

# EVENING WORSHIP: LIBERATION

**June 13, 2024, 6 pm Located in our Queen's Courtyard. Entrance on 2700 block of Fifth Avenue 92103 (5th Ave. Side)**

**June 27, 2024, 6 pm Located in the Labyrinth Courtyard, entrance on 2700 block of Sixth Avenue. The Labyrinth will be open for walking throughout the day and after the service.**

*Thank you for joining us this evening for this outdoor worship service. Please follow along in this simple liturgy. Services take place on the second and fourth Thursday of the month, except for January, February, July, and December.*

*Regular text will be said by the leader, text in **bold** can be said in unison. Please participate as you feel led, or feel free to rest in quiet contemplation.*

*We are glad you are here.*

## PRELUDE

*Music selected by the worship leader.*

## WELCOME

*The worship leader or a clergy person welcomes all to the gathering.*

## OPENING

*We begin with a few moments of silence, to center ourselves and enter into God's presence.*

*Leader:* Blessed be our loving, liberating, lifegiving God.

*All:* **And blessed be God's people gathered here.**

*Leader:* Let us pray together.

*All:* **as we light the lamps of evening,  
kindle, O God, in our hearts,  
the flame of that love which never ceases,  
that it may burn in us and give light to others.  
May we shine for ever in your presence,**

**set on fire with that eternal light of yours  
which puts to flight the darkness of this world.  
As you once freed your people from bondage,  
so we call on you to lead us to renewed freedom,  
for the sake of your love. Amen.**

*Adapted from The SPCK Book of Christian Prayer, SPCK, London 1995.*

*The leader now lights the candles at the Altar as we meditate in silence.*

*Leader: The light shines in the darkness, and the darkness did not overcome it.      John 1:5.*

## **SONG OF PRAISE**

**The right hand of God is writing in our land,  
Writing with power and with love,  
Our conflicts and our fears, our triumphs and our tears  
Are recorded by the right hand of God.**

**The right hand of God is pointing in our land,  
Pointing the way we must go.  
So clouded is the way, so easily we stray,  
But we're guided by the right hand of God.**

**The right hand of God is striking in our land,  
Striking out at envy, hate, and greed.  
Our selfishness and lust, our pride and deeds unjust  
Are destroyed by the right hand of God.**

**The right hand of God is lifting in our land,  
Lifting the fallen, one by one.  
Each one is known by name, and rescued now from shame,  
By the lifting of the right hand of God.**

**The right hand of God is healing in our land,  
Healing broken bodies, minds, and souls.  
So wondrous is its touch, with love that means so much,  
When we're healed by the right hand of God.**

**The right hand of God is planting in our land,  
Planting seeds of freedom, hope, and love.  
In this and all the lands, God's people all join hands,  
And be one with the right hand of God.**

*Adapted from The Caribbean Conference of Churches*

# THE PSALMS: PSALM 126

*We read the Psalm responsively, one verse read by the leader, the next (in **bold**) by the congregation.*

When Yahweh brought back the captives of Zion,  
we were like those who dream.

**Then our mouth was filled with laughter,  
and our tongue with shouts of joy;**

then they said among the nations,  
“Yahweh has done great things for them.”

**Yahweh has done great things for us;  
we are glad indeed.**

Restore our fortunes, O Yahweh,  
like the streams in the Negeb desert!

**Those who sow in tears  
shall reap with joyful shouts!**

Those who go forth weeping, bearing the seed for sowing,  
shall come home with shouts of joy, bringing their sheaves with them.

**Glory to the Lover, the Liberator, and the Life-giver;  
As it was in the beginning, is now, and will be forever. Amen.**

*Psalm 126, adapted from Psalms for Praying, by Nan C Merrill*

# THE LESSONS

## What is Juneteenth?

Juneteenth honors the date, June 19, 1865, when the last Confederate community of enslaved Americans in Galveston, Texas, received word that they had been freed from bondage. Nearly three years earlier, President Lincoln had issued the Emancipation Proclamation, which reads in part:

“On the first day of January, in the year of our Lord one thousand eight hundred and sixty-three, all persons held as slaves within any State or designated part of a State, the people whereof shall then be in rebellion against the United States, shall be then, thenceforward, and forever free; and the Executive Government of the United States, including the military and naval authority thereof, will recognize and maintain the freedom of such persons, and will do no act or acts to repress such persons, or any of them, in any efforts they may make for their actual freedom...

“I do order and declare that all persons held as slaves within said designated States, and parts of States, are, and henceforward shall be free; and that the Executive government of the United States, including the military and naval authorities thereof, will recognize and maintain the freedom of said persons.

“And I hereby enjoin upon the people so declared to be free to abstain from all violence, unless in necessary self-defence; and I recommend to them that, in all cases when allowed, they labor faithfully for reasonable wages.

“And I further declare and make known, that such persons of suitable condition, will be received into the armed service of the United States to garrison forts, positions, stations, and other places, and to man vessels of all sorts in said service.

“And upon this act, sincerely believed to be an act of justice, warranted by the Constitution, upon military necessity, I invoke the considerate judgment of mankind, and the gracious favor of Almighty God.”

## Selections from the writings of Martin Luther King, Jr.

“We are caught in an inescapable network of mutuality, tied in a single garment of destiny. Whatever affects one directly, affects all indirectly. Never again can we afford to live with the narrow provincial ‘outside agitator’ idea ... It is unfortunate that the demonstrations [were] taking place in Birmingham, but it is even more unfortunate that the city’s white power structure left the Negro community with no alternative.” *Letter from Birmingham Jail*

“One of the most ringing replies came from a child of no more than eight years who walked with her mother one day in a demonstration. An amused policeman leaned down to her and said with mock gruffness, ‘What do you want?’ The child looked into his eyes, unafraid, and gave her answer. ‘FEEDOM,’ she said. She could not even pronounce the word, but no Gabriel trumpet could have sounded a truer note.” *Why We Can’t Wait*

“The Church has an opportunity and duty to lift up its voice like a trumpet and declare unto the people the immorality of segregation. It must affirm that every human life is a reflection of divinity, and that every act of injustice mars and defaces the image of God in man.” *Where do We Go from Here*

Hear what the Spirit is saying to the Church.

*All*    **Thanks be to God.**

## THE REFLECTION

*A personal meditation on Liberation.*

## MUSIC

*Music selected by the worship leader or author of the reflection.*

## PRAYERS

*Prayer leader:* God be with you.

***All:* And also with you.**

*Leader* As we offer this celebration of Juneteenth, we offer prayers for ourselves and the world.

That those entrusted with authority in our nation may support the changes needed in order to exercise leadership and promote healing in an authentic, responsible, and peaceful manner, we pray . . .

*People:* **May we accept the call to be bearers of peace.**

*Leader* That the fullness of justice and compassion may be extended to the victims and families who have been subjected to violence, abuse, discrimination, murder, or the threat thereof, we pray . . .

*People:* **May we accept the call to be bearers of peace.**

*Leader* That our communities and our schools may find ways to actively participate in efforts to eliminate violence, especially violence against black and brown people, so that this country may take the lead in fostering conditions for healing racial division, we pray . . .

*People:* **May we accept the call to be bearers of peace.**

*Leader* That all who gather this month to remember Juneteenth may be able to do so freely, peaceably, and in celebration with us, we pray . . .

*People:* **May we accept the call to be bearers of peace.**

*Leader* That we be courageous in living out the Gospel, we pray . . .

*People:* **May we accept the call to be bearers of peace.**

(<https://mercyedu.org/juneteenth-2020-prayer-service/>)

*Leader* We pray, O Lord, for change. Your son Jesus made incarnate your wise words and loving deeds, and we encounter you still today in the faces of those whom society has pushed to the margins. Guide us, through the love you have revealed, to establish the justice you proclaimed, that all peoples might dwell in harmony and peace, united by that one love that binds us to each other, and to you. And most of all, Lord, transform our routine worship and work into genuine encounters with you and our better selves so that our lives will be changed for the good of all. **Amen.**

(<https://www.archbalt.org/a-prayer-to-celebrate-juneteenth-a-light-of-hope-for-freedom-and-justice/>)

## CREATIVE RESPONSE

*A participant offers a poem, piece of art, dance etc that they have chosen to reflect God's surprising Spirit or some other aspect of the service.*

# THE BLESSING AND DISMISSAL

*Leader or leaders:* May God bless us with discomfort,  
at easy answers, half-truths,  
and superficial relationships  
so that we may live  
deep within our hearts.

May God bless us with anger  
at injustice, oppression,  
and exploitation of people,  
so that we may work for  
justice, freedom and peace.

May God bless us with tears,  
to shed for those who suffer pain,  
rejection, hunger, and war,  
so that we may reach out our hands  
to comfort them and  
to turn their pain to joy.

And may God bless us  
with enough foolishness  
to believe that we can  
make a difference in the world,  
so that we can do  
what others claim cannot be done,  
to bring justice and kindness  
to all our children and the poor.

**All: Amen.**

*Adapted from a Franciscan Blessing*

*Leader:* Let us go forth, rejoicing in the liberating, life-giving love of God.

**All: Thanks be to God.**

## POSTLUDE

*Music selected by the worship leader*

*When the service takes place in the labyrinth courtyard, you are welcome to walk the labyrinth while the music is playing.*

***Thank you for worshipping with us tonight.***

**Would you like to participate in a future service? We practice community-led worship. Whether you would like to read something, contribute a spoken piece or musical offering, or help with organization- you are welcome! Please email [jowj@stpaulcathedral.org](mailto:jowj@stpaulcathedral.org) or call cell 619.840.2327**