Mark Stanard
Sharon Stanard	John Adams	Jerry Edwards
Alyssa Russell	Deb Houser	Jacquelyn Kellogg
Leon & Karen Vickerman		
Bob Braden (Sandy Johansen's brother-in-law)		

SCHOLARSHIPS

Great Rivers Region Scholarship Programs:

Scholarship programs exist in the Great Rivers Region to assist young people who are members of Great Rivers Region American Baptist Churches to secure a college and/or seminary education. Scholarships for any college student (regardless of major) are available from the Gernenz-Shurtleff/Wilcoxon Scholarship. Ministerial students attending ABC-related schools and seminaries in preparation for ministry can also apply for the Harold O. Long Scholarship. To receive an application for these scholarships, write to: Scholarship Committee, Attn Melissa Gibson, PO Box 13457, Springfield IL 62791, or send an email to melissa@abcqrr.org

First Baptist Church of Peoria Scholarships: College scholarship applications for the 2021-2022 school year are available online at www.fbcpeoria.org or in the church office. Completed applications are due in the church office by April 30, 2021.

