



SOCIAL ACTION NEWSLETTER

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Rev. Reuben J. Boyd, Jr., Pastor

BLACK HISTORY MONTH

The Importance of What Our History Holds

By Rev. Reuben J. Boyd, Jr.

Carter G. Woodson said, "If a race has no history, it has no worthwhile tradition, it becomes a negligible factor in the thought of the world, and it stands in danger of being exterminated." It was that thought which led Woodson to launch "Negro History Week" in 1926. Some fifty years later, President Gerald Ford decreed Black History Month a national observance.

Dr. Woodson understood the importance of African Americans being reminded of their rich history of being achievers and overcomers in spite of their centuries of unjust treatment. Every time I view the latest breaking news of some injustice against people of African descent, I often think about the negative impact that centuries of enduring such injustices have had on our people. Often, we are viewed in the media as being the sickest, oppressed or more apt to die early as a result of racist treatment than any other; yet, our Black history reminds us that we are greater than any damage done from centuries of injustices at the hands of white hatred.

Our history reminds us to see ourselves through the lens of divine wealth and boundless potential rather than through the obscured view that the media presents. Our history has been shaped by much more than the versions of white supremacy thrust upon us. Let us take pride in our history that enhances our creativity, talent, strength, intellect, and overall pride in who we are. We are Black And we Are proud!



Dr. Carter G. Woodson

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Originally posted on [Pastor's Corner](#).

CELEBRATE FOUNDERS DAY

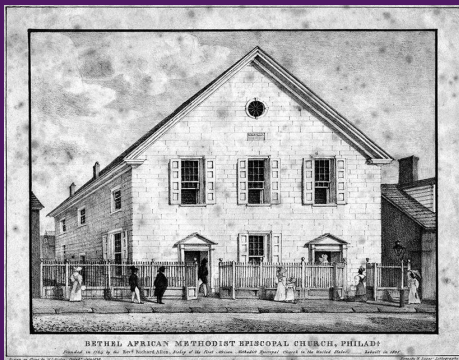


Rt. Rev. Richard Allen

1760 - 1831

A number of us usually attended St. George's Church in Fourth street; and when the coloured people began to get numerous in attending the church, they moved us from the seats we usually sat on, and placed us around the wall, and on Sabbath morning we went to church and the sexton stood at the door, and told us to go in the gallery. He told us to go, and we would see where to sit. We expected to take the seats over the ones we formerly occupied below, not knowing any better. We took those seats. Meeting had begun, and they were nearly done singing, and just as we got to the seats, the elder said, "let us pray." We had not been long upon our knees before I heard considerable scuffling and low talking. I raised my head up and saw one of the trustees, H-- M--, having hold of the Rev. Absalom Jones, pulling him up off of his knees, and saying, "You must get up--you must not kneel here." Mr. Jones replied, "wait until prayer is over." Mr. H-- M-- said "no, you must get up now, or I will call for aid and I force you away."

Mr. Jones said, "wait until prayer is over, and I will get up and trouble you no more." With that he beckoned to one of the other trustees, Mr. L-- S-- to come to his assistance. He came, and went to William White to pull him up. By this time prayer was over, and we all went out of the church in a body, and they were no more plagued with us in the church. This raised a great excitement and inquiry among the citizens, in so much that I believe they were ashamed of their conduct. But my dear Lord was with us, and we were filled with fresh vigour to get a house erected to worship God in. Seeing our forlorn and distressed situation, many of the hearts of our citizens were moved to urge us forward; notwithstanding we had subscribed largely towards finishing St. George's Church, in building the gallery and laying new floors, and just as the house was made comfortable, we were turned out from enjoying the comforts of worshipping therein.



Bethel African Methodist Episcopal Church, Philadelphia, July 1829

Excerpt from Bishop Richard Allen's book,
The Life, Experience, and Gospel Labours of the Rt. Rev. Richard Allen.

Click this [link](#) to read more.

MUSINGS AFTER THE CORONAVIRUS TOWN HALL



Dr. Michael Dawson



I have just finished participating in the Third St. Bethel AME Town Hall, sponsored by the Social Action Committee, on the Coronavirus vaccine and I must say that I was pleased to participate with such an array of learned and capable colleagues. Much valuable information was shared and I hope that most or all participants found it useful and will find it helpful in making the decision regarding taking the vaccine that we all must make. However, as pleased as I am with the results of the Town Hall, my spirit remains somewhat unsettled.

After giving it some thought, I realized that I was not troubled by what was spoken, but rather by what was left unspoken. We discussed scientific facts about the two vaccines already approved under the Emergency Use Authorization authority, and other vaccines, that may be on the way. We also discussed the process of medical trials and the fact that because the trials were abbreviated due to the current emergency, there is much that we do not know about the vaccines. I also acknowledge the understandable skepticism resulting from the legacy of unethical experimentation on people of color, continuing health disparities, and the past administration's disregard for minority communities. However, there was not much discussion about what we do know.

We know that to date over 410,000 Americans have succumbed to this horrible disease, and African Americans have died at twice the rate of white Americans. This fact is irrespective of age, wealth, or access to health insurance or medical care. I have personally lost friends and colleagues who were health care providers and had access to our medical care system and all the advantages that it should provide. I also have friends mourning the loss of parents and loved ones.

We discussed taking vitamin supplements, exercising, eating well, and living a healthy lifestyle. As a practicing family physician, I have spent my entire medical career promoting and directing my patients to exercise, make healthy food choices, and get adequate sleep. The benefits to be gained by these measures have been proven by medical science. While being healthy will certainly decrease the likelihood of contracting and dying from coronavirus, it is by no means a guarantee. I know of otherwise healthy young people with no pre-existing conditions that have contracted the infection and passed away, leaving parents and young children to mourn them. In addition, when a significant part of our population already suffers from one or more conditions like hypertension, diabetes, obesity, heart, kidney, and lung disease, how realistic is it to suggest that they simply lose weight and eat right? Surely, the virus will not wait until their medical condition improves.

As a family of faith, we should realize that the decision to take the coronavirus vaccine is not simply about medical facts and data. While these things are important, I submit that it is about much more than that. As my former Sunday School classmate and present pastor of my home church Bethel AME in Augusta, GA, Rev. Augustus Hall might say "somewhere I read" that He would never leave me or forsake me. As our Pastor of Third St. Bethel AME, Rev. Reuben Boyd often sings, "God specializes," and as he reminds us, faith, without works is dead. It occurs to me that lifting your sleeve to take the vaccine is not only a decision but an act of faith. If we believe God is a way maker, how can we disregard the possibility that the vaccine is the way that he has provided for his people?
(Continued on page 4)

MUSINGS AFTER THE CORONAVIRUS TOWN HALL CONT.

If He is our doctor in the sick room, how can we refuse the medication that he has offered? The potential side effects of the vaccines, so far, have paled in comparison to the real prospects of severe illness and death associated with the actual infection.

Jesus has commanded us to love one another as He has loved us and to love our brother as ourselves. I have taken the first dose of the vaccine not so much for myself, but for my wife Donna, who supports and loves me knowing that as a physician, I could inadvertently bring the coronavirus home at any time. I have taken it for my soon to be 87-year-old father who depends on my wife and I to be his support and companions after the loss of our stepmother. I have taken it for the expectation that I may greet my uncle and aunt, both in their late 90s with a warm hug, while they are yet with us. I have taken it with the hope that I may greet and actually touch my son, sister, nieces, great-nephew, cousins, and other relatives at holiday gatherings and family reunions, Alpha brothers and classmates at homecoming, and childhood friends when I visit my hometown. I have taken it to protect my colleagues, co-workers, patients, neighbors, and the host of people that I may come in contact with at supermarkets, restaurants, gas stations, and other public places. I look forward to the church reopening and greeting my church family at Third Street Bethel AME without fear, but a sense of joy and triumph. Wear your face masks, maintain social distance and wash your hands frequently. But, don't disregard the fact that the Lord, in His infinite mercy, has provided us with the technology and knowledge to provide us with the means to prevent this terrible disease. We simply need to have the faith of a mustard seed and accept it. Perhaps, this is our test.

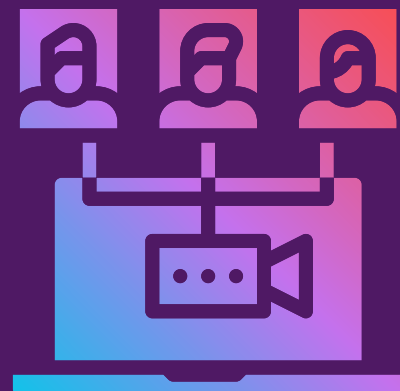
It has become painfully obvious that each of us will at some point be exposed to an event that will render us immune to the blight of coronavirus. That event will be either the natural infection, which everyone will not survive or one of the available vaccines, each with some inherent risk and uncertainty. Let's pray for God's guidance as each of us makes this important decision.



TOWN HALL EVENTS

On December 15, 2020, the Committee on Social Action hosted, "Election 2020 Monumental and Emotional Young Adults and First Time Voters." Panelists included first-time voters from Third Street and social activists.

On January 19, 2021, the Committee on Social Action hosted, "Making it Plain: African Americans, the Vaccine, and Vaccinations" Panelists shared their expertise and provided insight on the COVID-19 Vaccine. If you missed this informative event, click this [link](#) to watch the recording.



Beyond the Ballot Box

Virginia Bills Alerts

HB1888 - Makes various reforms to absentee voting processes and procedures, including those related to availability and accessibility.

HB1993 - Requires state agencies to establish and maintain a comprehensive diversity, equity, and inclusion strategic plan in coordination with the Governor's Director of Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion.

HB1930 - No public institution of higher education shall ask admissions questions about the criminal history of the applicant.

SB1395 - Voting Rights Act of Virginia (Virginia would be the first state in the south to pass such legislation.)

For comprehensive legislative information and statistics, visit <https://www.govtrack.us/>.



Stay up to date on the Virginia General Assembly at <https://virginiageneralassembly.gov/>



Stay up to date on Capitol happenings senate.gov and congress.gov

Amanda Gorman's "The Hill We Climb"



Click the picture to hear the poem.

"When day comes, we ask ourselves where can we find light in this never ending shade? The loss we carry, a sea we must wade. We braved the belly of the beast." - Amanda Gorman

Black History Month

Friday, Feb. 5, 7 to 9 p.m.

4th Annual Black Lives Matter RVA 2021 Art Show Gallery Opening hosted by Daphne Reid, who will introduce the artists and their work. RSVP: <https://blmrv2021.eventbrite.com>.

Saturday, Feb.13, 10 to 11:30 a.m.

University of Virginia's Descendant Outreach Program: Louisa County Connections presented by Dr. Shelley Murphy. Program discusses some of the Louisa County enslaved laborers who were rented out to help build U.Va. Free. Click [here](#) to register.

Saturday, Feb. 6, 11 a.m.

"My Story of a Sharecropper's Life." Matoaca author James McKnight shares his book that recounts the life and experiences of his grandfather who lived to age 112. Details and to reserve a seat: Bryan Truzzie at museum, (804)751-4946.

Feb 1-28, 2021



African American Read-In
Sponsored by the Virginia Museum of Fine Arts
Click [here](#) to register.

BLACK HISTORY MONTH AT RICHMOND PUBLIC LIBRARY

- 2.1 6PM** Historical Fiction Panel with Rebekah Lynn Pierce, Robin Farmer, and LaKesa Cox
- 2.2 6PM** "Death & Rebirth in a Southern City: Richmond's Historic Cemeteries": Virtual author talk with Dr. Ryan Smith
- 2.8 6PM** Economic Empowerment: Let's Talk about Money with JB Bryan
- 2.8 7:30PM** Writing Black History with Roy S. Wyatt
- 2.10 12PM** African American History and 5 Eras of Sports Activism with Clarence McGill
- 2.11 6PM** "The Other Side of the Coin: Race, Generations & Reconciliation" Documentary screening and discussion
- 2.16 6PM** Black Oscars: Virtual author talk with Dr. Frederick Gooding, Jr.
- 2.17 4PM** Black History Month Family Trivia
- 2.23 6PM** Economic Empowerment for Youth with Kerwyn Phillip and Elliott Eddie
- 2.23 7:30PM** Representation Matters: The Power of Black Children's Books with David Miller
- 2.24 6PM** "The Black Family and its Representation, Identity, and Diversity": A discussion with Michael Dickinson, Kimberly Wallace-Sanders, and Grace Gipson
- 2.25 6PM** Dramatic Reading by Evans D. Hopkins
- 2.26 7PM** Through the Eyes of the Poet: Celebrating African American Poetry

ALL EVENTS ARE VIRTUAL AND REQUIRE REGISTRATION. TO SIGN UP, VISIT: RVALIBRARY.ORG/EVENTS



My motto was always to keep swinging. Whether I was in a slump or feeling badly or having trouble off the field, the only thing to do was keep swinging. – Hank Aaron

"Whatever good I have accomplished as an actress I believe came in direct proportion to my efforts to portray Black women who have made positive contributions to my heritage. – Cicley Tyson



Congratulations!

*Congratulations to high school senior, Danielle Campbell, on her induction into the National Honor Society!

Dear God,

Thank you for your making us in your image. As we celebrate Black History Month, we thank you for the memories and the stories of all history makers. We thank you for the fearless leadership and faith of Bishop Richard Allen, Sarah Allen, Absalom Jones, and other early A. M. E. Church leaders. We thank you for Dr. Carter G. Woodson and his work to celebrate the contributions of our people. We ask that you help us also be great contributors to your world and your people. Please help us be bold in our faith, confident in our service, and eager to evangelize. We love you, and we give you all the honor and praise.

Amen.