



"An inclusive community that seeks, serves & celebrates!"

Rev. Dr. Mary Kay Totty, Pastor

October 11, 2015

Good afternoon!

It is an honor to be here with you for this homecoming celebration as you begin your yearlong celebration of your 200th Anniversary.

Thank you, Rev. Cogman, for the invitation to bring greetings. It is good to see several of my colleagues here this afternoon (*Pastor Teal, Pastor Pines,*)

I stand here this afternoon because I am pastor of Dumbarton United Methodist Church, and you, Mt. Zion United Methodist, graciously invited us to be here, honoring us as your Mother church. Thank you.

As I considered what it means to be a Mother Church, the image that kept coming to mind was childbirth. Childbirth brings forth new life, but the birth itself will be painful, and messy.

Mt. Zion, your birth was similarly painful and messy. 200 years ago, Dumbarton was known as the Montgomery Avenue Methodist Church. Our church did not believe in civil rights. Some of our members were slave owners. We held to a strict segregation within the life of the church -- separating people of color, whether slave or free. This injustice became too painful to endure, so the African Americans, both slave and free, left and formed Mt. Zion Methodist Church. Still not a perfect solution, because like some mothers can be, my church was too controlling -- insisting that we still had the right to make important decisions, insisting that our pastor -- ALWAYS a white man in those days - would also be Mt. Zion's pastor. Black exhorters and lay preachers did have leadership at Mt. Zion but under the supervision of the Montgomery Street and later Dumbarton church. Throughout the last 200 years there have been other examples of blatant racism, prejudice, and unkindness on the part of Dumbartonians toward the members of Mt. Zion. I stand today to offer my apologies for my congregation's stained history. I invite Dumbartonians present who would join me in this apology to also stand. For the years and centuries of injustice by the members of our congregation we apologize. We are sincerely sorry. Today we stand as a sign of our repentance and our commitment to work to dismantle racism. We believe with all of our hearts that Black Lives Matter.

There is another facet to this story that is also important to articulate. The birth process brings labor and pain, but the labor and pain bring forth new life! So part of why I am here today,

Dumbarton is here today, is to honor and celebrate the first 199 years of life of Mt. Zion United Methodist Church.


I so deeply admire Mt. Zion UMC and your rich history. Your ancestors charted the course which has shaped you into an important congregation in Washington D.C. I do not know your history well, but there are two items I know that mean a lot to me. First, I know that the first African American female bishop of the United Methodist Church, Bishop Leontine Kelly, was born in your parsonage. Second, one of the United Methodist leaders who has been an inspiration to me for ministries of social justice and inclusion is your very own Barbara Ricks Thompson.

Dumbarton is also grateful for the life and ministry of Mt. Zion United Methodist this day. We so admire your willingness to host the Georgetown Saturday Suppers week in and week out, all year round. We are grateful that we have the opportunity to work with you to provide these suppers every other month. Thank you. You inspire us when we see you becoming engaged with the One Congregation, One Family program which is making a difference in people's lives in powerful ways. In addition, Dumbarton treasures the times that we come together each year to share worship -- for Martin Luther King Sunday, Ash Wednesday, Pentecost, and the Blessing of the Animals.

Dumbartonians who are here, can you express celebration for Mt. Zion?

We have a small gift for Mt. Zion. Please, Rev. Cogman, go ahead and open it. It is a ceramic peace dove lamp. One of the traditions at Dumbarton is that every week we light a peace candle and pray for peace in the world. We offer you this small dove that you may use as a lamp or not -- however, you like. We offer it with our prayers for Mt. Zion, that you may know the fullness of peace -- God's shalom.

Blessings to you during this year of celebration.

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Mary Kay Totty". The signature is written in black ink and is positioned above the typed name and title.

Rev. Dr. Mary Kay Totty
Pastor