

The Weekly Challenger

KEEPING YOU CONNECTED TO YOUR COMMUNITY

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50¢

IN THIS WEEK



PAGE 4
COMMUNITY NEWS
Open letter



PAGE 6
COMMUNITY NEWS
Green Book of Tampa Bay



PAGE 7
COMMUNITY NEWS
I can't breathe

INDEX

COMMUNITY NEWS
PAGES 2 - 7,
12 - 14

HURRICANE PREPAREDNESS
PAGES 8 - 9

CHURCH NEWS
PAGES 10 - 11



Before inviting congregants back, faith leaders should set up a reopening and recovery team at least six to eight weeks before reopening. The team should consist of leaders and lay-leaders within the congregation.

Reopening the doors of the church

BY FRANK DROUZAS
Staff Writer

ST. PETERSBURG — As communities turn to places of worship for both spiritual counsel and practical guidance during the COVID-19 pandemic, it's integral, now more than ever, for churches and other faith organizations to feel equipped to lead through the crisis. Everyone is facing some type of struggle, be it navigating trials due to COVID-19, overcoming fear of the unknown, or striving to nourish parishioners while maintaining social distance.

To provide an applicable roadmap on how to deal with the crisis, faith leaders supported by the Foundation for a Healthy St. Petersburg and the

Florida Department of Health, Pinellas County, prepared a series of online seminars to help prepare pastors and spiritual leaders to best serve during this tumultuous season.

Rev. Rebecca Burrow, CEO of Building Reconciliation Inclusion Diversity and Gender Equity, LLC, St. John Primitive Baptist Church and Andrea Peaten, community immunizations liaison at the Florida Department of Health Pinellas, shared their perspective and guidelines for reopening places of faith, strategies for mitigating Coronavirus within congregations and resources for developing a disaster preparedness plan.

Speaking to community faith leaders in a webinar, Bur-

row asked them to consider the average age of their congregations and their race and percentage of members with existing health conditions as a guiding factor in reopening. Data and financial resources for their recovery should also be considered.

"Because we know that people of color have been disproportionately affected by COVID-19, it's important that you keep these things in mind when you are considering reopening the doors to the church," Burrow said.

She urged leaders to consider the financial and psychological impact the virus has already had on their parishioners, and what resources

See **CHURCH**, page 13

Respect, accountability and integrity



Goliath J. Davis

BY GOLIATH J. DAVIS, III, PH.D.
Contributor

ST. PETERSBURG — As many of you know, I am a product of Methodist Town, having been delivered into this world by midwife Roxanna Donaldson. I had the distinction of policing for an agency I was policed by and ultimately served as its police chief. I served with a vast majority of honorable, compassionate, professional men and women, sworn and civilian.

I was fortunate enough to know the forerunners of community policing in St. Petersburg, the Courageous Twelve. They were a point of reference for assessing professional, compassionate policing and, along with other experiences with the police while growing up, helped me shape my approach to policing and the administration of police agencies.

When I assumed the office of police chief in 1997, I adopted three tenets as my underlying guiding principles: respect, accountability and integrity.

We chose to recruit employees with high integrity and a moral compass that inspired them to respect the communities they served, and in the event they fell short, they were held accountable. There were no exceptions, and all knew corrective action was a certainty.

Once again, we find ourselves confronting a very familiar and frequent problem in America: an African-American male is killed by a rogue police officer resulting in lawful, peaceful protests and sporadic looting and burning.

Some choose to focus on the looting and burning, which is deplorable and may negate the importance of the real issue — law enforcement managers need to ensure their policies and procedures clearly prohibit chokeholds and other use of force policies that are not sufficiently restrictive.

Those who refuse to acknowledge the real problems in America regarding race maintain a laser focus on the looters. They refuse to deal with police malpractice and justify police transgressions as necessary inconveniences to maintain "law and order."

Few, if any, are willing to acknowledge the truth. Control the police, hold them accountable for

See **INSULT**, page 7

A history of policing in America

A history of policing in America and the steps to reform police departments in the aftermath of George Floyd's murder

BY GWENDOLYN REESE
Columnist

Modern policing in America has roots that go back centuries. It is a confluence of the watch groups in the northern colonies and the slave patrols in the southern colonies.

The watch groups in the north were modeled after the system used in England in which volunteers from the community were charged primarily with the warning of such dangers as fire, crime, maintaining order and controlling enslaved and Native people.

There were day and night watch groups. The first night watch was formed in Boston in 1636, followed by New York in



1658 and Philadelphia in 1700. Philadelphia formed the first day watch in 1833, and New York followed in 1844.

In the southern colonies, slave patrols were established to capture and punish enslaved people who ran away. This was a way of maintaining the economic order in those colonies. The slave patrols of the south

are the first version of police organizations as we know them today.

South Carolina formed the first patrol in 1704, ordering its militia to punish any enslaved person caught away from home without a pass. In 1837, the city of Charleston, N.C.,

See **POLICING**, page 2

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In Florida, the spread of the virus is particularly concerning in the black/African-American community; where the prevalence of diabetes, obesity and hypertension contribute to the higher mortality rate.

“Just as prevention is the key to lower cancer risk, the same holds true for lowering the risk of COVID-19— understanding how to prevent it. We have to ensure these populations are getting the necessary information to help lower their risk of the virus.”

-Dr. B. Lee Green, Vice President, Diversity, Public Relations & Strategic Communications at Moffitt

To learn more about how Moffitt has adapted to the pandemic to keep everyone safe, call 1-888-456-2839 or visit Moffitt.org/HereForYou.



A history of policing in America

POLICING, from front page

had a slave patrol larger than any northern watch group.

Both northern and southern states and Congress enacted laws to criminalize, abuse and control enslaved and Native people. Congress passed the Fugitive Slave Acts in 1793 and 1850 — these laws guaranteed slaveholders the right to recover their enslaved runaways.

The 1793 law was considered weak because some states passed regulations to circumvent the law, and other states actively defied the law. The Fugitive Slave Act of 1850 strengthened the laws regarding runaways by penalizing officials who did not arrest runaways, levying fines and imprisonment against anyone aiding runaways by providing food or shelter, eliminating jury trials for runaways or allowing them to speak on their own behalf.

Additionally, bonuses were often given to those who captured and returned runaways. The law passed in 1850 was nicknamed the “Bloodhound Bill” by many abolitionists because of the use of dogs in the pursuit of runaways.

Most law enforcement, particularly in the south, were white patrolers watching, catching, beating, enforcing curfews, controlling movement and behavior, preventing organized resistance, and terrorizing enslaved people. Although the patrols supposedly ended with the abolishment of slavery, it did not.

We can see parallels between the patrols and the “illegal” tactics of the vigilantes during Reconstruction and the white supremacist, white nationalist and neo-Nazi groups of today. We can also see parallels between the roles and responsibilities of the legal patrols and watch groups of that time with the legal roles and responsibilities of law enforcement today.

Though it may look quite different today, many of the modern law enforcement practices were implemented in colonial America. As it was during slavery, and still is today, the primary role of law enforcement is to watch, catch, beat, enforce curfews, control movement and behavior, prevent organized resistance and terrorize black and brown people.

There have been no significant reforms to law enforcement or the criminal justice system since President Abraham Lincoln issued the Emancipation Proclamation on January 1, 1863.

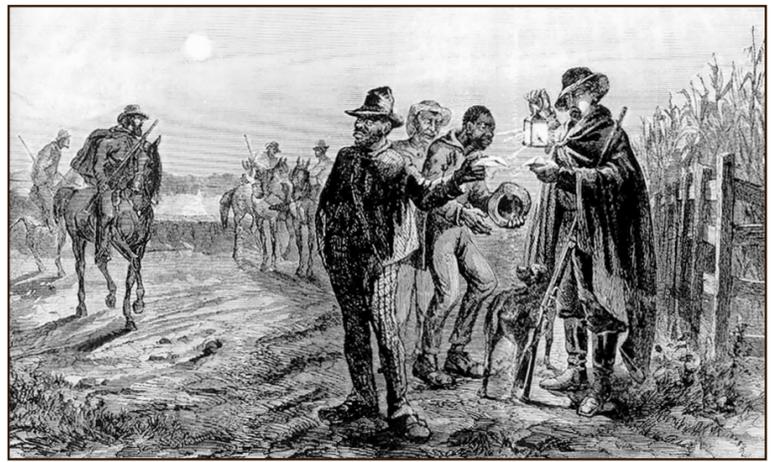
On June 8, 2020, House and Senate Democrats unveiled the Justice in Policing Act of 2020, which is intended to bring about major reforms to police departments throughout the country. The House may take up the bill when it reconvenes on June 30, or it may return sooner to expedite the process.

The bill addresses the excessive requirements for pursuing penalties against police misconduct and proposes reforms to qualified immunity for po-

lice officers. Qualified immunity was developed in recent decades by The Supreme Court. It shields police officers and other government officials from lawsuits regarding their conduct, or should I say, misconduct. The Supreme Court is currently considering reexamining the qualified immunity doctrine.

The Justice in Policing Act of 2020 also:

- Creates a National Police Misconduct Registry to track police misconduct and to improve police practices by mandating training on racial bias and the duty to intervene.
 - Limits the transfer of military-grade weapons to state and local law enforcement agencies and requires the use of body cameras.
 - Empowers attorney generals and the Justice Department to play a much larger role in its oversight of police agencies, allows them to independently investigate police misconduct and excessive use of force, and gives them greater powers to investigate and track cases.
 - Makes federal funding for state and local police agencies conditional upon their training and adoption of policies to combat racial bias and profiling.
 - Bans “no-knock” warrants in drug-related cases and the use of chokeholds.
- For more information, visit www.themarshallproject.org.



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Email: editor@theweeklychallenger.com
www.theweeklychallenger.com

Ethel L. Johnson
CEO/Publisher Emerita

Lyn Johnson
Publisher/General Manager

Advertising
Advertising Dept. 727-896-2922
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Lorrie Bellinger
Art Director

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All news items, advertising copy and related art submitted for publication on Thursday must be received no later than 4 p.m. Monday.

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believes that America can best lead the world from racial antagonism when it accords to every man, regardless of race, creed or color, his human and legal rights. Hating no man, fearing no man... the Black Press strives to help every man in the firm belief that all men are hurt as long as anyone is held back.



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Displaced workers can get fast training at SPC

PINELLAS COUNTY — When COVID-19 forced the closure of shops, restaurants, hotels, bars, and entertainment venues, many people found themselves without jobs. Though job loss is regrettable, St. Petersburg College's Dean of Workforce Development Michael Ramsey says the down time is a great time to earn some new credentials.

burg College's Dean of Workforce Development Michael Ramsey says the down time is a great time to earn some new credentials.

"Now is a great time for unemployed workers to earn new credentials,"

Ramsey said. "We definitely want to do our part to help the community as they look to rebound."

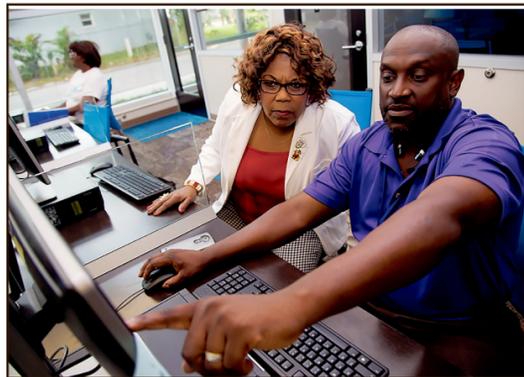
In response, the college has launched a new tool for people who are looking to earn credentials that will land them a job in a short amount of time — as little as 16 weeks, in some cases. The Get Job Ready at SPC webpage offers plenty of helpful information that will get people on the path to a new career.

The webpage offers a list of in-demand occupations and training programs, some of which can be completed online. All of the programs will prepare students for work in fields such as technology, health

and business, including the following:

- Supply Chain Management
- Accounting Technology Operations
- Computer Aided Design and Drafting
- Medical Coding
- Computer Programming Specialist
- Public Safety Telecommunication
- Digital Media/Multimedia
- Cybersecurity

Visitors to the Get Job Ready at SPC page can also find information about SPC, tuition and term dates. Using current labor market data, the page offers a list of job titles, employment and salary information, along



with the necessary short-term training and certificates needed to land those jobs. They can even apply and register for classes directly from the site.

Ramsey also notes that there are many financial aid opportunities right now, both through the college or the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity

Act. But the first step is the Job Ready page.

"There is a ton of information, resources and skill development opportunities for anyone looking to upskill or reskill," Ramsey said.

For more information, visit now.spc.edu/jobready.



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PCS Food and Nutrition Team

PINELLAS COUNTY — The PCS Food and Nutrition Team will be distributing free meals at our schools for Pinellas County Schools students ages 18 and younger. Lunch and breakfast will be packed together. Child/Teen must be present to receive meals. Meals will be served as 'Drive-Thru' at the Car/Bus circle and for 'Walkers' near the main entrance of school. The last day of distribution will be Aug. 5.

We are asking parents to pop open their trunks at the sites for safe food delivery. Families who walk to the site can bring a bag or large box.

Meal Package Distribution
Meals (BREAKFAST AND LUNCH) for six days



are available every Wednesday from 8-11 a.m. at select school locations:

Azalea Middle, Bay Point Elementary, *Bayside High, *Clearwater High, Clearwater Intermediate, Dunedin Middle, Fairmont Park Elementary, Garrison Jones Elementary, Gulfport Elementary, John Hopkins Middle, Kings Highway Elementary, Largo Middle, *Lynch Elementary, McMullen Booth Elementary, New Heights Elementary,

North Shore Elementary, Oak Grove Middle, Plumb Elementary, Rawlings Elementary, *Ridgecrest Elementary, Southern Oak Elementary, Tarpon Springs Elementary

* NEW SCHOOL LOCATION

NOTE: Anona Elementary, Eisenhower Elementary, High Point Elementary and Sawgrass Lake Elementary are closed for the Summer for repairs and maintenance.

Harry Lee, Willie Mae and Fannie Lou: 'Lest we forget'

BY GOLIATH J. DAVIS, III, PH.D.
Contributor

ST. PETERSBURG — I am asked why I am so passionate about education. The answer is a simple one. As a product of segregation, I so vividly recall mama, grandma, granddaddy, community activists, and educators sounding the alarm: "Education is the way up and out."

I heard, and I complied. When I joined the St. Petersburg Police Department, I followed the arrest data, and it confirmed what I already knew regarding the disproportionate arrest rates for African Americans, specifically males.

Through the Community Alliance (a multiracial group to address discrimination) and the Community Police Council, I began to work with school superintendents on educational equity issues. I emphasized a need to change the nature of the relationship between law enforcement and education.

My position then and now is that every time schools fail children of color, I, as a law enforcement officer, win — the jail/prison population swells. Today we speak of this as the school-to-prison-pipeline phenomenon.

I am called a "loudmouth" and other less than affectionate names by current district administrators for relentlessly challenging district policies and practices. More recently, I have been vociferous regarding the community's displeasure surrounding how Nikita J.

Reed's departure and replacement was managed.

I wear the "loudmouth" moniker as a badge of honor.

I make no apologies for advocating for black and brown children and their parents laboring in Pinellas District schools. I do so in honor of deceased grassroots advocates, Harry Lee Williams, Willie Mae Sanderson and Fannie Lou Hamer. Harry "the crab man" and Ms. Willie Mae, NAACP member, were St. Petersburg residents. Mrs. Fannie Lou Hamer was a Mississippi native and organizer.

All three were passionate civil rights activists committed to civic engagement and political action. They were common folks with the common touch. They were courageous individuals who were more committed to freedom than fear of losing a job or material possessions.

Mrs. Hamer is the best known nationally of the three for her activism on the national stage and her well-known expression of her frustrations with black life in segregated America. She asserted: "I'm sick and tired of being sick and tired."

We all should invoke the presence of these three heroes. For if Harry Lee, Willie Mae, and Fannie Lou could do it, why can't we? Why can't we all raise our voices and convey our concerns to the district and board? Why can't we continue to sound the alarm?

We must encourage our children to value education and those involved in the educational enterprise to value our scholars. Education is



Goliath J. Davis

the way, and quality education requires consistent advocacy and pressure on the system.

Frederick Douglass admonished us: "Power concedes nothing without a demand. It never did and it never will. Find out just what any people will quietly submit to and you have found out the exact measure of injustice and wrong which will be imposed. . ."

Some view Reed's departure as insignificant even though her hard work yielded the most significant results to date for scholars under her care in the Transformation Zone. Superintendent Dr. Michael Grego's management of her departure and replacement was insulting and disrespectful.

If we quietly submit to such treatment, we should expect similar future acts or greater. Those of us who have been blessed with upward mobility due in part to our education, training, and the activism of Harry Lee, Willie Mae, Fannie Lou, and others owe our children what they gave us — advocacy and agitation.

Open letter from SPC President Tonjua Williams

Dear SPC Family,

My heart is heavy over the act of brutality that occurred in Minneapolis, Minnesota last week, and the subsequent protests that began peacefully, but have in some cases turned violent in recent days. I know you are hurting, too. We grieve with the families and friends of those lost through recent senseless acts of violence and everyone across the country, and in our own local communities, who are affected by these horrible events.

At St. Petersburg College we value the sanctity of all human life. We honor diversity, equity and inclusiveness. We denounce racial injustice, classism, sexism, gender bias, religious persecution and bigotry in all forms. We believe all people should be treated with dignity and respect. In standing firm on these principles, we show the world that we are committed to equality and opportunity for all people, all the time.

I am proud and humbled to be a part of our SPC family, a rich tapestry of people of many races, ethnicities, religious affiliations, gender identities, sexual orientations, political beliefs and physical abilities. This diversity, which is a true reflection of our community, makes us stronger.

At SPC, we are uniquely situated to be a part of the solution to the deeply disturbing issues we are facing. Our institution can provide a voice for disenfranchised and marginalized individuals by acting as a convener and supporting respectful discourse to affect change. The very premise SPC is built upon — providing equity and excellence in education for all — provides the foundation for us to listen to one another, learn from each other and teach others.

As we struggle to comprehend the horrific images we saw play out in Minnesota, and in so many other communities



Tonjua Williams

over the past several years, our hearts and souls are strained by acts of injustice and inhumanity.

It is said that a house divided cannot stand. We must unite in our efforts to spread awareness of social injustices, use kindness to bridge differences and work tirelessly to find solutions to move our country forward, peacefully. Let us work together to be the change we want to see. I pledge to be a part of the solution, and I hope that you will join me.

Dr. Tonja Williams,
President, St. Petersburg College

Stand up for righteousness sake

Dear Editor:

I am unapologetically a black man and I will not be silent as black people are being hatefully targeted as prey. I will not stand idly by as racists declare open season on black people. I fear no man.

I will train my youth to be educated and productive members of society. I will be my brother's keeper. I will respect and cover my sisters. I will fight for and defend the right for all people to have the freedom to life, liberty and the pursuit of happiness.

I'm truly blessed because I have white, black, brown, yellow, red, and rainbow friends who genuinely love and respect me and they know I love and respect them. I can sit in places where I am the only black person there and feel peace, comfort and love.

I can sit in a room full of black folks and feel just like family, accepted, respected and loved. I talk to everyone, and everyone seems to gravitate towards my essence regardless of my skin color.

I try to be like Jesus, and it works. But there is a deeply rooted problem in America, and it's time we all honestly deal with it.

I challenge white supremacy and systemic racism. I do not subscribe to a theology, where God favors one people over another to the detriment, oppression and annihilation of any people.

As a nation, we have some painful days and experiences ahead, but it will be a time for beneficial painful realizations and painful truths as we mend the fabric of our present existence and allow God to heal and guide us.

All people are created equal. Sometimes the truth hurts, but pain can be beneficial if we heed the warnings. My brothers and my sisters are in pain — white as well as black, red as well as gray, male as well as female, gay as well as

straight.

And only the truth can set us all free.

We thank God for peaceful protest, but we are sure that there are looters and rioters who are not peaceful protestors. We know that white supremacists and white nationalists have infiltrated the protests and are instigating the looting and burning of businesses.

We know people are joining the protests to loot and care less about the underlying causes. In a lot of places, the peaceful protestors are confronting the looters.

We must not fall into the repeated trap to make any protest all about George Floyd. Sadly, he was merely another trigger in a sea of millions of triggers in every state, city, and town in America with ripple effects daily.

We cannot take our eyes off the bigger problem: systemic racism, white supremacy, hate, and racism perpetrated at the highest form of government to the lowest ignorant racist agitators. America has a "president" who threatens to shoot the black thugs for looting but praises the good white people for armed takeovers of government land, buildings, and college campuses.

Therein lies the real problem. Killing black people is just a symptom of something much more sinister. This is what we are sick and tired of. If you're not with us, then you are against us.

Therefore, we must make sure our prayers and our protests include all people of all races, and we must be strategic with positive goals, objectives and outcomes. If not now, then when? If not us, then who?

Those are the open and public conversations that must now occur as we all look at our actions and words no matter how overt or covert they may be. Many good people are unknowingly and very subtly contributing to our hurt, pain, and even anger by ignoring us when we tell them how their actions and



Dr. G. Gregg Murray

words are being received.

This is how we will grow together towards a nation where all people are treated equally and given the same rights and privileges that every person enjoys. It's time for people to humble themselves in the sight of God and listen to one another. God is trying to tell us all something.

So-called Christians who support Trump's racist ideology must really take an honest introspection within their souls before it is too late. Trump's anti-Christian evil and despicable ways and means are producing more division and hate in this nation each passing day.

But those religious folk haven't been silent! They have openly supported this man and have gone as far as to put God-like attributes to him and his purpose.

The Republican politicians have been silent, and hopefully, they will pay the price at the polls. The devil has a hold on both of their minds and souls right now, and God has exposed them.

We will need all righteous hands on deck to combat this present darkness. The true people of God will be victorious and will be stronger for it. But we cannot remain silent on the sidelines.

As a man of God, I will continue the good fight. I will continue to fight systemic racism. I will continue to preach the Gospel of Jesus Christ. I will continue to give the devil a concussion. I'm tired, but I will continue.

Dr. G. Gregg Murray
Senior Pastor
Mt. Zion Primitive Baptist Church

USFSP Regional Chancellor reaffirms core values of diversity and inclusion in wake of George Floyd's death

The following message was sent by USF St. Petersburg Regional Chancellor Martin Tadlock to the USF St. Petersburg campus community in response to the tragic killings of George Floyd, Breonna Taylor, Ahmaud Arbery and others.

As a campus absolutely committed to diversity and inclusion and where we create physical and psychologically safe places for all people, we have an obligation to uphold that commitment and live those stated values.

We have a duty to honor every person and every life through what we say and how we act on our campus, in the St. Petersburg community, and across the entirety of the human family regardless of geography. Our students, staff and faculty are daily participants in the

world, and we must speak out and act when our neighbors, our brothers and sisters, are harmed or in pain. We must recognize and call out injustice when we see it.

My heart is burdened by the death of George Floyd in Minnesota as the most recent example of how what we value at USF St. Petersburg is not reflected within important segments of our society, so I must speak and act.

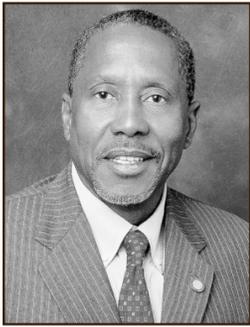
I will be writing my state and federal elected officials and my former acquaintances in Minnesota about my concerns. I will express my condolences directly to the family members of Mr. Floyd. I will continue to be vigilant and actively engaged in opposing acts of violence and oppression in our society.



I invite you as a member of this campus community to speak up and act, as any concerned citizen living in a democratic society should, to call out actions that ignore our campus commitment to diversity and inclusion and the values reflected by that commitment.

My thoughts are with George Floyd's loved ones and friends.

Pinellas County black-elected officials speak



State Senator Darryl Rouson



State Rep. Wengay "Newt" Newton



Pinellas County Commissioner Kenneth T. Welch



Pinellas County School Board Member Rene Flowers



St. Petersburg Council Member Lisa Wheeler-Bowman



St. Petersburg Council Member Deborah Figgs-Sanders

PINELLAS COUNTY — As black elected officials representing the citizens of Pinellas County, we express our collective outrage at the murder of George Floyd in Minneapolis, and join the call for justice for Mr. Floyd, and accountability for all officers involved in this

heinous act.

We strongly support peaceful protests. Rioting and looting, however, is dangerous and dilutes the message of justice for Mr. Floyd. This destructive behavior appears to be fomented by a small group of agitators — some from outside our community — and

it cannot be allowed to continue.

Here in Pinellas County and the City of St. Petersburg, local law enforcement leaders have rightfully denounced the conduct of the Minneapolis officers involved in Mr. Floyd's death, and pledge that our local law enforce-

ment standards of conduct expressly ban the use of such tactics.

No law enforcement agency is perfect; however, we value the progress that has been made and the ongoing partnership with our local law enforcement agencies. We will continue to demand community-f-

ocused policing and high standards of professionalism from our law enforcement agencies.

Moving our community forward also requires high standards from our community. Many issues impact our community currently, from the impacts of poverty to the economic

and health impacts of COVID-19 to the deadly trends of auto-theft and "toe-tagging," lives are being lost and impacted in our community.

We look forward to continuing our collective work for a safer, more equitable and prosperous community for all.

UNITE Pinellas on tracking COVID-19 in the black community

PINELLAS COUNTY — The "Equity Now" broadcast on WTMP reviews events through a lens of racial and health equity. Hosted by Carl Lavender, chief equity officer at Foundation for a Healthy St. Petersburg (FHSP), the program features conversations with local health experts, civic and political leaders, community activists, and stakeholders.

On May 30, Lavender was joined by Dr. Stephanie Reed, MPH and Tim Dutton, executive director of UNITE Pinellas.

As planning and quality assurance manager at Pinellas County Government's Department of Health and Human Services, Reed works to ensure quality outcomes for all the services and contracts the county provides in the community.

She represents Pinellas County as a member of UNITE Pinellas, a collective of organizations working to increase income and race equity through county-wide systems change, led by Dutton.

Reed discussed the

"COVID Tracker," a dashboard she created for looking at county data in relation to race and health equity. As a social epidemiologist, Reed believed it was vital to develop the tracker to specifically investigate the impact of the disease on black and brown communities.

Reed shared that the data coming down from the state and county level are showing great proportions of COVID-19, but also believed there was a need to look deeper.

"I posited that it's very important to look at the impact of COVID in terms of rates in our community, standardized against the population of communities across the state — so that we can really understand the impact of COVID-19 on communities of color."

The COVID Tracker reveals the rates of COVID illness, hospitalization, and deaths, among "Blacks, whites and others" — which is the way the county collects racial data. It also collects those identifying as "Hispanics" across the three groups. Reed noted

that the "other" population includes people identified as American Indian/Alaskan Native, Asian and Native Hawaiian/Pacific Islander.

Reed pointed to structural and institutional racism as the root cause of inequities and health disparities, such as the mortality and preterm birth outcomes in the black community and rates of heart disease, hypertension, and diabetes.

She noted, "Knowing the history of racism in America, it is appropriate to look at the impact by race and appropriate to look at the impact of racism on COVID-19."

When Lavender asked how data could impact the course of COVID-19 rates in black and brown communities, Reed responded, "We shouldn't wait for [increased negative outcomes] to happen; we should be mobilizing ourselves to test those communities to make sure that we don't have a disproportionate impact."

She referred to current statewide data, which al-

ready shows the highest number of deaths across the state are among blacks. Reed cautioned that while data has not shown that trend in Pinellas, getting accurate numbers would also "depend on how much we're appropriately testing those populations."

She noted that being proactive means ensuring appropriate resources, access to testing, and access to appropriate care.

Dutton reaffirmed the importance of Reed's use of rates to track the racial data, rather than the proportional numbers used by the state of Florida, and referred to Reed's writing on the case for analysis of rates by race. The COVID Tracker is available for viewing on the UNITE Pinellas and FHSP websites.

The conversation also covered the work and research Dutton and UNITE Pinellas are doing in other equity-related issues in the county. One of those issues noted Dutton — arrests and policing — is very much under a microscope with the recent spate of police

killings, and was highlighted as a problem area in our county in UNITE Pinellas' 2019 Equity Profile.

Dutton also referred to work UNITE Pinellas is doing with Senator Darryl Rouson around fees and fines, disproportionately impacting black and brown people in Pinellas County.

A current crisis is on the horizon: the looming rent crisis and the expiration of Gov. DeSantis' moratorium on evictions.

"Florida has a very unkind eviction law — it is very unkind to tenants. And we're working at the state level to look at that issue," Dutton said. He noted that now, with the COVID-19 crisis leading to increased poverty and eviction, the issue is "really a big deal."

Dutton and FHSP's President and CEO Randall Russell have written at length on the impending crisis, including reiterating The Urban Institute's five-point strategy for how state and local entities can maximize new federal funding

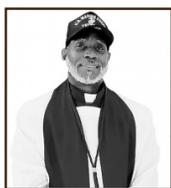


Dr. Stephanie Reed



Tim Dutton, executive director of UNITE Pinellas

and opportunities related to COVID-19 to help stabilize communities and protect individuals and families at risk.



Breaking the Cycle

REV. DR. ROBERT L. HARRISON, PH.D.
Men of S.T.E.E.L. Ministries
www.menofsteelministries.com

Praise the Lord saints.

OMG!!! I had to post this this week.

I have been here for more than 30 years and have been one of the most active activists from 2013 till 2019 after my baby boy graduated college from UCF.

I believe God has decided that it's time for me to find new battles for folks that will appreciate my efforts. Because truth be told, if there had been a more concerted effort for change, positive, permanent change, south St Pete wouldn't be in the position it's in now.

Time and time again, I tried to help support and give advice that would have made significant differences, and so many times, I was looked at like "well you're not from here," and well, I won't say the many other reasons I know y'all didn't listen.

So, here we are again, significant decisions are approaching, elections, questions as to what would be the best approach.

It saddens me somewhat because I have befriended many of you, and I will always treasure our relationships, but I can't help those that feel they have all the answers. The funny thing is, if you had all the answers, then why aren't they being implemented and used today.

Anyway, I had to post replies from a candidate running for the only "black" or African American position on the Pinellas County School Board, after I baited him to reply to my Facebook post.

And like clockwork or I like a rodent baited with peanut butter and cheese, he bit.

"I added this to my timeline, so my comment could be read by the 3K plus followers I'm linked to. So, for over a decade, he was holding a position designated for a black, African American and what did he do to show for it.

Well, just ask him to post it. Or ask any of your then "leaders." Go ahead, I'll wait. Actually, I won't because I know the an-

swer is blank, crickets.

Did you hear anything from any of them when the L5 neighborhood schools were the worst in the entire state? So now he wants to steal another black African American position. I'm going to reserve comments about that position, but unfortunately, he will probably win, and well, no, I won't say. I will, however, in my article."

His reply, Karl Nurse: Ken Welch and I launched the CRA which ensures 30 years of increasing funding for south St. Pete. I led the effort to turn around Citrus Grove. I worked with 4 non-profits to rehab and/or build over 80 homes in the CRA for affordable housing. I could do dozens of problems in the district ranging from a lack of sidewalks from Jordan Park to Melrose, to street flooding in parts of Bartlett Park. I got more additional park improvements in District 6 than anywhere else in the city including: outdoor weight lifting equipment,

shade structures at the ball fields, additional tennis courts at Bartlett Park. A skate park at Campbell Park. I led the effort to launch "Bank on St Pete" in 2008-10 where over 1,000 people got bank accounts. I led the effort to fund foreclosure prevention in the recession. I got an ordinance passed that eventually required the banks to maintain the exterior of the properties that they own. I got the first and second version of an apprenticeship ordinance passed to require city contractors to provide opportunities for those with a record and for apprentices."

The statement he used in another media piece pissed me off: "I would hope that they would make an effort to judge me by the content of my character not the color of my skin," Nurse said. "If we can improve schools, we can grow the middle class. To me that is the fundamental challenge to our community and that's what I'll work on."

Now, I am not going to continue to get into a fight that you guys obviously should get in. This time you have a chance to get in on the bottom rung and blast these comment out the water as I know I could but this is no longer my fight, but as a TRUE Man of God, My Lord and Savior Jesus Christ REQUIRES that I lend aid and support whenever I can.

He just spits in your faces by attempting to use one of our GREAT-EST LEADERS WORDS, and that kind of pissed me off. I take this as a DIRECT INSULT and attempt to question our intelligence.

I would HIGHLY suggest contacting Wengay Newton if he is available for comment as he served during the time Nurse was on the city council and knows the truth about this guy's true work. I guess his failed feeble attempt to suggest reverse racism, like there is such a thing, is what he is leaning towards. smh.

All this occurred last week before the murder of another brother. Now

it's even more important that y'all get it together and galvanize your forces and efforts to combat this and many other obstacles that are coming down the road.

I will end with this. I have been insulted by someone that we considered a dear friend by returning the blessing we offered in support of their efforts. I won't say who or what they are doing, but they will know if they read this.

I will only say this: when a TRUE MAN OF GOD blesses you, and you throw it back at them, it's a direct insult not only to them but to God Himself as it was God that blessed us to be blessings to others.

I was going to reject the returned blessing, but God had me to understand that if I did, I would be no better than them.

I recently became a bishop and will use it to get part of my new vestment requirements.

Till next week, Blessing Dr. Robert L. Harrison, Ph.D., DD



REV. DR. ROBERT L. HARRISON, Ph.D.
Senior Pastor
True Holiness Worship Ministries, Inc.
www.trueholinessworshipministry.com
FLORIDA WEST DISTRICT ELDER
Open Door Church of God & True Holiness, Inc.
www.opendoortrueholinesschurch.org
CHURCH OF GOD & TRUE HOLINESS, INTL.
www.cogath.org
727.265.6437 pastorrobharrison@gmail.com

Online directory Green Book of Tampa Bay helps visitors put their 'green into black' businesses

BY J.A. JONES
Staff Writer

TAMPA BAY — Green Book of Tampa Bay (GBTB) is an online resource that offers its readers information on black-owned businesses, entrepreneurs, artists, and cultural experiences created out of the African-American/African diasporic perspective, in Pinellas and Hillsborough counties.

Created by Joshua Bean and Hillary Van Dyke, two educators who met at Azalea Middle School, the site was started in 2018 to help readers gain insight into locations where they could spend their dollars with black retailers — resulting in greater black economic stability.

Recently the platform has been upgraded, and as COVID-19 recovery plans are on every businessperson's to-do list, GBTB is hoping the resource will offer more people ways to "buy black."

Van Dyke explained, "Through some community contacts, namely Veatrice Farrell of the Deuces Live, Gypsy Gallardo of One Community reached out to us, because part of the work that #InThisTogether wanted to do was create a directory of Black-owned businesses."

Since GBTB already had a database, One Community offered to help create a more user-friendly experience.

"One Community partnered us with a web developer, and now the site works more like the Yellow Pages or Yelp," Van Dyke acknowledged.

Bean noted, "Before, our listings were very basic with no visual component (service name, link to website/social media, phone number and address). Now listings are full of pictures, business logos, hours of operation, menu prices, etc. This is so much more comprehensive — and I absolutely love it."

Anyone can add a listing for a black-owned business; Bean encouraged visitors to the site to help them increase the number of listings. "If you know of a black-owned business, search for it on greenbooktb.org — if it's not there, add the listing."

Business owners who visit the site can also search for and claim their own listing, edit, and update what is currently there.

Jonny Moon, St Pete, CEO of Astute Observations, a multimedia business specializing in business products including graphic design, audio and visual needs, and marketing tools, is enthusiastic

about the site.

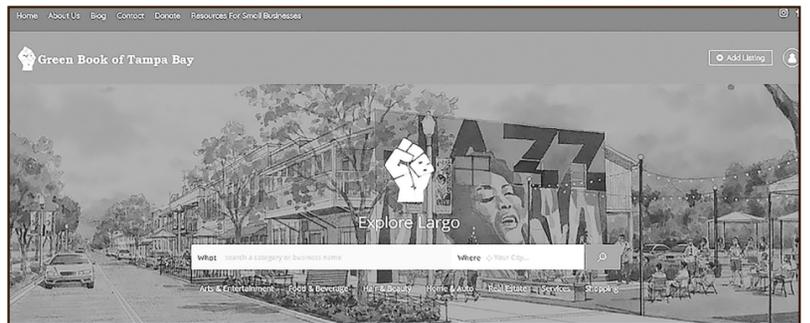
"Hillary and Josh requested that the raised fist be a part of the Green Book logo, so I had fun coming up with a clever way to tie the raised fist in with the Green Book's name," shared Moon.

Noting that GBTB is a "one-stop source for finding professionals in your community — but allows you to diversify your support," Moon added that GBTB has already helped Astute Observations increase clientele. (To find out more, you can reach Astute Observations at 727-308-1020 or astuteobservations.llc@gmail.com.)

Delvin Kariuki, Tampa, CEO of Kwamboka Kariuki, an online retail business that partners with women in Kenya to sell fashion and accessories, said, "The benefit is to have a directory for black-owned business — I don't know anything like it for just black-owned businesses. On Google and Yelp, you get lost in the mix of big businesses."

Kariuki said since listing on GBTB, the business has received more traffic to its social media and website — which in turn increases sales.

Van Dyke and Bean started GBTB with a mission to change the game for black businesses and communities in Tampa Bay. Bean noted that "sys-



temic inequity reaches ALL aspects of life for black folks — including in the business sectors. There are inequities in who owns brick-and-mortar stores, has smaller workforces."

Van Dyke offered, "Our website has changed, but our overall mission hasn't. We want equity in

the black community. We want to build economic vitality in the black community. We want all black people to thrive! In order to do that, we want to see not only black dollars circulating in the black community — we want to see everyone's dollars circulating in the black community. #GreenBookTB —

Helping you put your green into Black!"

Visit Green Book of Tampa Bay for more information or to be included on their site, or reach them at Greenbookoftampabay@gmail.com.

To reach J.A. Jones, email jjones@theweeklychallenger.com.



Experts In Life-Changing Care

By LaShante Keys, Empath Health Community Outreach Specialist

Finding comfort at the Suncoast Hospice Care Center

ST. PETERSBURG — Over the past few months, families everywhere have had to relearn what it means to have a loved one in a care facility or a hospital.

Older adults and people with underlying health issues such as heart conditions, obesity, and diabetes — which have high rates of prevalence in African Americans — are at a higher risk of developing serious complications from COVID-19. Additionally, this virus spreads very easily, and current data shows that people who do not show any symptoms may still be contagious.

As a result, places, where this group receives nursing care for extended periods, have

had to revise their visitation policies to minimize any possible exposure to the virus. In many cases, this means no visitors at all.

Because of its location inside of Bayfront Health St. Petersburg, the Suncoast Hospice Care Center South Pinellas, a member of Empath Health, is one such place that has had to limit visitation.

With family and friends adjusting to being unable to visit their loved ones, nursing teams are also adapting to fit the evolving needs of patients.

One such team member is Lore Newton, CNA. A certified nursing assistant (CNA) for the past 23 years, most recently in her career, she

has been a part of the Suncoast Hospice team.

As a hospice health aide, she helps her patients meet the needs of everyday living. This can include everything from bathing and feeding to checking vitals and making sure they are comfortable.

"Being a CNA helps keep me humbled and focused," said Newton. "A lot has changed recently, but it's important we are still here for our patients."

These days she finds herself doing more of the little things that can make a big difference. This includes safety precautions, like wearing a mask during patient interactions and doing what she can to boost someone's day. That

might be as simple as spending a few extra minutes listening to a patient talk about their grandchildren or bringing a favorite snack.

"I have one client, a long term patient, who has always liked pastries and coffee, so I'll bring that to him," Newton added. "Even though family can't visit, we can still find ways to show that someone cares."

That's why she has made it a point not just to care for the clinical needs of her patients, but also to look out for their emotional well-being. These little comfort gestures all add up to a bigger picture: families may be apart, but no one has to feel alone.

Everyone is a part of the family at the Suncoast



Lore Newton has been a certified nursing assistant for the past 23 years.

Hospice Care Center. is proving that together And with every simple we can make it through act of kindness, Newton anything.



Displaced workers can get fast training at SPC

PINELLAS COUNTY — When COVID-19 forced the closure of shops, restaurants, hotels, bars, and entertainment venues, many people found themselves without jobs. Though job loss is regrettable, St. Petersburg Col-

lege's Dean of Workforce Development Michael Ramsey says the downtime is a great time to earn some new credentials.

"Now is a great time for unemployed workers to earn new credentials," Ramsey said. "We defi-

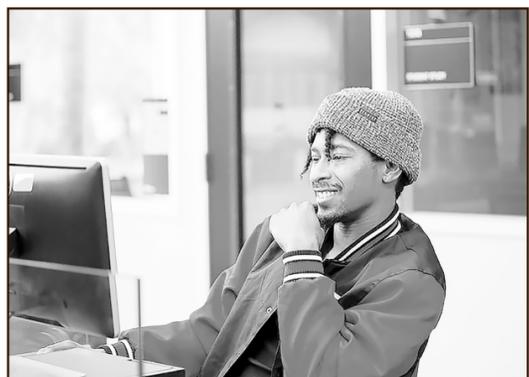
nately want to do our part to help the community as they look to rebound."

In response, the college has launched a new tool for people looking to earn credentials that will land them a job in a short amount of time — as little as 16 weeks, in some cases. The Get Job Ready at SPC webpage offers plenty of helpful information to get people on the path to a new career.

The webpage offers a list of in-demand occupations and training programs, some of which can be completed online. All of the programs will prepare students for work in fields such as technology, health and business, including the following:

- Supply Chain Management
- Accounting Technology Operations
- Computer-Aided Design and Drafting
- Medical Coding
- Computer Programming Specialist
- Public Safety Telecommunication
- Digital Media/Multimedia
- Cybersecurity

Visitors to the Get Job Ready at SPC page can also find information about SPC, tuition and term dates. Using current labor market data, the page offers a list of job titles, employment, and salary information, along with the necessary short-term training and certifi-



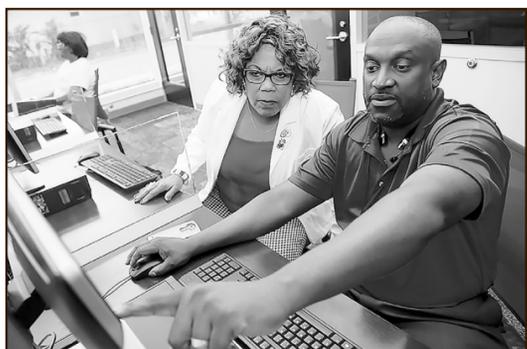
cates needed to land those jobs. They can even apply and register for classes directly from the site.

Ramsey also notes that there are many financial aid opportunities right now, both through the college or the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act. But the first step is

the Job Ready page.

"There is a ton of information, resources, and skill development opportunities for anyone looking to upskill or reskill," Ramsey said.

For more information, visit now.spc.edu/jobready.



During COVID-19, St. Pete Timebank offers new ways to consider community economies

BY J.A. JONES
Staff Writer

ST. PETERSBURG — COVID-19 has triggered a breakdown of the U.S. and world economy within three months. In rebuilding our economy, individuals, communities, and groups might want to consider developing alternate ways to receive and offer goods and services.

The idea of communities and individuals sharing and swapping services and goods without using money is indeed as old as time. Here in St. Pete, one group has already come together to establish a new social exchange system.

St. Pete Timebank was started by BJ Andryusky in 2017 as a grassroots movement in his kitchen with two close friends. She had formerly been a member of the Tampa Bay Time Bank but wanted to do something St. Pete.

Edgar Cahn developed the time bank system in the

early 1980s. A legal professor and speechwriter for Robert F. Kennedy, Cahn was a strong proponent of civil rights. When a heart attack in 1980 left him unable to work the way he had before, he started to think about how humans are valued in our society.

He developed the concept of “service credits” to encourage community building, which he later called “time credits.” Time is the medium of exchange, rather than dollars — and every person’s hour has the same value, no matter who is contributing. The math is simple: one hour equals one credit earned.

Andryusky noted, “We are asset-based community development; we believe that everybody is an asset. We don’t care who you are, where you’re from, what initials you have or don’t have behind your name — none of that matters. Everybody is an asset.”

The group initially functioned under the Everyday

Hero Project, an organization incorporated in Hawaii with a program in Tampa Bay, doing the kind of grassroots action and community work that inspired Andryusky and the original St. Pete Timebank team.

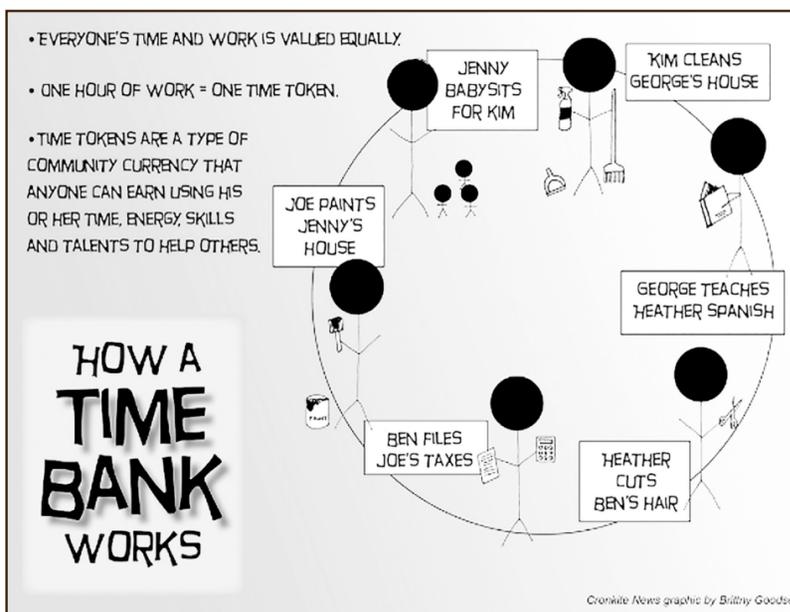
But wanting a local sponsor and finally deciding to use the name St. Pete Timebank, in November of 2019, Andryusky connected with the Pinellas County Urban League, which now functions as its fiscal sponsor. A capacity-building grant from the Foundation for a Healthy St. Petersburg has helped the time bank expand its reach.

“Everybody has stuff that they can do,” Andryusky added. “And they can do it to enrich somebody else lives — and in the process of doing that, they enrich their own lives. And it doesn’t take money.”

The group’s public Facebook page provides examples of the variety of services and goods members swap to earn credits. One person may be taking down a wood fence and offering time credits for members’ assistance; someone else will swap time credits for used vertical blinds.

Another person may earn time credits calling seniors in the community to make sure they’re ok; others may offer a class in their area of expertise that members can “pay for” with time credits.

Still, others may have a gardening project that they need help in or take part in



Respect, accountability and integrity

INSULT, from front page

their use of force abuses and you strip protestors and looters of a platform. The small minority of police officers, chiefs and sheriffs who participate in and condone the acts that consistently bring us to this place, protests, and disruption, should not be allowed to remain in the profession.

Abusers should be disciplined and, when necessary, prosecuted. Police administrators who refuse to insist on professional policing and accountability should be relieved of duty and, if warranted, subjected to harsher consequences.

Body cameras for police officers should not be a matter of debate. They should be mandatory as they protect the public as well as the officers wearing them. Disengaging a body cam is a prima facie case of bad intent, and officers who are guilty of such behavior should be dealt with harshly. Inept police officers must not be allowed to tarnish the image of those who work tirelessly to serve and protect.

Like law enforcement administrators who refuse to hold their officers accountable or promulgate policies and procedures that protect life — police and citizens — elected federal, state and municipal officials, also have dirty hands. Too many are more concerned about their political futures and longevity than attending to constituent needs.

The interests of big business and special interest groups take precedence over health care, affordable housing, jobs, living wages and education. Elected officials routinely ignore the wishes of the people who elected them for their own self-interests.

The Florida legislature imposed what amounts to a poll tax to impede the ability of non-violent offenders to engage in the political process by voting. This, despite the fact Florida voters approved the ballot initiative allowing offenders to do so. This, along with other legally mandated restrictions, prevent willing offenders’ reintegration into society.

Law enforcement officers are also victims of bad public policy. They are pushed to the forefront to defend the consequences of the political interests of elected officials — inadequate education, poor housing, poor health care, unemployment, etc.

The nature of this relationship confounds one’s ability to objectively evaluate inappropriate police actions and generate appropriate legislative controls.

The emotionally charged law and order political/campaign speeches are nothing more than red meat and dog whistles that play on voter fears and biases and perpetuate division and hostility. And when the inevitable occurs, the police are called upon to respond — to maintain order.

The current protests have a different feel and appearance. The committed crowds are demographically diverse (race, gender and age) and are exercising their rights nationally and internationally. They confront the police as well as the COVID-19.

It appears more likely now that the needed policy changes and accountability may be attainable. For the first time in my career, law enforcement administrators, police officers, and union officials

openly condemn the officers’ actions in Minneapolis and call for reform. Juries must also engage and hold officers accountable for inappropriate behavior.

St. Pete, let’s lead the way. Body cameras, accountability, progressive use of force policies, affordable housing, living wages, advocacy for health care, closing the achievement gap and juror willingness to convict police officers when warranted are a must and will rob looters of a platform and prevent unjustified killings of black males and police officers.

Mayor Rick Kriseman and Chief Anthony Holloway, cease with yet another study of body cams and deploy them. They should be activated continuously, not just when the weapon is drawn.

We know that excessive force against a citizen and assaults on police officers are not limited to shootings. This was demonstrated in Minneapolis and New York (Floyd and Garner).

You owe it to your officers and the communities they serve. We hear what you say regarding your commitment to police accountability, but it is not sufficient. Your statements and actions do not align. Please actualize your verbal affirmations.

City councilmembers, you need to do your jobs as well and hold Mayor Kriseman and Chief Holloway accountable for ensuring the health and safety of all the residents of St. Petersburg.

The glowing rays of sunlight should not just shine on the chosen few, the wealthy and the privileged. We need “liberty and justice for all.”

I Can’t Breathe: A diagnostic criteria of being black in America

BY RUSSIA COLLINS,
LMHC, CCPP
Contributor

ST. PETERSBURG — I can’t breathe! A plea that has played in our minds, resonated in our spirits and has become symptomology for many black and brown individuals in America. This term, which has exited the mouths of multiple victims as they have described the air struggling to pass through their lungs, holds both a literal and figurative meaning.

As a black woman and mother of black boys, I experience a constant lack of oxygen as I hold my breath daily when they are not in my care. As a licensed mental health counselor, this phrase has been used to describe the state in which many clients find themselves when they are experiencing symptoms of anxiety or PTSD.

What we know about breathing is that it is a way to release the toxins from our bodies. It gives life to our minds, and like water, is necessary to sustain us. So, what is the result when black America cannot breathe? What is the risk to our children’s health and mental health when there is a constant lack of oxygen; when we cannot breathe life into them because we are in constant fear that it will be taken?

I believe that we are witnessing the results of this. We see the anger, outrage, advocacy and fear. We are experiencing a lack of sleep, flashbacks, increased heart rate and intrusive thoughts. We are collectively meeting the DSM-V (Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders) criteria for several mental health disorders.

When discussing clinical

practices, the term countertransference is used to describe the clinician’s own thoughts, fears and experiences onto those we are treating. Countertransference can also occur within the relationship.

As we watched an officer, through the use of force, restrict, cut off, and prevent air from passing through Mr. Floyd’s lungs for 8 minutes and 46 sec-



Russia Collins



onds, we held our breath (literally). We must ensure that this does not cause us to inadvertently cut off the air stream to our children (figuratively).

The existence of what they need to sustain, much like air, these things are their hopes, dreams, and equitable opportunities.

Things we can do during these moments, we find it hard to breathe, include closing our eyes, acknowledging our thoughts (even those that are painful) and allowing our heartbeat to guide us. It will provide the rhythm needed to find our way back to a place of consistent breathing and air to our mind, body and spirit.

This practice of self-regulation is something that we can share with our

children. It is through this practice we can speak and breathe life back into them.

About Russia Collins, LMHC, CCPP

Russia Collins is a licensed mental health counselor with a professional background in child welfare and integrated behavioral health. She is the owner of Collins Consulting LMHC, where she focuses on relational work with individuals, families, providers, communities and within systems.

Collins serves as the vice president on the board of directors for New Visions of the Well and is an avid member of The Well for Life, LLC. She prides herself most as being an intentional mother of two boys, Christian and Carter.

Survival kit for staying home

PINELLAS COUNTY — If you are staying home during a hurricane, here's a list of items to consider for your survival kit. Keep items in airtight plastic bags or containers. Replace stored water every six months and double check battery expiration dates.

One of the most important things to include in your emergency survival kit is your prescription medications. But, what happens when an emergency is declared and your insurance company claims it is too early for you to get a refill?

In 2006, the Legislature passed the Emergency Prescription Refill bill (Florida Statute 252.358 and 462.0275). This law requires all insurers and managed-care organizations to suspend refill-too-soon restrictions when a patient seeks a refill in a county.

Currently under a hurricane warning issued by the National Weather Service

Declared to be under a state of emergency in an executive order issued by the Governor

Has activated its Emergency Operations Center and its emergency management plan

This law also allows patients outside of these areas to get an emergency 72-hour refill if the pharmacist is unable to readily obtain refill authorization from the doctor. Please talk with your doctor and pharmacist now about how this new law can affect your prescriptions.

In addition to having a supply of your medications on hand, keep a list of each one you take, including the name of the doctor who wrote the prescription, the name of the drug, dosage instructions and the name of the pharmacy where you had it filled.

Suggested items for a "Stay Kit"

• One-week supply of



food that requires no cooking and fluids to drink

• Ready-to-eat canned meats, fruits and vegetables

• Nuts, beef jerky and trail mix

• Raisins, peanut butter and granola bars

• Formula or baby food

• Canned juices or sports drinks

• One gallon of water per person per day

• Non-electric can opener

• Utility knife

• Cups, plates and plastic utensils

• Cooler and ice

• Pet food

• First aid supplies

• Adhesive bandages, gauze pads and tape

• Soap and anti-bacterial hand gel

• Antiseptic

• Latex gloves, scissors and tweezers

• Thermometer

• Sunscreen

• Over-the-counter pain reliever

• Anti-diarrhea medicine and laxative

• Anti-itch cream

• Tools and emergency supplies

• Flashlight and lanterns

• Battery-operated radio

• Extra batteries

• Matches or lighter in a waterproof container

• Compass and local maps with shelter locations

• A shut-off wrench and other tools

• Paper and pencil

• Plastic sheeting and tarps

• Elastic cords or rope

• Tarps and plastic sheeting

• Sanitation

• Portable toilet (5-gallon bucket, heavy trash bags, chlorine bleach)

• Toilet paper and moist towelettes

• Feminine supplies

• Personal hygiene items

• Clothing and bedding

• One complete change of clothing and shoes per person

• Sturdy shoes or work boots

• Rain gear

• Blankets and sleeping bags

• Sunglasses

• Kids and entertainment

• Favorite nonperishable snacks

• Powdered milk

• Stuffed animal or favorite toy

• Blanket and pacifier

• Diapers and wipes

• Card and board games

• Books for all ages

For more information, visit <http://www.pinellascounty.org/emergency/preparahead.htm>

Pinellas County Emergency Operations Center Department of Emergency Management - 727-464-3800

During an emergency activation, call the Citizen Information Center at (727) 464-4333.

Evacuation kit: What to take?

PINELLAS COUNTY — If you are evacuating to a public shelter, pack your essentials but pack light as space is limited. It is possible you may only have a space that measures 5 feet by 2 feet. Remember, a public shelter is not a cruise ship; it is a life boat with the mission to save lives.

One of the most important things to include in your emergency survival kit is your prescription medications. But, what happens when an emergency is declared and your insurance company claims it is too early for you to get a refill?

In 2006, the Legislature passed the Emergency Prescription Refill bill (Florida Statute 252.358 and 462.0275). This law requires all insurers and managed-care organizations to suspend refill-too-soon restrictions when a patient seeks a refill in a county.

Currently under a hurricane warning issued by the National Weather Service

Declared to be under a state of emergency in an executive order issued by the Governor

Has activated its Emergency Operations Center and its emergency management plan

This law also allows patients outside of these areas to get an emergency 72-hour refill if the pharmacist is unable to readily obtain refill authorization from the doctor. Please talk with your doctor and pharmacist now about how this new law can affect your pre-



scriptions.

In addition to having a supply of your medications on hand, keep a list of each one you take, including the name of the doctor who wrote the prescription, the name of the drug, dosage instructions and the name of the pharmacy where you had it filled.

Suggested items for a "Go Bag"

• Medications and copies of prescriptions

• Nonperishable food

• Special dietary food that is nonperishable

• Several gallons of drinking water to keep in your vehicle. A minimum of one gallon per person.

• Bedding for a small space

• Infant or child necessities (wipes, diapers, bottles)

• Personal hygiene items

• Change of clothes

• Eyeglasses

• Quiet games, toys or reading materials

• Important papers and valid ID

• Cash and a phone list

If you are evacuating

to stay with friends or relatives or in a Host Home Take your "Go Bag" and ask in advance what kind of space you'll have for your possessions and vehicles.

Prepare your home to leave

Regardless of where you are evacuating, before you leave your home, be sure to do the following:

• Take your valuables and important papers with you

• Turn off all utilities (water, electricity, gas) at the main switch

• Lock windows and doors

• Fill your gas tank

• Advise friends or relatives of where you are going

For more information, log on to <https://bit.ly/hurricanedocs>

Pinellas County Emergency Operations Center Department of Emergency Management - 727-464-3800

During an emergency activation, call the Citizen Information Center at (727) 464-4333.

WWW.THEWEEKLYCHALLENGER.COM

Know your evacuation zone

In order to know when to evacuate for hurricane surge flooding, you must KNOW YOUR ZONE! Enter your address and you will be provided not only information on your evacuation zone, but also the closest shelter, the closest special needs shelter, and the closest hotel accommodation.

There are many ways to learn your zone:

• The Ready Pinellas App: For checklists, preparedness assistance, and information, download the new mobile app at Google Play and Apple Store.

• Check out Pinellas County's Evacuation Level / Zone Lookup. Storm surge levels have changed. Your evacuation zone may be impacted. Check your zone. Enter your address and you will be provided not only information on your evacuation zone, but also the closest shelter, the closest special needs shelter, and the closest hotel accommodation.

• Call the Pinellas County Interactive Hurricane Evacuation Inquiry Line at (727) 453-3150 and key in your home phone number without the area

code to hear your home's evacuation zone.

• Call Pinellas County Emergency Management at (727) 464-3800 for help looking up your home's evacuation zone. Regular business hours are from 7:30 a.m. until 4:30 p.m. Monday through Friday.

• Your evacuation zone is printed on your Pinellas County Utility bill and the Truth in Millage (TRIM) Notice sent by the Property Appraiser.

To learn more, go to the Evacuation Level FAQ page.

• Evacuation Map and Shelter List

Remember, all residents living in mobile homes/manufactured homes must evacuate, even if their homes are located in a non-evacuation area.

For more information, visit <http://www.pinellascounty.org/emergency/knowyourzone.htm>

Pinellas County Emergency Operations Center Department of Emergency Management - 727-464-3800

During an emergency activation, call the Citizen Information Center at (727) 464-4333.

Evacuation Zones & Shelters

Not all shelters open for all evacuations.

Check the website www.pinellascounty.org before heading to a public shelter to make sure it is open. Updates on open shelters will also be provided to local media.

North County

- 1) Tarpon Springs Middle School
501 N. Florida Ave. • Tarpon Springs
- 2) Brooker Creek Elementary School
3130 Forelock Road • Tarpon Springs
- 3) East Lake High School
1300 Silver Eagle Drive • Tarpon Springs
- 4) Carwise Middle School
3301 Bentley Drive • Palm Harbor
- 5) Palm Harbor University High School
1900 Omaha St. • Palm Harbor
- 6) Palm Harbor Middle School
1800 Tampa Road • Palm Harbor
- 7) Dunedin Community Center
1920 Pinehurst Road • Dunedin
- 8) Dunedin Highland Middle School
70 Patricia Ave. • Dunedin
- 9) Dunedin Elementary School
900 Union St. • Dunedin
- 10) McMullen-Booth Elementary School
3025 Union St. • Clearwater
- 11) Safety Harbor Middle School
901 First Ave. N. • Safety Harbor
- 12) Clearwater Fundamental Middle School
1660 Palmetto St. • Clearwater
- 13) Skycrest Elementary School
10 N. Corona Ave. • Clearwater
- 14) Belleair Elementary School
1155 Lakeview Road • Clearwater
- 15) Ross Norton Recreation Center
1426 S. MLK Jr. Ave. • Clearwater
- 16) Oak Grove Middle School
1670 S. Belcher Road • Clearwater
- 17) Largo High School
410 Missouri Ave. N. • Largo
- 18) Mildred Helms Elementary School
561 Clearwater-Largo Rd. S. • Largo
- 19) High Point Elementary School
5921 150th Ave. N. • Clearwater

South County

- 20) Pinellas Park High School
6305 118th Ave. N. • Pinellas Park
- 21) Bauder Elementary School
12755 86th Ave. N. • Seminole
- 22) First Baptist Church of St. Petersburg
1900 Gandy Blvd. N. • St. Petersburg
- 23) Lealman Exchange
5175 45th St. N. • Lealman
- 24) New Heights Elementary School
3901 37th St. N. • St. Petersburg
- 25) Lealman Innovation Academy
4900 28th St. N. • St. Petersburg
- 26) John Sexton Elementary School
1997 54th Ave. N. • St. Petersburg
- 27) Boca Ciega High School
924 58th St. S. • Gulfport
- 28) Fairmount Park Elementary School
575 41st St. S. • St. Petersburg
- 29) Gibbs High School
850 34th St. S. • St. Petersburg
- 30) John Hopkins Middle School
701 16th St. S. • St. Petersburg
- 31) Campbell Park Elementary School
1051 Seventh Ave. S. • St. Petersburg
- 32) Jamerson Elementary School
1200 37th St. S. • St. Petersburg
- 33) St. Petersburg College Midtown Campus
1300 22nd St. S. • St. Petersburg
- 34) Gulfport Elementary School
2014 52nd St. S. • Gulfport
- 35) Thurgood Marshall Middle School
3901 22nd Ave. S. • St. Petersburg
- 36) James Sanderlin Elementary School
2350 22nd Ave. S. • St. Petersburg

EVACUATION GUIDELINES
(mobile homes MUST always evacuate)

Mobile Home Parks (red to homes closest to surge evacuation)

A Up to 11' Evacuate red areas and all mobile homes

B Up to 15' Evacuate red and orange areas and all mobile homes

C Up to 20' Evacuate red, orange and yellow areas and all mobile homes

D Up to 28' Evacuate red, orange, yellow and green areas and all mobile homes

E Up to 35' Evacuate red, orange, yellow, green and purple areas and all mobile homes

Areas shown in white are non-evacuation zones.

Evacuation Routes

Evacuation zones can vary from street to street, this map may not show your most accurate evacuation zone. To know your zone look up your address at www.pinellascounty.org/knowyourzone

WE ENCOURAGE LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

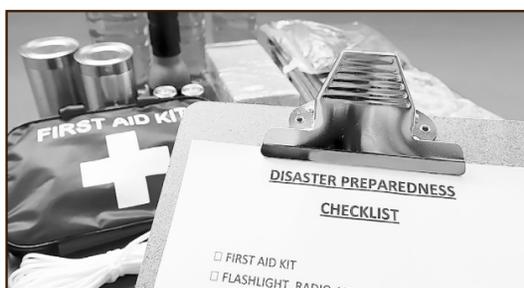
Gather important documents ahead of the storm

PINELLAS COUNTY — If you were ordered to evacuate from your home for a hurricane, could you easily and quickly collect all of your important documents for transport? Your important papers include everything from your driver's license to your homeowner's insurance policy.

By spending some time now, you can ensure that you will have everything you need if you must evacuate.

Personal papers to take with you:

- Driver's license or ID card
- Important numbers and emergency contacts
- Credit cards and list of creditors
- Medical records and blood type
- Prescription information (list of medications, dosage, prescription numbers, etc.)
- Doctor's contact information
- Cash and bank ac-



count numbers

- List of savings and investments, including CDs, stocks, bonds and mutual funds
- Household inventory: paper copy, photos, video tape or computer disk
- List of insurance policies with name of company, type of policy and policy number
- Copy of wills, trust documents and living wills
- Titles for your house, car and other property
- Birth, marriage, divorce, death and adoption certificates, and passports
- List of family advi-

sors, such as accountant, attorney and religious leader

- Educational and military records
- Other special papers that would be difficult or impossible to replace if lost

For more information, log on to <https://bit.ly/hurricane> edocs

Pinellas County Emergency Operations Center Department of Emergency Management – 727-464-3800

During an emergency activation, call the Citizen Information Center at (727) 464-4333.

Plan ahead for your pets

Pinellas County pet owners have new options when it comes to pet-friendly emergency shelters. The Pinellas County School Board and Pinellas County government provide these three pet-friendly shelter locations.

• Palm Harbor University High School 1900 Omaha St., Palm Harbor

• Largo High School 410 Missouri Ave. N., Largo

• Gibbs High School 850 34th St. S., St. Petersburg



The facilities are substantially-built, have large indoor gyms, and separate air handlers to ensure the comfort and safety of allergic citizens who shelter there.

Pinellas County Animal Services, in partnership with local fire departments, realized some citizens that are classified as special needs evacuees and that are already registered with their local fire department may have a pet they need help evacuating. These citizens should call Pinellas County Animal Services at (727) 582-2600 option #8 to make arrangements for pickup.

The fire station that is closest to them will be the one that evacuates them in an emergency. For more information, these citizens can call Pinellas County Emergency Management at (727) 464-3800 or their local fire department. If they have not done so yet, they must do so in order to register for Pinellas County Animal Services pet pickup.

Other shelter options: Animal shelters, such as Pinellas County Animal Services, the Humane Society, and the SPCA, cannot accept your pets.

Also, please do not assume that a boarding kennel or hotel/motel will accept your pet. Check ahead and look for kennels in non-evacuation zones. For pet-friendly hotels/motels, call the St. Petersburg/Clearwater Area Convention & Visitors Bureau at (727) 464-7200 or, during an evacuation, go to www.visitstpetclearwater.com.

There are many services on the Internet that list pet-friendly lodgings and include travel recommendations. Search "pet-friendly lodgings" for options.

Recommended disaster supply kit for pets:

- Proper identification
- Immunization records
- County license rabies tag
- Food and water (2 wks. supply)
- A carrier or portable kennel
- Medications

- Muzzle, collar, and leash
- Manual can opener
- Current photo of pet
- Feeding and water bowls
- Favorite toys and blanket
- Cat litter/pan and scoop
- Grooming items
- Plastic bags to handle waste

Residents who are evacuating with their pets should remember to bring the suggested supplies. If you are not able to gather all these supplies, accommodations will still be provided for you and your pet.

Preparation tips:

- Make sure your pet has proper identification with either a collar tag or a microchip implant. Have proof of current county-issued rabies vaccination available. A license is your pet's ticket home. Download a Pet Identification Form here. Fill out this form and adhere to your pet carrier or kennel. This form will contain all needed information about your pet for your stay at Pinellas County pet-friendly shelters.
- Plan for your pet well in advance if you live in an evacuation area. Write down your plan or create a check list.
- Take your pet when you evacuate.
- Know your evacuation route and when you will evacuate.
- Ask friends or family living outside of evacuation areas if they can keep your pet.

Make sure you have a collar and leash for keeping your pet under control.

- Keep a pet carrier (portable kennel) for each pet—one that allows your pet to stand and turn around. The carrier should be marked with your pet's identification.
- Make sure all your pet's vaccinations are current and have proof available of its current county-issued rabies vaccination.
- Pack supplies for your pet, including current veterinary records, a two-week

supply of food and water, medications with instructions, bowls, favorite toys and blanket, cat litter/pan, plastic bags, collar/leash, disinfectants to handle pet wastes, and a current photo of you with your pet.

If you must use a kennel as a last resort, make sure it is not in an evacuation zone and reserve space as soon as possible. Kennels require proof of vaccinations.

After a storm:

- Walk pets on a leash until they become re-oriented to their home. Often, familiar scents and landmarks may be altered and pets could easily be confused and become lost.
- Reptiles brought in with flood water and debris can pose a threat for animals after a disaster.
- Carry a picture of your pet for identification.
- After a disaster, animals can become aggressive or defensive. Monitor their behavior.

Post-disaster animal collection temporary collection sites:

After a storm, stray animals will be collected and staged at temporary collection sites prior to transfer to more permanent shelters. The location of these collection sites will be determined based on prevailing conditions. Every effort will be made to inform the public of these locations so that animals can be returned to their owners as quickly as possible.

Once the site(s) have been determined, you should look for your pet(s) at the location nearest your home and where you last saw your pet. To report a lost pet, call Pinellas County Animal Services at (727) 582-2600.

For more information, visit <http://www.pinellas-county.org/emergency/pet-preparedness.htm>

Pinellas County Emergency Operations Center Department of Emergency Management – 727-464-3800

During an emergency activation, call the Citizen Information Center at (727) 464-4333.

The storm is coming, now what?

PINELLAS COUNTY — The time to put your survival plan into action is when forecasters predict a hurricane is headed toward Pinellas County. Forecasters use a "cone of certainty" to show areas likely to be impacted by a storm.

Do not wait until the last minute! You need to start getting ready as soon as the storm is predicted to hit near our county.

Select a safe room

If you don't have to evacuate and plan to weather a hurricane at home, set up a safe room for you and your family in case your home is damaged. This is also a good place to store emergency supplies, important papers and battery-powered radios.

Make sure the room has a solid-core door with heavy duty hinges for greater protection. Use long screws to ensure the hinges are anchored securely. Installing a deadbolt lock, like those found on entry doors, will further help protect you and your family.

Where your safe room should be located depends upon how many levels are in your home or building.

In a one-story house, the ideal safe room is in the center of your home with few or no windows.

In a two-story house, seek out an interior first-floor room such as a bathroom, closet or space under the stairs.

In a multiple-story building, go to the first or second floors and take refuge in halls or other interior rooms away from windows. Interior stairwells and areas around elevators shafts are generally the strongest parts of a building.

As a storm approaches

If you are planning to leave the area, go early.

Other tips:

Refill your prescriptions. Make sure you have at least a one-week supply. (see prepare your medications)

Fill your car's gas tank. Have the oil, water and tires checked. Gas pumps cannot operate during power outages. Place emergency items inside like booster cables, tire repair kit and spare tire and flashlight with extra batteries.

If your home may flood, stack valuable items and cover them with plastic.

Get cash. Credit cards may not work. ATM's may not be operable.

Secure your boat and make arrangements for your pets early. When a Hurricane Watch is issued, a storm may affect our area within 36 hours. This is the time to review your Family Plan and Emergency Survival Kit checklist.

Contact family members to coordinate efforts and exchange plan information.

Turn refrigerator and freezer to coldest settings.

Freeze drinking



water in plastic jugs.

Stock up on an emergency water supply. Sterilize bathtub, jugs, bottles, utensils and containers.

Set up 5-gallon buckets with tight-fitting lids for use as emergency toilets. Line each bucket with a heavy-duty plastic trash bag.

Install shutters or precut plywood over windows.

Drop the water level in your pool by 1 or 2 feet. Shock the pool with extra chlorine to compensate for heavy rains.

Turn off the pool pump. Put outdoor furniture and pool equipment into the pool, but remove after the storm passes to prevent rusting.

Listen for weather updates and information on local TV or radio. The NOAA Weather Radio is a reliable source. Turn to PCC-TV, Your County Connection, to receive the latest official Pinellas-specific information. Don't rely on rumors and speculation.

If you must evacuate

When an evacuation order is given you should:

Secure all windows and doors tightly.

Put your Disaster Survival Kit in your car.

Turn off electric, water and gas.

Wear protective clothing like long pants, long sleeve shirts and sturdy shoes.

Lock your home.

Evacuate quickly but safely. The sooner you leave, the less time you spend in a traffic rush.

Only evacuate as far as necessary. Traffic gridlock could leave you stranded. When the storm passes, you may not be able to get back in. Officials suggest going to someone else's home in a non-evacuation area.

Let friends and family know your plans.

When a hurricane warning is issued

Hurricane conditions are less than 36 hours away and violent weather may come quickly. If you are not ordered to evacuate, complete your preparations and head to your home's safe room.

Move your supplies and emergency survival kit to your safe room.

Close all interior doors. Secure and brace external doors, particularly double inward-opening doors and garage doors.

Most importantly, stay inside and do not leave your shelter.

When the storm's impact is felt

While the approach of a hurricane can be an anxious time, living through the storm can be terrifying.

If you live in an ordered evacuation zone, you should already be at your safe place (host home, hotel or shelter). If you are not evacuating, it's time to brave the storm.

Here are some important tips to remember:

Stay tuned to local news or PCC-TV for updates.

Close interior doors. Secure and brace external doors.

If power goes out, use your weather radio for alerts. For light, use flashlights, lanterns or chemical light sticks. Avoid burning candles and do not run a generator inside.

Stay indoors and most importantly, stay calm.

Parents should extend greater patience and understanding to children having difficulty coping with the situation. Be honest about the danger and reassure them that you are focused on their safety. Do your best to keep them entertained or occupied.

Do not be fooled if there is a lull; it could be the eye of the storm and winds may pick up again.

If your home is breached

Even though you have taken the necessary precautions to protect your home, the exterior can be breached. Debris can break through windows, and trees can crash through your roof.

When this happens, take these immediate actions:

Take refuge in a small interior room, closet or hallway on the lowest level of your home. Remember, the center of your house is the safest.

Lie on the floor under a table or other sturdy object if you cannot make it to a safe room.

Consider leaving your home ONLY if remaining poses an imminent threat to your life.

Wait until the storm has passed to tend to any damage.

For more information, visit pinellas-county.org/emergency/itscoming.htm.

Pinellas County Emergency Operations Center Department of Emergency Management – 727-464-3800

During an emergency activation, call the Citizen Information Center at (727) 464-4333.

CONNECT WITH US!

CHURCH NEWS



955 20th Street South • St. Petersburg, FL 33712
(727) 894-4311
Email: info@mzprogressive.org
Website: www.mzprogressive.org

Sunday Worship Services.....7:45 a.m. & 10:00 a.m.
Sunday School.....9:00 a.m.
Wednesday Mid-Day Bible StudyNoon - 12:30 p.m.
Wednesday Prayer Service.....6:00 p.m.
Wednesday Bible Study6:30 p.m.

Youth Chapel Services - 921 20th Street South
Sunday Worship Service10:00 a.m.
Wednesday Small Group Bible Study6:30 p.m.

Mission Statement:
Impact the world by equipping believers to reach the lost with the gospel of Jesus Christ.



Rev. Louis M. Murphy Sr.
Senior Pastor

First Baptist Institutional Church
3144 Third Avenue South,
St. Petersburg, FL 33712
Phone: 727-323-7518

Sunday School 9:30 a.m.
Praise Time 10:45 a.m.
Morning Worship 10:45 a.m.
Tuesday Night Live -
Prayer Service & Bible Study 7 p.m.

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REV. DR. WAYNE G. THOMPSON,
PASTOR

BETHEL METROPOLITAN BAPTIST CHURCH
3455 - 26th Avenue South, St. Petersburg, FL 33711
Telephone (727) 327-0554 • Fax (727) 327-0240
E-mail: church5@tampabay.rr.com Web site: www.bmmbc.org

Sunday Worship Service10:15 a.m.
Sunday School9:00 a.m.
Teen Summit (Wednesday).....7:00 p.m.
Bible Study (Wednesday)7:00 p.m.



Rev. Rickey L. Houston,
Pastor

“God’s House To The City”

BETHEL COMMUNITY BAPTIST CHURCH
2901 - 54th Avenue South
St. Petersburg, FL. 33712
(727) 866-2567

SERVICES
Sunday School: 9:00 a.m.
Sunday Worship Service: 10:00 a.m.
Mid-Week Worship: Wednesday 7:00 p.m.



Rev. Dr. Manuel L. Sykes

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Joyful Spirit, Joyful Jazz
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The Rev. Josie Rose,
Priest-in-Charge

Sunday Communion and Worship Service 9:00 a.m.
Communion and Healing Service 11:00 a.m. Tuesdays

FAITH MEMORIAL MISSIONARY BAPTIST CHURCH
1800 18TH AVENUE SOUTH
ST. PETERSBURG, FL 33712
727-896-0351
FAITHMBC@YAHOO.COM
GROWING RELATIONALLY IN DISCIPLESHIP THROUGH CHRIST
MATTHEW 28:18-20, JOHN 15:4-5



REV. ROBERT A. VINSON, JR.

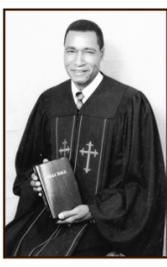
FAITH IN ACTION
FAITH MEMORIAL MISSIONARY BAPTIST CHURCH

SUNDAY PRAYER SERVICE 9:00AM
SUNDAY CHURCH SCHOOL 9:30AM
SUNDAY WORSHIP SERVICE 10:45AM
TUESDAY BIBLE STUDY 7:00PM

First Mount Zion Missionary Baptist Church
1121 22nd Street South, St. Petersburg, FL 33712
(727) 327-8708

Sunday Worship Services 8:00 and 11:00 a.m.
Sunday School.....9:30 a.m.
Prayer Meeting (Tuesday)6:00 p.m.
Bible Study (Tuesday)7:00 p.m.
Baptist Training Union (Sunday)..4:00 p.m.

“The Little Church Where Everybody Is Somebody”



Rev. Wallace Elliott
Sr. - Pastor

**YOUR CHURCH AD
COULD BE HERE!**
Contact:
www.TheWeeklyChallenger.com

Victory Christian Center Church
3012 18th Avenue South
St. Petersburg, Fla. 33712
(727) 321-0911
www.Victorychristiancenterchurch.org

Schedule of Services
Sunday Worship*
10:30 a.m.
Wednesday Bible Study* -7:00 p.m.
Friday Prayer -7:00 p.m.
Intercessory Prayer - 9:00 a.m.
(except Wednesdays)

Victory Christian Center is a Word of Faith Church.
For more information about the other services and ministries at Victory Christian Center, please call (727) 321-0911.
*Nursery and Youth Services Available



Donn & Jean
Freshler

20th Street Church Of Christ
825 20th Street South
St. Petersburg, FL 33712
Home: 896-8006

Bro. Robert Smith

Sunday Bible Class (All Ages)8:30 a.m.
Sunday Morning Worship9:45 a.m.
Sunday Evening Worship6:00 p.m.
Ladies Bible Class Monday7:00 p.m.
Monday Evening Bible Class7:00 p.m.
Wednesday Morning Bible Class10:00 a.m.
Wednesday Evening Bible Class7:00 p.m.

Unity Temple of Truth Church
511 Prescott Street South
St. Petersburg, FL 33712

Helping People Live Healthy, Prosperous, and Meaningful Lives

Sunday Worship Service 10:00 A.M.
Spiritual Living Class—Wednesday 1:00 P.M. & 7:15 P.M.




(727) 898-2457 | unitytruth1957@gmail.com

INSPIRATIONS
BY DIERDRE DOWNING-JACKSON
The Great Manipulation



“...Naked came I out of mother’s womb, and naked shall I return thither. The LORD gave, and the LORD hath taken away; blessed be the name of the LORD”. Job 1:21
It is important to remember that We can do all things through JESUS CHRIST who strengthens us. HE alone is LORD and SAVIOR. HE directs our path in righteousness, if we would only obey HIS commands. Our FATHER in Heaven, Our LORD and SAVIOR JESUS CHRIST and the HOLY SPIRIT are all we’ll ever need.
The enemy is not wise but deceitful. The enemy does not seek peace. The enemy manipulates for evil. The enemy flees at the name of JESUS.
As we live on this earth, GOD wants us prepared for the attack of the enemy by diligently seeking HIS Living Word in JESUS.
So many of our loved ones are focusing on money, not JESUS, on self not JESUS, on material gain not JESUS, on taking and not giving. The enemy is manipulating the destruction of so many lives because they are not focused on the goodness, grace and mercy of JESUS. Those walking by faith are blessed with a spiri-

tual vision, knowing that ‘whatever is done in darkness will be revealed in the light’. No matter what the enemy throws at the righteous, the Blood of JESUS always covers and protects. Remember that the enemy can’t manipulate one if one forever operates out of truth and love.
GOD gives those who diligently seek HIM wisdom to walk in righteousness and survive every attack of the enemy.
We must recognize the great manipulation of the enemy is defeated because the victory is in JESUS.
“NO WEAPON FORMED AGAINST GOD’S SAINTS WILL EVER PROSPER” IN JESUS.
“Because thou hast made the LORD, which is my refuge, even the most High, thy habitation; There shall no evil befall thee neither shall any plague come nigh thy dwelling.”
“If you make the Most High your dwelling place, even the LORD, who refuge, then no harm will befall you, neither shall any plague come nigh thy dwelling.” (Psalm 91:9-10)
GOD WILL GUARD YOU IN ALL YOUR WAYS!!! TO GOD BE THE GLORY IN JESUS CHRIST!” AMEN

WOW WEDNESDAYS
CREATING & LEADING A V.I.C.T.O.R.I.O.U.S. LIFE

JUNE 10 - NOVEMBER 18
6:30 pm - Collective Consciousness Prayer 

7:00 pm - Bible Study & Interactive Activities
Zoom Meeting ID: 375 007 212
Conference Call-in Number:
+1 253 215 8782 US



Dr. Doral R. Pulley
Spiritual Leader & Instructor



website - todayschurchtampabay.com
Giving through Givelify or
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CHURCH NEWS

ST. MARK MISSIONARY BAPTIST CHURCH
 1301 - 37th Street South, St. Petersburg, FL
 (727) 321-6631 • www.stmarkch.org

Schedule of Services

Church School 9:30 a.m.
Morning Worship 10:45 a.m.
Baptist Training Union..... 5:00 p.m.
Prayer Meeting and Bible Study
Wednesday 7:00 p.m.



Rev. Brian K. Brown

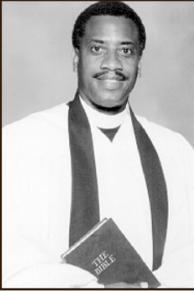
THE ROCK OF JESUS MISSIONARY BAPTIST CHURCH

SUNDAY SERVICES/WEEKLY ACTIVITIES

10:30 a.m. Worship Service
 9:00 a.m. Breakfast (First Sunday only)
 9:30 a.m. Sunday School (First Sunday Only)
 Sunday School 9:15 a.m. / Devotion 10:15 a.m.
 Praise & Worship 10:20 a.m. / Worship Services 10:30 a.m.
 Saints of Prayer - Monday 12:00 noon
 Weekly Bible Study - Tuesday 6:30 p.m.
 Adult Choir Rehearsals - Thursday 6:30 p.m.

Van service is available by calling: (727) 327-0015

THE ROCK OF JESUS IS LOCATED AT:
 3940 - 18th AVE. S., St. Petersburg, Florida
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Rev. Frank W. Peterman, Jr.
 Pastor

Friendship Missionary Baptist Church
 3300 31st St. S., St. Petersburg, FL 33712
 (727) 906-8300 www.fmbctheship.net
 Email: fmbc3300@verizon.net



Dr. John A. Evans, Pastor

WORSHIP EXPERIENCES

Sunday Worship7:45 a.m. and 10:45 a.m.
 Sunday School.....9:30 a.m.
 WednesdayNoonday Wednesday in the Word and Bread of Life
 7:00 p.m. Prayer and Wednesday in the Word
 7:00 p.m. Youth Enrichment

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DR. DORAL R. PULLEY
 Spiritual Leader Today's Church

CHURCH NEWS

St. Mark M.B.C.

The message from Pastor Brown on Sunday, May 31: 'How Do We Get on the Other Side of the Wall?' Joshua 6:1-10, 16, 20

Where one knee bent and took a life, let us bend a knee to save lives. We need to learn how to coexist bending our knees for the positive as we confess and communicate to God who hears and can bring healing.

The scripture from Joshua is a reminder of where we are living now. Israel was on a journey out of captivity, through a wilderness on to a promised land where they would have rights and freedom they didn't have in captivity. (Covid-19 has placed us in a form of captivity). Before the Israelites was a mighty walled city, Jericho, thought to be impenetrable. Walls are designed to keep things behind it or keep things from coming in. Walls are not designed to bring communities together. God wants us to be a people coming together and doing a work for everyone. Today we've hit a wall of anger, anguish and aggravation. God says don't tap out, pass out or give up. Though the wall may seem impenetrable we must realize it may not be ours to penetrate but ours to walk around as we trust and believe God.

So, 'How Do We get on the Other Side of the Wall (whatever your wall may be)? In Joshua God gives a plan of hope to get over whatever walls we're behind. First, from verse 2 we see that 'There Must Be a Plan - Where is Your Faith? There was no violence by their hands to bring the Jericho wall down. The plan was to wait on God, have faith and trust that He would provide what was needed. God's plan gave Joshua and the Israelites victory over Jericho.

Secondly, 'There Must Be a Process - What Will You Follow? The Israelites were to protest in silence, without violence. They were to follow the process of God and not man. (Are you following the mandate of man or the proscribed process of God)? We don't need to worry about others hearing us as we protest in silence, God hears, and He can cause others to hear us.

The third point from verse 10 'There Must Be Patience - How Will You Fight?' There is a way to protest peacefully with honor and dignity. Change does not happen overnight. We need to press where we can press and speak where we can with articulation and intelligence. We must fight with love.



Rev. Brian K. Brown, Pastor

The final point from verses 16 and 20 'There Must Be a Purpose - When Will We finish?' As they did at the Jericho wall we need to keep shouting until justice rolls down like a river . . . If we start shouting others will join us. It will take all people to bring the wall down. Where do we go from here? Continue to run into the wall or become break through men and women who work smart and not hard, so the power of the shout brings down the wall.

We invite you to join our live streaming service on YouTube each Sunday @ 10:20 and Bible Study on Wednesdays @ 7:00 p.m. (look for St Mark M B C).



Pastor's Corner

BY REV. DR. DORAL R. PULLEY,
 SPIRITUAL LEADER
 TODAY'S CHURCH Tampa Bay

We need more Wayshowers

"I AM the way, the truth and the life (John 14:6)."

Jesus was a powerful Wayshower to his disciples, the multitudes that followed him, individuals who experienced miracles through their interactions with him and to the religious leaders of his day. The Gospels illustrate Jesus' example of how to successfully navigate through the nine phases of life: Pre-existence with God, Birth, Life, Ministry, Death, Burial, Resurrection, Ascension and Second Coming. Shortly after Jesus' ascension, in the early church people who utilized Jesus' example and became Wayshowers themselves.

Today, we are Wayshowers. Following Jesus as a Wayshower empowers you to be a Wayshower to others throughout your cycle of life. As you live your life, you are setting an example for others to follow. Sometimes you may do it consciously through conversations and acts of service. Other times you may do it not really being aware that people are watching you and learning from you vicariously. Whether you do it intentionally or unintentionally, you are a Wayshower.

During COV-19, are you

showing people the way to healing and prosperity or are you showing the way to panic and poverty? Amidst racial tension and social unrest, are you showing the way to love and peace or are you showing people fear and chaos? Are you a Wayshower of prejudice and discrimination or a Wayshower of unity and equality? Are you a Wayshower of the problems or a Wayshower of the solutions?

Rev. Doral Pulley is the senior pastor of Today's Church Tampa Bay, 940 5th Ave. S., St. Petersburg (Staybridge Suites) and 5107 North Central Ave., Tampa.



INSPIRATIONS

BY DIERDRE DOWNING-JACKSON

Our ancestors paved the way

"Our ancestors have paved the way and must be honored for their sacrifices and diligence. They sacrificed so that future generations would be granted an education and the right to vote. Our ancestors believed in their hearts that not only should future generations be educated but they must demonstrate character and integrity to effectively and compassionately lead and make a difference.

As the daughter of a Tuskegee Airman, "Major" Alvin "Al" Downing (musician and writer of the Tuskegee Airmen theme song) and E. Bernice "Bunny" Downing (an accountant for the Tuskegee Airmen), my sisters and I were blessed that both of our parents were also compassionate educators and strong advocates for equal justice.

My father, Al Downing, was the first African American to play in the St Petersburg, Florida Symphony Orchestra and established the Al Downing Tampa Bay Jazz Association dedicated to providing avenues and scholarships for youth to pursue and succeed in music.

My uncle, Mayor George H. Gause, was the first African American to be elected to the Polk County School Board. (Our Pastor, Clarence E. Williams of Greater Mt Zion AME Church, as a youth, worked on my Uncle's campaign). "Uncle" was also the first African American to be elected mayor in the state of Florida, serving two terms as mayor of Bartow (1971 & 1974).

My husband, Dr. Russell T. Jackson, a retired anesthesiologist, was the first African American President of The California Society of Anesthesiologists. He remains dedicated to inspiring, guiding and mentoring young people to complete and further their education.

Our ancestors have made many sacrifices for African Americans to be able to vote and to be educated. We must not destroy the memory of the shoulders upon which we stand.

It is encouraging to see the willingness and true commitment of our youth who honor their ancestors and follow in a path of righteousness and who are determined to operate in excellence. We must encourage everyone, especially young people, to realize the importance of education and learning about African American Life and History.

At the age of ninety (90), my mother, "Bunny" Downing, insisted that I take her to the polls to vote for the first African President of the United States, President Barack Obama. We walked one block to the polls that day.

In the early 60's (1963), eight (8) African American students (later known as the "Dixie 8") integrated Dixie Hollins High School in St. Petersburg, Florida. (Three females: Thelma Bruce-President of the St. Petersburg Metropolitan Section of the National Council of Negro Women, Jessica Neal and Dierdre Downing-Jackson. Five males: Pastor Bobby McDonald, Charles Ford, Steve Jones, Ronald Sellers and Milton O'Neal.)

"Daddy" picked all eight of us up every morning, drove us to Dixie Hollins High School and picked us up everyday from school for a year. He did this for our safety because integration, especially in Pinellas Park, was not welcomed.

We all made a commitment to be educated and to make sure all young people, especially African Americans, realize the sacrifices that have been made by so many. Our ancestors have paved the way. With an education and by exercising the right to vote, we can make a difference in this country. We must honor the sacrifices of our ancestors.

Because we have been blessed by GOD's grace in our lives, we must honor our ancestors by operating in excellence and in integrity. Our ancestors lived and died for justice and equality. We must be without compromise in our commitment, unconditional in our love to all people and make truth our mantle.

We thank GOD for our ancestors who held on to their faith and paved a way for our future. "WE CAN DO ALL THINGS THROUGH JESUS CHRIST WHO STRENGTHENS US" Philippians 3:14

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The Daily Download at Dawn 6:30 AM with Dr. Doral R. Pulley on the Dr. Doral R. Pulley page
 The Midday Moment with Dr. Davina Jones between 12 PM & 3 PM on the Davina Jones page
 The Nightly Review at 9:25 PM with Deacon Kenneth Butler, Jr. on the Kenneth Butler, Jr. page

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Local protests in St. Petersburg draw hundreds after George Floyd's death

Photo courtesy of Danita Harris. Other photos used are courtesy of Frank Drouzas, Jabaar Edmond and Carla Bristol

BY FRANK DROUZAS
Staff Writer

ST. PETERSBURG — By the light of day, they were peaceful, almost serene. As dusk began to darken the sky, they began to stir. Come nightfall, their passion was fully aroused.

The protesters, upward of 300 strong, gathered outside the St. Pete Police Department at the intersection of 13th Street and First Ave North to make certain their voices were heard. This night, June 2, was the latest in a string of consecutive evenings that saw people in the city protesting the death of George Floyd in Minneapolis on May 25.

Floyd, a 46-year-old African-American man, died at the hands of a white police officer while being detained. Cuffed and forced to lie on his stomach, he expired as the officer pressed his knee to Floyd's neck for nearly

nine consecutive minutes. For the last two minutes and 53 seconds of that entire time, Floyd was nonresponsive.

Protesters of all races camped outside the police station, some of them sitting on First Avenue, which had been blocked off to traffic, as the twilight air crackled with anticipation. Many had signs. Music blared sporadically. A man arrived with some pizzas, and he was promptly cheered. Soon, the mood grew expectant, and the atmosphere electric.

"The American system was not built for black people to exist in the country," said a protester named Beatrice. "And unfortunately, there's nowhere else for us to go."

She said that too many people grew up being taught racist attitudes and thinking, and it is "really hard to deviate from what you've been taught."

"So I'm just out here supporting people that look like

me," she said. "We're tired of dying; we're tired of trying to explain to people why and how we feel, and how things are different for us and how your existence is different from ours. And even if you don't see it and you might not be able to understand it, it's real."

One woman paraphrased writer Alice Walker in asserting that the most common way people lose their power is by thinking they don't have any.

"I feel like all us being here together and just supporting one another, I feel like our voices will be heard," she said. "That's why I'm here. To be heard."

Another woman's message was simple: "I'm just hoping for some change."

Around 8 p.m., the crowd had collected into a condense unit and pressed against the barricades that had been erected all around the police station. They shoved their

signs into the air and raised their voices as loud as they could, shouting, "No justice, no peace!" and "Black lives matter!" directly at the heavily tinted windows of the station.

Night had completely fallen when they mobilized, marching and chanting as a group up First Avenue North toward a barrier created by police vehicles, then back again, reforming in front of the station. A few cars turned onto the road from side streets and rolled along with the protesters, honking in solidarity.

At 8:37 p.m., a protester called for everyone present to lie flat on the pavement — just as Floyd had done — for almost nine minutes, as a sign of respect. Many stretched out, face down, and hands behind their backs on the concrete. Some kneeled in reverence. Not a single word was spoken.

One woman stood completely still with her head bowed and one arm raised in a fist. By the end of the nine minutes, her eyes were streaming with tears.

Their voices were loud,

and their passion was real. Protesters marched from the police station to the downtown area, but on the way back, the peace turned into chaos.

Fireworks were set off, and by the time protesters reached police headquarters, officers told them to leave. Police launched smoke and flash bangs to disperse the crowd. The Pinellas County Sheriff's Office joined in, and several protesters were arrested.

Earlier that day, the St. Petersburg Police Department unveiled new body cameras for police officers. Five prototypes will be tested in the coming months. For now, only Police Chief Anthony Holloway and four officers received the cameras that fit in the front pocket of their uniforms.

The body cameras will turn on when an officer pulls their gun or Taser or if the officer is in an unusual position. Footage from the moment leading up to a drawn weapon will also be shown. Cameras also send an alert to nearby officers and supervisors when an officer is in dis-

truss. In Tampa, city leaders signed off on buying 650 body cameras.

Wednesday afternoon, Holloway, Mayor Rick Kriseman, and U.S. Rep. Charlie Crist spoke with a small crowd gathered outside of the police headquarters.

Holloway plans to hold daily one-on-one sidewalk chats with protesters in front of the police station.

"We're here," said Holloway. "We're not going anywhere; they're not going anywhere, so let's have these hard conversations."

SPPD has arrested upwards of 50 people this week for unlawful assembly, including someone with materials that could be used to make a Molotov cocktail and someone carrying a backpack with mortar-style fireworks.

Wednesday night's rainstorm didn't stop the fifth night of protest. Several hundred people made their presence known by 5 p.m. close to Central Avenue and 34th Street South.

To reach Frank Drouzas, email fdrouzas@theweeklychallenger.com



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At 8:37 p.m., a protester called for everyone present to lie flat on the pavement — just as Floyd had done — for almost nine minutes, as a sign of respect to Floyd.



#JusticeforGeorgeFloyd

When a child asks "Why?"
Tell them the truth.

It's hard to provide comfort during this tragic time in America. But it's important to teach the value and respect for human life. We will keep telling our children that we are all the same, that we are all equal. Because equality is the cornerstone of American democracy and worth fighting for.

"The horror of George Floyd's murder played out on television over and over, only heightening the outrage. We recognize that this is not normal law enforcement behavior. We realize that systematic change is within our grasp. If we speak with one voice that believes in human dignity, we will be able to live without fear in the greatest nation in the world." FEA President Fedrick Ingram






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Questioning police tactics

BY J.A. JONES
Staff Writer

ST. PETERSBURG — Like many cities across the nation, St. Pete has been the site of daily and nightly protests beginning on Saturday, May 30, sparked by the police killing of George Floyd in Minneapolis.

Daytime protests began peacefully on Saturday, but by nightfall, some news outlets referred to violence outside of the police headquarters Saturday night, leading police to use “non-lethal rounds” and flash grenades.

That did not deter protesters, however. They returned to march and protest on Sunday and each day since. They have been met with various proclamations of support and or warnings against violence from city hall and the police department.

Over the last few days, St. Pete activists have experienced peaceful protests, while questioning police tactics.

St. Pete Youth Farm coordinator Carla Bristol marched in the protests on Sunday, and said it was “peaceful.” Yet, Bristol also noted that while pro-

testers were able to march through the streets of south St. Pete without issue, when “...we arrived on Beach Drive, there were multiple police present.”

Bristol said this being the case, she wondered why there was a police presence in that part of town, rather than being along the whole route — and questioned why they were on Beach Drive at all.

“This was a reminder of the ‘two cities,’” she added.

Bristol was, of course, referring to the well-

known existence of separate policies, socio-economic, educational, and employment conditions that mirror and echo the racial divide between north and south of Central Avenue.

School board candidate and educator Caprice Edmond added, “The peaceful protest was a demonstration of solidarity, a demonstration that systemic racism must end. Our lives are depending on it. Seeing the police come out in raid gear was another reality of the times we are facing.”

Filmmaker and activist

Jabaar Edmond shared, “The protests in St. Pete were some of the most peaceful in the United States and the city administrators should see it as “goodwill,” noting that the south St. Petersburg community has been “hurt.”

“The city council, mayor, and chief [of police] should also show goodwill,” Edmond continued, urging a full review of policies and practices. Edmond is currently working with a social justice policy group called the Social Response Team to develop a platform of policies to present

to city officials.

He said the platform includes reviewing policies on body cameras for police officers with taxpayer access to videos, and equity audits on city programs and departments.

The team will also address prison pipeline policing, youth arrest policies, and various programs for youth, including employment and driver education courses.

To reach J.A. Jones, email jjones@theweekly-challenger.com

Trump’s photo-op with a Bible is contemptuous

BY FRANK DROUZAS
Staff Writer

It will be remembered as the day Donald Trump raised a Bible but dropped all pretense.

The president’s designs to wield religion as a political weapon were fully laid bare in an image that is striking and scary on so many levels. We’ve all seen it by now. In a made-for-propaganda-TV moment, he led a bizarre parade from the

White House to St. John’s Episcopal Church down the street on the evening of June 1, where he waited for someone in his entourage to hand him a Bible. He then silently stood in front of the church, trying out a few awkward poses with the Good Book — even holding it up in the air at one point like a trophy he’d just won — while he posed for photographs.

Since the church was built in 1816, every president has attended services at St. John’s, a block away from the White House. This place of worship had suffered some fire damage during the nationwide civil unrest following the death of George Floyd, who was killed by a white officer while in custody on May 25 in Minneapolis.

Perhaps Trump wanted to convey that he aimed to pay due respect to this revered building, harmed in the protests. Only he didn’t do anything that remotely showed he was being reverent. It wasn’t an actual visit, as he only faced the cameras, not even bothering to look over his shoulder at the boarded-up church.

He wasn’t inspecting any damage (mainly in the basement) and did not attempt to. He didn’t deliver inspiring words in front of such a holy backdrop; he quoted no Scripture and certainly didn’t pray. Finally, he encouraged members of his entourage to join him in the photo-op, and they all dutifully obeyed, standing like a dour group of white-collar businessmen in front of a vacation landmark.

It’s hard to pull punches when you see such a surreal, self-serving display. Rev. Mariann Budde, Episcopal Bishop of Washington, D.C., called it as she saw it, stating on a call to CNN that she was “outraged” by the act.

She publicly denounced the use of the sacred building “as a backdrop for a message antithetical to the teachings of Jesus and everything that our churches stand for.”

Minutes before, Trump had given a speech in the Rose Garden proclaiming he is our president of “law and order” and vowed that he would come down with a hammer on any protests that got out of hand. He failed to acknowledge the reason people are protesting across the country, to begin with — that is, systemic racism. Then safely surrounded by armed police and secret service men, Trump led members of his administration and the press on foot like a morose yet determined Pied Piper, simply to use religion, in its most tangible form, as a theater set.

All this would be deplorable enough, but let’s

not forget how his path was cleared for this stunt. Police in riot gear had been given the go-ahead only minutes before using brutal force and chemical irritants on peaceful protesters to disperse them forcibly and make way for the president. And what did these American citizens do to deserve such thuggish treatment? They were exercising their constitutional right to assemble at Lafayette Park, next to the White House.

Rev. Gini Gerbasi, rector at St. John’s Episcopal Church in Georgetown, was on the patio of the church at the time with protesters, explaining that the space was being used as a respite, for rest or prayer. When the ominous baton-wielding forces came rushing in, though, she had to flee like everyone else, telling CNN later that “people were dropping to the ground, afraid.” She added that she was stunned, shocked, and deeply offended that the administration had desecrated the holy ground that was church property, turning it into a literal battleground.

This isn’t the first time Trump has used religion as a prop, weapon or even a shield. Well into the time of the COVID-19 lockdowns, the president suddenly demanded that churches be reopened immediately. Forget about the fact that most states were disallowing crowds to gather for the express purpose of maintaining their citizens’ safety; Trump seemed hell-bent (pun intended) on urging churchgoers to assemble, regardless of the deadly virus.

Yes, the fine print of his message suggested that the houses of worship follow guidelines from the Center for Disease Control, but he made no allowance for how severely a given community was affected or if the churches themselves were even ready to reopen just yet. And the timeline is more revealing: several months into the Coronavirus era and weeks into shelter-in-place instructions, Trump suddenly decided that churches should be deemed essential and demanded that the state governors open them immediately.

So, where was this righteous proclamation at the outset of the pandemic? If he truly felt this strongly all along that houses of worship were so essential to the country, why the delay in conveying this message? Recent voter polls showing his approval ratings dropping among evangelical voters may be a cause.

On Sunday directly following his demands for places of worship to reopen, Trump was nowhere near a church service, opting instead to spend the Sabbath on the golf course.

For an economy-obsessed president who has claimed that the Bible is his favorite book, Trump has a hard time putting his money where his mouth is. While giving an interview for Bloomberg Television as a presidential candidate years ago, a reporter asked him to name one or two of his favorite verses. Trump ducked the question a few times, like a boxer evading oncoming jabs, ultimately



saying he wouldn’t want to get into it because it’s “very personal.”

A second reporter then asked him simply if he was an “Old Testament guy or a New Testament guy.” Now I’m no biblical scholar, but even I know that this is one of the most rudimentary questions you can ask someone who has ever cracked open the Book.

After a weird attempt at waffling, Trump answered, “Probably equal,” and refused to commit beyond that. Even if we assume he understood the nature of the question and what it is supposed to reveal about you, begging off didn’t make him look diplomatic. It just made him look like, well, a guy who doesn’t know the first thing about the very book he insists is his favorite of all time.

Trump isn’t the first politician to promote religion (or hide behind it, or hold it up like a crucifix against an evil threat, or wave it like a flag) for his own agenda, and he won’t be the last. But his controversial actions and words concerning religion are far more egregious than anything this country has seen

in a long time, possibly ever.

His administration’s spin machine will claim that his St. John’s photo-op was reminiscent of Winston Churchill inspecting parts bombed-out London during the Second World War. Even many of his adamant supporters have a hard time swallowing this spoonful of malarkey, and many of them concede that the stunt was at best half-baked, misguided and contrived.

History will record it as a watershed moment not just in Trump’s presidency but in the American presidency itself.

Most people view it as a shameless, reprehensible and a sacrilegious play to make you believe that the man you see in the photo is on the side of God.

I’m not one to throw around a term like “false prophet” lightly, but the man posing in those pictures — with the church for his background and the Bible for his prop — is a leader who is completely out of touch with these very sacred buildings, texts and what other symbols of religion truly signify. But he understands their power all too well.

Reopening the doors of the church

CHURCH, from front page

could be put in place before reopening. Burrow stressed that it’s essential to realize the potential for a COVID-19 outbreak within the congregation before opening.

“Think about how vulnerable your congregation and your parishioners will be to a COVID-19 outbreak within the congregation,” she said.

Allowing for necessary expenses is key, as Burrow said, such as additional cleaning supplies or multiple services. She urged churches to assemble a reopening and recovery team of leaders and lay leaders six to eight weeks before reopening, to deal with logistics and provide the best insight to the functioning of the church.

Ushers and security members, for example, maybe the ones to ask congregants to put masks on or sanitize their hands before entering the

church.

“Make sure you are asking different people from various capacities,” Burrow said. “You’ll need your trustees; you’ll need your financial folks, you’ll need your assistant ministers and leadership to be a part of that reopening team. Think about who are the people that have touchpoints with the congregation and will be able to assist with that reopening process. Their input is vital.”

As an alternative to fully reopening, a church can consider doing a partial reopening, or opening in phases. This may apply to churches that have day-care facilities or host outside meetings such as A.A. and N.A. She explained that leaders should develop a plan for physical and social distancing and adjust the duration and operating times of the service.

To avoid a full house,

faith leaders might ask congregants to attend on only certain Sundays, while the rest worship virtually from their homes that week. Some churches have been issuing a limited number of tickets or even holding multiple services on a given Sunday.

“But you cannot have all your members come in at the same time,” Burrow pointed out.

Communicating with the congregants and keeping them informed of the reopening steps helps alleviate their anxiety. This can be done with videos, e-mails, Facebook posts, or even newsletters for those who don’t have access to Wi-Fi.

She urged churches to order cleaning supplies and sanitizers well ahead of time, as these items aren’t as readily accessible as before the pandemic. Deep cleanings will be necessary, and it is

wise to document these cleanings.

Entry and exit stations with sanitizer and temperature checks are recommended. Though parishioners with a high temperature may not necessarily be carrying the virus, at least the church can remind them that they may be putting others at risk that day.

Water fountains should be closed off, and all door handles should be cleaned regularly and often. Microphones, keyboards, and organs should be sanitized after every use or every hand-off. Personal headphone microphones may be an alternate option. Also, remove Bibles, hymnals, pens, information cards, etc., from the backs of chairs/pews.

Faith leaders must communicate clearly to the congregants what the new mitigating guidelines are — such as wearing

masks, for example — and make sure they adhere to them. They might position offering trays at entrances to avoid passing them around or encourage parishioners to give online.

“Do not relax your mitigation guidelines until the data says we’re clear,” Burrow said. “And that will probably be when there’s a vaccine or cure.”

Peaten underscored that everyone will have to adjust to living in the time of COVID-19. Reopening church preschools, for example, should be done with extreme care and limited class size. Mission work and outreach efforts are currently being discouraged by health organizations due to their close contact natures.

“If you’re going to do community outreach, which is local, find ways to do it where you can do the social distancing,” she said.

Peaten explained that congregants over 65, those with underlying health conditions, pregnant women, and newborns are more susceptible to the virus and should be encouraged to stay home. She also placed great importance on cleaning.

“The church needs to be cleaned any time there is someone in the building,” she said, “whether it is a group of two or a group of 200.”

Resources:
floridahealthcovid19.gov/community-events/gabaptist.org/reopening-your-church-building/
COVID-19 testing:
baycare.org/coronavirus/covid-19-testing-centers
floridahealthcovid19.gov/
<https://www.chcpinelas.org/>

Congratulations, Patrick Jones!

Hobbies: Working, Music and being a DJ

Top 3 Dream Careers: Owning his own business, being a realtor, or radio personality

ST. PETERSBURG – Patrick Jones has been an active member of the Cohort of Champions since its inception in 2017 and is graduating from Boca Ciega High School Class of 2020. He has participated in the cohort's after-school training program and the Summer Workforce Training and Leadership Academy.

Through his love for music, Patrick has developed a passion for providing DJ services for special events. He was even featured as a guest DJ at this past year's Honoring Champions Celebration alongside Mayor Rick Kriseman and DJ Wynn of WTMP. During his senior year of high school, he worked at Taco Bell and is working toward starting his own business as a DJ.

Patrick plans to pursue an associate degree at St. Petersburg College and transfer to a state university to complete his bachelor's degree in business.

The Cohort of Champions exposed me to professional careers and positive black men that inspired me to feel like I can be great in life," said Patrick. "The cohort gave me the information



Patrick Jones

I can use to achieve my dreams, and it helped make college more of a realistic goal for me."

Patrick's proudest accomplishment is graduating high school and having the chance to pursue his dream of owning his own business.

The City of St. Petersburg's Cohort of Champions funds entrepreneurial and educational training opportunities for African-American male and female youth. The program also provides participants with oppor-

tunities for skill-building, leadership-focused workshops and events, mentoring, tutoring and academic advising.

The Cohort of Champions offers continuous recruitment throughout the year and provides mentors, coaches and wrap-around services to youth between the ages of 12-24.

If you are interested, contact their team at 727-893-7885 or via email at Carlos.Daniels@stpete.org or Richard.Prince@stpete.org for more information.

Congratulations, Maliky Rhymes!

Hobbies: Sports, educating himself, learning about entrepreneurship

Top 3 Dream Careers: Military police officer, plumbing business owner, community activist

ST. PETERSBURG — Maliky Rhymes has been an active member of the Cohort of Champions since 2019 and is graduating from Gibbs High School. He came to the Cohort of Champions as an intern through the Pinellas County School Board's Summer Acceleration Program as a rising senior.

He helped and served as an intern in the Cohort's Summer Workforce Training and Leadership Academy, leading group activities in a maintenance short course and becoming a coach and mentor to some of the younger students. He also served as one of the masters of ceremonies for the Cohort of Champions 2019 Servant Leaders Community Day.

Maliky is currently working and learning how to run a plumbing business. He plans to attend Pinellas Technical College to obtain a plumbing certification and work toward enlisting in the United States Navy, where he aspires to become a military police officer.

"The Cohort of Champions helped me get my life on track for the future I wanted, said Maliky. "I learned important skills



Maliky Rhymes

that I use every day, like how to save money. Now with my first job, I know how to save, and I am on track to get my own apartment very soon."

He says his proudest accomplishment is getting back on track in time to graduate with his class.

The City of St. Petersburg's Cohort of Champions funds entrepreneurial and educational training opportunities for African-American male and female youth. The program also provides participants with opportunities for

skill-building, leadership-focused workshops and events, mentoring, tutoring and academic advising.

The Cohort of Champions offers continuous recruitment throughout the year and provides mentors, coaches and wrap-around services to youth between the ages of 12-24.

If you are interested, contact their team at 727-893-7885 or via email at Carlos.Daniels@stpete.org or Richard.Prince@stpete.org for more information.

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