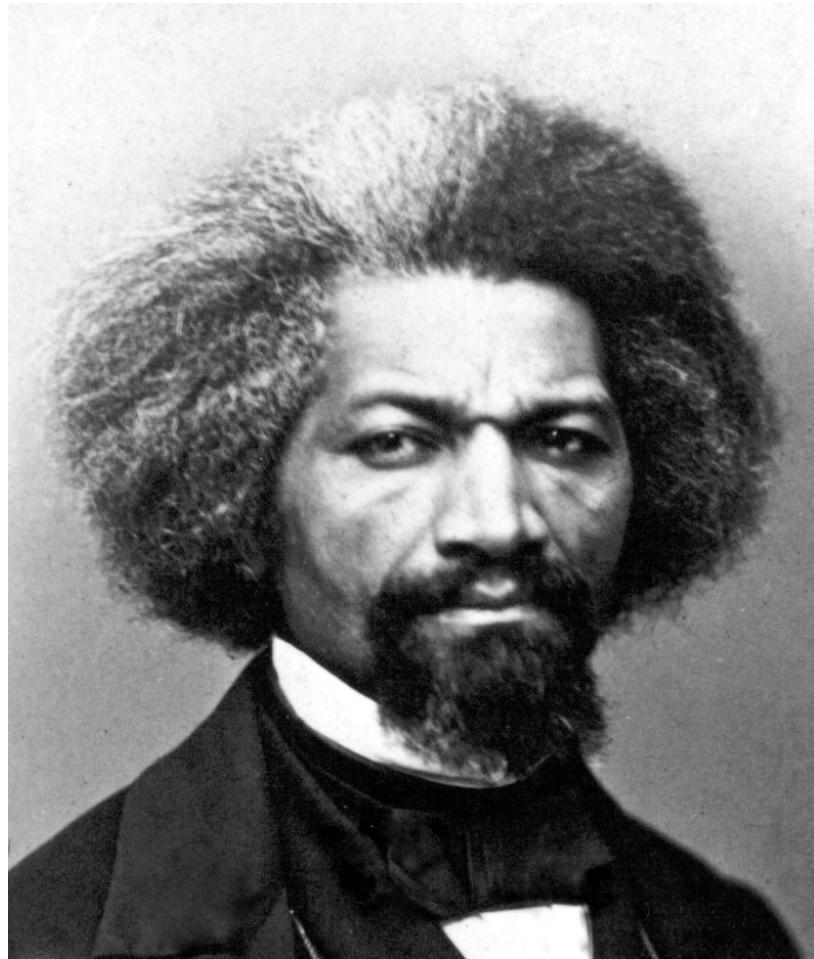


# Trinity Episcopal Church

Bethlehem, Pennsylvania



*The Lessons appointed for use on  
The Commemoration of  
Frederick Douglass*

**Orator and Advocate for Truth and Justice, 1895  
Wednesday, February 20, 2019**

## Collect

Almighty God, we bless your Name for the witness of Frederick Douglass, whose impassioned and reasonable speech moved the hearts of people to a deeper obedience to Christ: Strengthen us also to speak on behalf of those in captivity and tribulation, continuing in the Word of Jesus Christ our Liberator; who with you and the Holy Spirit dwells in glory everlasting. **Amen.**

## A Reading from the Letter to the Hebrews

## Hebrews 2: 10-18

It was fitting that God, for whom and through whom all things exist, in bringing many children to glory, should make the pioneer of their salvation perfect through sufferings. For the one who sanctifies and those who are sanctified all have one Father. For this reason Jesus is not ashamed to call them brothers and sisters, saying,

“I will proclaim your name to my brothers and sisters, in the midst of the congregation I will praise you.”

And again,

“I will put my trust in him.”

And again,

“Here am I and the children whom God has given me.”

Since, therefore, the children share flesh and blood, he himself likewise shared the same things, so that through death he might destroy the one who has the power of death, that is, the devil, and free those who all their lives were held in slavery by the fear of death. For it is clear that he did not come to help angels, but the descendants of Abraham. Therefore he had to become like his brothers and sisters in every respect, so that he might be a merciful and faithful high priest in the service of God, to make a sacrifice of atonement for the sins of the people. Because he himself was tested by what he suffered, he is able to help those who are being tested.

## Response

## Psalm 85: 7-13

Show us your mercy, O LORD, \*  
**and grant us your salvation.**

I will listen to what the LORD God is saying, \*  
**for he is speaking peace to his faithful people  
and to those who turn their hearts to him.**

Truly, his salvation is very near to those who fear him, \*  
**that his glory may dwell in our land.**

Mercy and truth have met together; \*  
***righteousness and peace have kissed each other.***

Truth shall spring up from the earth, \*  
***and righteousness shall look down from heaven.***

The LORD will indeed grant prosperity, \*  
***and our land will yield its increase.***

Righteousness shall go before him, \*  
***and peace shall be a pathway for his feet.***

### **The Holy Gospel according to Saint John**

**John 8: 30-32**

As Jesus was saying these things, many believed in him.

Then Jesus said to the Jews who had believed in him, “If you continue in my word, you are truly my disciples; and you will know the truth, and the truth will make you free.”

### **Prayer over the Gifts**

God of peace, who guided your servant Frederick Douglass in the works that give you glory, grant that in all our offering this day we may wait upon the riches of your grace and be ready in truth for the abundance of your table, through Jesus Christ our Lord. **Amen.**

### **Prayer after Communion**

***Grant, O almighty and everlasting God, that your faithful people, whom you have restored to life through the proclamation of your holy word and nourished with the bread of heaven, may grow into the likeness of him whose Body and Blood they have received, and may be made worthy to dwell with him in heaven, where he lives and reigns for ever and ever. Amen.***

## **Frederick Douglass, 1818-1895**

**Frederick Douglass was the most important black American leader of the 19th century.** He was born Frederick Augustus Washington Bailey, in Talbot County, on Maryland's Eastern Shore in 1808[sic], **the son of a slave woman, and in all likelihood, her white master.** Upon his escape from slavery at age 20, Douglass adopted a new surname from the hero of Sir Walter Scott's **The Lady of the Lake**. Douglass immortalized his formative years as a slave in the first of three autobiographies, *Narrative of the Life of Frederick Douglass, An American Slave*, published in 1845. This and two subsequent autobiographies, *My Bondage and My Freedom* (1855) and *The Life and Times of Frederick Douglass* (1881), mark Douglass's greatest contributions to southern culture.

Written both as antislavery propaganda and as personal revelation, they are universally regarded as **the finest examples of the slave narrative tradition and as classics of American autobiography.**

Douglass's public life ranged from his work as an abolitionist in the early 1840s to his attacks on Jim Crow segregation in the 1890s. Douglass lived the bulk of his career in Rochester, N.Y., where for 16 years he edited the most influential black newspaper of the mid-19th century, called successively *The North Star* (1847-51), *Frederick Douglass' Paper* (1851-58), and *The Douglass Monthly* (1859-63). **Douglass achieved international fame as an orator with few peers and as a writer of persuasive power. In thousands of speeches and editorials Douglass levied an irresistible indictment against slavery and racism, provided an indomitable voice of hope for his people, embraced antislavery politics, and preached his own brand of American ideals.**

**Douglass welcomed the Civil War in 1861 as a moral crusade to eradicate the evil of slavery. During the war he labored as a fierce propagandist of the Union cause and emancipation, as a recruiter of black troops, and on two occasions as an advisor to President Abraham Lincoln.** Douglass made a major contribution to the intellectual tradition of millennial nationalism, the outlook from which many Americans, North and South, interpreted the Civil War. During Reconstruction and the Gilded Age Douglass's leadership became less activist and more emblematic. He traveled and lectured widely on racial issues, but his most popular topic was "Self-Made Men." By the 1870s Douglass had moved to Washington, D.C., where he edited the newspaper *The New National Era* and became president of the ill-fated **Freedmen's Bank**. As a stalwart Republican, he was appointed **marshall** (1877-81) and **recorder of deeds** (1881-86) for the District of Columbia, and **chargé d'affaires for Santo Domingo and minister to Haiti** (1889-91). Douglass had five children by his first wife Anna Murray, a free black woman from Baltimore who followed him out of slavery in 1838. Less than two years after Anna died in 1882, the 63-year-old Douglass married Helen Pitts, his white former secretary, an event of considerable controversy. Thus by birth and by his two marriages, **Douglass is one of the South's most famous examples of the region's mixed racial heritage.**

Douglass never lost a sense of attachment to the South. "Nothing but an intense love of personal freedom keeps us [fugitive slaves] from the South," Douglass wrote in 1848. He often referred to Maryland as his "own dear native soil." Brilliant, heroic, and complex, **Douglass became a symbol of his age and a unique American voice for humanism and social justice. His life and thought will always speak profoundly to the dilemma of being black in America.** Douglass died of heart failure in 1895, the year Booker T. Washington rose to national prominence with his Atlanta Exposition speech suggesting black accommodation to racial segregation.

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