



at the Corner

July/August 2020

EMMETT TILL - MEDGAR EVERS - DR MARTIN LUTHER KING JR - HENRY SMITH - JOHN CRAWFORD III - MICHAEL BROWN - EZELL FORD - DANTE PARKER - MICHELLE CUSSEAU - LAQUAN MCDONALD - TANISHA ANDERSON - AKAI GURLEY - TAMIR RICE - RUMAIN BRISBON - JERAME REID - MATTHEW AJIBADE - JAMES N. POWELL JR. - FRANK SMART - NATASHA MCKENNA - TONY ROBINSON - ANTHONY HILL - MYA HALL - PHILLIP WHITE - ERIC HARRIS - WALTER SCOTT - WILLIAM CHAPMAN II - ALEXIA CHRISTIAN - BRENDON GLENN - VICTOR MANUEL LAROSA - JONATHAN SANDERS - FREDDIE CARLOS GRAY JR. - JOSEPH MANN - SALVADO ELLSWOOD - SANDRA BLAND - ALBERT JOSEPH DAVIS - DARRIUS STEWART - BILLY RAY DAVIS - SAMUEL DUBOSE - MICHAEL SABBIE - BRIAN KEITH DAY - CHRISTIAN TAYLOR - TROY ROBINSON - ASSHAMS PHAROAH MANLEY - FELIX KUMI - KEITH HARRISON MCLEOD - JUNIOR PROSPER - LAMONTEZ JONES - ABERN BAW - DO NIC HUTCHINSON - ANTHONY ASHFORD - ALONZO SMITH - TYREE FORD - NI KAGI - AVANTE BIGGS - MICHAEL LEE MARSHALL - JAMAR CLARK - RICHARD PERKINS - PHILLIP PANNELL - NATHANIEL HARRIS PICKETT - BENNI LEE TIGNOR - MIGUEL ESPINALE - MICHAEL NOEL - KEVIN MATTHEWS - BETTIE JONES - QUINTONIO LEGRIER - KEIT QUINDY - JANET WILSON - RANDY NELSON - ANTRONIE SCOTT - WENDELL CELESTINE - WIL JOSEPH - CALIN ROQUEMORE - DYZHAWN PERKINS - CHRISTOPHER DAVIS - MARCO LOUD - PETER GAINES - TORREY ROBINSON - DARIUS ROBINSON - KEVIN MA - TR - AMADOU DIALLO - WILLIE TILLMAN - TERRI - ALVINE SMITH - DUBOSE - ALTON STERLING - PHILANDO CASTI - E - RUCHER PAUL - AERIA WOODS - BOBBY RUSS - JORDAN EDWARDS - AARON BAILEY - RONELL FOSTER - STEPHON CLARK - COREY CARTER - ANTWON ROSE II - TAYLER ROCK - MALICE GREEN - RAMARLEY GRAHAM - ELIJAH MCCLAIN - AIYANA STANLEY JONES - BOTHAM JEAN - PAMELA TURNER - DOMINIQUE CLAYTON - SEAN BELL - ATATIANA JEFFERSON - JEMEL ROBERSON - JAMES LEE ALEXANDER - RYAN MATTHEW SMITH - DERRICK AMBROSE JR. - ADDIE MAE COLLINS - CAROL DENISE MCNAIR - CAROLE ROBERTSON - CYNTHIA WESLEY - NICHOLAS HEYWARD JR. - CHRISTOPHER WHITFIELD - WILLIE MCCOY - VICTOR WHITE III - MARCUS DEON SMITH - MARTIN LEE ANDERSON - CHRISTOPHER MCCORVEY - BRADLEY BLACKSHIRE - TIMOTHY THOMAS - REGINALD DOUCET JR. - DANROY "DJ" HENRY JR. - KARVAS GAMBLE JR. - ERIC REASON - KORRYN GAINES - REKIA BOYD - KIONTE SPENCER - DARIUS TARVER - WAYNE ARNOLD JONES - MANUEL ELLIS - VICTOR DUFFY JR. - KOBE DIMOCK-HEISLER - CLINTON R. ALLEN - TIMOTHY CAUGHMAN - COREY JONES - TYRE KING - ERIC GARNER - MILES HALL - KENDRICK JOHNSON - CHARLEENA LYLES - MICHAEL LORENZO DEAN - TRAYVON MARTIN - RENISHA MCBRIDE - OSCAR GRANT III - BREONNA TAYLOR - KALIEF BROWDER - DARRIEN HUNT - TROY HODGE - WILLIAM GREEN - AHMAUD ARBERY - DION JOHNSON - TONY MCDADE - JAMEL FLOYD - GEORGE FLOYD - RAYSHARD BROOKS

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FOR INFORMATION ON
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COME2CORNERSTONE.ORG



**Cornerstone
Community
Church**

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203-866-3707
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www.come2cornerstone.org

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M, T, Th 10-1, W & F 1:30-4:30

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Rev. Elizabeth C. Abel

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Pat Bobwich, Amy Silvester

Council Chair
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Office Administrator
Pamela Toason

Church Musician
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Pastor-Parish Relations Chair
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Megan Krois

**Cornerstone Early Learning
Center Director**
Debra Horton

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Nancy Kenworthy
Susan Maddox
Lynn Russo Whyllly

If you have news or concerns you would like communicated to the church, please have your information to Nancy Kenworthy by the first of the month for the following month's issue.

Lectionary

July 12, Sixth Sunday after Pentecost

Genesis 25:19-34
Psalm 119:105-112
Romans 8:1-11
Matthew 13:1-9, 18-23

August 2, Ninth Sunday after Pentecost

Genesis 32:22-31
Psalm 17:1-7, 15
Romans 9:1-5
Matthew 14:13-21

August 23, Twelfth Sunday after Pentecost

Exodus 1:8-2:10
Psalm 124
Romans 12:1-8
Matthew 16:13-20

July 19, Seventh Sunday after Pentecost

Genesis 28:10-19a
Psalm 139:1-12, 23-24
Romans 8:12-25
Matthew 13:24-30, 36-43

August 9, Tenth Sunday after Pentecost

Genesis 37:1-4, 12-28
Psalm 105: 1-6, 16-22, 45b
Romans 10:5-15
Matthew 14:22-33

August 30, Thirteenth Sunday after Pentecost

Exodus 3:1-15
Psalm 105:1-6, 23-26, 45b
Romans 12:9-21
Matthew 16:21-28

July 26, Eighth Sunday after Pentecost

Genesis 29:15-28
Psalm 105:1-11, 45b
Romans 8:26-39
Matthew 13:31-33, 44-52

August 16, Eleventh Sunday after Pentecost

Genesis 45:1-15
Psalm 133
Romans 11:1-2a, 29-32
Matthew 15: (10-20), 21-28



Cornerstone's **vision** is to be a space open to all persons to experience God's grace and love, and to share that love with others, through acceptance, service, and witness, as followers of Jesus Christ.

Cornerstone's **mission** is to embrace and nurture everyone we meet as we build together the body of Christ and express God's love by our witness in the world.



A Lot Has Happened in a Year

Search me, O God, and know my heart; test me and know my thoughts. See if there is any wicked way in me, and lead me in the way everlasting. Psalm 139:23-24

It's been one full year since I landed in Norwalk, CT, to serve as the Pastor at Cornerstone Community Church. God called me to the orders of elder, and though I took my time in responding to my call, once I did, I felt prepared for the journey. I was still unaware of all I would encounter, nevertheless ready to serve in the way God needed me.

Having lived a full life in the service, I have grown tough skin and a spirit for the hard knocks of life. My tolerance level has always been high in order to persevere as I search for the gaps and voids in the lives of others, to build the kin-dom. But I have learned this year that my yield has become low for those that stand complacent in mediocrity and block the way of progress, even though unknowingly. So, I know that God is still working on me to make me my best self.

As I took my seat as Pastor of Cornerstone, I knew my work was going to be cut out for me. The Bishop and Cabinet have invested in me to ensure I had the support to best serve. And the congregation has a dream to become the cornerstone of the community, so I took to the streets to learn the community, to gain an understanding of where and how we could begin to make that happen. I sat as the newcomer in town on budding community coalitions and met the leaders of the city and state. At the same time, I surveyed the church to sort out our own processes to ensure we were prepared for the journey ahead. I took my time to learn so I could listen to the members, the community, the people. I witnessed long life and saw good bones and amazing history! But I knew right away there were some foundational things that had to be set in order for us to be ready to meet that dream.

Most were willing, but unaware of the full load we were being asked to carry. Others were excited to see it happen but willing to stand by and watch. Some were working by themselves quite happily and were startled by my presence and eagerness to be involved. Then I was affirmed by the Board of Ordained Ministry to be ordained even during one of the most difficult times in my life, when I lost my aunt and could not attend her funeral because it was the same day as my interview. But I buckled down and relied on God to carry me through.

As the season of Advent blew through, I prepared to get us in gear by working with the membership and leadership to create S.M.A.R.T. goals for this year (2020) that would be measurable and specific to give us some direction and keep us focused. Leadership development was underway by my mid-year mark. I was blessed to be able to travel to England to visit the birthplace of the founding fathers of Methodism, John and Charles Wesley. I was inspired and invigorated to carry the legacy. In the meantime, the coronavirus landed in the heart of our conference, causing our trip to be cut short and, for me, my workload to triple. While I saw it as an opportunity to grow and learn, since we were sheltering in place, many were not ready for me to kick it up a notch. And we saw some wonderful success and some small failures, as was to be expected.

I believe the pandemic helped us set the course for what is to come for us for my Year Two with you. And I couldn't be more excited to continue the journey with you. I so appreciate the way you have loved my family and me. The support, care, and prayers have been needed and well received.

And so I leave you with some questions to search yourself, as I ask myself these same questions:

- Am I willing, indeed eager, to see God at work in new ways in my life?
- Am I determined to trust in God's ways, even if I am apprehensive about what they hold in store?
- Will I seek in all things to give thanks to God?

Grace and peace with each of you always.

Sincerely,

Rev. Elizabeth C. Abel

Becoming the Cornerstone of the Community Through Feeding

by Rev. Elizabeth Abel



The Blessing Boxes ministry has helped Cornerstone rise to the occasion of helping our city's most vulnerable. As a faith community we were extended an opportunity to bring food into the community by way of a ministry in Central Pennsylvania called Blessings of Hope.

Blessings of Hope serves as a food bank where large corporations efficiently donate their excess food to the community to help fight hunger. Then through the Hands of Hope program, food is distributed to ministry sites and local businesses for outreach programs to serve their local communities.

On an average, a family box would cost an estimated \$100 at a store, and our local food pantries were paying about \$20-\$27 per box to distribute. Blessings of Hope produces food boxes for as little as \$7. When we include transportation, the total comes to approximately only \$8.

This opportunity was sent to Pastor Liz through three sources in the community: Our very own Merary Cardona, Senator Bob Duff, and first lady Mrs. Lucia Rilling. Believing this to be a great opportunity, we brought several of the local food banks, like Person 2 Person and Open Door, to the table through connections with the Chief of Community Services of the City of Norwalk, Mr. Lamond Daniels, to determine if this was a good deal and what was the best way to serve the larger community in this effort through partnership. With the approval of the Church Council, we became the fiduciary agent and workforce in this great work for our city.

The Fairfield County Community Foundation was the first to make a commitment for this work, followed quickly by The United Methodist Church of Westport and Weston, where Rev. Heather Sinclair is the Pastor. Through the

efforts of the New York Annual Conference Missions Coordinator's taskforce to respond to food insecurities, Norwalk was identified as an area of interest to support. We received more donations from Diamond Hill United Methodist Church, where Rev. Carol Bloom is the Pastor; and Mayor Harry Rilling gave financial and facilities support through the Mayor's Community Fund.

Through the office of Community Services, we have access to municipal facilities and have representation on the Food Providers call weekly. Person 2 Person asked that we first fill the gaps in the community, since they knew there were many residents who did not have access to their pantry because of family dynamics and fear. They partnered with us from the onset to purchase boxes to supplement their pantry, which was seeing a significant increase in services needed from the community.

Other donations came from Grace Baptist Church, Norwalk; the United Methodist Women of Stevens Memorial United Methodist Church, NY; several members of Cornerstone Community Church; and The Alliance for Community Empowerment. The Church Council of Cornerstone also approved financial support from the ministry funds at the Frontier Foundation.

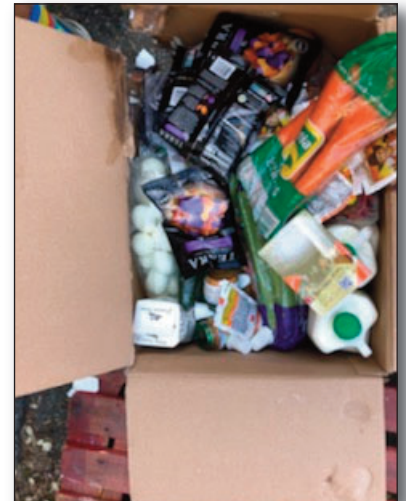
We could not be more grateful for all the support that has already been made for this ministry to continue. We have seen an increase in request of boxes every week we have made a distribution. Because of our relationship with the City and access to the food providers, we have set our ministry up to fill the gaps and support the shortfall that has been a result of the pandemic. Residents have been limited in access to food because of loss of work and being mandated to shelter in place. Single parents with young children at home also have serious problems, because only one family member is allowed to do grocery shopping.

To meet the full needs of the community, we partnered with local agencies both for feeding people and

for resourcing volunteers for delivery and service, to fill the gaps. Common Council Members Darlene Young and Ernie Dumas have connected us to Housing Authority in South Norwalk. We are working with Mutual Aid of Norwalk, Person 2 Person, Open Door, Grace Baptist Church, NAACP, Saving All Vessels Equally (SAVE), the Norwalk Public School System, Unidad Latina en Acción, and some dynamic neighbors who have stepped out on their own to serve those in need during these difficult times.

To date we have had a hand in bringing 95,040 pounds of food into Norwalk and have raised approximately \$39,000 through all our efforts. We do not know how long we will need to do this work or how many more people we are still not serving, but it is our hope to continue to be this resource in our community. The need is there and work is crucial during these times.

We thank Gwen Hong and Pat Bobwich and the countless volunteers who have given their time and energy to support this ministry and help it be successful.



To Request a Blessing Box...

While the majority of boxes will be distributed to local agencies, for distribution to families in need, we don't want to ignore our own immediate church family and any needs we may have. Each box contains 35 to 40 lbs. of food.

Please contact the church office to order your box for pick-up. Call 203-866-3707 or email come2cornerstone@optonline.net. Further details on pick-up date and location will follow, once you order the box.

The expenses for this program are shared by several community organizations. Donations are gratefully accepted. You may write a check to the Cornerstone Community Church and show "Blessing Boxes" on the memo line or donate through Venmo using [@Come2Cornerstone](https://www.venmo.com/@Come2Cornerstone).

CONGRATULATIONS 2020 GRADUATES!!!

Cornerstone has a bumper crop of fantastic graduates to celebrate this year. Congratulations to all and thank you for the wonderful contributions you are making to the world.



Elementary School

Eva Abel
See Confirmation Class for more about Eva.

Alex and Abby Krois are moving this summer to Easton, so both will be attending a new school and meeting a lot of new students.

Abby graduated from 5th grade at Kendall Elementary School on June 9.

Middle School

Joanna Gentle
See Confirmation Class for more about Joanna.



High School



James Curley

James is Grete Nyrop's grandson and Mackenzie's brother (see college graduates). After graduating from Shelton High School, he will attend Central College in Connecticut.



High School (cont'd.)



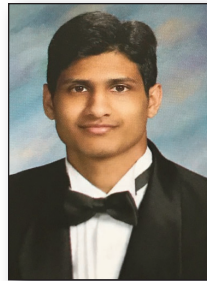
Tristan Hong

Tristan is graduating from Norwalk High School and will be attending the University of Rhode Island in the Fall. He is following in the footsteps of his grandmother Ludi and cousin, Rachel, as he is majoring in nursing. His dream is to work as a nurse in Hawaii.



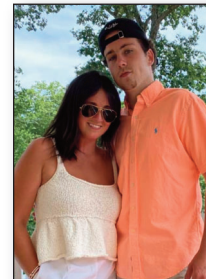
Georgette Williams

Georgette is a graduate of New York Institute of Special Education. She is a National Honors Scholar. This year she was on the swim team and on cheerleading. She will attend SUNY Purchase in the Fall with an interest in Creative Writing and Psychology. Georgette loves to sing, write, paint, and rock climb.



Solomon Wyclif

Solomon graduated from Brien McMahon High School. He will attend Rutgers University-New Brunswick, NJ in the Fall. He plan's to major in Finance.



Mackenzie Curley

Mackenzie is Grete Nyrop's granddaughter (and James' sister.) She graduated with a bachelor's degree from the Health Studies School at Monmouth University in West Long Branch, NJ. She will continue her education at The University of Saint Joseph in the Fall, a three-year master's program, to become a Board-Certified Behavior Analyst.



Amber Fogarty-Bobwich

Amber graduated from Norwalk Community College with an associate's degree in general studies. She plans to pursue a bachelor's degree in interior design. She currently works full time in web fulfillment at Nordstrom, in the new Norwalk mall. She hopes to expand into the visual department, which is the interior design department of Nordstrom.

College and Beyond (cont'd.)



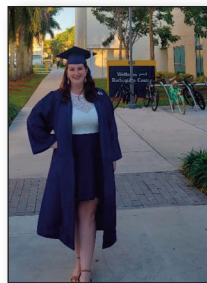
Rebecca Little

Rebecca is Susan Maddox's granddaughter. Rebecca graduated from Furman University in Greenville, SC with a bachelor of arts cum laude degree. She graduated with two majors, English and History, with a minor in Ancient Studies. She was also the recipient of a 3/4 scholarship during her 4 years of the program. Rebecca is now enrolled in an 18-month Master's in Education program (also at Furman), which started this month and will run continuously until next summer. She hopes it will lead to a teaching career, at least initially.



Christina Wyclif

I'm Christina Wyclif and I just graduated from Western CSU. I received my Bachelor's in Business Administration. I am now working on furthering my education. I plan on going to medical school in the spring.



Sara Pernek

I graduated from Florida International University with my Double Major in Therapeutic Recreational Sports Management and Interdisciplinary Study of Science. I am currently enrolled in the master's program for Therapeutic Recreation. I would love to teach courses in Therapeutic Recreation or work in a Children's Hospital. I do love working in nursing homes, but I've always wanted to have a career involving children/teaching. I'm very lucky I was able to go to my school before everything was closed.



That's Joy. That's Love.

By Georgette Williams, Class of 2020

True unfiltered joy is diving into a lake on a hot day
And having my body not tense up.
It's walking down an open space
And not worrying about where my feet will land.
It's talking to someone
And not thinking about anything else.

Bliss is singing at the top of my lungs;
Being breathless and allowing the applause
And excitement of the audience to sweep me away.
Because joy or rather surrounding to complete joy and bliss is a
very hard choice.

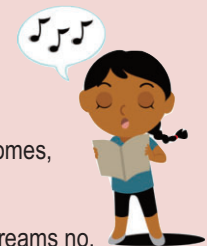
But if I fight it, I miss out on some important thing.
I miss out on singing, writing, painting something beautiful.
I miss out on connecting with beautiful people.
I miss out on getting to know myself.
So now I have something to ask of you all, and I promise to
keep it to myself.

Relax into the freezing water. Sing at the top of your lungs.
Walk and only walk; your feet and cane will be there for you.
Listen and talk; only listen and talk in that moment.

If you're here, be here.
Half-listening is not enough.

Let the good energy in the
room overcome you,
so that you can be swept
off your feet for a little while.
And when it is over, let's not mourn.
Let's be grateful that we were
strong, courageous,
vulnerable enough to let ourselves
feel joy, happiness unfiltered.

Perhaps happiness is not a choice,
it is something you work at and practice.
Joy can catch you in the oddest places
and it is an experience, not an emotion.
Staying positive is all good and well;
but when opportunity to swim the cold lake comes,
do you have the courage to say yes?
That's what counts to me.
To be able to say yes when everyone else screams no.
When your body screams no, but go anyway.
That's joy. That's courage.



Meet Cornerstone's 2020 Confirmands!

Our Confirmation Class this year includes four brilliant students who have completed their work and are ready to join the church. As soon as we are meeting in person again, we will formally observe a confirmation service.



Eva V. Abel

Eva V. Abel has graduated from Naramake Elementary School and will be attending Nathan Hale MS in the Fall. Eva says: "I love to learn, so I miss going to school and am looking forward to it in September, and I hope I can see my friends again, in class. I am excited about a new school and more friends. I have learned a lot about Methodism in Confirmation classes and am happy to be confirmed so I can keep learning about God, Jesus Christ, and the Holy Spirit."

Joanna Gentle

"I recently graduated from West Rocks Middle School, and I will be going to Norwalk High next year, where I hope that I can learn a lot about things that I'm interested in. I hope that I can be involved in high school and do things that impact my community in a positive way. I am very happy to be graduating confirmation class so that I can do more for the church. I hope to be able to make an impact at the church as well, and help it grow in any way that I can."

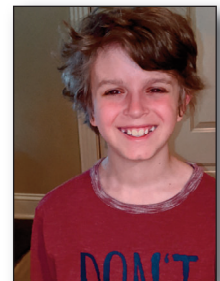


Jacob Hong

"My name is Jacob Hong. I am in 7th grade and go to West Rocks Middle School. I think that it is good to become a member of the church and to confirm my faith. I learned about the history of our church, important people to it, and events like the liturgical calendar."

Daniel Peter Silvester

"I am 13 years old, in the 7th grade, and attend West Rocks Middle School. When I think about finally becoming a member of Cornerstone Community Church, I feel happy, because I am able to seek higher status in the name of the Lord. I am no longer going to be another kid that attends our church. I'm going to be a full-fledged member. This is going to be a pretty big change for me. Ever since four days after my birth, I have been a part of East Ave. UMC. When it merged with the other church to become Cornerstone, it was a huge change for me. Being a member of the church might be pretty cool so I can possibly express my ideas more, and maybe get to speak my thoughts. I'll probably have to donate every week as well, but I won't be able to donate a lot, since I don't have a current allowance. I might have to stay for more parts of church, but I think that will be OK, since some things in it are actually pretty interesting. And hey, once I become a member, maybe more people will respect my talents more. In conclusion, I am proud to become a member of Cornerstone. I am happy that I am now officially part of it."



Please pray for: Amber Fogarty-Bobwich, Grete Nyrop, Suki John, Scott Trowbridge, Beverly Sweeney, Georgette Williams, Chris Radu's mother Shirley Lewis, Margaret and Patrick Doyle on loss of their daughter Karen – Arlene Trowbridge's niece, Frank and Evet Roberts, Owen Mehle's brother Don, Cheryl Mehle's cousin Vicki, Jean Strong's nephew Michael, and neighbor Nick, Fred Anderson, Susan Maddox, Kon Swee Chen, Ludi Gabagat's sister Corazon Capilitan, Dora White, Lillian Webb, Lorie Kristof, Jim Wilson.

REOPENING CORNERSTONE COMMUNITY CHURCH

The committee to organize the reopening of our church building met on June 17. The various participating committees, such as Communication, Education, Finance, Membership, Trustees, and Worship, will be meeting individually and drawing up plans relating to their areas of responsibility. The group will reconvene in July. We are carefully adhering to the guidelines put forth by the Conference, which were developed in coordination with the rules published by the states of New York and Connecticut for reopening.

We are not rushing into reopening because we want to take the utmost care for the safety of all who will use the building, because the preparation is extremely detailed and arduous, because of the age demographic of our congregation, because many people have said they do not feel comfortable coming back soon in any case, and because the rules are very restrictive of the number of people who can be present and of the activities permitted. For example, seating must be 6.0 feet apart. There can be no singing except by one or two soloists, no hymnals, no bulletins, no communion except a pre-packaged item, no food and fellowship before and after.

We will let you know as the situation develops.

Vote in the August 11 Primary!

Fill out your application for absentee ballot. Every registered voter in Connecticut is eligible. If you're not registered, register now. "Due to the ongoing COVID-19 pandemic, Governor Ned Lamont has signed an executive order allowing all registered voters in Connecticut to vote absentee in the August 11th primary elections. Secretary of the State Denise Merrill has announced that she intends to mail every registered voter in the state an application that they will need to fill out and return to obtain an absentee ballot. That application, which will be sent via U.S. Postal Service, will include a postage paid return envelope.

(From Sen. Chris Murphy)"

WESLEY CLASS GROUP MEETINGS

The leaders of the Wesley small groups met with the Pastor on June 20. We will be bringing our small group meetings together again, starting in July. We will also be undertaking conversations and studies for dismantling racism, in accordance with the Bishops' recommendations. You will be hearing from your group leader and learning more as plans progress.

4 WAYS TO GIVE TO CORNERSTONE:

By Mail:

**Cornerstone Community Church
Attention: Gwen Hong
718 West Avenue
Norwalk, CT 06850**

**EFT (Electronic Funds Transfer):
Download the form here**

**Venmo: Search for
@Come2Cornerstone**

**Online: Add Cornerstone as a
payee through your online banking**

Pastoral Letter from the NEJ College of Bishops

Dear Friends & Colleagues,

The bishops of the Northeastern Jurisdiction have been in deep conversation, prayer, and mutual strategy in recent days regarding the deep and intentional ways that each of us can and should be responding to the depth of systemic racism that has been revealed in the murder of George Floyd.

Below is our statement to the people and churches of the Northeastern Jurisdiction.

*Thomas J. Bickerton
Resident Bishop*

The Journey Continues . . .

We, the College of Bishops of the Northeastern Jurisdiction of the United Methodist Church, prayerfully stand with our pastors, members and churches during the aftermath of the recent deaths of unarmed African American people at the hands of law enforcement officers and citizens across our nation. We decry the murders of Ahmaud Arbery, Breonna Taylor, George Floyd and countless others. The racist system and structures that permeate every facet of life in the United States including health care, employment, education, wealth, the criminal justice system and housing infects our churches as well. In the face of these injustices we often embody the words of the prophet Jeremiah by treating “the wound of God’s people carelessly, saying ‘peace, peace’ when there is no peace” because there is no justice. (Jeremiah 6:14)

The devastating effects of racism are many and every time we forget that each person is made in the image of God, we are all harmed. We have witnessed the murder of African Americans numerous times in the past in this country and it seems when the protests pass, we go back to our old ways and progress gained becomes lost. Ideas and systems that support white supremacy continue unchecked in our churches, communities and national politics. Human suffering among people of color that we

have witnessed recently, as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic, is yet another reminder of the inequities in our racist society that have continued because we have been slow to work for justice.

In the long history of the people called Methodists, when we have not been our best selves, we created the Central Jurisdiction (a segregated conference of African American Methodists). When we have been our best selves, we have labored for abolition, voting rights, civil rights and most recently we have been

working to end mass incarceration.

The 2016 Northeastern Jurisdiction Conference entered into the “Call to Action” to address our complicity in perpetuating a culture of racism and white privilege in our church. We initiated many proactive steps to address the systemic racism in our jurisdiction. However, it has fallen short and needs to continue with even more urgency and passion.

The NEJ College of Bishops, a multi ethnic group, hold our jurisdiction in prayer during this challenging time. We are also marching with you on the streets of our cities, naming the names, calling out our public leaders for advocating violence against peaceful protestors, and mobilizing our churches for action and response. It is our prayer that this time of crisis will become an opportunity for transformation and that the church can be a moral light that leads to peace with justice. Together we can accomplish this through the power of the Holy Spirit.



The white bishops of the NEJ, in consultation with the bishops of color, declare the following:

■ **We pledge** to take personal responsibility to challenge theologies and practices that promote or accommodate structural and systemic racism and replace it with systems of justice and equality. We call upon our baptismal vows to remind us to “renounce the spiritual forces of wickedness, to reject the evil powers of the world and repent of our sin.”

■ **We pledge** to repent of our personal racism, our failure to hear the cries of our brothers and sisters, our silence in the face of racial injustice, our valuing of law and order, possessions and power more than lives, and our complicity with police violence. We will follow our statement on “Criminal Justice” as found in our Social Principles, which calls for an overhaul of our justice system.

■ **We pledge** to be accountable to our sisters and brothers of color, engaging with them in a process of reconciliation for our churches, and to bring change to our denomination’s system and structure.

■ **We pledge** to bring our prophetic voices to the public arena, lead our congregations to confront our racism, call for the firing of racist law enforcement officers, transform our criminal justice system, and create a denomination that exemplifies equality for all.

■ **We confess** the racism and white privilege that is part of our denominational heritage and our organizational systems.

■ **We pledge** to further educate ourselves, our leaders and members in order to dismantle those systems for the sake of all God’s children.

■ **We encourage** each Annual Conference to engage in a four-week Bible Study sometime in the fall so together we may discern how to equip clergy and laity to address the evil of racism from a faith perspective.

References:

A part of this pastoral letter was adapted from a recent statement by “Faith in Action” a national community-organizing network, that gives people of faith the tools needed to fight for justice and work toward a more equitable society
(faithinaction.org)

“The Baptismal Covenant” - *Book of Hymns*, page 34

“Call to Action” - www.nejumc.org/resources.html
“Humanizing Criminal Justice” #5031, *2016 Book of Resolutions*, page 490

COVID-19

Information and Resources

Norwalk City Hall

Coronavirus Page

<https://bit.ly/3fdpe9v>

State of Connecticut

Coronavirus Page

<https://portal.ct.gov/Coronavirus>

Norwalk Library Homepage

Closed but doing curbside service

<https://www.norwalkpl.org/>

Norwalk Hospital

Coronavirus Page

<https://bit.ly/2VZ17E0>

Centers for Disease

Control and Prevention (CDC) Coronavirus Page

<https://bit.ly/2O34GEK>



BIOGRAPHY || PAMELA TOASON

On July 6, we welcome our new Office Administrator, Pamela Toason. Pamela has tremendous experience managing church offices. We're excited to have her join the Cornerstone family. Here is her back story.

WORK EXPERIENCE

After serving as the executive assistant for the Area Director of Cablevision for 17 years, she has been able to tailor her gifts and talents to meet the needs of various local churches. Some of her accomplishments include:

Office Manager. God's Bridging the Gap Ministries, Norwalk, CT. Assisted the Pastor in starting the ministry.

Office Administrator. First Congregational Church, Darien, CT. Assisted the Pastor with the smooth transition of new office management, updated social media sites, handled all public relations.

Secretary/Social Media Manager. St. James Missionary Baptist Church, Norwalk, CT. Pastor, created church branding, created and managed website, promotional flyers and video promotions, revamped church bulletins.

Administrative Assistant. Miracle Temple COGIC/UCC, Norwalk, CT. Assisted the Pastor in maintaining building calendars and ensuring the office was running smoothly. Created posters and banners for events.

EDUCATION

Pam graduated from the College of Westchester, White Plains, NY with an Associate's Degree in Administrative Secretarial Studies.

Pam's life is a testimony of Proverbs 18:16 "A man's gift makes room for him."

NEW OFFICE HOURS:

- Monday: 10 a.m. to 1 p.m.
- Tuesday: 10 a.m. to 1 p.m.
- Wednesday: 1:30 p.m. to 4:30 p.m.
- Thursday: 10 a.m. to 1 p.m.
- Friday: 1:30 p.m. to 4:30 p.m.

**STOP & SHOP
AND SHOPRITE
GIFT CARDS
CAN NOW BE
PURCHASED AT
THE CHURCH
OFFICE.**

Nina Simone's

Protest Song

by Nancy Kenworthy

In 1963, Medgar Evers was murdered in Mississippi after attending an NAACP meeting. Later that year, four young girls were murdered by white supremacists who blew up the 16th Street Baptist Church in Birmingham, Alabama. Nina Simone felt that it had blown up in her face. She was so furious, she felt immobilized, but in about an hour, she wrote one of the most famous protest songs, "Mississippi goddam." She said that she didn't like protest songs because they were too bland and polite, they didn't do justice to the subject. Her song was not like that. It is full of outrage and bitterness and truth. The recording was banned in several Southern states, on the pretense that the language of the title was inappropriate. In 2019, the Library of Congress chose it for preservation in the National Recording Registry.



She sings:

"Lord have mercy on this land of mine

...

I don't belong here

I don't belong there

I've even stopped believing in prayer.

...

I've been there, so I know

They keep on saying 'Go slow!'

But that's just the trouble

'do it slow'

...

Yes, you lied to me all these years

...

You keep on saying 'Go slow!'

So here we are 57 years later. And 400 years before that. How slow is slow enough?

To read the interesting story of the song, go to <https://bit.ly/38zBnD6>

To see the full lyrics, go to: <https://bit.ly/3fah2XJ>

Access the Upper Room Online!

YouTube: <https://bit.ly/3iCgLyO>

Listen By Phone (free during the pandemic):

<https://bit.ly/203E1YD>

Read the blog: <https://bit.ly/3fci5WU>

Blessing Box Thank You's by Rev. Liz Abel

Indira Yanez and Claudia Rosas are two neighbors who are feeding those who are food insecure. They have organized their friends and neighbors to meet the needs of those in their community. They are serving close to 240 persons from Stamford - Bridgeport on their own. They are friends of Merary Cardona. The letter below is from them.

This morning when I parked at Smith street, I parked at Animal Control and Officer Duddie and I spoke and when we had a few boxes left over I asked if he needed or knew someone who could use the food. Hesitant, he took one box after thinking he might know someone. Here is a quick message from him. When he called me he was choked up and was surprised by this small act of kindness. Thank you.

Cornerstone Community Church
and Pastor Elizabeth,

Thanks for making a difference in our community. On behalf of my friends and family I wanted to say thank you for supporting this emergency volunteer effort and for supporting economically disadvantaged families in Norwalk.

Your donation on May 20/2020 allowed us to deliver food and hope to the community in need and we witnessed first hand how their faces changed from reflecting despair to reflecting gratitude. These families are struggling, have no jobs, are dealing with COVID-19, are not able to receive State assistance. Some are single parents whose children are not going to school and mostly, they are people who are afraid to ask for help. Receiving a box full of food without filling information on a paper, without showing their ID or passport is giving these families hope that they will see a better future.

Cornerstone and Pastor Elizabeth, thank you for working for our community. Thank you for your unconditional donation. Thanks for trusting our group of friends who decided to work for the community during this pandemic.

God bless you all and God bless all donors that made this miracle possible.

Indira Yanez

Pastor Liz,

I want to take a couple minutes to thank you for the food donation. I called my friend and told her that I have a package for her, and her Mom who is elderly and is not in the best in health. My friend Cindy came down, and I showed her the box. Cindy opened the box and she started to cry. I didn't expect Cindy to start crying, but I felt a feeling from my heart that I haven't felt in a while, and I believe it was being able to help someone in need. Please thank everyone for me, who helped with this food drive. To me they are all angels. I always say that no child or adult should ever go hungry.

Thank you once again,

Sincerely,
MACO Richard Duddie
Norwalk Animal Control Division

A graphic with the words "thank you!" in a colorful, playful font. The letters are in various colors like yellow, green, blue, and red, with a white outline. The exclamation point is also colorful.

**Stay connected with your faith
and with Cornerstone through:**

- come2cornerstone.org
- facebook.com/come2cornerstone
- **Twitter: @come2ccc**
- **Instagram: come2cornerstone**

JULY/AUGUST 2020

SUNDAY	MONDAY	TUESDAY	WEDNESDAY	THURSDAY	FRIDAY	SATURDAY
12 JULY 10:00a Cornerstone Worship on Zoom 11:00a Cornerstone Worship on Zoom en Español 1:00p Corporate Prayer	13 1:00p Corporate Prayer	14 1:00p Corporate Prayer 7:00p Finance Committee Mtg. on Zoom Birthday: Cheryl Mehle	15 12:00p Mid-Week Prayer on Zoom 6:00p Bible study on Zoom	16 1:00p Corporate Prayer	17 1:00p Corporate Prayer	18 12:00p Disciple Bible Study on Zoom 1:00p Corporate Prayer
19 10:00a Cornerstone Worship on Zoom 11:00a Cornerstone Worship on Zoom en Español 1:00p Corporate Prayer	20 1:00p Corporate Prayer	21 1:00p Corporate Prayer	22 12:00p Mid-Week Prayer on Zoom 6:00p Bible study on Zoom	23 1:00p Corporate Prayer	24 1:00p Corporate Prayer	25 12:00p Disciple Bible Study on Zoom
26 10:00a Cornerstone Worship on Zoom 11:00a Cornerstone Worship on Zoom en Español 1:00p Corporate Prayer	27 1:00p Corporate Prayer 7:00p Church Council Mtg. on Zoom	28 1:00p Corporate Prayer	29 12:00p Mid-Week Prayer on Zoom 6:00p Bible study on Zoom	30 1:00p Corporate Prayer Birthdays: Patti Yarnold Rhonda Mitchell	31 1:00p Corporate Prayer	1 AUGUST 12:00p Disciple Bible Study on Zoom 1:00p John Wesley Class Leaders mtg. on Zoom 1:00p Corporate Prayer
2 10:00a Cornerstone Worship on Zoom 11:00a Cornerstone Worship on Zoom en Español 1:00p Corporate Prayer	3 1:00p Corporate Prayer 7:00p Trustees Mtg. on Zoom Birthday: Joyce Kenworthy	4 1:00p Corporate Prayer	5 12:00p Mid-Week Prayer on Zoom 6:00p Bible study on Zoom PASTOR LIZ ABEL IS ON VACATION AUGUST 5TH-24TH Birthday: Pastor Liz Abel	6 1:00p Corporate Prayer	7 1:00p Corporate Prayer	8 12:00p Disciple Bible Study on Zoom 1:00p Corporate Prayer Birthdays: Todd Faus Debbie Dayton
9 10:00a Cornerstone Worship on Zoom 11:00a Cornerstone Worship on Zoom en Español 1:00p Corporate Prayer Birthday: Eva Abel	10 1:00p Corporate Prayer	11 1:00p Corporate Prayer Birthday: Merary Cardona	12 12:00p Mid-Week Prayer on Zoom 6:00p Bible study on Zoom Birthday: Annie Gibson	13 1:00p Corporate Prayer	14 1:00p Corporate Prayer	15 12:00p Disciple Bible Study on Zoom 1:00p Corporate Prayer



718 West Ave.
Norwalk, CT 06850



Betty Kestenbaum

Bertha (Betty) Kestenbaum, 94, passed peacefully on April 9, 2020. Betty was born in Norwalk on August 22, 1925 to Lillian and Robert Kortge.

She was the wife of the late Thomas Kestenbaum. She is survived by her daughters Eileen Ciarletto and husband of Fairfield and Linda Prastine and husband of Norwalk.

During World War II, she was proud to be in the Army Nurse Cadet Corp. Betty worked for many years for Dr. Robert Northrop in Norwalk. She also worked for many years for Pitney Bowes until her retirement.

She was an active member of Norwalk United Methodist Church and Cornerstone United Methodist Church. She was the matriarch of her family and will live on as an inspiration to those she loved.

There will be a memorial service at a later date. Donations can be made to Cornerstone Community Church in Norwalk or The Marvin in Norwalk. To leave the family an online condolence, please go to www.magnerfuneralhome.com.

Jaqueline M. Lubell

Jackie Lubell, a longtime active member of First UMC, East Avenue UMC and Cornerstone Community Church, passed away on March 15, 2020, after a long illness. She is survived by her daughter Rachel. A memorial service at the church will take place at a later date.

Alice Buono

Alice Buono, a long-time member of East Avenue UMC and Cornerstone, passed away quickly and peacefully at Cassena Care of Norwalk on April 7th at the age of 89. She was devoted to Christ and read her Bible faithfully which sustained her when she was no longer able to go to church. No services will be held and she is interred at St John's Cemetery.