

## Calls to Worship

**One:** The Lord our God is great.

**Many:** The Lord is worthy of our praise.

**One:** Come; let us remember the great things God has done for us.

**Many:** Let us not neglect to teach our children the greatness of God.

**One:** Let us not forget our past and those who have gone before us.

**Many:** We remember our ancestors, our history, our Africa; and we name our future.

**One:** Let us lift up our voices in song, lift our arms in praise, and open our hearts in gratitude.

**Many:** Let us greet God with our hymn of praise.

(Blair, Eugene. 21st Century Africana Liturgy Resources: "Worship Resources for Juneteenth Day Celebrations." 2007, 2008. <https://www.umcdiscipleship.org/resources/juneteenth-day-worship-resources>)

**One:** We gather in the presence of our God, whose favor is on justice, who loves the liberation of all.

**Many:** We gather to celebrate freedom from oppression and the full humanity of every man, woman and child.

**One:** We gather to celebrate the resilience and contributions of Black Americans, and to pledge our continued work to build a just society.

**Many:** We gather to pray.

(Catholic Health Association. "Call to Prayer." <https://www.chausa.org/prayers/cha-prayer-library/prayer/juneteenth-prayer-service>)

## Litanies

**One:** Celebration rises, up from the deep places, finding voice in the light and air no longer denied.

**Many:** Lift every voice and sing, sing till earth and heaven ring, ring with the harmonies of liberty.

**One:** Celebration rises, not blind to the suffering, not blind to the sorrow. Celebration comes at a cost.

**Many:** Stony the road we trod, bitter the chastening rod, felt in the days when hope unborn had died; yet with a steady beat have not our weary feet come to the place for which our parents sighed.

**One:** Celebration rises, remembering the way we have come, the paths taken that have brought us here now to this place and time of celebration. Celebration rises, up and up, full of remembering. Remembering the ones led to freedom by Harriet; remembering lives and freedom stolen.

**Many:** We have come over a way that with tears has been watered; we have come treading our path through the blood of the slaughtered, out from the gloomy past till now we stand at last where the white gleam of our bright star is cast.

**One:** Celebration rises, recognizing what has been done and left undone, knowing there is still and yet much to do, so much further to go. Celebration rises, naming the victories, recognizing the challenges yet ahead. Celebration rises on voices offering unfinished praise.

**Many:** Lest our feet stray from the places, our God where we met thee; lest our hearts drunk with the wine of the world we forget thee;

**One:** Celebration rises, resisting illusions, to be embraced by the real and abiding presence of God who breaks our chains, and sets us free for freedom, in power and love and joy.

**Many:** God of our weary years, God of our silent tears thou who hast brought us thus far on our way; thou who has by thy might led us into the light, keep us forever in the path, we pray.

**One:** Celebration rises, with the power of healing wings and promise to endure. Celebration rises, celebrating that by God's grace, I am because You are, You are because I am; Celebrating that the fullness of my humanity does not diminish yours and the fullness of your humanity does not diminish mine.

**Many:** Shadowed beneath thy hand may we forever stand, true to our God, true to our native land. True to who we are, True to who we have been and who we are becoming, thanks be to God.

(Evangelical Lutheran Church in America. "Worship Resources: Juneteenth." 2019.

[https://download.elca.org/ELCA%20Resource%20Repository/Juneteenth\\_observance\\_0619.pdf](https://download.elca.org/ELCA%20Resource%20Repository/Juneteenth_observance_0619.pdf))

**One:** As we commemorate freedom as African Americans, let us not forget the trials and tribulations faced by our ancestors forced into slavery for hundreds of years.

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

**One:** Let us continue to emphasize the importance of education and the advancement of the People of Color.

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

**One:** God has granted us freedom, let use it wisely, guard it carefully, and embrace it totally.

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

**One:** Allow this Juneteenth celebration to serve as a reminder of our tenacity, our ability to hold on to hope and to our God.

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

**One:** Let all people of all religions come together and acknowledge a period in our history that shaped and continues to negatively influence American society.

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

**One:** Allow other ethnic groups to be sensitized to the conditions our ancestors endured and help them to understand why racism and bigotry cannot have the last word.

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

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

**Many:** We will not forget the "Middle Passage." We will continue to tell our ancestral story of bondage that gave way to freedom, both physically and spiritually. We shall forever strive to advance the Kingdom of God through liberation and excellence.

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

(Laverne Fuller, Sharon. "A Christian Affirmation of Juneteenth." adapted.

<http://www.theafricanamericanlectionary.org/PopupWorshipAid.asp?LRID=62>)

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

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

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

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

**One:** That our communities and our schools may find ways to actively participate in efforts to reduce violence against our black citizens so that this country may take the lead in fostering anti-racism, we pray. . .

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

**One:** That all who gather this week to remember Juneteenth be able to freely and nonviolently remember together, we pray . . .

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

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

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

(Mercy Education. "Litany of Healing." June 2020. <https://mercyedu.org/juneteenth-2020-prayer-service/>)

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

**One:** That the fullness of compassion and true justice may be extended to the victims and families who have been subjected to violence, abuse, discrimination and murder, we pray,

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

**One:** That our communities and our schools may find ways to actively participate in efforts to reduce violence against Black citizens so that this country may take the lead in fostering anti-racism, we pray,

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

**One:** That all who gather this week to remember Juneteenth be able to freely remember and celebrate their stories of joy and pain, struggle and triumph, we pray,

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

**One:** That we be courageous in living out the Gospel, we pray,

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

(Catholic Health Association. "Intercessions." <https://www.chausa.org/prayers/cha-prayer-library/prayer/juneteenth-prayer-service>)

**One:** Today, we gather to remember, to reflect, to celebrate FREEDOM!

**Many:** Freedom is not free. We thank You, O God, today for our freedom in You and remember those for whom freedom was so costly a price to pay.

**One:** We remember those who were enslaved. We recognize that slavery tried to erase the humanity of so many of Your people – those who were enslaved and those who brutalized and dehumanized others, not realizing the cost for their own souls. Lord, have mercy!

**Many:** Forgive us, O God. Help us to always treat one another as we want to be treated and to, above all, recognize that we are all created in Your image and likeness. We remember today. In Your mercy, O God, hear our prayers.

**One:** We reflect on the gift of freedom today and the many ways that the struggle continues. We lament those who are still treated as less than Your very own as we recommit to fight for freedom and dignity for all of Your people.

**Many:** Help us, O God, to be courageous in fighting for justice and righteousness for all of Your people until justice rolls down like waters and righteousness like a mighty stream!

**One:** We celebrate today! For freedom has come and will come again. For those in cages at our borders, for those locked up in jail cells away from their families, for those who are caught up in human trafficking, for those living without clean water, for those trapped in the bondage of an opioid addiction – God as we celebrate freedom today, help us to continue the fight for freedom across the global village in every form and in every way.

**Many:** We celebrate FREEDOM today! We celebrate with renewed determination, knowing that our work is not done and our task has not been fully accomplished until all of God's children are truly free from bondage.

**All:** We remember, we reflect, we celebrate this Juneteenth. Thank You, O God, for reminding us that freedom is possible, necessary and a promise from You.

(Copeland-Tune, Leslie. "Responsive Reading, National Council of Churches Chapel Service." 2019.

<https://nationalcouncilofchurches.us/juneteenth-a-celebration-of-freedom/>)

## Prayers

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.

(Evangelical Lutheran Church in America. "Worship Resources: Juneteenth." 2019.

[https://download.elca.org/ELCA%20Resource%20Repository/Juneteenth\\_observance\\_0619.pdf](https://download.elca.org/ELCA%20Resource%20Repository/Juneteenth_observance_0619.pdf))

We pray, O Lord, for change. Jesus you revealed God through 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 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, change our routine worship and work into genuine encounter with you and our better selves so that our lives will be changed for the good of all.

(Archdiocese of Baltimore. Racial Healing and Liturgical Resources. "In Celebration." adapted.

<https://www.xavier.edu/jesuitresource/online-resources/prayer-index/juneteenth-prayers>)

God of all peoples, of all nations, on this day of freedom, we celebrate triumphantly with all people of goodwill that we might walk arm in arm towards justice for all.

Breathe into us your eternal breath, that we may never tire of ensuring a flourishing life for all people, but most especially, those brothers and sisters whose growth has been stifled by the trauma of being enslaved.

O God, we know and have seen your goodness, and because of it, we cling to the hope that unity and liberation for all are within our grasp. Continue to show us your goodness, that we may have the strength to advance your kingdom with humility and grace.

(Catholic Health Association. "On This Day of Freedom." <https://www.xavier.edu/jesuitresource/online-resources/prayer-index/juneteenth-prayers>)

Today, we commemorate the end of slavery in America. This day partially reminds us of the progress made. This day also partially reminds us of the progress we have not made. We

celebrate the freedom of black lives in our nation. We grieve that we have not correctly reconciled racism in our nation.

You created each person in Your image. The two greatest commandments call us to love You with all our heart, souls, and minds; Then, to love our neighbor as ourselves. Your love for us motivates us to love each other. If we do not love each other, then ultimately, we have not experienced Your love.

As much as we commemorate and celebrate Juneteenth, we grieve this day. We mourn that our black brothers and sisters have not been loved as our neighbors. We mourn that our black brothers and sisters have been treated less than created in Your image throughout history. So, Lord, we confess our sins and repent. The healing and reconciliation we desire comes from the gospel.

On Juneteenth this year, we ask You to guide our nation. May the good news of the gospel motivate us to love each other. May the ideals of our words match the practices of our lives. May a fresh empowerment of Your Spirit unite us together. Give us eyes to see and ears to hear Your will and leading.

(Englert, Peter. "A Commemoration." <https://www.xavier.edu/jesuitresource/online-resources/prayer-index/juneteenth-prayers>)

Almighty God, you rescued your people from slavery in Egypt, and throughout the ages you have never failed to hear the cries of the captives; We remember before you our sisters and brothers in Galveston, Texas who on this day received the glad tidings of their emancipation; Forgive us for the many grave sins that delayed that liberating word; Anoint us with your Spirit to bring good news to the poor, to proclaim release to the captives and recovery of sight to the blind, to let the oppressed go free, and to proclaim the year of your favor; through Jesus Christ our Lord, who lives and reigns with you, in the unity of the Holy Spirit, one God, for ever and ever. Amen.

(Episcopal Formation in the Bay Area. "Juneteenth Liturgy." <https://faithinformed.org/resources/juneteenth-liturgy>)

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, resist 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.

(Episcopal Formation in the Bay Area. "Juneteenth Liturgy." <https://faithinformed.org/resources/juneteenth-liturgy>)

Eternal God, you made us in your own image, and became one of us in Jesus Christ. Look with compassion on the whole human family; Take away the arrogance and hatred that infect our hearts; Break down the walls that separate us; Unite us in bonds of love; and, through our struggle and confusion, Work to accomplish your purposes on earth; So that, in your good time, We learn to live as brothers and sisters, to serve and love in harmony. Amen.

(Catholic Health Association. "Closing Prayer." <https://www.chausa.org/prayers/cha-prayer-library/prayer/juneteenth-prayer-service>)

## Confessions

In this worship and when we leave this place, we pray for more than conviction. We pray, O Lord, for change. Change the easy peace we make with ourselves into discontent because of the oppression of others. Change our tendency to defend ourselves into the freedom that comes from being forgiven and empowered through your love. Change our need for disguises, excuses, and images into the ability to be honest with ourselves and open with one another. Change our inclination to judge others into a desire to serve and uplift others. And most of all, Lord, change our routine worship and work into genuine encounter with you and our better selves so that our lives will be changed for the good of all.

(The Episcopal Church in West Missouri Diversity Commission. "Seeing the Face of God in Each Other." adapted. [https://www.diowestmo.org/dfc/newsdetail\\_2/3179590](https://www.diowestmo.org/dfc/newsdetail_2/3179590))