

Juneteenth observance at St. Stephen's Church

Juneteenth is celebrated annually on June 19 to commemorate the end of slavery in the United States; Gen. Gordon Granger ordered the final enforcement of the Emancipation Proclamation in Texas at the end of the Civil War on June 19, 1865. St. Stephen's Church honors this anniversary on a Sunday near June 19; this year, we're doing that on June 22.

The Collect for Juneteenth is printed below, followed by notes on the opening poem used in the Celtic service and music used in the 10 a.m. and 5:30 p.m. services. These notes are also available at ststephensRVA.org/music-notes.

Collect for Juneteenth

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 June 19, 1865, 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.

Celtic service opening poem: "The Work of Christmas" by Howard Thurman

The Rev. Howard Thurman (1899-1981) is remembered as a teacher, minister, theologian, writer, mystic and activist. "No single label can capture the multiplicity of Howard Thurman's life, but his influence is evident in the most significant aspects of the civil rights movement..." where Thurman served as the movement's chaplain and spiritual leader to its leader, especially the Rev. Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. "As racial justice once again comes to the forefront of American consciousness, Howard Thurman's faith and life have much to say to a new generation of the disinherited and all those who march alongside them."

"The Work of Christmas" echoes Jesus' sermon on the mount and points to the meaning of an incarnated, Spirit led life in this and every age.

—Quotations from Paul Harvey's *Howard Thurman and the Disinherited: A Religious Biography* (2020).

Music notes

Our recognition of Juneteenth celebrates Black excellence in music, featuring compositions by Black composers and several traditional spirituals in instrumental arrangements or sung congregationally. The following music notes are by Diana Chou and Brent te Velde.

10 a.m. service of Holy Eucharist:

Virginia Beach-based composer **Adolphus Hailstork** (b. 1941) has taught on the faculty of Norfolk State University and Old Dominion University. His "**Prelude on *We Shall Overcome***" sets the gospel song of the same name, which rose to prominence as one of the Civil Rights Movement's most iconic protest anthems. Hailstork draws on Baroque musical style in his setting, particularly in the piece's trio texture.

The tune of the hymn **“In Christ there is no East or West,”** *McKee*, grew out of the older spiritual “The angels changed my name.” Celebrated Black American composer and songwriter Harry T. Burleigh (1866–1949) adapted and arranged the spiritual for a text by John Oxenham; the hymn emphasizes the message of Christian unity and the “great fellowship of love... whate’er your race may be.”

David Hurd (b. 1950) was Professor of Sacred Music and Director of Chapel Music at the General Theological Seminary, New York City, for 39 years, and is presently the Director of Music at the Church of St. Mary the Virgin in Times Square, New York City. The text of **Love bade me welcome** derives from “Love (III),” one of a sequence of three poems on the nature of love by 17th-century metaphysical poet and Church of England priest George Herbert. The poems comprise a portion of Herbert’s larger devotional work *The Church*, with “Love (I)” and “Love (II)” focusing on earthly love and “Love (III)” — cast as a dialogue between the speaker and Love, or God — turning towards an exploration of divine love. Hurd colors his introspective musical setting with blooms of rich harmony.

The text of the hymn **“There is a balm in Gilead”** is one of many spirituals in which the chorus is based on a specific scriptural passage. It responds to a question asked in Jeremiah 8:22 (“Is there no balm in Gilead?”) and answered by a command in Jeremiah 46:11 (“Go up to Gilead, and take balm!”). The singers represent those who have benefited from the balm (salvation) through having been made whole (finding the strength to endure slavery).

Powered by an energetic and syncopated ostinato, **Adolphus Hailstork’s** jubilant **“Toccata on Great Day”** conveys the ebullience of the traditional spiritual tune. Like many spirituals, *Great Day* is cast in call-and-response form; the rhythmic vitality of Hailstork’s setting hearkens to the text’s imagery of “marching” and “the day of jubilee.”

5:30 p.m. service of Celtic Evensong and Communion:

Samuel Coleridge-Taylor (1875–1912) was a British composer and conductor whose works gained popularity in his lifetime due to the support of composers such as Edward Elgar and Charles Villiers Stanford. This led Coleridge-Taylor to make multiple tours of the United States, during the first of which he was received at the White House by President Theodor Roosevelt. Coleridge-Taylor’s father Daniel Taylor was descended from African-American slaves who had been freed from slavery by British soldiers at the end of the Revolutionary War, and Samuel considered emigrating to the U.S. at one point due to his interest in his ancestry. **“Arietta”** is the first movement of his 1898 work for organ, *Arietta, Elegy, and Melody*.

Adolphus Hailstork “Prelude on We Shall Overcome” (see 10 a.m. service note)

The spiritual **“Let us break bread together”** traces its roots to coastal South Carolina. Early written records of the hymn, dating from the 1920s, are linked to the Penn School on St. Helena Island, the first school for formerly enslaved West Africans in the South. Hymnologist Carl Daw has suggested that the text’s imagery of taking Communion “on our knees” and “with my face to the rising sun” could point towards historical practices of the

Episcopal Church. Daw notes, “[M]any colonial churches had one or more windows on the east wall. These were originally all clear glass, though some examples, such as those at St. Philip’s Church and St. Michael’s Church in Charleston, South Carolina, are now filled with stained glass, or the east window is now blocked by later renovations, as at Bruton Parish Church in Williamsburg, Virginia. So the experience of receiving Communion on one’s knees would often involve facing such a bright window.”

Often deemed the “Dean of Afro-American composers,” Oberlin Conservatory graduate **William Grant Still** (1895–1978) was an important musical and cultural luminary of the Harlem Renaissance. Still’s musical suite, *Three Visions*, was originally written for his wife and musical collaborator, the pianist Verna Arvey. The work’s second movement, **“Summerland,”** depicts a vision of the heavenly afterlife. Still’s daughter, Judith Anne Still, explains, “The three segments of the suite... tell the story of the human soul after death: the body expires, and the soul goes on to an apocalyptic judgment. If it is seen that the past life has been a good one, the soul may enter ‘heaven,’ or ‘Summerland.’”

A native of Arkansas, **Florence Price** (1887–1953) trained at New England Conservatory, graduating with a Bachelor of Music in organ and piano at the age of 19. Based in Chicago for most of her career, Price was a trailblazer in music composition; her *Symphony in E minor*—premiered by the Chicago Symphony Orchestra—was the first work by a Black woman to be performed by a major orchestra. In recent years, Price’s music has enjoyed a well-deserved and overdue resurgence in interest. Her setting of the spiritual **“Nobody knows the trouble I’ve seen”** was originally written for solo piano but has been arranged for flute and piano in tonight’s service.

Black Canadian-American composer and keyboardist **Robert Nathaniel Dett** (1882–1943) was a graduate of the Curtis Institute of Music. *Cinnamon Grove*, written in 1928, was one of Dett’s later works for piano; the suite’s meditative second movement draws upon verses from Bengali poet Rabindranath Tagore’s *Gitanjali* (“Song offering”):

When thou commandest me to sing
it seems that my heart would break
with pride; and I look to thy face,
and tears come to my eyes.

There is a balm in Gilead: see 10 a.m. service note

Composer and social justice activist **Margaret Bonds** (1913–1972) was among the first Black woman composers to be nationally recognized for her work. A student of Florence Price, Bonds was also a highly accomplished pianist, becoming the first Black soloist to perform with the Chicago Symphony Orchestra at age 20. Bonds arranged a number of spirituals for solo piano and voice and piano, including **“This little light of mine,”** a notable tune that took on new life in the 1960s as a well-known and beloved anthem of the Civil Rights Movement. As Freedom Singer Rutha Mae Harris [explained to NPR](#), singing the song’s joyful words and music gave her and her fellow activists comfort and courage in the face of danger, steadying their nerves: “Music was an anchor. It kept us from being afraid... It played a very important role in the movement.”