

## Juneteenth Prayer Service

*Juneteenth commemorates the emancipation of enslaved people in the U.S. The holiday was first celebrated in Texas, where on June 19 in 1865, General Granger read General Order Number 3, declaring, "The people of Texas are informed that in accordance with the Executive of the United States, all slaves are free."*

### Call to Prayer

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

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

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

We gather to pray.

**Scripture:** Galatians 3: 26-28

A reading from the book of Galatians

So in Christ Jesus, you are all children of God through faith, for all of you who were baptized into Christ have clothed yourselves with Christ. There is neither Jew nor Gentile, neither slave nor free, nor is there male and female, for you are all one in Christ Jesus.

### Reflection

We are people of story and word, and so as we celebrate Juneteenth and the liberation of Black Americans from the prison of chattel slavery, we listen again to the General Order Number 3,

*The people of Texas are informed that, in accordance with a proclamation from the Executive of the United States, all slaves are free. This involves an absolute equality of personal rights and rights of property between former masters and slaves, and the connection heretofore existing between them becomes that between employer and hired labor.*

The prophet Isaiah tells us the Spirit of God is on the one who proclaims good news to the poor, binds up the brokenhearted and proclaims freedom to the captives. As we

hear again the words that proclaimed freedom to the slaves still held captive in Texas in 1865, let us commit to work for justice and to be champions of peace. Please respond, *may we accept the call to be bearers of peace.*

## **Intercessions\***

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

Leader        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,

**All**            **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 reduce violence against Black citizens so that this country may take the lead in fostering anti-racism, we pray,

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

Leader        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,

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

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

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

## **Closing Prayer**

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;



# PRAYER

So that, in your good time,  
We learn to live as brothers and sisters, to serve and love in harmony.  
Amen.

\*Adapted from <https://mercyedu.org/juneteenth-2020-prayer-service/>