

An Unequivocal Piece of Mike's Mind... by Rev. Mike Morran

In 1792, writer Mary Wollstonecraft called for the full participation of women in the rights and duties of citizenship. Her essay, [A Vindication of the Rights of Women](#) becomes a foundation for the early movement for suffrage for women.

In 1851, Sojourner Truth delivers her feminist speech, [Ain't I a Woman?](#), at a women's rights forum in Akron, Ohio.

In 1860, social reformer Elizabeth Cady Stanton addressed the New York State legislature, advocating the passage of the women's suffrage bill that was before the state senate.

In 1863, Olympia Brown was ordained as the first fully credentialed Universalist minister.

Please see **Mind** on page 2



Every Single Day by Erin Kenworthy, DRE

February is Black History Month. It is also the shortest month of the year. So how do we honor black history makers, while recognizing that black history is relevant 365 days a year? Can we make a February gesture without legitimizing the idea that black history is an aside to our shared history, or an addendum to white centered history curriculums in use across the United States? Yes, if we approach the gesture as a both/and situation.

Black history expands far beyond one month, in fact, Black history is occurring every single day because it is a integral part of our shared history. Do we need to turn up the volume on Black history makers, past and contemporary? Absolutely. That spotlight and acknowledgement is necessary.

Please see **Every** on page 3

Mind from page 1

In 1916, Jeannette Rankin of Montana was the first woman elected to the U.S. House of Representatives.

In 1920, the 19th amendment to the constitution was ratified, finally granting full voting rights to women.

In 1922, Hattie Caraway of Arkansas was the first woman elected to the U.S. Senate

In 1925, Nellie Ross of Wyoming was elected the first woman Governor.

In 1981, Sandra Day O'Connor became the first woman to serve on the United States Supreme Court.

In 1993, Janet Reno became the first woman Attorney General.

In 1999, ordained women in the Unitarian Universalist ministry outnumbered men for the first time in the history of any denomination within the Judeo-Christian tradition.

In 2001, Condoleeza Rice became the first woman National Security Advisor, and in 2005, the first woman Secretary of State.

In 2007, Nancy Pelosi became Speaker of the House, third in line to be President of the United States, the highest political office ever held by a woman at that time.

In 2016, Hillary Clinton became the first woman to be a major candidate for president and won the popular vote!

In 2020, Kamala Harris became the first woman, and the first Black woman, to be elected Vice President of the United States, the highest political office ever held by a woman. At this moment, both the second and the third person in line to be president are women.

All of which is wonderful(!), though it needs to be noted that the U.S. is WAY behind the rest of the world in terms of women in elected leadership. Sixty-seven other countries have already elected women to their highest offices, either presidents or prime ministers. The achievement of equality for women is certainly not done, but the election of Kamala Harris, and the progress represented, is worthy of celebration.

To be clear, the goal is not to have more women in politics, though that's a good start. The real goal is full and unequivocal self-determination for women. Full stop. So that if a woman wants to go into politics, or science, or finance, or whatever, there is no more in her way than there would be for a man in the same situation, and when she gets there she should get the same treatment, the same respect, have the same opportunities, and receive equal pay.

Unequivocally,

Mike

Every from page 1

If we can divorce ourselves from the notion that black history is a separate narrative from our national and global history, we'll be reframing the whole story with all the complex and interwoven narratives that comprise the truth. And the truth never came from one singular story or perspective.

I invite you to re-examine your own history education, and take note of where you are continuing to carry forward narratives that center white position holders, and white supremacy values as the good actors and motivators in historic events.

As a child, I loved history for the stories I learned, the people who lived ordinary and notable lives. We celebrated Black history month every year, with the same list of names from which to chose our book reports. We loved the novelty of these familiar lists, beloved characters whose lifes accomplishments were neatly tied to their own industrious behaviors. We lifted up all that our familiar Rosa Parks, Benjamin Banneker, Marion Anderson, Malcolm X, Frederick Douglas, Harriet Tubman, Maria Tallchief, Bobby Seale, and others had accomplished without ever really investigating the obstacles set before them by our white forefathers and mothers. How quick we were, I was, to celebrate their acheivements, without examining the measuring sticks used to proclaim them successful. I understand now that all of the book reports I wrote were incomplete projects, ones that fast forwarded to a happy ending rooted in perpetuating comfort, glossing over struggle, and continuing the message that in the American 1980's and 90's we were post racial, which was a lie. It was a lie my teachers taught me.

When we know better, we do better. As a congregation, we have taken on the acknowledgement of a culture that has long operated to feed the notion that white experience sets the bar, defines what success looks like, tastes like, sounds like, walks like, and feels like. We have stated our goal of understanding how we got here, and how we can work to dismantle the structures and obstacles that our Black history makers have had to overcome. It is time for us to finish the book reports.

Certainly, there are exceptional reads out there. I've said it before and I'll say it again though, reading books is not the action that satisfies the work we are called to do. It is a part, but only a part of the work necessary to live into our covenant with one another.

When I taught public school world history, we were constantly beset by the crush of information that came at the end of the year. We took our sweet time at the beginning, setting the stage for agricultural societies, understanding world religious in a comparative study, but by April, we were speeding through the fall of communism, the war on drugs, and the saccharine wonderings of what impact will you, dear teenager, have on the events in the world yet to come. Final exams spanned nearly a century of human history in 40 questions, reviews rode roughshod over entire decades. We ended each year gasping for breath because, while the more current information was certainly relevant, it was not as neatly evaluated and prepared as early civilizations and westward expansion. And we were using textbooks that placed the end of current affairs in the late 1990's, nearly 15 years behind the times when I walked out of a history classroom for the last time.

My point here is, contemporary history is easy to miss in a classroom. And we have a rich variety of Black history makers in action right now, during our lives, who are not going to show up on that beloved list of book report options. And so I challenge you, and myself, to make a list of new names. Find the names that white-centered historians left out of the narrative. Seek out the living history makers, teach their stories to the children around you. Talk about these History makers at dinner in February and all year long. Recalibrate your definitions of success, break the old measuring sticks and listen for the voices of change agents who are telling new versions of old stories. And then, someday soon, tell me a story.

Blessings,

Erin

Experience Sunday Service Online Without a Computer

People can attend our Sunday service virtually even without a computer. From a telephone dial 312-626-6799, 646-558-8656, or 301-715-8592. When prompted enter the meeting ID 466 677 668 and the password 454623.

The Board Beat *by Chris Berlinger, Trustee, First Unitarian Board of Trustees*

Each year, on the Friday before the Marade, my school gathers all K-8 students, faculty, and staff into the ballroom to honor the life, work, and legacy of Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. It is quite possibly my favorite day of the year. We listen intently to the “I Have a Dream” speech, middle schoolers share poems that grapple with racial injustice, kindergarteners (in their adorably heart-wrenching way) share their vision of what it means to be an upstander, we lock arms and sing “We Shall Overcome,” and close with a guest speaker.

This year, of course, our gathering was virtual. We can’t march together, we can’t lock our arms, and we can’t sing. Yet the spirit of this assembly was very much intact. Our guest speaker was perhaps our most notable to date: the activist, radio host, and minister Ronald Smith. Ronald grew up in infamously segregated Selma, Alabama, and is a student and practitioner of the nonviolent resistance movement of Jim Lawson and the SCLC. One aspect of his speech that really resonated with me was a phrase that he used, “the art of nonviolence.” This reference to nonviolence, as an artform, was new and revelatory to me. Upon further research, I found that it has been attributed in various ways to the work of Gandhi, Mandela, and King.

Art is a practice, a discipline, and a dedication. Art is written in blood and full of sacrifice. There is nothing passive about this art of nonviolence. Rather, it is an art that transcends violence, and transcends a rather justified anger. For it takes courage to stand on the side of love. As a white male, I can’t even begin to purport that I understand the anger and frustration of black-and-brown America, or the many disenfranchised who have given their blood and their sacrifices for their rights and the rights of others. Yet in my admiration for those brave and relentless souls, who cross the Edmund-Pettus-bridges of our past, present, and future, there is a living hope for all of us: a universal truth.

For me, personally, there is no separation between my activist and my artist. When the music is right it goes straight to the heart. It disarms, heals, and breeds radical acceptance. Beyond left or right, black or white, gay, non-binary or straight - - when the toe is tapping and the body sways, we are one human family. What happens to the racist bigot when Aretha Franklin sings? If we’re lucky, a new bell rings, of ignorance -- erased, of a commonality of spirit, of a renewed heart. Because the toes are tapping and the heart beats much like the drum.

When we speak of the battle for the soul of America, let us not forget the art of nonviolence. How big is the table, and who are we willing to feed? If the mind follows the heart, then we must get there first. To move beyond loathing and march through the batons wailing. To overcome the hate in the heart of America with the only weapon imaginable: love and the art of nonviolence.

Financial Performant for Calendar Year 2020 by Karl Jonietz, Treasurer

Despite the pandemic, FUSD had an excellent financial Year in 2020. Some of the highlights are summarized below. Please do not hesitate to contact me if you have questions.

Operating Funds:

At the beginning of 2020, our accounts totaled \$133,418.85. At the same time, we owed \$66,993.66 on a construction loan and a total of \$128,395.04 for our solar panels. At the end of the year our total operating funds at Alpine were \$300,552.96. We have completely paid off all debt associated with the church renovation and reduced the debt associated with our two sets of solar panels to a total of \$118,572.30. We successfully borrowed \$58,900 from the Payroll Protection Program, all of which has been forgiven by the lender.

Long-term Funds:

We hold funds for longer-term purposes in a series of accounts at Fidelity. While these funds are all ultimately for the benefit of FUSD, the specific conditions associated with their future expenditure necessitate their investment in a combination of bonds, cash, and socially responsible mutual funds.

We began the year with a total of \$1,021,333.35 in our Fidelity accounts. As of year-end, the corresponding total is \$1,512,236.44. In addition, from these accounts, we have paid \$80,450 in advance for our share of the upcoming roof repair and made a \$4,000 distribution to our operating account from the Carolyn Utter Fund.

We, like other investors, have benefitted from the growth of the stock market, although I feel obligated to caution that markets go down as well as up. (We hold those funds for the long haul and over time we are confident that, despite gyrations, markets will go up.) Our investment gains for 2020 over all funds amounted to \$195,775.31.

Growth can also be seen in the prices of the mutual funds in which we keep our endowments and other funds at Fidelity:

Fund	FNDSX	FITLX	CSIFX
12/31/19	\$10.55	\$13.96	\$35.22
12/31/20	\$11.05	\$16.28	\$39.40

There is no way to overestimate the continuing generosity of our members and friends, even without the added strain of a global pandemic. We are entering the new year in remarkable financial shape. We have cash balances that are more than adequate, we are nearly debt-free, and our two endowment funds will provide a strong cushion against the unexpected.

My sincere thanks to all who have made this possible.

Brokenness is the Whole Souul Living Theme for February, but not so that we might wallow morose or despairing. Brokenness, whether occasional or systemic is simply an essential and unavoidable part of human life. It often marks turning points in our life journeys; the endings of chapters, the beginnings of new ones, the places where growth takes place.

This month, in our individual and especially our communal discussions, reflect on...:



1400 Lafayette St.
Denver, CO 80218

Phone: 303-831-7113

Fax: 303-831-8458

E-mail:
office@fusden.org

Rev. Mike Morran:
revmorran@gmail.com

Erin Kenworthy,
DRE:
erin@fusden.org

Website:
www.fusden.org

- Even Muste uses the warlike word “attack” in his quote about peace! What does this say about our culture and language?
- The bible talks about, “The peace the passes understanding.” But what about the understanding that leads to peace? What is your Peace? And, what is your understanding?
- What have you learned about Peace in your lifetime? Is it teachable?
- What should your church be teaching children about Peace?

Cover photo by Lobo Studio Hamburg on unsplash.com