

A Resolution Regarding Inclusion of Juneteenth in Lesser Feasts and Fasts Calendar

Whereas, the Emancipation Proclamation was issued on January 1, 1863, however, it only freed slaves in the areas of the United States participating in armed rebellion. Because Texas was not such an area, it took two and a half years, until June 19, 1865 when Major General Gordon Granger in Galveston, Texas read the General Order announcing that the Civil War was over and slavery had been abolished throughout the United States. [1] The General Order Number 3 read: “The people of Texas are informed that . . . all slaves are free. . . .” [2] (is this a dangling reference impacting following references? Let’s discuss) and

Whereas, June 19th, known as Juneteenth, celebrates the end of slavery and is a symbolic date of freedom for African Americans. Juneteenth is observed as a state holiday in 15 states and the District of Columbia. [3] Thirty-two additional states recognize Juneteenth through community service and celebration, and many such states are considering making Juneteenth a state holiday. The annual celebration of Juneteenth is a time of reflection, learning, self-assessment, and healing. The recent passage of The Juneteenth National Independence Day Act by the United States Congress, which act was signed by President Biden made Juneteenth a federal holiday; and

Whereas, today, the celebration of Juneteenth has deep and lasting meaning for the Black community as it continues to fight for justice and freedom. We have witnessed a rise in racist and oppressive actions and behaviors that directly conflict with our beliefs and values as Christians. There is a misconception that slavery no longer exists in this nation and that everyone enjoys freedom. However, “More than 400,000 people could be living in ‘modern slavery’ in the US, a condition of servitude broadly defined in a new study as forced and state-imposed labor, sexual servitude and forced marriage.” [6] The majority of those who live in “modern slavery” today are people of color, predominately Black and Brown persons. [7]; and

Whereas, it is vital as Episcopalians that we join together in unity to be ever vigilant in fighting for the precious meaning of freedom of all people by celebrating Juneteenth as a Feast Day.

Therefore be it resolved that this 155th Annual Convention of the Episcopal Diocese of Long Island resolves to propose a resolution at the next General Convention to include the Juneteenth Feast Day in Lesser Feasts and Fasts; and be it further

Be it further resolved that this 155th Annual Convention of the Episcopal Diocese of Long Island hereby resolves to propose a resolution at the next General Convention for the approval of an appropriate proper to be prepared by the Standing Commission on Liturgy and Music; and be it further

Be it further resolved that this 155th Annual Convention of the Episcopal Diocese of Long Island adopts the aforementioned resolution and hereby directs the Secretary of this Convention to forward this resolution to the Secretary of General Convention of The Episcopal Church as a duly authorized resolution from this Diocese.

[1] Congressional Research Service Juneteenth: Fact Sheet, dated June 3, 2020, viewed 8 August 2020, p 1 <<https://fas.org/sgp/crs/misc/R44865.pdf>>

[2] Ibid

[3] Ibid

[4] Rebecca Shabad, Senators propose bill to make Juneteenth a federal holiday, NBC News (June 19, 2020). <https://www.nbcnews.com/politics/congress/senate-democrats-introduce-bill-make-juneteenth-federal-holiday-n1231550> (August 27, 2020)

[5] Juneteenth.com organization, Have a Happy Juneteenth, viewed 8 August 2020, <<https://www.juneteenth.com/>>

[6] Helmore, E. 2019 The Guardian: Over 400,000 people living in 'modern slavery' in US, report finds, viewed 8 August 2020,
<<https://www.theguardian.com/world/2018/jul/19/us-modern-slavery-report-global-slavery-index>>

[7] Walk Free, Global Slavery Index, 2018 United States Report, viewed 8 August 2020, pp.2, 5 <<https://www.globallslaveryindex.org/2018/findings/country-studies/united-states/>>

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