



2021 Resources



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June 2021

Dear Beloved Community,



Juneteenth is a celebration that has been a part of my history and upbringing. As more people become aware of the holiday, it is important to note this day has been celebrated for over a century. Juneteenth was first celebrated in Texas, on June 19, 1866. This was the first anniversary of the day that African Americans in Texas first learned of the Emancipation Proclamation, more than two years after it was initially issued.

This day is very special to my heritage and upbringing. My parents are both from Texas and it represents my history and roots. Several years ago our family journeyed to Texas for a family reunion and gathered at the site that my ancestors received the news. We celebrated the legacy that they carried and how they impacted their community. The Texas historical society had erected a plaque that celebrated the legacy of our ancestors. My ancestors established their own surnames for their descendants. Spencer is the name given by my ancestors. They created a school. They built and founded Anadarko Christian Church (Disciples of Christ) and we worshipped in the building over 150 years later.

Discover the history and significance of this day with this resource packet. We have included worship resources and suggestions for additional study. This is a day that is important and significant for all of us to embrace.

Blessed to be a blessing,

Rev Sheila P Spencer
DHM Interim President

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.

Why We Celebrate Juneteenth...

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

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

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

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

T To encourage every former slave-holding state to follow Texas' (and Oklahoma's) example and make Juneteenth a state holiday.

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

E 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.

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

H 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

What is Juneteenth?

June 19th is perhaps the oldest holiday celebrated by African Americans; it is the grandfather of all such observances. Juneteenth is a cultural observance. June 19, 1865 marks the date that all slaves in the United States were officially made "free."

Who developed Juneteenth?

Freed slaves in the state of Texas created and developed the June 19th celebration in 1866. Legend has it that the name Juneteenth was derived from a little girl who could not pronounce "June 19." She said "Juneteenth" and the name caught on and was used throughout the state of the Texas

Where is Juneteenth observed?

This American holiday is celebrated primarily by African Americans and was originally celebrated by freed slaves located in the state of Texas. Juneteenth is now celebrated by many throughout the world.

Litany

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 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!

When is Juneteenth observed?

Juneteenth is officially observed on June 19; however, the celebration may last one to seven days. On this Lectionary, it is slated for celebration for January 1 and has been joined with Emancipation Proclamation Day for two reasons. First, the Emancipation Proclamation was given effect on January 1, 1863. Second, during the earliest Juneteenth celebrations the reading of the Emancipation Proclamation took center stage. Our goal is to give historical coverage to both events, understanding that Juneteenth is now almost always celebrated in June.

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.

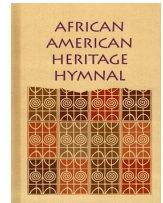
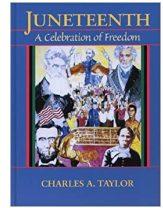
*A portion of The Black Church and Juneteenth
by Dr. Charles Taylor*

Why is Juneteenth observed?

Juneteenth is observed to acknowledge that all slaves within the continental United States were freed at a certain point. This celebration acknowledged the signing of the Emancipation Proclamation while also acknowledging that the slaves of the state of Texas did not receive the news until almost 2½ years after the official signing and announcement was given. Large celebrations began in 1866.

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>
- **Texas State Historical Association. Online location:** <http://www.tshaonline.org/handbook/online/articles/lkj01>
- **2019-2020 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 [African American Heritage Hymnal - GIA Publications \(giamusic.com\)](http://www.giamusic.com)
- **Celebrating Freedom and Black Culture-** <https://thejuneteenthfoundation.com/>



Children's Books and Celebrating Juneteenth

- Juneteenth for Mazie by Floyd Cooper.
- Juneteenth Jamboree by Carole Boston Weatherford.
- Juneteenth by Vaunda Micheaux Nelson.
- Freedom's Gifts: A Juneteenth Story by Valerie Wesley.
- All Different Now: Juneteenth, the First Day of Freedom by Angela Johnson.
- Juneteenth: A Celebration of Freedom by Charles Taylor.
- The Story of Juneteenth: An Interactive History Adventure by Steven Otfinoski.
- Juneteenth: Freedom Day by Muriel Miller Branch.
- Come Juneteenth by Ann Rinaldi.
- Tiny's Emancipation by Linda Baten Johnson. <https://coloursofus.com/10-childrens-books-celebrating-juneteenth/>

