

racism among some of the members. I was also very aware that in each setting there were people who proclaimed a profound love for God and a love for their neighbor. The goal of my preaching was to lovingly challenge the congregation to fully embrace who they are in Christ and to radically demonstrate their faith by the way they welcome, treat, speak to, and serve those who are different. I invited the congregations to reflect on the privilege of their whiteness and affluence and the ways it can help make lives better and how it causes harm. I would preach about the stereotyping assumptions that are often made about others and the importance of knowing others' stories. I was intentional in weaving stories, liturgy, and music from the Black Experience to help connect the great divide between culture and experience.

If communities are to fully discover God's all-encompassing love and fully embody it through acts of love and justice, God's truth must be proclaimed. The preaching

needs to be loving and provoking, transforming, and prophetic. We should not deny people the truth, even though they can't always handle the truth. When we preach God's truth, the Spirit of God transforms hearts. Thomas G. Long speaks to preaching this way, and he writes in *Preaching from Memory to Hope*, "This is not just reflective wisdom, not even just good oratory. This is a language summoned and swept into the event of God's speaking and acting."

While Black History Month becomes an opportunity to celebrate African-American Heritage, it risks becoming nothing more than tokenism if the stories and struggles of people of this heritage are not part of the common story. Using stories, hymns, quotes, and so on from the Black Experience throughout the year gives the congregation a fuller appreciation for a people with a rich heritage and helps to break down racial barriers.

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*"It is time for parents to teach young people early on that in diversity there is beauty and there is strength. We all should know that diversity makes for a rich tapestry, and we must understand that all the threads of that tapestry are equal in value no matter their color." -Maya Angelou*

#### Quiz answer key:

1.) B 2.) B 3.) C 4.) A 5.) A 6.) D 7.) B 8.) D 9.) B 10.) D

*The Bridge* is a Conference Communications Ministry tool that delivers to local churches news and stories of ministry from around the Upper New York Conference and the world. For more news and stories visit:  
[www.unyumc.org](http://www.unyumc.org)



*"While Black History Month becomes an opportunity to celebrate African-American Heritage, it risks becoming nothing more than tokenism if the stories and struggles of people of this heritage are not part of the common story."*

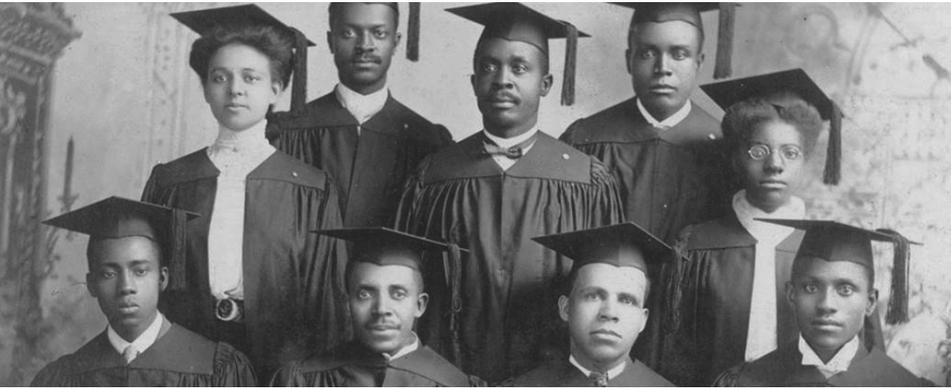
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## What's inside

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- 3 | Truth by Heart

 *The Upper New York Conference's vision is to live the gospel of Jesus Christ and to be God's love with our neighbors in all places.*

# Celebrating Black History Month



Too often, the accomplishments of African Americans have not received adequate notice in U.S. history books and classrooms. That is why historian Carter Woodson first proposed a week-long focus on Black history in 1926. The first U.S. celebration of Black History Month happened decades later.

Today, this month-long annual celebration (every February) is a time for recognizing the achievements and central role in U.S. history (and Church history) of Black Americans.

## Quiz

**1. Historian Carter G. Woodson chose February as the month to honor Black history because:**

- A.) Woodson was born in February.
- B.) Abraham Lincoln and Frederick Douglass were born in February.
- C.) February was the shortest month.
- D.) All of the above.

2 The Bridge

**2. True or False: Black History Month is only celebrated in the United States.**

- A.) True
- B.) False

**3.) The first Black History Month took place when?**

- A.) 1945
- B.) 1957
- C.) 1970
- D.) 2000

**4. This former slave became a famous abolitionist and a Methodist preacher.**

- A.) Sojourner Truth
- B.) Harriet Tubman
- C.) Harriet Beecher Stowe
- D.) David Walker

**5. Which United Methodist church is named after one of the “founding fathers of Gospel music?”**

- A.) Tindley Temple
- B.) Jones Memorial UMC

- C.) Barratt’s Chapel
- D.) Sealy Hubbard UMC

**6. This former school, once a haven from racial prejudice, is now an UMCOR relief center:**

- A.) Scarritt Bennett Center, Nashville, TN
- B.) Southern Methodist University, Dallas, TX
- C.) Adrian College, Adrian, MI
- D.) Sager-Brown Depot, Baldwin, LA

**7.) After the U.S. Civil War, this trailblazing African-American woman went to college, owned a business, and became a United Methodist missionary.**

- A.) Susanna Wesley
- B.) Susan Angeline Collins
- C.) Billie Holiday
- D.) Bishop Sharma Lewis

**8.) Mother African Zoar UMC in Philadelphia, PA housed:**

- A.) The first well-baby clinic for African-Americans
- B.) A stop on the Underground Railroad
- C.) A school
- D.) All of the above

**9.) Who was the first African American Bishop in the UMC?**

- A.) Roy G. Biv
- B.) Roy C. Nichols
- C.) Roy Rogers
- D.) Roy Brown

**10.) Who was the only other woman besides Coretta Scott King who was on the platform for MLK’s “I Have a Dream” speech in 1963?**

- A.) Jacquelin Kennedy
- B.) Lena Home
- C.) Mahalia Jackson
- D.) Dorothy Height

# Truth by Heart

By The Rev. Dr. Tracy S. Malone, Bishop of the East Ohio Conference



Rev. Dr. Malone

## Editor’s Note:

*This article was written in 2014 when Bishop Malone was District Superintendent of the Chicago Southern District*

*of the Northern Illinois Conference. She urges local churches to celebrate Blacks not only in Black History Month but throughout the whole year.*

I am equally convinced that most sincere Christians want to know and experience God’s truth and love and desire to embody it. This foundational belief has shaped my preaching for over 20 years. It provides a social-gospel lens through which I interpret Scripture and a theological framework for preaching lovingly bold, prophetic sermons. It helps to create a message that provokes and invites the listeners to examine their faith and lives considering God’s truth, justice, and love. This approach has been particularly useful as I’ve served as pastor in predominantly white suburban churches—in two of which, I was the first African American and female senior pastor.

While pastoring in those settings, I was always aware of how my presence and positional leadership evoked unspoken, unacknowledged, and unresolved

*Continued on page 4*