
Saints Alive!: News & Announcements for the week of February 24, 2019

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Saints' Alive!

News & Events for the week of February 24, 2019

Weekly Calendar

Sunday 2/24

8:00a Celtic Holy Eucharist
9:15a Adult Forum
10:30a Holy Eucharist

Monday 2/25

7:00p AA

Tuesday 2/26

4:00p Bound Together
7:00p Vestry

Wednesday 2/27

4:00 Bound Together
7:30p Choir

Thursday 2/28

4:00p Bound Together

The Seventh Sunday after the Epiphany

Readings for this Week:

Genesis 45:3-11, 15
1 Corinthians 15:35-38,42-50
Luke 6:27-38
Psalm 37:1-12, 41-42

Preacher and Presider:

The Rev. Dr. Chris Johnson

5:30p Cranbrook
Dinner

The Sanctoral Cycle

Friday 3/1

11:00a AA

Saturday 3/2

8:00a Community
Breakfast

10:00a

Resale/Produce/Book
Shop

Future Events

- Mar 6 Ash Wednesday
Mar 8-9 St. David Youth
Lock-in

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Like stars appearing...

This is the last of five portraits of African American Saints who appear on the liturgical calendar of the Episcopal Church. Its subject is James Weldon Johnson. His is not the most familiar of names. Yet those who worship here at All Saints' are acquainted with his work. Among his multiple vocations, he was a poet. In 1900 to commemorate the birthday of Abraham Lincoln, Johnson wrote a poem which was set to music by his brother. Thus was born the powerful anthem, "Lift every voice and sing" which has been called the Black National Anthem. We sing it periodically at All Saints'; as a matter of fact, it was the closing hymn at last Sunday's late service (Feb. 17). "Lift Every Voice" plus a string of "firsts" (e.g., first African American to pass the Bar Examination in Florida; first African American professor at New York University) seem to constitute Johnson's biography for many historians. Yet James Weldon Johnson should be known for far more than a list of firsts.

One cannot understand or appreciate his stature without understanding or appreciating the Harlem Renaissance. After the Civil War our nation entered a brutal period called by historians the Reconstruction Era. During Reconstruction, freedom for African Americans remained a dream only infrequently realized. This was the era of Jim Crow and the Klan which enforced segregation, intimidated, and demeaned Black citizens. One result of the thwarted hopes for freedom and equality was a shift in population. Perhaps freedom could be realized in the north. Moreover, there was the lure of jobs in the booming factories of northern cities. From about 1890 through the 1920s, former slaves and impoverished freedmen migrated from the South and moved north to large and growing urban centers, notably, Chicago, New York, Detroit and Philadelphia. In these places and others, they established cities within cities, enormous enclaves of African Americans in the heart of the nation's largest heretofore largely white cities. The largest of these enclaves was Harlem in New York City. For the first time the creative energy of Black people was concentrated and unfettered. It erupted in an exuberant celebration of an emerging new culture. Art, literature, music flourished - and jazz, the quintessential American musical art form. Names like Duke Ellington, Louis Armstrong, Billie Holiday, Eubie Blake, Fats Waller, Bessie Smith - creative musicians all - is just the beginning of the roster of musicians who thrived in Harlem during the Renaissance. This list does not include writers (e.g., Langston Hughes, Zora Neale Hurston, W. E. B. Dubois, Countee Cullen), performers

and entertainers (e.g., Paul Robeson, Bessie Smith Josephine Baker), and artists of all kinds and in all media. It was as if generation upon generation of pent-up creative energy was at last given the opportunity for expression. Among the leaders of this phenomenon was James Weldon Johnson, musician, poet, educator, diplomat, attorney and civil rights activist. He was a "renaissance" man.

In large part Johnson realized so much of his potential because of his parents. His father was a freeborn Virginian and his mother was Bahamian. Neither had the experience of slavery. He was not raised in a household in which there was a sense of limitation or a focus on segregation.

James Weldon Johnson was born in Florida in 1871. He was a brilliant student. On graduation from Atlanta University and after serving as a school teacher and principal, he began work with the NAACP (National Association for the Advancement of Colored People). At that time, the NAACP, in spite of its name and stated constituency, was operated by white people. In 1920, Johnson, had worked his way up in the organization, and became the first African American to lead it. He threw the weight of his reputation behind Theodore Roosevelt in the election of 1904 and Roosevelt won the presidency. Johnson was appointed by him as consul to Venezuela and later to Haiti. And all the while, James Weldon Johnson was writing. 200 original songs for Broadway's musical stage, *Lift Every Voice...*, (1900), *The Autobiography of an ex-Colored Man* (1912), *The Creation* (an extended poem in the epic style based on the Genesis creation story), *God's Trombones: Seven Negro Sermons in Verse* (1927), *Fifty Years and other Poems, Along this Way* (autobiography). This list is very incomplete. In addition, Johnson gathered and wrote commentary on African American Poetry and edited anthology after anthology of the work of African American authors and poets. He was a leader in the effort not simply to preserve the flowering of Black letters, but to promote them as legitimate, complex and provocative evidence of a rich and developing culture within American culture. Not only was his voice added to the chorus of voices that spoke for America, he gathered and amplified the voices of those whom history might otherwise overlook.

Of all the many pursuits in which he spent his life (educator, activist, musician, diplomat, lawyer) it was his writing that persisted throughout and the arena in which he made his most significant contributions. For James Weldon Johnson captured, and himself represented, the voice of his people. He expressed it with clarity and beauty and unusual power so that it could become an integral and constructive source of a richer and deeper American culture then emerging. His feast day is June 25.

Adult Forum

A calendar of dates and offerings in February and March is posted on the bulletin board.

Adult Forum Offering for February 24:

Christian Response to Contemporary Issues by Georgia Buckley

Politically, immigration is a complicated and divisive issue. I will facilitate a group discussion as to a Christian's response to immigrants and immigration along with biblical references.

Hope to see you Sunday, 9:15-10:15 in the Library!

Pastoral Care, Notes & Birthdays

Prayers

For those who have asked for our prayers: Ali, Alicia, Annamary, Charles, Chris and Lisa, Chris and Margie, David, Delphine, Ernie, Glenden, Gordie, Greg, Harry, Jan, Janet, John, Larry, Lenora, Lisa, Lori, Micah, Michelle, Paul, Reatha, Sarah, Shari, Shirley, Steven, Susy, Sydney, and Twyla.

Birthdays:

March 1 Rosie Glispie
March 2 Ken Burr

Notes

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Bound Together

Jane Porter - director@boundtogetherpontiac.org

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