

Grace and peace to you in the name of Jesus Christ.
Please, save the date of

Friday September 20, 2019
for
“May We Forever Stand”:
Massachusetts Commemorates 400 Years of Black
Resiliency

The year 2019 marks 400 years since the first enslaved Africans set foot in Jamestown, Virginia. Since then, Black communities have demonstrated remarkable resiliency in the face of cruelty, terror, and systematic oppression. African Americans have not only created pathways to survive but, in many instances, to thrive. Through it all, the Black Church has endured as a beacon of hope and testimony to resurrection. On September 20, 2019, people of faith will gather to honor ancestors, commemorate 400 years of resiliency, and pray for an end to systemic and racial injustice.

The commemoration will consist of two major components on **Friday September 20**:

- a preaching master class during the day
- a joint ecumenical worship service in the evening

We ask that you save the date and share this with your church community. In the days ahead, we will follow up with opportunities for your sponsorship and participation. *We encourage that every denomination plan to turn out 100 people for the joint ecumenical worship service.*

Please use the above image and blurb for your bulletins, social media posts, and newsletters. Please share widely!

Massachusetts has a complex and varied history on the path to liberation for all. Far too often, the story of abolition and justice has centered the stories of white leadership. And yet, we are actively excavating and reclaiming stories of black resiliency. As the Massachusetts Council of Churches, our 116-year-old history contains both these threads. As a network of churches dedicated to full, visible, Christian unity, we also know that racism and our internal divisions have compromised our common witness to the liberating love of Jesus Christ. As we gather on September 20, we envision this time of education, commemoration, and worship as a celebration of black resiliency in Massachusetts, especially through the enduring power of the Black Church.

May Jesus Christ, who draws all people to himself, be glorified in our work and witness.

In hope,

Rev. Laura, Rev. Meagan, Rev. Kenneth, & Rev. Carrington

Massachusetts Council of Churches