Juneteenth National Independence Day (June 19th)

Many of you may already be making plans for Independence Day, July 4th. The national celebration commemorates the Declaration of Independence of the United States; the day citizens of the thirteen American colonies were no longer subject to Great Britain. However, not all American citizens were freed on the Fourth of July. By 1776 there were an estimated 2.5 million enslaved people of African ancestry who were owned by fellow American colonists. That number soared to about 4 million by the start of the Civil War in 1861. For enslaved People of Color, the promise "that all men are created equal" meant nothing. Although President Lincoln declared all enslaved people in the Confederate States free via the Emancipation Proclamation (January 1, 1863), the proclamation could only be enforced by advancing Union troops. When the Civil War officially ended in April 1865 it took until June for Union army soldiers to reach Texas, the most remote state of the Confederacy. On June 19, 1865 Union Army general Gordon Granger finally proclaimed freedom to the remaining enslaved people of Texas. June 19th – or "Juneteenth" – has been celebrated continuously in various parts of the United States since 1865. Last June (2021), Juneteenth National Independence Day was officially recognized as a federal holiday. This holiday is a celebration of freedom and independence for **all** people, equally endowed by God with the unalienable rights of life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness. The PSEC Zachariah Walker Racial Justice Team encourages all PSEC congregations to recognize and celebrate Juneteenth. Click here for Juneteenth Worship Resources.