

Black History Month

February is Black History Month—or African Heritage Month—in Canada. The development of Black History Month dates back to 1926, when Dr. Carter G. Woodson (an African-American historian) proposed a Negro History Week for the second week of February. The initial proposal came at a time when Black peoples were legally segregated, exploited, and treated as sub-human. In 1976, the week evolved into the full month of February becoming Black History Month.

Black History Month is now a time to honour and celebrate the historical and present contributions of peoples of African descent. It is also a time to remember the struggles from which Black peoples came and the continued legacy of the Transatlantic Trade in Africans.

Why should we celebrate African Heritage Month within The United Church of Canada?

For a church that is striving to become more intercultural, African Heritage Month provides a unique opportunity to learn more about the lives and legacies of peoples of African descent. This month could also be a time for congregations to make a commitment to becoming more culturally sensitive, racially inclusive, and justice-conscious.

Black history is Canadian history, and the month of February provides us with a unique time to worship, reflect, dialogue, and discuss issues relevant to peoples of African heritage.

In addition to focusing on Black history of the past, churches could also prayerfully consider issues facing the Black community in the present. For example, there are alarming new cases of HIV/AIDS among Black women between the ages of 19 and 40. The current crisis of HIV/AIDS, and historical legacy of the Transatlantic Trade in Africans, can inspire us all for renewed action and faithful resistance.



For more on Black History Month, see:
www.united-church.ca/planning/seasons/blackhistory

The United Church of Canada
L'Église Unie du Canada

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Minute for Mission—February 2008
The Journeys of Black Peoples in
The United Church of Canada

In April 2007, in a downtown Montréal hotel, a ballroom full of self-identified Black peoples—clergy and lay from across Canada and Bermuda—rock and move to Afrocentric worship. African heritages resound as communion, scripture, prayers, and music blend to link faith and racial identities for those who journey as Black members within the United Church. This was the picture of the opening worship of the Journeys of Black Peoples in The United Church of Canada meeting. Through the four-day gathering, participants were inspired and uplifted by the experience of being in community with other Black members of the United Church. They engaged in creative and dynamic workshops, developed regional cluster groups, and participated in closing worship and a meal at Union United Church, which is Montréal's oldest Black congregation.

The Journeys of Black Peoples in The United Church of Canada is a growing network of self-identified Black peoples who together strive to assess, promote, and support the well-being of Black peoples within The United Church of Canada.

Your gifts to the **Mission and Service Fund (M&S)** help to make the Journeys of Black Peoples possible, a part of God's mission within the Ethnic Ministries Unit. This unit focuses on work with ethnic minority congregations, racial/ethnic individuals, and intercultural ministries. It advocates for racial justice to nurture a better place of belonging for racial and ethnic minority peoples and congregations in The United Church of Canada. Thanks **M&S!**

For more on The Journeys of Black Peoples, see:
www.united-church.ca/intercultural/associations/blackpeoples



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