

A Century of Courage: Still Walking, Still Rising

By Rev. Sharon M. Perry

This year marks the 100th anniversary of Dr. Carter G. Woodson launching the movement we now celebrate as Black History in America — formally recognized as “A Century of Black History Commemorations.”

Black History Month invites us not only to remember the past, but to reflect on how history continues to shape our present and our future. Black history is deeply connected to struggles for dignity, justice, and equality — values that transcend culture, race, and religion.

Therefore, would you not agree that throughout history, progress has been driven by people willing to speak, to listen, and to act with courage, even when it was uncomfortable?

Can't you feel the resolve of Harriet Tubman, who followed the North Star to freedom?

Can't you envision Frederick Douglass, who taught himself to read — and then taught the world?

Can't you imagine Rosa Parks, who sat down so we could stand tall?

Can't you hear Dr. Martin Luther King Jr., the Drum Major for Justice, who dared to dream out loud?

Can't you sense Maya Angelou, who turned pain into poetry?

Can't you recognize Bishop Colette Matthews-Carter, who champions equity and justice every day?

Can't you acknowledge former Vice President Kamala Harris, who broke barriers with purpose and poise?

Can't you remember former President Barack Obama, who embodied hope on a global stage?

Can't you honor Mayor Sharon Owens, who leads with vision and a commitment to collective uplift?

Yes, InterFaith Works colleagues — we are standing at the intersection of compassion and justice!

Can't you see the everyday heroes — like you and me — whose names never make headlines, but whose courage, consistency, and internal resolve continue to shape our community day after day?

Today, InterFaith Works' Center for Dialogue & Action reminds us that:

Dialogue is not passive. It is an active commitment to understanding, to truth, and to shared humanity.

As we honor Black History, we honor the people who built the road — and those of us who continue to walk that road.

Yes, we are still walking — with consciousness, with courage, and with a call to action.

Thank you.