

A Guide to Coracle's Juneteenth Commemoration Service

Honesty– We want to honestly face the painful elements of American history so that we can rightfully remember and celebrate the lives of those who rest in the Corhaven Graveyard and their kin across the country.

Reflection Questions:

- 1) Why did the 4th of July not feel like independence day for enslaved Americans?
- 2) How did Jim Crow and vagrancy laws, redlining of neighborhoods, legalized segregation of schools, etc. perpetuate racial inequality in the United States well beyond the abolition of slavery?
- 3) What role does the acknowledgement of slavery's long legacy play in our ability to come together as a nation that espouses to be "under God"?

For Prayer:

As you reflect on the history of racial injustice and inequity, notice any strong emotions that emerge for you. Ask God to help you notice what they are and be curious about your response. Pray for a willingness to go deeper into how God might transform you and your ability to be present for change.

Read: ["Space for God from the Corhaven Graveyard"](#) by Sarah Kohrs

Watch: Coracle's ["Lament for Racial Injustice"](#) from Juneteenth 2020

Listen: [The History of Juneteenth](#) from "Fresh Air" on NPR

Solidarity- Juneteenth is not an official "church holiday" like Christmas or Easter, but when the Emancipation Proclamation was finally read in Galveston Texas on June 19th, 1865, those gathered made their way from the courthouse to the church to celebrate with a "public prayer meeting" of thanksgiving for what was seen as an answer to centuries of prayer. We believe it is important for Christians of all stripes to join the remembrance of that procession in solidarity with our black brothers and sisters and to celebrate *together* as the church.

Reflection Questions:

- 1) What does it teach us about the faith of enslaved people that the very day they heard of their emancipation they responded by "going to church"?
- 2) What might God want you personally to learn from such faith?
- 3) How can the broader church in America join this celebration in a way that does not co-opt but honors the legacy of this faith?

For Prayer:

Reflect on the diverse people God has brought into your life. Take some time to contemplate your openness to join with what God is already doing to promote flourishing for all. Who might God be inviting you to bless? Who might God be inviting you to pray for?

Read: [Juneteenth was an Answer to Centuries of Prayer](#)

Watch: [“March” by Sho Baraka](#)

Listen: [Tom Skinners 1970 Speech at Urbana](#) or [“Let Justice Roll Down” David Platt](#)

Hope in Action - Though there is deep brokenness around issues of race in our nation, it is worth lifting our eyes to see and celebrate those bringing healing and light as they fight tirelessly to represent God’s heart of love, justice, and peace for all people everywhere.

Reflection Questions:

- 1) Although having hope in the midst of slavery and oppression seems foolish, the hope-filled action of many black Americans– amidst the evils of slavery, Jim Crow, and present injustices– is an example of “the foolishness of God [which] is wiser than human wisdom” (1 Corinthians 1:25). How might God be inviting you to such a hope in the midst of racial brokenness in your neighborhood, your city, and (y)our nation?
- 2) What gets in the way of your hope and/or gets between your hope and the action(s) it prompts you toward? What would Jesus– who is both the meek lamb and the fierce lion– say if you brought those obstacles to him?
- 3) We often say, “I’m (not) *feeling* hopeful!” But what if hope isn’t so much a feeling, but rather a discipline– even a spiritual discipline? How might God be inviting you to train for the sort of hopefulness that frees you to act courageously?

For Prayer:

First pay attention to the stories of people doing small things with great love. How do they speak to you? How are you being invited to live your life more hopefully as a result of these examples of others engaging in hopeful action? What is one small thing you can do today to participate in God's flourishing?

Read: About [Elder Clyde Harris](#) and the redemptive work of [Intersection of Change](#) in Baltimore!

Watch: A short [overview](#), and then a longer [oral history](#), of the remarkable life of Opal Lee, an educator, urban farmer, activist, and– among many other things– “Grandmother of Juneteenth.”

Listen: And sing along to [“Lift Every Voice and Sing”](#) (written 1899) known by many as the “black national anthem.”

Next Steps

Start Somewhere:

Come to a Community Workday at the [Corhaven Graveyard](#). The next one is July 3 ([Learn More](#)).

Learn More:

Check out Coracle’s [Resources for Racial Healing and Justice](#) webpage.

Go further:

Virginia Slavery Pilgrimage - October 16-17
More information and registration options [here](#).

Consider meeting with a [Spiritual Director](#).

Contact Coracle’s Spiritual Direction Coordinator Margot Eyring for more information:

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