

**The Episcopal Diocese of Newark
Commission on Liturgy and Music
June 10, 2021**

Liturgical Resources and Information for Observing Juneteenth in Your Congregation

Also referred to as - Freedom Day, Jubilee Day, Liberation Day, and Emancipation Day

“Juneteenth is the oldest nationally celebrated commemoration of the ending of slavery in the United States. Dating back to 1865, it was on June 19th that the Union soldiers, led by Major General Gordon Granger, landed at Galveston, Texas with news that the war had ended and that the enslaved were now free. Note that this was two and a half years after President Lincoln’s Emancipation Proclamation - which had become official January 1, 1863.”

<https://www.juneteenth.com/history.htm>

Considerations:

The nature of the day is Celebratory

It is of primary importance that this anniversary is used as an opportunity to teach people about the history of racism in NJ, and especially, in their own town, and the on-going racism of today.

Learn about the day

Teaching needs to begin well in advance of June 19. NJ Public schools rarely, if ever, taught how slow New Jersey was to support the 13th Amendment.

The following link is a very helpful resource for background work. Other resources are noted in the document. <https://www.durandhedden.org/docs/juneteenth-exhibit.pdf>. A google search may help you find documentation about early enslavement in your own town, and data about on-going racism through redlining and other means.

Union of Black Episcopalians website offers resources and information
https://www.ube.org/dfc/newsdetail_2/3172534

Videos to Consider

1. <https://www.history.com/news/what-is-juneteenth>
2. [The Talk -- about police interactions](#)
3. [Racism shorts](#)
4. [PBS series](#)
5. [how to raise a black son](#)
6. [another one](#)

Avoid cultural appropriation.

Liturgical Notes

Incorporate biddings about racial justice and racial reconciliation in the *Prayers of the People*. Pray for racial reconciliation and economic and personal freedom in black communities.

- Consider using additional collects in the service
 - *O Lord God of hosts, who with a mighty arm delivered Israel from bondage in Egypt: Let not our hearts be hardened like Pharaoh's, but incline our hearts to mercy; that we might fight against slavery of body and mind, and oppression of the soul. Help us to welcome the liberated into the fullness of the family of Christ, that their children and our children may share the bread of brotherhood, and that hand in hand they may enter into thine eternal Kingdom; through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.* <http://www.ststeve.com/2020/06/19/juneteenth-4/>

From *the Book of Common Prayer*

3. For the Human Family

O God, you made us in your own image and redeemed us through Jesus your Son: Look with compassion on the whole human family; take away the arrogance and hatred which infect our hearts; break down the walls that separate us; unite us in bonds of love; and work through our struggle and confusion to accomplish your purposes on earth; that, in your good time, all nations and races may serve you in harmony around your heavenly throne; through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.
BCP page 815

27. For Social Justice

“Grant, O God, that your holy and life-giving Spirit may so move every human heart [and especially the hearts of the people of this land], that barriers which divide us may crumble, suspicions disappear, and hatreds cease; that our divisions being healed, we may live in justice and peace; through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.”

44. For the Future of the Human Race

O God our heavenly Father, you have blessed us and given us dominion over all the earth: Increase our reverence before the mystery of life; and give us new insight into your purposes for the human race, and new wisdom and determination in making provision for its future in accordance with your will; through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

62. A Prayer attributed to St. Francis

Lord, make us instruments of your peace. Where there is hatred, let us sow love; where there is injury, pardon; where there is discord, union; where there is doubt, faith; where there is despair, hope; where there is darkness, light; where there is

sadness, joy. Grant that we may not so much seek to be consoled as to console; to be understood as to understand; to be loved as to love. For it is in giving that we receive; it is in pardoning that we are pardoned; and it is in dying that we are born to eternal life. Amen.

7. For the Diversity of Races and Cultures page 840 BCP

O God, who created all peoples in your image, we thank you for the wonderful diversity of races and cultures in this world. Enrich our lives by ever-widening circles of fellowship, and show us your presence in those who differ most from us, until our knowledge of your love is made perfect in our love for all your children; through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

- Music
 - Include music from LEVAS. Notes in the bulletin/announcements about the pieces chosen further better understanding of the day.
 - N.B. *Lift every voice* (LEVAS, Hymn 1) is sung in place (as one would the *Star-Spangled Banner*), and not as a processional or recessional. Provide an explanation in the bulletin to avoid cultural appropriation and to further better understanding of the day.
 - Consider using music of freedom riders of the 1960s. Many of the songs were Gospel songs with rewritten lyrics.
 - <https://folkways.si.edu/we-shall-overcome-songs-of-the-freedom-riders-and-the-sit-ins/african-american-music-american-history-historical-song-struggle-protest/album/smithsonian>
 - <https://www.pbs.org/wgbh/americanexperience/features/soundtrack-lyrics/>
- Preaching
 - Consider preaching from a liberation theologian's position or inviting a guest preacher to do so.

For questions or comments about this resource, please contact the Commission on Liturgy and Music through the Rev. Audrey Hasselbrook, Chair (ahasselbrook@optonline.net).