

2018



RESOURCES



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June 2018

Dear Beloved Community,

"The more you know of your history, the more liberated you are." Maya Angelou



This quote reminds us of the power of knowing history, it guides us and gives insight.

Juneteenth originated in Galveston, Texas on June 19, 1865. The people of Texas learned that the Civil War had ended and slaves had gained their freedom. Major General Gordon Granger, the leader of the Union troops, issued General Order Number 3, emancipating the last 250,000 slaves who remained captive despite President Lincoln's Emancipation Proclamation of 1863. Justice was delayed but ultimately not denied.

The name Juneteenth may capture the excitement those slaves felt. According to the "Queen's English," the celebration should be called "June Nineteenth." But when chains of captivity fell from their bodies and souls, their tongues were not concerned about grammar. Newfound freedom prompted the creation of a new word, "Juneteenth." (Source: African American Lectionary)

This resource includes worship litany, history and additional resources that can be used within your community and congregation.

Blessed to be a blessing to you,

A handwritten signature in cursive that reads "Sheila P. Spencer".

Sheila P Spencer

Juneteenth is the oldest known celebration of the ending of slavery. "From its Galveston, Texas origin in 1865, the observance of June 19th as the African American Emancipation Day has spread across the United States and beyond. Today Juneteenth commemorates African American freedom and emphasizes education and achievement. It is a day, a week, and in some areas a month marked with celebrations, guest speakers and family gatherings. It is a time for reflection and rejoicing. It is a time for assessment, self-improvement and for planning the future. In cities across the country, people of all races, nationalities and religions are joining hands to truthfully acknowledge a period in our history that shaped and continues to influence our society today.

Litany

A Christian Affirmation of Juneteenth

- Leader:** As we commemorate freedom as African Americans, let us not forget the trials and tribulations faced by our ancestors forced into slavery for hundreds of years.
- People:** Thanks be unto God for granting freedom and giving us victory through Jesus Christ our Lord!
- Leader:** Let us continue to emphasize the importance of education and the advancement of the African American race.
- People:** Thanks be unto God for granting freedom and giving us victory through Jesus Christ our Lord!
- Leader:** God has granted us freedom, let us use it wisely, guard it carefully, and embrace it totally.
- People:** Thanks be unto God for granting freedom and giving us victory through Jesus Christ our Lord!
- Leader:** Allow this Juneteenth celebration to serve as a reminder of our tenacity, our ability to hold on to hope and to our God.
- People:** Thanks be unto God for granting freedom and giving us victory through Jesus Christ our Lord!
- Leader:** Let all people of all religions come together and acknowledge a period in our history that shaped and continues to negatively influence American society.
- People:** Thanks be unto God for granting freedom and giving us victory through Jesus Christ our Lord! We are more than conquerors through Jesus who loves us so.
- Leader:** Allow other ethnic groups to be sensitized to the conditions our ancestors endured and help them to understand why racism and bigotry cannot have the last word.
- People:** Thanks be unto God for granting freedom and giving us victory through Jesus Christ our Lord! We are more than conquerors through Jesus who loves us so.
- Leader:** Let all African Americans continue to hope for a better tomorrow while remembering and rejoicing over our triumphant heritage.
- People:** We will not forget the "Middle Passage." We will continue to tell our ancestral story of bondage that gave way to freedom, both physically and spiritually. We shall forever strive to advance the Kingdom of God through liberation and excellence.
- All:** Thanks be unto God for granting freedom and giving us victory through Jesus Christ our Lord! We are more than conquerors through Jesus who loves us!

* Litany from *The African American Lectionary* by Sharon Laverne Fuller

The Church and Juneteenth

From the establishment of the first black church in America, throughout slavery and beyond, the church has been the foundation of the black community. During the horrific days of slavery it provided relief and nourishment for the soul with its promise of a better life after death. The church gave the slave dignity and assured him he was equal in the eyes of God. Despite his earthly condition he was loved and valued as a person of God no matter how difficult his burden became or unbearable his suffering was. Jesus, who too suffered, prepared a place of rest for him when his time was up on earth. It was this religious faith that sustained the slave and enabled him to endure his bondage.

The slave owner was able to observe a glimpse of this faith as he heard the incredible music that seemed to come out of the slave's soul while toiling in the field. If the slave owner had ventured into a slave church, his strong defense of slavery would no doubt have been weakened. He would have seen the people he considered inferior and sub-human without the defensive masks they wore in the fields; in their churches, enslaved men and women displayed a dignity and stateliness that survived the slave owner's dehumanizing oppression.

The church was more than a safe house. It served as a launching pad for black leadership and was involved early on in working for liberation. Many free blacks in northern churches participated in the Underground Railroad, raised money for freedmen after the Civil War, and helped keep the black community intact.

The importance of the black church cannot be overstated. It was, and perhaps still is, the single most important institution in the black community. It permitted self-expression and supported creativity at a time when it could have meant death. An example is found in the spirituals, gospel and other forms of music that helped blacks explain and endure their sojourn in America. Blacks were able to use their churches to hone organization and leadership skills useful in the economic, social and political development of their community. It's no accident that Martin Luther King, Jr., Jesse Jackson and a host of civil rights leaders got their start through the black church.

The Black Church provided a haven from the daily oppression slaves faced, but after freedom it was also the center of social activities including the sponsorship of the annual Juneteenth Celebration.

A portion of The Black Church and Juneteenth by Dr. Charles Taylor. The whole paper can be found online at <http://www.njclc.com/njclchistory.html>.

Juneteenth, celebrated on June 19, is the name given to emancipation day by African-Americans in Texas. On that day in 1865 Union Major General Gordon Granger read General Order #3 to the people of Galveston. General Order #3 stated "The people of Texas are informed that, in accordance with a proclamation from the Executive of the United States, all slaves are free. This involves an absolute equality of personal rights and rights of property between former masters and slaves, and the connection heretofore existing between them becomes that between employer and hired labor. The freedmen are advised to remain quietly at their present homes and work for wages. They are informed that they will not be allowed to collect at military posts and that they will not be supported in idleness either there or elsewhere." --
Courtesy Texas State Library

Why We Celebrate Juneteenth...

Juneteenth represents the joy of freedom – the chance for a new beginning.

Unless we expose the truth about the African-American slave experience, Americans won't truly be free.

Never must we forget our ancestors' endurance of one of the worst slave experiences in human history.

Every American has benefitted from the wealth blacks created through over 200 years of free labor and Juneteenth allows us to acknowledge that debt.

TTo encourage every former slave-holding state to follow Texas' (and Oklahoma's) example and make Juneteenth a state holiday.

Everyday in America, blacks are reminded of the legacy of slavery. Juneteenth counters that by reminding us of the promise of deliverance.

Even on the journey to discover who we are, Juneteenth allows us to reflect on where we've been, where we're at and where we're going as a people.

N"Never give up hope" is the legacy our enslaved ancestors left. It was this legacy that produced black heroism in the Civil War and helped launch the modern civil rights era. It is this legacy we celebrate.

TTo proclaim for all the world to hear, that human rights must never again become subservient to property rights.

History books have only told a small part of the story; Juneteenth gives us a chance to set the record straight.

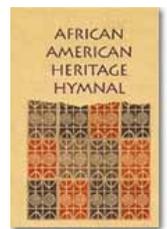
Freedom is always worth celebrating!

A portion of The Black Church and Juneteenth by Dr. Charles Taylor. The whole paper can be found online at <http://www.njclc.com/njclchistory.html>.



Juneteenth Resources

- Video on Juneteenth – African American Lectionary:
<http://www.theafricanamericanlectionary.org/videos.html#v35>
- History of Juneteenth and resources: <http://www.juneteenth.com/>
- African American Lectionary Resources:
<http://www.theafricanamericanlectionary.org/PopupLectionaryReading.asp?LRID=305>
- National Juneteenth Holiday Campaign. Online location: <http://www.juneteenth.us/>
- Texas State Historical Association. Online location:
<http://www.tshaonline.org/handbook/online/articles/lkj01>
- 2017 Juneteenth Events – Click link for info on Juneteenth celebrations that are near you
<https://www.everfest.com/seasonal/juneteenth-festivals>
- Taylor, Charles A., *Juneteenth: A Celebration of Freedom*, Greensboro, NC: Open Hand Publishing, LLC, 2002.
- *African American Heritage Hymnal: 575 Hymns, Spirituals, and Gospel Songs* by Rev. Dr. Delores Carpenter – General Editor, Rev. Nolan Williams – Music Editor <https://www.giamusic.com/products/P-5400.cfm>



Additional Resources

- **Black Disciples Who Make a Difference** Issue 1-5: These resources contain brief biographies of African Americans whose lives are a significant part of our Christian faith.
<https://www.discipleshomemissions.org/congregations/african-american-congregational-nurture/resources/>
- **African American History Month:**
<https://www.discipleshomemissions.org/congregations/african-american-congregational-nurture/resources/african-american-history-month/>

