

WHAT TO US IS THE FOURTH OF JULY?



BE IT THEREFORE RESOLVED | 247 years ago, the men assembled in Pennsylvania State House, now known as Independence Hall, adopted the Declaration of Independence. ***In 1320 words, they determined that their desired future was impossible within their lived reality. Resolved to change their circumstances by any means necessary, they "mutually pledge to each other our Lives, our Fortunes, and our sacred Honor."*** On the front cover, the image of a Black boy attending the 1963 March on Washington is contrasted with the picture above of a Black girl attending a recent Protest on the latest pronouncement of the Supreme Court rolling back the very rights gained during the Civil Rights Movement. With Affirmative Action, Voting Protections, and Reproductive Health Care Choice all eviscerated by the radical right-winged Supreme Court, the question Frederick Douglass asked in 1852 as to "what this Fourth of July means" is a relevant as ever.

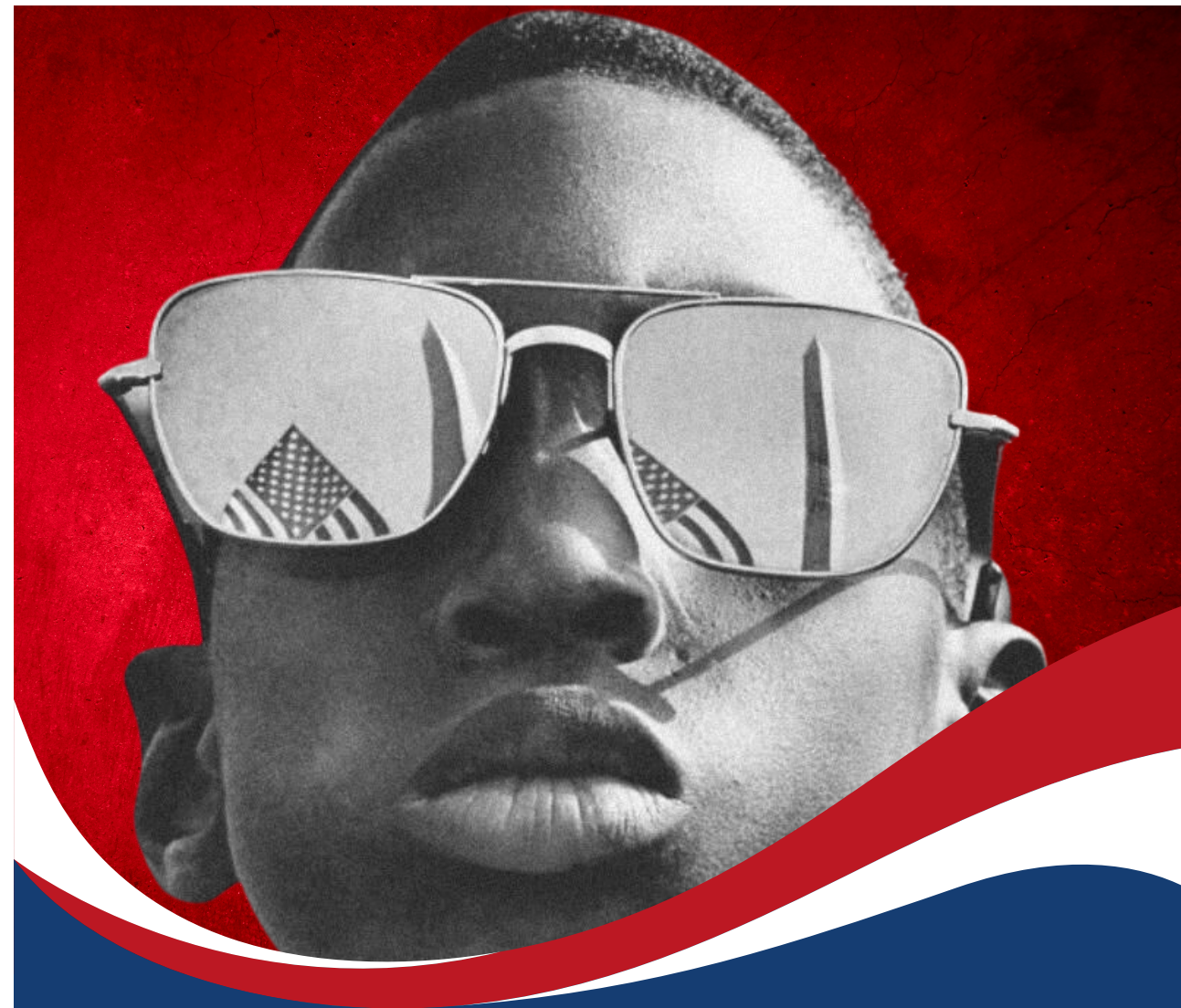
WELCOME TO SWEET MAGNOLIA



This week our Nation marks the Fourth of July. During worship today, we reflect on our struggle to get to this point and the work that lies ahead to make real all of the promises of America.

Established in 1914, Magnolia honors the Mother Church founded in 1864 near Louisville. Affectionately known as Sweet Magnolia, this ministry has stood as a physical representation of the hope and determination of the African American spirit. We are a Spiritual Anchor grounded in a liberation tradition operating as an African American Baptist community of faith.

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MISSIONARY BAPTIST CHURCH

Rev. Dr. Francys Johnson, Senior Pastor

Welcome to Sweet Magnolia



Its #BlackJoyRising Summer! Central to Joy is Freedom. This is also the Season of Pentecost which is centered on Freedom!

On Pentecost, the coming of the Holy Spirit on the gathered disciples after the resurrection of Jesus marked the beginning of the Christian church. Next, we acknowledge Juneteenth, the day we remember the coming of federal troops with the word that the Civil War and Chattel Slavery were over almost two and a half years after the signing of the Emancipation Proclamation. **This week the nation marks the Fourth of July. Although the promise of America is not fully realized, those of us who believe in Freedom cannot rest until it comes!**

Each of these days represents a freedom that only came from the disruptive—upsetting the status quo and the expectations that people had come to have about how the world worked. The Spirit caused an outpouring of praise in numerous languages and broke down the barriers that separated people—barriers of race, national origin, language, and faith.

SCHOLAR IN FOCUS | The Rev. Dr. Teresa L. Fry Brown is the Bandy Professor of Preaching and Associate Dean of Candler at Emory University. She was the Director of Candler's Black Church Studies program. Fry Brown's research interests include homiletics, womanism, womanist ethics, socio-cultural transformation, and African diaspora history focusing on African American spiritual values. Her scholarship includes *Delivering the Sermon: Voice, Body and Animation in Proclamation* (Fortress Press, 2008); *Can A Sister Get a Little Help: Advice and Encouragement for Black Women in Ministry* (Pilgrim Press, 2008); and *Weary Throats and New Song: Black Women Proclaiming God's Word* (Abingdon Press, 2003).



4 WAYS TO GIVE

TEXT BLESSED TO 912.225.6531



ONLINE



SMART PHONE



MAIL



SUNDAY

ME WARE WO means "I shall marry you" and symbolizes commitment and perseverance.

Order of Service

FOURTH OF JULY SUNDAY
Fifth Sunday After Pentecost
July 2, 2023 | 9:00 AM

SUNDAY SCHOOL

Deacon Johnny Tremble teaches *Peace to the Nations* drawn from Zechariah 9:9-13, 16-17.

DEVOTIONAL

The Deacons lead the Congregation in a Traditional Hymn and Prayer.

CALL TO WORSHIP

Every Praise by Hezekiah Walker with an Invocation and *Let the Words of My Mouth* as the Congregational Response.

SERVICE OF LIGHTS

Battle Hymn of the Republic (Instrumental) by Julia Ward Howe

Sweet Magnolia utilizes all our resources, providing a Christ-centered setting where people in this community are redeemed to a personal relationship with Christ, reconciled to God and his people, restored to wholeness, to well-being, and revived for a full life involved in service to others. In this church, everyone is welcomed and affirmed. You can be redeemed, reconciled, restored, and revived in this community.

LIBATIONS, TITHES, AND OFFERINGS

Tithes and Offerings with *Praise Him* by Anita Wilson

Offertory Claim - *I am a consistent Tither, a Bountiful Sower, and a Cheerful Giver. I have confessed my sins; therefore, GOD rebukes the Devourer for my Sake, and GOD makes all Grace abound toward me! Malachi 3:1-11 and II Corinthians 9:5-8*

THE PREACHED WORD

Lead Me, Guide Me by Doris M. Akers, as a hymn of preparation, followed by the Preached Word by Rev. Dr. Francys Johnson

BENEDICTION

Go in confidence. Know that God goes with you to give you hope, comfort, and peace. May God's love flow through you to all those whom you meet. May God's power be yours as you move mountains. AMEN.

Lectionary: Genesis 22:1-14 • Jeremiah 28:5-9 and Psalm 89:1-4, 15-18 • Romans 6:12-23 • Matthew 10:40-42



GYE NYAME means "except for God" This symbolizes the Supremacy of God.

About this Sunday

FOURTH OF JULY



I say it with a sad sense of the disparity between us. I am not included within the pale of glorious anniversary! Your high independence only reveals the immeasurable distance between us. - Frederick Douglass

This weekend marks the 247th Fourth of July, declaring America's independence from Great Britain. Yes, the Fireworks, BBQ, and Waving Flags stir patriotic sentiments in our hearts.

At the same time, many of us yearn for the day when July Fourth does not invite the ambivalence we also feel this weekend. *Both feelings are legitimate.*

We long for the day when we can cherish the country we love without feeling torn by the two-ness that W.E.B. Du Bois wrote about in The Souls of Black Folk. And just as Douglass accurately prophesied the death of slavery in his famous speech, that day is coming. It's coming because of the determination of true patriots of all races who believe in the Founding Fathers' beautiful promises more than the Founding Fathers did. It will be our birthday present to America.

If it had been, Douglass would never have had to ask the electrifying question in his famous speech in 1852: "What, to the American slave, is your 4th of July?" If the founders had really meant what they said, there would not have been any slaves.



ADINKRAHENE is the King of the Adinkra symbols meaning Authority

Deeper Understanding

AFFIRMATIVE ACTION

All but seven of the 115 Supreme Court justices in US history have been White men. Only three have been Black. Thurgood Marshall, Clarence Thomas, and Ketanji Brown Jackson. Racial discrimination is part and parcel of America's 236-year constitutional history. Affirmative Action was a remedy that alleviated the impact of that discrimination for the last 62 years. The decision upended decades of law and the higher education landscape. The ruling will shift the makeup of many of America's top universities – and the prospects of students who want to attend them.

In a 6-3 decision, the Court's six conservative justices declared that colleges' use of race as a factor in student admissions is unconstitutional. Citing the 14th Amendment prohibiting racial discrimination Chief Justice John Roberts wrote for the majority that affirmative Action is racially discriminatory and unconstitutional. "Eliminating racial discrimination means eliminating all of it," he wrote. Okay, but what about housing segregation, pay gaps, health disparities, the prison industrial complex, and voting disenfranchisement, all tied to racial discrimination?

"With let-them-eat-cake obliviousness, today, the majority pulls the ripcord and announces 'colorblindness for all' by legal fiat," Justice Brown Jackson wrote in the dissent.



PLEDGE Campaign

Every Member is a **BELIEVER**
 Every Believer is a **GIVER**
 Every Leader is a **TITHER**



ANANSE NTONTAN means "spider's web" and symbolizes creativity.