

**The Racial Justice Mission Group
Invites the NH Conference Churches
To Celebrate Juneteenth**

Our Purpose in Celebrating Juneteenth in New Hampshire is based upon our desire for greater visibility, education, and alliance in a state and geographic region that is historically perceived as demographically white. This misperception is perpetuated through the mainstream and local media; socially, culturally, and politically governed institutions; and lack of cultural awareness manifested in expressions of implicit bias. On Wednesday, June 19, 2019, Governor Chris Sununu signed a bill proclaiming an annual observance Juneteenth as an officially recognized state holiday. This act ended many decades of oversight.

Juneteenth Commemorates the End of Slavery and the Beginning of a Journey into Freedom – It recalls how the states of Louisiana and Texas heard that President Abraham Lincoln had signed the Emancipation Proclamation on January 1, 1863. Slavery continued in those two states for more than two years after the proclamation was signed due to active resistance. News of Emancipation had not been fully shared until June 19, 1865. Hence this is the origin of the Juneteenth holiday which is still celebrated in many communities of African American descent. Americans, this is our collective history and a narrative that deserves to be shared. Remember that in NH, slaves were not legally freed until the Emancipation Proclamation in 1863, though many NH people fought on the side of the Union. NH was not a free state.

The truth is that people of African heritage have always been part of New Hampshire history. The narrative of enslaved African people and their descendants is far too often untold and denied. We appreciate the ongoing efforts of our allies to preserve these stories. We embrace Juneteenth as an opportunity to request that EVERYONE participate and join us in celebration for the whole month of June. **Follow our Facebook page**

<https://www.facebook.com/CelebrateJuneteenth> .

Juneteenth can be celebrated in your congregation on any Sunday in June, since June 19 is a Friday this year. Some liturgical selections are included.

Liturgy for Juneteenth

Leader: As we commemorate freedom for all African Americans, let us not forget the trials and tribulations faced by their ancestors forced into slavery for hundreds of years.

People: Thanks be unto God for granting us freedom and giving us victory through Jesus our Lord!

Leader: Let us continue to emphasize the importance of equality, freedom, education and the advancement of African Americans.

People: Thanks be unto God for granting us freedom and giving us victory through Jesus our Lord!

Leader: God has granted us freedom, let us use it wisely, embrace it totally, sharing the power we have willingly for the sake of all God's people.

People: Thanks be unto God for granting us freedom and giving us victory through Jesus our Lord!

Leader: Allow this Juneteenth celebration to serve as a reminder of the tenacity and long suffering of the African American people, their ability to hold on to hope and to God.

People: Thanks be unto God for granting us freedom and giving us victory through Jesus our Lord!

Leader: Let all people of all religions come together and acknowledge a period in our U.S. history that has shaped and continues to negatively influence our American Society.

People: Thanks be unto God for granting us freedom and giving us victory through Jesus our Lord! We are more than conquerors through Jesus who loves us so.

Leader: Let all other ethnic groups be sensitized to the conditions that African Americans have endured and currently endure and help them to understand racism and bigotry cannot have the last word.

People: Thanks be unto God for granting us freedom and giving us victory through Jesus Christ our Lord! We are more than conquerors through Jesus who loves us.

Leader: Let all African Americans continue to hope for a better tomorrow while remembering and rejoicing over their triumphant heritage.

People: We will not forget the "Middle Passage". We will continue to learn, educate and tell the African American US history story of bondage that gave way to freedom, both physically and spiritually. We as God's people shall forever strive to advance the Kingdom of God through liberation and excellence.

All: Thanks be unto God for granting us freedom and giving us victory through Jesus Christ our Lord! We are more than conquerors through Jesus Christ who loves us.

<http://www.theafricanamericanlectionary.org/PopupWorshipAid.asp?LRID=62> adapted by Rev. Renee' Rouse, Northwood Congregational Church, Northwood, NH 03261

Hymn of Praise: Lift Every Voice and Sing

Poem reading: "Feet O' Jesus" by Langston Hughes

"At the feet O' Jesus,

Sorrow like a sea.

Lordy, let yo' mercy

Come driftin down on me.

At the feet o' Jesus

At yo' feet I stand.

O, ma little Jesus,

Please reach out yo' hand."

Congregational Prayer {unison}

Holy and righteous God, You created us in Your image. Grant us grace to contend fearlessly against evil and to make no peace with oppression. Help us, like those of generations before us who resisted the evil of slavery and human bondage in any form and any manner of oppression. Help us to use our freedoms to bring justice among people and nations everywhere, to the glory of Your Holy name through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen (2019 Evangelical Lutheran Church in America)

Response to prayer: Sing -The Lord's prayer

Offering: Giving out of Love back to God - support eliminating racism

Scripture Reading: 2 Chronicles 7:14

Message: "Healing is Available"