



First Church Tucson Weekly Digest

First United Methodist Church
915 E. 4th St., Tucson, AZ 85719
www.firstchurchtucson.org

6.7.2021

First Church Tucson is an inclusive multi-ethnic faith community, a reconciling congregation of the United Methodist Church.

Established in 1879 as the first protestant church in our city, First Church Tucson continues to pave the way in creating a faith community that embraces all peoples into the grace of God.

As a courageous family of faith, we celebrate the diversity of all God's children, welcome everyone to share in God's love and grace, and offer a sanctuary of hope.

We seek to be in ministry with all God's people, regardless of gender, race, age, class, ethnicity, culture, country of origin, ability and disability, and sexual orientation.

We welcome you to join in our journey of faith through worship, prayer, Bible study, and service for social justice and ministries of compassion.

At First Church Tucson,
You have a home.
At First Church Tucson,
You have a family of faith.
At First Church Tucson,
You belong.

"Onward to True Joy"

By Bishop Bob Hoshibata

Dear Members and Friends of the Desert Southwest Conference,

This year, at Annual Conference from June 11-13, we will hear, consider, and celebrate the ways in which God has blessed each one of us with unique gifts. This message is meant for all of us, whether or not we will be attending the virtual Desert Southwest Conference session. We are uniquely created and endowed by God and we each have opportunities to use our gifts for the glory of God for the transformation of the world.

One of the books on my shelf that was suggested reading for annual conference a few years ago, and one I like to read again and again is a book entitled "The Book of Joy." It is a chronicle of conversations between His Holiness the Dalai Lama and Archbishop Desmond Tutu, two great human beings, spiritual leaders, and friends. Much of what is in this book, as you might guess, is about joy. Not just the kind of joy that is connected to a joke or a funny situation. The true joy these two talk about is more than just a feeling. "It is something more profound. . . joy is a way of approaching the world." And moreover, "ultimately our greatest joy is when we seek to do good for others."

Doesn't doing good for others bring joy to you? Have you ever realized that your gifts, received from God, are meant to be utilized for this very purpose? Some believe, for example, that the gift of being able to raise large sums of money is meant to benefit only that person and her or his family. Others believe and practice the art of generosity. John Wesley has preached this, saying, "Earn all you can, save all you can, and give all you can" in his sermon entitled, "The Use of Money."

And there are those who find joy helping those in need, whether it is a physical or spiritual need. Archbishop Tutu speaks of joy being "the reward of seeking to give joy to others. When you show compassion, when you show caring, when you show love to others, do things for others, in a wonderful way you have a deep joy that you can get in no other way. You can't buy it with money.

(cont. pg 8)

QUEER VOICES

YOUR FAITH DOESN'T NEED PERMISSION

By Quest Hunter, member of the Reconciling Committee of the Desert Southwest Conference

<https://dscumc.org/blog/2021/06/01/your-faith-doesnt-need-permission/>

Happy Pride Y'all! Happy Pride to the United Methodist Church's Reconciling Ministry's members for their tireless efforts to educate. As a ministry, they work towards the goal of understanding and acceptance of LGBTQI people in the world and church. Happy Pride to the work of white abolitionists who seek to teach and heal their own communities as they know that it is in their own healing and self-acceptance that will allow People of Color to lift the yoke of their oppressors' pain. This Pride, I would like to honor the lives of the countless Black trans women who face the highest murder rates of any other LGBTQI identity. An acknowledgment is due to the white men who struggle to love themselves as they face the highest suicide rate of any other demographic, many of them gay. To the many queer and transgender young people who didn't believe that things do in fact get better and took their own lives. This article is for all LGBTQI lives and their witnesses.

In honor of the Stonewall Uprising each June, many Americans and countless people around the world celebrate LGBTQI Pride Month. If you have never been to a Pride celebration, imagine a utopian community under the bruises of riots, honoring their truth and self-acceptance. Imagine the spirits of the oppressed living lives of freedom and pride within themselves and without the struggle of shame and hidden authenticity.

In the book of Philippians 1, we find Timothy and Apostle Paul. Paul is sending salutations to the people of Philippi in a letter, thanking them for their support during his imprisonment. Paul expresses his confidence in the people of Philippi, their courage, and steadfast faith in sharing the Gospel. The people of Philippi continued the good work of Paul, despite his imprisonment, the persistent ridicule from the community, and the real danger of government persecution. The Philippians have carried the torch thus far for Paul but had fallen victim to minor setbacks and thus, have now become complacent.

To address this complacency, Paul in a prayer states, that the Philippians need to distinguish between the things that truly matter from that of those that do not. What truly matters, is the advancement of their communal purpose to spread, teach, and live out the Gospel. What truly matters is that those who are lost, find and develop a spiritual relationship with God. What truly matters, is that their faith doesn't need permission from society to love or make the Gospel a real experience for all people.

On February 19th, 2019, I, like many of you, witnessed the United Methodist Church deny openly identified LGBTQI persons the right to be ordained or married once again. Upholding the question of worthiness based on sexuality. On that day, I received countless messages from friends expressing their love for me and their disappointment in the church. As a Black Queer American born and raised United Methodist, theologically trained at Candler School of Theology of Emory University and a domestic US-2 Missionary, I cannot deny that I did not see this coming, nor can I deny that the United Methodist Church must now reap what they have sowed.

Through the Christian Supremacy lens, the UMC has taught, spread, and practiced the colonization within the United States with the Native Americans, throughout the many countries of Africa and Philippine nations. To which made up the majority of opposing votes to maintain the discipline. Largely impacting the gap against the reformation of The Book of Discipline's law.

In reading the many Facebook posts, blogs, and articles, I acknowledge where the UMC has contributed to the influence of Christian Supremacy. For those who do not know the term Christian Supremacy, Christian Supremacy is the connective tissue among different systemic acts of violence and domination that use the language, capital, and power of Christianity to gain power.

It is here at this divide that the church stands. This alone has brought us here. The 2nd largest Protestant Church may split once again. Due to lack of acknowledgment (sic) within the church. A disregard for the issues that have persisted to this very day. Unfortunately, we have all contributed to the Christian Supremacy that lies within the colonization. Colonization that only further denies the ethnicity, traditions, and gender identities of people, all of which God made.

To quote Audre Lorde, a black civil rights writer, and activist,... *"For the master's tools will never dismantle the master's house. They may allow us temporarily to beat him at his own game, but they will never enable us to bring about genuine change."* To reach and achieve genuine change, an apology is, in fact, necessary. Have you ever been in a dispute with someone and the very next time they see you, they fail to acknowledge the situation or apologize? How did that make you feel?

Well, I believe, to recognize the needs of the LBGTQI within the Church, we must first acknowledge, address, and apologize. The stigmas enforced by Christian Supremacy on race, sex, immigration, mental health, the impoverished, and sexuality all have deep toxic religious roots. These intolerances remain sources of our societal disparities and affect our daily social and political lives. Christian Supremacy supports and denies women's access to reproductive healthcare; allows men toxic authoritative control that equates power to dominance; denies transgender children and adults access to unashamed psychological wellbeing, equitable medical care, and spiritual community. The negation of these human rights has refuted your own faith to grow, as we limit the power of God's love.

An apology can be found in the Philippines Pentecostal Church. A group of Pentecostal Christians showed up at Pride to apologize for their homophobia. They held signs that read, *"I used to be a Bible-banging homophobe. Sorry."* The picture featured apologizes for....

.....hiding behind religion when really I was just scared.

....I've looked at you as a sex act instead of a child of God.

...I have looked down on you instead of honoring your humanity.

...I've rejected and hurt your family in the name of "family values"

I challenge us as ministers, leaders, and all who hear, to imagine what Paul's prayer would be for us today. I believe that the Message translations of Philippians 1 make it clear as Paul says in 9-11, *"So this is my prayer: that your love will flourish and that you will not only love much but well. Learn to love appropriately. You need to use your head and test your feelings so that your love is sincere and intelligent, not sentimental gush."*

Learning to love takes a sincere, acknowledgment that love will only take us so far. As it should be paired with a shakeable faith that pushes us outside of our comfort zones to speak. Appropriately, acknowledging our wrongs, to take deliberate actions, that shows love and solidarity for all those who suffer. We can have all the "Kumbaya" moments, hold hands and sing "We shall overcome." To suggest that we have "Open Doors, Open Hearts & Open Minds" but if you don't speak up and actively support the unification of the suffering our time, we will forever be divided and the church's message will remain sentimental gush.

Your faith doesn't need permission to call out bigotry or to have uncomfortable transforming conversations that address these social ills.

We just need to do it! To speak even and when your voice shakes. To be an accomplice in the fight for what is just, right to which will eventually make room for all to be at the table of God. We just need to do it, ask questions when you don't understand. To google it, and not rely on those with queer identities or people of color to constantly teach or explain themselves. You must speak because if we don't speak there will be no left to speak for you.

Thus, we must make room for people who grow our faith, Paul writing continues at verse 8: *"Live a lover's life, circumspect and exemplary, a life Jesus would be proud of: bountiful in fruits from the soul, making Jesus Christ attractive to all, getting everyone involved in the glory and praise of God."* Make room for people who grow your faith. Transwomen, [men who transition from male-to-female,] I feel have grown my faith and I feel give are the greatest example of faith and belief in a God that loves them just for them. For a trans woman, to walk down the streets of America, you have to be brave and have faith pushing through the fear of others, to live a life of personal truth.

For example, Marsha P. Johnson was a Black transwoman, best known as an outspoken advocate for gay rights, and was one of the prominent figures in the Stonewall riots, an uprising that sparked the gay liberation movement. It was a social and political movement of the late 1960s through the mid-1980s. Urging LGBTQI to engage in radical direct action, and counter societal shame with gay pride. It was Johnson's witness and testimony that broke the first bottle that shattered social bigotry sparking the riot. Making way for the modern-day movement for inclusivity. I know for sure that Jesus would be proud of her because as a Black Trans Woman she was able to look beyond her suffering and say "No Pride for some without liberation for us all."

To end, the month of June Pride is celebrated all over the world. As we are a mere two weeks in the shadows of Pentecost Sunday, know and be reminded that the Holy Spirit is working. Giving people the courage to use their privilege to address and amend the wrongs of the past. To build a future where all can live authentic lives without shame or doubt. In 2019, the NYPD police Chief James P. O'Neill publicly apologized on behalf of the force during a safety briefing related to Pride month at Police Headquarters. Saying, *"I think it would be irresponsible to go through World Pride month and not to speak of the events at the Stonewall Inn in June of 1969,"* O'Neill said. *"I do know what happened should not have happened. The actions taken by the NYPD were wrong, plain, and simple. The actions and the laws were discriminatory and oppressive, and for that, I apologize."* If the New York City Police Dept can apologize and repent, Why Can't the Church?

It was the strength of Marsha P. Johnson, Sylvia Rivera, Harvey Milk, Brent Hawkes, Linda Ann Bellos, and countless other Gay activists that fought to liberate us all. Creating safe spaces, organizations that encourage us to not deny our truths whatever they may be, as none of these truths can separate us from the resurrecting power of God's love that was given to us all. May the grace of God fall upon our lives to be aware enough to alleviate the suffering of others so that our own chains of fear, personal judgment, and shame may be broken. In the name of Jesus our liberator. Amen & Ashe



THIS WEEK'S
ANNOUNCEMENTS & GATHERINGS

SUNDAY MORNING LIVE!

Join us for Laity Sunday service at 10AM on ZOOM at the link below.

[Meeting ID: 972 7492 7766](#) [Passcode: 6226481](#)

Visit our Youtube channel. bit.ly/fumcYouTube

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한국어 사역

주일 오전 10:00에 영어 회중과 연합예배를 드립니다.

[Meeting ID: 972 7492 7766](#) [Passcode: 6226481](#)

Visit our Youtube channel. bit.ly/fumcYouTube

금요일 성경공부는 휴강합니다.

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WEEKDAY ONLINE GATHERINGS

Women on a Spiritual Quest (WSQ)

-A classic UM small group accountability and fellowship on Monday Evenings at 4:30PM.

[Meeting ID: 920 5951 9248](#) [Passcode: 6226481](#)

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All God's Creation (AGC)

-A time of scripture reading and reflection with a focus on living creatures, on Wednesday Mornings at 10AM.

[Meeting ID: 994 3610 1655](#) [Passcode: 6226481](#)

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Chancel Choir

-Meet with the choir online from the comfort and safety of your home on Wednesday Evenings at 6:30PM.

[Meeting ID: 929 7830 4567](#) [Passcode: 6226481](#)

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Progressive Book Study (PBS)

-On break through June. July's book will be "God's Politics: Why the Right Gets It Wrong and the Left Doesn't Get It" by Jim Wallis.

[Meeting ID: 980 1573 8087](#) [Passcode: 6226481](#)

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Not seeing something of interest?
We'd love to hear from you. Let's talk.
Contact pastor@firstchurchtucson.org

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PRAYERS FOR OUR COMMUNITY

We offer our prayers for those in our community who are suffering, who are physically, mentally, & emotionally unwell, and those caring for them.

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We offer our prayers for these sister faith communities:

Bishop & Staff of the Desert Southwest Conference
Staff and Churches of the East, North, and West Districts

* * *

SUPPORT FIRST CHURCH TUCSON

Head to our website www.firstchurchtucson.org/give to give online. As always, you can mail in checks to the church office at the address printed on the front page. Alternatively, have your IRA advisor automatically make payments from your IRA.

When we give to God from our hearts, it is always enough. We see you. We thank you for your commitment to making a difference in our community.

THIS WEEK'S BIRTHDAYS AND ANNIVERSARIES

Allan Wintersteen (Jun 7)
Christopher Kang (Jun 8)

Victoria Russell (Jun 9)
Ann Goff (Jun 12)

(If we have missed your birthday or anniversary, please let us know so we can update our records!)

Animal **Holidays** - A Week at a Glance

By Diane Russell

June 7 - June Bug Day

This is the month that June bugs emerge from the ground in search of food and a mate. They have been in the ground as larvae for up to 3 years.



June 8 - World Pet Memorial Day

This day was created to memorialize your beloved pets that have passed away. "Until one has loved an animal, a part of one's soul remains unawakened." --Anatole France

June 8 - World Oceans Day

This day was designated by the United Nations for the world to celebrate the ocean. This year's theme is "The Ocean:

Life and Livelihoods" - to spotlight biodiversity, between the ocean and its ecosystems



June 8 - International Day of Action for Elephant in Zoos

This is a day to bring awareness to the world the way that some zoos and traveling circuses treat their elephants, and to end their suffering by sending them to accredited sanctuaries.

June 11 - World Jaguar Day

This 3rd annual day was created to bring awareness and conservation efforts to the Jaguar. They are under threat due to habitat loss, wildlife trafficking, human conflict, and road crossings.



SOUL KITCHEN

Rainbow Cookies

<https://blog.etsy.com/en/show-your-pride-with-diy-rainbow-cookies/>

Ingredients

2 $\frac{3}{4}$ c all-purpose flour,
divided
 $\frac{1}{2}$ tsp baking powder
 $\frac{1}{4}$ tsp salt
 $\frac{2}{3}$ c confectioners' sugar
 $\frac{1}{4}$ c granulated sugar
 $\frac{1}{2}$ lb plus 4 Tbsp (2 $\frac{1}{2}$ sticks)
butter, cut into pieces and
kept very cold
1 tsp vanilla extract
1 tsp each color gel food
coloring: red, orange,
yellow, green, violet

Directions

1. Combine 2 cups of the flour with the baking powder, salt and sugars in a food processor; pulse briefly to mix. Add the cold butter in pieces; process with short bursts until the mixture has a crumbly consistency. Add the vanilla extract and process several times in 5-second pulses until a dough ball forms.
2. Divide the dough into 6 equal portions.
3. Add one portion of dough to the bowl of a stand mixer (with paddle attachment) and tint with the red food color. Add 2 tablespoons of flour and mix to combine. The dough should not be sticky and resemble the consistency of soft play-doh. Add more flour if needed. Repeat process with remaining dough pieces, food color and flour.
4. Roll the violet portion of dough under your palms into an even baton shape, about 10-inches long.
5. Roll the blue portion into a 10-inch long piece and roll flat to $\frac{1}{4}$ -inch thickness. Trim one edge straight lengthwise.
6. Gently place the violet dough on top of the blue dough and roll it up jelly roll style in a single layer. Trim away excess blue dough.
7. Repeat the process using the remaining dough. Starting from the center, the colors should be in this order: violet, blue, green, yellow, orange, red.
8. While rolling the dough, the red portion (which will be on the outside of the roll) may want to tear. Pinch tears together as they happen and keep rolling. It's okay if a few tears remain – it doesn't have to be perfect.
9. Wrap the finished cookie dough roll in parchment paper and refrigerate until firm enough to slice, about 3 hours. (Tip: opt for a short chill in the freezer; the cookies slice more cleanly when slightly frozen.)
10. Preheat the oven to 325°F. Line 2 baking sheets with parchment paper. Slice the dough into $\frac{1}{4}$ inch thick cookies with a non-serrated knife.
11. Next, cut each cookie in half so that you have two rainbows.
12. Bake cookies on parchment lined baking sheets for 12 to 15 minutes.
13. When done, cookies should be slightly puffed and no longer be shiny on top. Store the cookies in an airtight container.

Onward to True Joy (cont.)

You can be the richest person on Earth, but if you care only about yourself . . . you will not be happy or joyful. But when you are caring, compassionate, more concerned about the welfare of others than about your own, wonderfully, wonderfully, you suddenly feel a warm glow in your heart, because you have in fact, wiped the tears from the eyes of another.”

When we gather for our Annual Conference, I hope we will experience the joy of our ministry together. Not to benefit only ourselves, but to unselfishly offer our gifts for the people we serve and the communities in which we live and offer ministry, especially in this time of COVID-19. Our mission of making disciples will be served if we act with compassion, not malice. Our task of being a courageous church will become reality as we reach out and care for the marginalized and the poor in spirit. And as we feel the spirit of God inspiring us to love like Jesus, act for justice, and unite our hearts in hope, the joy of serving in the name of Jesus will overflow to touch the hearts of those in our congregations and communities.

I am praying for God's Spirit to bring true joy to all our hearts! Come and pray with me!

Blessings,
Bishop Bob



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