



MASSACHUSETTS COUNCIL of CHURCHES

For Immediate Release: Friday September 20, 2019

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BLACK RESILIENCY IN MASSACHUSETTS: STATEWIDE COMMEMORATION OF 400 YEARS SINCE 1619 ON FRIDAY SEPT. 20, 2019

Boston, MA —Black residents of Massachusetts have demonstrated remarkable resiliency in the face of cruelty, terror, and systematic oppression for 400 years, since that fateful day in 1619 when the initial enslaved Africans were first brought to the colonies. In every generation, Black residents of Massachusetts have demonstrated courage, faithfulness, creativity, and most of all, resiliency. On [September 20, 2019](#), people of faith will gather to honor ancestors, commemorate 400 years of resiliency, and pray for an end to racial injustice.

“We aim to tell a more complete story of Massachusetts,” said the Rev. Laura Everett, Executive Director of the [Massachusetts Council of Churches](#). “In every generation, Black churches have served as schools, social service providers, training grounds for civil rights organizing and testimony to God’s desire for liberation. So on this 400th anniversary, we will celebrate the enduring witness of the Black Church. We need to tell [stories of Black resiliency](#) across the Commonwealth, from Elizabeth Freedman of Great Barrington to Zipporah Potter Atkins of Boston, all the way to Captain Absalom Boston of Nantucket. ”

Two main events will mark the occasion on [Friday September 20, 2019](#):

- A mid-day workshop to train pastors on “Preaching Black Resiliency” led by esteemed teacher Rev. Dr. Leslie D. Callahan of St. Paul’s Baptist Church in Philadelphia. The preaching workshop will be held at the historic Peoples Baptist Church in 830 Tremont St in Boston, hosted by Rev. Dr. Wesley Roberts.
- An evening worship service at 7:30pm on Friday September 20, 2019, “May We Forever Stand: Massachusetts Commemorates 400 years of Black Resiliency” at the Greater Framingham Community Church, 44 Franklin Street, Framingham. Bishop Claude Alexander of The Park Church in Charlotte, NC will be the preacher. The Rev. Dr. Cheryl Townsend Gilkes, John D. and Catherine T. MacArthur Professor of Sociology and African-American Studies at Colby College and Assistant Pastor of Union Baptist Church in Cambridge will serve as the Mistress of Ceremonies.

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Elder Terrance Haynes and the D.M.J United Voices of Praise Choir will lead the music. Rev. Dr. J. Anthony Lloyd will serve as host pastor. Black Church leaders from across Massachusetts will lead the worship service and commemoration. Elected officials and local leaders will bring greetings.

The service will begin at 7:30pm on Friday September 20, 2019 at Greater Framingham Community Church, 44 Franklin Street in Framingham, MA. All are invited to attend and participate. Media are welcome to attend and set up beginning at 6:30pm.

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Founded in 1903, the Massachusetts Council of Churches (MCC) is a statewide network of 17 different Orthodox and Protestant denominations, congregations and individual Christians. Together, we make the vibrant Church visible.

Learn more at www.masscouncilofchurches.org