



THE OFFICIAL JUNETEENTH FLAG

# JUNETEENTH 2025 RESOURCE

**Celebrating African American Freedom**

Remembering The Past, Maintaining Courage For The Present &  
Participating In Hope For The Future

Joshua 4:1-7

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According to historians and scholars, the scores of oppressed African American people and communities, generationally impacted by the sin and evil of slavery in the United States, Juneteenth is the oldest African American commemorative holiday. Juneteenth, also known as Emancipation Day, Freedom Day, Jubilee Day, or African American Independence Day, is celebrated yearly on June 19<sup>th</sup>. June 19, 1865, is an important date in American History. It represented when enslaved African Americans living in Galveston, Texas, received breaking news from General Gordon Granger of the Union Army that all enslaved persons were free. This in-person pronouncement and the many notices posted on the doors of buildings and churches were significant because there were approximately 250,000 people still being strangled by the stronghold of slavery.<sup>1</sup> Two and a half long years following President Abraham Lincoln's signing of the Emancipation Proclamation on January 1, 1863, the enslaved in Galveston, Texas, finally received the word.

Though the proclamation declared liberation for all, many enslaved people remained unaware. In addition, Texas slaveholders refused to abide by the law and accept that the social norm, economic gains, and forced labor they unjustly enjoyed had come to an end. Texas had become a safe harbor for enslavers during this time. Enslavers would travel from other Confederate states with their enslaved to Texas for cover because Union Soldiers had not traveled to the area yet. Many states and cities, like Galveston, had continued to break and ignore the law by maintaining such a horrific and oppressive system. Enslavers held the secret to themselves simply because they wanted to get a few more crop seasons of free labor.<sup>2</sup>

When federal soldiers finally marched on Texas and took control of the state, General Granger announced the law giving liberation to all who were still enslaved. Once the enslaved persons realized they had been freed, they began to celebrate, worship, and honor God for their liberation. What they had been praying for had finally come to pass. Ring shouts, call and response singing, and chanting could be heard through the wind. Clapping of hands and stomping of feet could be felt through the soil of the land. It was a time to run and celebrate! Tempie Cummins, a formally enslaved person recorded that her mother, who was enslaved in Brookeland, Texas, a town two hundred miles from Galveston told her that when she received the news, she slipped out of the chimney and clicked her heels 4 times, shouting "I's free!, I's free!" Then she ran to the field and told all the other enslaved people, and they quit their work.<sup>3</sup> Since that day of liberation, African Americans in Texas and across the United States began to celebrate the abolishment of slavery. Juneteenth signaled the end of slavery in the United States.

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<sup>1</sup> *History & Legacy of Juneteenth*, National Museum of African American History and Culture, Smithsonian, May 14, 2025, <https://nmaahc.si.edu/explore/stories/historical-legacy-juneteenth#:~:text=Freedom%20finally%20came%20on%20June,newly%20freed%20people%20in%20Texas>

<sup>2</sup> Kirsti Jewel, *What Is Juneteenth?* (New York, Penguin Workshop, 2022) 9.

<sup>3</sup> Kirsti Jewel, 10.

This movement of liberation and celebration began spreading to the most remote and rebellious communities in the confederacy, and later across the United States. Today, communities across our nation commemorate Juneteenth by hosting festivals, barbecues, concerts, educational forums, health fairs, job fairs, church services, volunteer opportunities, mission activities, and more. Juneteenth represents the resilience, resistance, community, strength, brilliance, and hope of African Americans.

Two hundred years following the liberation of African Americans in Galveston, Texas, a national holiday was created and signed into law by President Joe Biden on June 17, 2021. Though this holiday is widely celebrated by African Americans, Historically Black Colleges and Universities, private institutions, and religious movements, large sections of our nation are still unaware of this vital piece of American history.

## **OUR COVENANT OPPORTUNITY AS DISCIPLES**

Disciples Home Missions and its Office for Congregational Vitality & Innovation encourages every member and congregation within the Christian Church Disciples of Christ to join in the recognition and celebration of Juneteenth. Consider participating by engaging in transformative acts of service within the community, advocating for marginalized communities, promoting justice, and sharing the significance of Juneteenth with others. Please acknowledge Juneteenth in some way during worship. Consider at least one of the resources provided. Let us celebrate Juneteenth, an important national holiday. After all, Juneteenth is a part of American History.

## **JUNETEENTH RESOURCES**

### **WEBSITE ARTICLES:**

- The Historical Legacy of Juneteenth:  
<https://nmaahc.si.edu/explore/moments/juneteenth#:~:text=Juneteenth%20is%20an%20often%20overlooked,Lincoln%20signed%20the%20Emancipation%20Proclamation>
- What is Juneteenth? Juneteenth Commemorates an Effective End of Slavery in The United States: <https://www.history.com/articles/what-is-juneteenth>
- Juneteenth & General Orders #3:  
<https://www.galvestonhistory.org/news/juneteenth-and-general-order-no-3>

### **JUNETEENTH VIDEOS:**

- History of Juneteenth by Dr. Shennette Garrett Scott:  
[https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=dli\\_53jihMM](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=dli_53jihMM)
- What is Juneteenth, and why is it important? - Karlos K. Hill and Soraya Field Fiorio  
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=lq8TNKZVEWs>

- Henry Louis Gates Jr. The Significance and History of Juneteenth: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=W6unHgUZ6IA>
- What Is Juneteenth Video? | Interesting Facts for Students: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=VUlnCTurgw>

## **BOOK RESOURCES:**

### *For Adults & Young Adults*

- On Juneteenth by Annette Gordon-Reed
- Juneteenth: The story behind the celebration by Edward T. Cotham
- Juneteenth by Ralph Ellison
- Envisioning Emancipation: Black Americans And The End of Slavery by Deborah Willis and Barbara Krauthamer

### *For Children & Youth*

- What is Juneteenth by Kirsti Jewel
- Juneteenth for Mazie by Floyd Cooper
- The History of Juneteenth: A History Book for New Readers by Arlisha Norwood, PhD and Illustrated by Sawyer Cloud
- Opal Lee and What It Means to Be Free: The True Story of the Grandmother of Juneteenth by Alice Faye Duncan and Illustrator, Ketura A. Bobo

## **Juneteenth Activities for Congregations**

- Host or participate in a community festival, carnival, concert, etc.
- Host panel discussions, speaker series, town hall.
- Engage in a local mission/volunteer event.
- Create a Juneteenth book display in a prominent place in the congregation.
- Organize a storytelling event for children and young people.
- Engage in congregational-wide anti-racism training.
- Create a Juneteenth worship experience on a Sunday.
- Host an arts & poetry contest for local elementary & middle school students.
- Sponsor a Juneteenth event for a local senior apartment or nursing home.
- Organize an advocacy event to address policy, social ills, social determinants of health, and inequalities in your community.
- Host a movie night that amplifies the African American experience in America, accompanied by a discussion.

# JUNETEENTH WORSHIP GUIDE

## Worship Songs, Hymns, Spirituals

### Contemporary:

Juneteenth Celebration by Sounds of Blackness:

[https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=WH3a\\_xtjzZg](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=WH3a_xtjzZg)

- Freedom Looks Good On You by Maverick City featuring Israel Houghton, Bri Babineaux & Ryan Ofei: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=vqGA0h0Qids>
- Make it Right by Maverick City Music featuring Dante Bowe, Todd Dulaney, & Jekalyn Carr: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=edaA71kMKgg>
- Call To Action by Anthony Brown & Group Therapy: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Mrb8eshuZK8>
- This Is The Freedom by Tasha Cobbs Leonard <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=qwYV3lzKa4M>

### Traditional Movement Songs:

- We've Come This Far by Faith by Albert A. Goodson, Chalice Hymnal, #533
- Lift Every Voice & Sing by James Weldon Johnson and J. Rosamond Johnson, Chalice Hymnal, #631
- Kum bay Yah (Come By Here), Composer Unverified, Chalice Hymnal, #590
- I'll Overcome Someday by Charles A. Tindley, African American Heritage Hymnal, #544.
- Go Down Moses, Composer Unverified, Chalice Hymnal, #663
- No More Slavery Chains For Me (Many Thousands Gone) by Shirley Verrett <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=PE3kBH8qBIY>
- Oh Freedom! - The Golden Gospel Singers: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=vejJLhXdown8>

### Liturgical Dance Possibilities

- Stand Up by Cynthia Erivo: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=fVh-7zqUIWY>
- Something Inside So Strong by the Spirituals featuring Annatoria & Ché Kirah: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=gkwzl8J5nWU>, <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=LSSayKeYSEw>

## Juneteenth Order of Worship Possibilities

Prelude Music

Call to Worship

Leader: We enter this place of worship to remember the pain, resilience, and hope for a just world.

Congregation: **We lean on God for daily strength and hope that one day liberation will fully come.**

We enter this place of worship remembering the impacts of trauma and the many moments of triumph.

**We lean on God for daily strength and hope that one day liberation will fully come.**

We enter this place of worship remembering how the Church at one time was complicit in partnering with systems and evil. Today, we acknowledge our role in fighting for justice, equity, and peace.

**We lean on God for daily strength and hope that one day liberation will fully come.**

**All: Today, we enter this place of worship remembering what African Americans endured and achieved in the United States. We celebrate progress, knowing more is needed. We worship together as we remember the past, maintain courage for the present, and participate in our hope for the future. Let us give God praise! Hallelujah!**

Musical Selection

Opening Prayer

Dear God, you created all in your image and declared that your creation was good. Your imagination and love for creation put us on a journey of unity, wholeness, and peace. However, humanity failed to embrace your will and way. Evil has infiltrated the human fabric and continues to create century-old divisions among us, leading to the misuse of power. This reality undoubtedly robs people of their dignity and their sense of wholeness. We ask that you arrest our hearts and forgive us of our sins, so that we might become the harbingers of the grace and peace needed today. Heal our world and all who are blessed to live and navigate it. As we remember the pain of the past, seek to eradicate the problems of today, and look with hope for a more just future, we ask that your divine mercy and favor rest on us all. Make us great stewards of our lives, bodies, talents, gifts, resources, and privileges as we seek to improve our community one life at a time. In Jesus' name! Amen!

Scripture Readings: Joshua 4:1-7; Psalms 78:1-32

Congregational Hymn of Acknowledgment & Solidarity

Lift Every Voice & Sing by James Weldon Johnson & John Rosamond Johnson

Welcome & Passing of The Peace

Offering: Worship Through Generosity

Juneteenth Moment of Reflection:  
Juneteenth: A Poem by Calvin J. Walker, performed by Jasmine Shanise Gammon<sup>4</sup>

<https://sojo.net/media/juneteenth>

<https://vimeo.com/563912995>

Liturgical Dance

Musical Selection

Sermon

Call to Discipleship

Communion/Lord's Supper

Video Announcements

Call to Action & Solidarity/Benediction

**Disciples Home Missions**

**Presented by Rev. Derrick L. Perkins, Sr.,**

**Director for Congregational Vitality & Innovation**

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<sup>4</sup> Sojourners, "Celebrating Juneteenth," <https://sojo.net/media/juneteenth>, 3.29, Jun 16, 2021, <https://vimeo.com/563912995>