

# AFRICAN AMERICAN HISTORY MONTH



# 2020



February 2020

*"We must never forget that Black History is American History. The achievements of African Americans have contributed to our nation's greatness." – Yvette Clarke*



Greetings,

"Known as the "Father of Black History," Carter G. Woodson (1875-1950) was the son of former slaves, and understood how important gaining a proper education is when striving to secure and make the most out of one's divine right of freedom. Although he did not begin his formal education until he was [almost] 20 years old, his dedication to study enabled him to earn a high school diploma in West Virginia, his first undergraduate degree from Berea College in West Virginia, and bachelor and master's degrees from the University of Chicago in just a few years. In 1912, Woodson became the second African American to earn a PhD at Harvard University.

February has been designated as African American History Month. Recognizing the dearth of information on the accomplishments of blacks in 1915, Dr. Carter G. Woodson founded the Association for the Study of Negro Life and History, now called the Association for the Study of African American Life and History (ASALH)."

We invite you to use this resource for not only February, but feel free to use them throughout the year. We have information about African American Disciples who made a difference in the life of the Christian Church (Disciples of Christ).

Blessed to be a blessing to you,

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## Sybel Thomas



Sybel Thomas served as a leader in general church and international leadership roles. She served as vice president of International Christian Women's Fellowship from 1978 – 1982. Sybel was also called to serve as President of the World CWF (now known as Global Women Connecting). Sybel Thomas was a member of the first moderator team at the first General Assembly of the newly restructured Christian Church (Disciples of Christ), and thus also the first African American and first lay woman to serve as one of the moderators. She also served as a former president of the National Convocation. Mrs. Thomas was an outstanding leader who had a love for the church and a special place in her heart for the women. She passed away June 2011.

She was a member of boards of the Pension Fund, Division of Overseas Ministries, Homeland Ministries, Eureka College, United Ministries in Higher Education, the United Christian Missionary Society, and the Executive Committee of the Disciples Peace Fellowship. She was a trustee of the Disciples Divinity House at the University of Chicago, served on the General Nominating Committee of the General Board. She also served on the executive committee of Church Women United. In 1998, Sybel was given the Liberation Award by the National Convocation. She was honored for being an "effective enabler of Disciples women."

# Litany

## *A Litany from African American Lectionary*

### **Black History Observance**

Oh God, you have heard the anguished cries of our ancestors. Their sounds echo and penetrate time to remind us of our foreparents who were brutally captured and forcibly enslaved, as they left the peaceful womb of their African homeland.

**“Stony the road we trod.”**

Oh God, you have seen the millions of dark bodies buried beneath the tumultuous waves of the deep. Bodies of African men and women who held the seeds of greatness. You have seen women’s dreams for a united family vanish as they were sold at auction blocks. You have seen the legacy of the African American family decimated and demeaned by those who have attempted to control our destiny.

**“Bitter the chastening rod, felt in the days when hope unborn had died.”**

Oh God, you have ignited the sparks within us into a blazing demand for freedom, equality and justice. This quest cost Harriet Tubman sleepless nights, as she led her people to freedom; it was an equality that Rosa Parks and civil rights activists fought for and gave their lives for; it was a justice that Martin Luther King, Jr. stood for, as thousands stood with him at the Lincoln Memorial.

**“Yet with a steady beat, have not our weary feet, come to the place for which our fathers sighed?”**

Oh God, you have seen our tears. You have been pained by the evil of human hearts. Yet, you loved humanity enough that you sent your only Son to identify with the outcast, marginalized and rejected. As the cries of Jesus pierced your heart, so have the cries of your people—cries from different cultures and in different languages.

**“God of our weary years, God of our silent tears.”**

O God, you answered us during our exodus from Africa. You wiped every teardrop during our exile in captivity. Our foreparents dared to dream that one day, on these shores, we would become politicians, preachers, educators, doctors, writers, scientists, artists, and so much more.

**“Lest our feet stray from the places, our God, where we met Thee.”**

Our ancestors’ hard work, their courage, their convictions, and their belief in you paved the way for our emancipation and education. But it is clear, you have liberated us. You have set us free. “Free at last, free at last, thank God Almighty, I’m free at last!”

**“Lest our hearts drunk with the wine of the world we forget Thee. Shadowed beneath Thy hand, may we forever stand. True to our God and true to our native land.”**

## 2020 – African Americans and the Vote

The year 2020 marks the centennial of the Nineteenth Amendment and the culmination of the women's suffrage movement. The year 2020 also marks the sesquicentennial of the Fifteenth Amendment (1870) and the right of black men to the ballot after the Civil War. The theme speaks, therefore, to the ongoing struggle on the part of both black men and black women for the right to vote. This theme has a rich and long history, which begins at the



turn of the nineteenth century, i.e., in the era of the Early Republic, with the states' passage of laws that democratized the vote for white men while disfranchising free black men. Thus, even before the Civil War, black men petitioned their legislatures and the US Congress, seeking to be recognized as voters. Tensions between abolitionists and women's suffragists first surfaced in the aftermath of the Civil War, while black disfranchisement laws in the late nineteenth and early twentieth

centuries undermined the guarantees in the Fourteenth and Fifteenth Amendments for the great majority of southern blacks until the Voting Rights Act of 1965. The important contribution of black suffragists occurred not only within the larger women's movement, but within the larger black voting rights movement. Through voting-rights campaigns and legal suits from the turn of the twentieth century to the mid-1960s, African Americans made their voices heard as to the importance of the vote. Indeed the fight for black voting rights continues in the courts today. The theme of the vote should also include the rise of black elected and appointed officials at the local and national levels, campaigns for equal rights legislation, as well as the role of blacks in traditional and alternative political parties.



The International Civil Rights Center & Museum (ICRCM) is located in Greensboro, North Carolina, United States. Its building formerly housed the Woolworth's, the site of a non-violent protest in the civil rights movement. The International Civil Rights Center & Museum is an archival center, collecting museum and teaching facility devoted to the international struggle for civil and human rights. The Museum celebrates the nonviolent protests of the 1960 Greensboro sit-ins that served as a catalyst in the civil rights movement. <https://www.sitinmovement.org/>

### Ernest Newborn



The Rev. Dr. Ernest J. Newborn, Sr., was born on March 19, 1927 in Whiteville, Tenn., to James Henry Newborn and Josephine McKinney. After graduating from Tennessee State University in 1951 with a degree in sociology, Newborn continued his studies at Howard University School of Religion, earning his master of divinity in 1954 and his doctor of ministry degree from Christian Theological Seminary in 1983.

He served as a pastor in Tennessee, Ohio, and Washington, D.C., as well as associate regional minister in Mid-America in the early 1970s.

In 1978, he started a new chapter with the Church Finance Council as administrative director of reconciliation, where he continued until 1992. Newborn was the fourth director of Reconciliation Ministry, following Revs. John Compton, Thomas Griffin and William Fox.

Married to Janice B. Robinson, father of two children and four grandchildren. He passed away in Claremont, Calif., on November 56, 2019.

# Lift Every Voice and Sing

*Lift every voice and sing,  
till earth and heaven ring,  
Ring with the harmonies of liberty;  
Let our rejoicing rise  
High as the listening skies,  
Let it resound loud as the rolling sea.*

*Sing a song full of the faith that the  
dark past has taught us,  
Sing a song full of the hope that the present  
has brought us;  
facing the rising sun of our new day begun,  
let us march on till victory is won.*

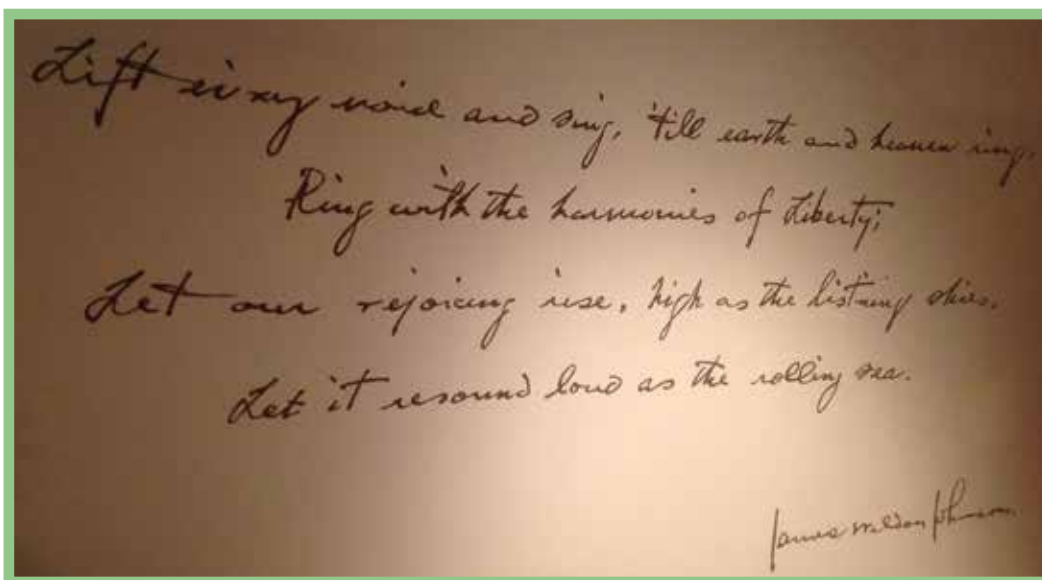
*Stony the road we trod,  
bitter the chastening rod,  
felt in the days when hope unborn had died;  
yet with a steady beat,  
have not our weary feet  
come to the place  
for which our fathers died?*

*We have come over a way that with tears*

*have been watered,  
We have come, treading our path through the  
blood of the slaughtered,  
out from the gloomy past,  
till now we stand at last  
where the white gleam  
of our bright star is cast.*

*God of our weary years,  
God of our silent tears,  
thou who hast brought us thus far on the way;  
thou who hast by thy might led us into the  
light,  
keep us forever in the path, we pray.*

*Lest our feet stray from the places, our God,  
where we met thee;  
lest our hearts drunk with the wine of the  
world, we forget thee,  
shadowed beneath thy hand,  
may we forever stand,  
true to our God,  
true to our native land.*



Left: "Lift Every Voice and Sing" in the hand writing of James Weldon Johnson (1871–1938). Sometimes referred to as "Black National Anthem" is a song written as a poem by Johnson in 1899 and set to music by his brother John Rosamond Johnson (1873–1954) in 1900.



The National Museum of African American History and Culture is the only national museum devoted exclusively to the documentation of African American life, history, and culture. It was established by Act of Congress in 2003, following decades of efforts to promote and highlight the contributions of African Americans. To date, the Museum has collected more than 36,000 artifacts and nearly 100,000 individuals have become members. The Museum opened to the public on September 24, 2016, as the 19th and newest museum of the Smithsonian Institution. <https://nmaahc.si.edu/>



The National Underground Railroad Freedom Center is a museum of conscience, an education center, a convener of dialogue, and a beacon of light for inclusive freedom around the globe. The mission is to reveal stories of freedom's heroes, from the era of the Underground Railroad to contemporary times, challenging and inspiring everyone to take courageous steps of freedom today. <https://www.freedomcenter.org/>

## Raymond Brown



The Rev. Dr. Raymond E. Brown was born on May 25, 1925, in Little Rock, Ark., to William Richard and Verlie Acklin Brown. He became a member of Cross Street Christian Church at an early age where he attended and graduated from the public schools of Little Rock.

Ray attended Jarvis Christian College in Hawkins, Texas, where he received the Bachelor of Arts degree and was ordained into the Christian Ministry. His Seminary work was done at Drake University, Des Moines, Iowa, and the Honorary Doctorate of Divinity Degree was conferred upon him by Jarvis in 1977.

He began his pastoral ministry in Hannibal, Mo., where he served the Willow Street Christian Church for sixteen and one half years. During this time, he met and married Edna Ruth Dixon and they became the parents of seven children

While working with Emmet J. Dickson, Brown was one of the key architects of the merger between the National Christian Missionary Convention (NCMC) and the International Convention of the Christian Church, Disciples of Christ. Elected the last president of the NCMC in 1965 serving until 1969, Brown finished what would have been a two-year term serving as the first president of the National Convocation of the Christian Church (Disciples of Christ).

Brown was the first African American vice-moderator of the Christian Church, Past President of the National Convocation, and the only person to serve as senior vice president of Church Extension. In the early 1960s, while pastor of Second Christian Church in Hannibal, Mo., with the church's Christian Men's Fellowship president, James P. Griggsby, Brown was given the permanent ownership of the state trophy for the best fundraising for the Star Supporter Fund for three years in a row.

In 1969, Raymond Brown became the first African American general field representative of Church Extension (formerly Board of Church Extension). In the first five years after Brown's appointment, twice as many African American congregations were requesting loans and services as requested services in the prior ten years. By 1987, Raymond Brown had become the senior vice president of Church Extension.

He married Suzanne DeMoss Brown and passed on October 30, 2012.

# African American Disciples Resources

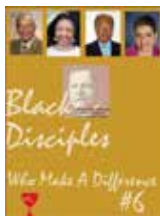
ASALH -- Established on September 9, 1915 by Dr. Carter G. Woodson, ASALH (Association for the Study of African American Life and History) are the Founders of Black History Month and carry forth the work of the founder, the Father of Black History.

ASALH continues his legacy of speaking a fundamental truth to the world—that Africans and peoples of African descent are makers of history and co-workers in what W. E. B. Du Bois called, “The Kingdom of Culture.” ASALH’s mission is to create and disseminate knowledge about Black History, to be, in short, the nexus between the Ivory Tower and the global public. We labor in the service of Blacks and all humanity. [www.asalh.org](http://www.asalh.org)

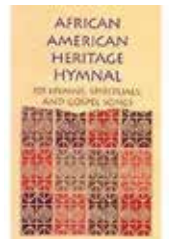
**Wisdom of Women Volume 2** -- Shares the life of Melvia Anderson Fields. She was born and reared in Bourbon County, Kentucky, which is near historic Cane Ridge. She is an African American author, leader, historian and inspiration. She is the author of “Women on a Mission” – a book about African American women who were integral parts of the history of the Christian Church (Disciples of Christ). This just scratches the surface of this remarkable woman It consists of 60 to 90 minutes of conversation and wisdom, edited into short six to ten-minute segments. A study guide with questions for reflection and conversation after each segment accompanies each DVD. The cost is \$29.95. For Information on the DVD Study Series and the book, “Women On A Mission”, go to [discipleshomemissions.org/wisdom-of-women](http://discipleshomemissions.org/wisdom-of-women)

**Black Disciples Who Made A Difference Series** -- This is a series of publications that highlights the life and achievements of African American Disciples who have made an impact in the life of the Christian Church Disciples of Christ. These marterials are available for free download at [www.discipleshomemissions.org/african-american-resources](http://www.discipleshomemissions.org/african-american-resources)

**The Cost of Unity: African American Agency and Education and the Christian Church 1865-1914 (Voices of the African Diaspora)** -- Macon, GA: Lawrence Burnley Mercer University Press, 2008. This book examines the agency of African-Americans in the founding of educational institutions for blacks associated with the Christian Church. The philosophical discourse within the Christian Church concerning the purpose, type, and control of these schools is examined as well as the prevailing racial assumptions and attitudes that informed each of these areas. For more info [www.mupress.org/productdetails.cfm](http://www.mupress.org/productdetails.cfm)



**African American Heritage Hymnal: 575 Hymns, Spirituals, and Gospel Songs by Rev. Dr. Delores Carpenter** -- Eight years of inspired work by a committee of more than 30 musicians and pastors, all leaders in African American worship and gospel music, have resulted in this compendium representing the common repertoire of African American churches across the United States. For the first time in an African American hymnal, traditional hymns and songs are notated to reflect performance practices found in the oral tradition of the black church in America. At a time when such traditions are falling victim to modern technology, this book strives to preserve this rich heritage for future generations. Presented are litanies for “Fifty-Two Sundays of Worshipful Celebration” outlining an African American church year, including such special days as Martin Luther King Sunday, Elders’ Day, Mother’s Day, and Men’s Day. Also included are 52 responsive scripture readings from the Old and New Testaments and an extensive index that includes scriptural and thematic cross-references.



**For Loves Sake** is a book by The Rev. John Foulkes. Published by the National Convocation and available for sale through GWD Ministries at [norman.reed@att.net](mailto:norman.reed@att.net).

**Lift Every Voice and Sing** -- sometimes referred to as “Black National Anthem” is a song written as a poem by James Weldon Johnson (1871–1938) in 1899 and set to music by his brother John Rosamond Johnson (1873–1954) in 1900.

**I Have A Dream** -- This poetic and provocative short film has been created to inspire communities to ask the question: how far have we come on the journey to social justice and what must be done to achieve the dream King so eloquently articulated in 1963? [www.saltproject.org/christian-video-resources-for-small-groups/i-have-a-dream](http://www.saltproject.org/christian-video-resources-for-small-groups/i-have-a-dream)

Elder Patricia  
Parker



Elder Patricia Parker was an ordained minister in the Christian Church (Disciples of Christ) as of May 2009.

Elder Parker began serving at East Percy Street Christian Church (Disciples of Christ) in Greenwood, Miss., as the transitional Pastor in June 2001. In March 2002, history was made when Elder Patricia Parker was installed as the first African American Pastor of a Disciples of Christ church in the state of Mississippi.

Elder Parker was a 1980 honor graduate of Amanda Elzy High School, Greenwood, Miss. She was also a graduate of Alcorn State University from which she received her Bachelor's Degree in Nursing in 1984. She later earned certification as a Critical Care Nurse in 1995 and later Trauma Life Support. She was employed with Greenwood Leflore Hospital, Greenwood, Miss.

Elder Parker was an active member on the Local, State, Regional, and National level with the Christian Church (Disciples of Christ). She served as both President of the Mississippi Christian Missionary Convention (MCMC) and President of District IV. She served on the Great River Region Board, the Regional Commission of Ministry for District II, and the Planning Committee for the Disciples Home Missions Black Ministers Retreat, and the Disciples Women's Joint Cabinet as Workshop Director. In addition, she was a Regional Elder for the Great River Region.

Elder Parker was a member of the Itta Bena Ministerial Alliance in Itta Bena, Miss.; the Black Minister's Fellowship of the National Convocation; the American Association of Critical Care; and Theta Pi Zeta Chapter of Zeta Phi Beta Sorority, Inc.

She was born in 1963 and passed in 2015.

## A Partial List of African American Inventors

Compiled by C. Butler and Charles Isbell



A.P. Ashbourne	Biscuit cutter	November 30, 1875
L.C. Bailey	Folding bed	July 18, 1899
A.J. Beard	Rotary Engine	July 5, 1892
A.J. Beard	Car-coupler	November 23, 1897
G.E. Becket	Letter Box	October 4, 1892
L. Bell	Locomotive smoke stack	May 23, 1871
M.E. Benjamin	Gong and signal chairs for hotels	July 17, 1888
M.W. Binga	Street sprinkling apparatus	July 22, 1879
A.B. Blackburn	Railway signal	January 10, 1888
Henry Blair	Corn planter	October 14, 1834
Henry Blair	Cotton planter	August 31, 1836
Sarah Boone	Ironing board	April 26, 1892
C.B. Brooks	Street-sweepers	March 17, 1896
O.E. Brown	Horseshoe	August 23, 1892
J.A. Burr	Lawn mower	May 9, 1899
J.W. Butts	Luggage carrier	October 10, 1899
W.C. Carter	Umbrella stand	August 4, 1885
T.S. Church	Carpet beating machine	July 29, 1884
G. Cook	Automatic fishing device	May 10, 1899
J. Cooper	Elevator device	April 2, 1895
P.W. Cornwall	Draft Regulator	February 7, 1893
A.L. Cralle	Ice-cream mold	February 2, 1897
W.R. Davis, Jr.	Library table	September 24, 1878
C.J. Dorticus	Machine for embossing photo	April 16, 1895
Clarence L. Elder	Occustat	1976
T. Elkins	Refrigerating apparatus	November 4, 1879
F. Flemings, Jr.	Guitar (variation)	March 3, 1886
G.F. Grant	Golf tee	December 12, 1899
J. Gregory	Motor	April 26, 1887
M. Headen	Foot power hammer	October 5, 1886
B.F. Jackson	Gas burner	April 4, 1899
Fredrick M. Jones	Automatic refrigeration system	
J.L. Love	pencil sharpener	1897
Latimer & Nichols	Electric lamp	September 13, 1881
T.J. Marshall	Fire extinguisher (variation)	May 26, 1872
Elijah McCoy	Lubricator for steam engines	July 2, 1872
Garrett A. Morgan	Gas mask	
Garrett A. Morgan	Traffic signal	1923
J.F. Pickering	an airship	1900
W.B. Purvis	fountain pen	1890
Norbert Rillieux	Sugar refining process	1846
H. Spears	Portable shield for infantry	December 27, 1870
Rufus Stokes	Air-purification device	1968
E.H. Sutton	Cotton cultivator	April 7, 1878
Granville T. Woods	Electromechanical brake	August 16, 1887
Granville T. Woods	Railway telegraphy	November 15, 1887
Granville T. Woods	Induction telegraph system	November 29, 1887
Granville T. Woods	Overhead conducting system for electric railway	May 29, 1888
Granville T. Woods	Electromotive railway system for long-haul trucks	June 26, 1888



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