

JUST *Love* MINISTRY PRESENTS



Voices of Justice

FAITH & RESILIENCE IN FLORIDA'S BLACK HISTORY



Fort Mose

A SANCTUARY OF FREEDOM & FAITH (1738)

Fort Mose, located near St. Augustine, was the first legally sanctioned free Black settlement in what is now the United States. Founded in 1738, it offered sanctuary to escaped enslaved people who converted to Catholicism.

“For freedom Christ has set us free; stand firm, therefore, and do not submit again to a yoke of slavery.”

GALATIANS 5:1

Fort Mose, located just north of St. Augustine, was the first legally sanctioned free Black settlement in what is now the United States. Founded in 1738, it offered sanctuary and freedom to enslaved people who escaped British colonies, under the condition they convert to Catholicism and defend the Spanish territory. This remarkable community highlights the longing for true freedom—both physical and spiritual—and the ways faith can empower people to seek liberation in oppressive circumstances. Their history reminds us that God’s heart is always inclined toward the release of those in bondage. As we reflect on Fort Mose, we recognize that our Christian faith compels us to create spaces of safety and sanctuary for people in need today. We may not be building physical fortresses, but we are called to build communities of welcome and belonging. This history challenges us to ask: Where do people still need refuge? How do we, as the Church, partner with the God of liberation to extend freedom to those bound by injustices, prejudices, or other chains?

Devotional Reflection: Reflect on how God calls us to create spaces of freedom and sanctuary for the oppressed. Discuss how the bravery of those at Fort Mose inspires modern justice efforts.

Call to Action: Pray for and support initiatives that provide refuge and opportunity for marginalized communities today.

Musical Selections

[“Lift Every Voice and Sing”](#) (TFF #274) – Often called the Black national anthem, this hymn celebrates the journey from oppression to freedom.

[“Guide My Feet”](#) (TFF#131) – A prayer for guidance and strength, resonating with the courage of those who sought refuge at Fort Mose.

Weekly Prayer: Liberating God, we give you thanks for the courageous people of Fort Mose who sought and found refuge from bondage. May their legacy inspire us to stand with those who are still yearning for freedom in our world today. Strengthen our resolve to be places of welcome and compassion, reflecting your heart for the oppressed and marginalized. Through Jesus Christ, who sets us free, we pray. **Amen.**

Offering Prayer: Generous God, we present our gifts with gratitude, knowing that you use what we offer to bring hope and freedom. May these tithes and offerings help create places of safety for those seeking refuge, and may our entire lives be dedicated to building a world where your justice and mercy reign. In Jesus’ name we offer our gifts. **Amen.**

Blessing: May the God who liberates all people bless you with courage to stand for freedom and justice. May Christ’s love guide you to open your heart to those in need of refuge, and may the Spirit’s power embolden you to walk in faith, hope, and compassion. Go in peace. **Amen.**



Rosewood

THE ROSEWOOD MASSACRE: REMEMBERING INJUSTICE (1923)

Rosewood was a thriving Black community destroyed in 1923 due to racial violence. Many residents were killed or displaced, and the incident was largely ignored until survivors spoke out in the late 20th century.

“For I, the Lord, love justice; I hate robbery and wrongdoing.”

ISAIAH 61:8

In 1923, a violent racist attack destroyed Rosewood, a predominantly Black community in Florida. Many residents were killed or forced to flee, and the truth of this tragedy was suppressed for decades. Remembering Rosewood reminds us that silence can be as harmful as acts of violence themselves. When we ignore past injustices or fail to acknowledge their continued effects, we allow pain and mistrust to fester. Our faith challenges us to be truth-tellers who shine light on every form of injustice. By honoring the memory of Rosewood, we join with those who seek healing, restitution, and reconciliation. We remember that God, who loves justice, also calls us to confront the roots of hatred. Let us not only lament the tragedies of the past but commit ourselves to dismantle the systems and attitudes that perpetuate violence against any community.

Devotional Reflection: Reflect on the importance of truth-telling and reconciliation in addressing past injustices. How does God call us to be witnesses to history and advocates for justice?

Call to Action: Encourage churches to engage in local racial justice initiatives and support community healing efforts.

Musical Selections

“Precious Lord, Take My Hand” (TFF#154) – A lament and prayer for comfort and hope, reflecting the grief and resilience of the Rosewood survivors.

“There Is a Balm in Gilead” (TFF#161) – A hymn of healing and hope, speaking to the need for reconciliation and restoration.

“There is a Fountain” (TFF #336) – This hymn speaks to the possibility of collective lament and healing. In the context of the Rosewood Massacre, its emphasis on Christ’s redemptive power becomes a prayerful reminder that God’s grace can address even the deepest wounds of injustice and open a path toward reconciliation.

Weekly Prayer: God of justice and consolation, we mourn the destruction and loss of life that befell Rosewood. We lament the pain and trauma carried by survivors and their descendants. Give us courage to confront the injustices of our history and to seek pathways of reconciliation. May we be agents of your healing love, ensuring that such violence and silence do not persist. We pray this in the name of Christ, our Redeemer. **Amen.**

Offering Prayer: Merciful God, our offerings today represent not only our material gifts but our commitment to building just communities. Use these gifts to shine light into the darkest places, to tell the stories that need telling, and to bring healing and hope to the wounded. May our generosity serve as an act of remembrance and of faith in your restoring power. **Amen.**

Blessing: May the God who loves justice bless you with boldness to speak truth and to serve as agents of healing. May Christ’s compassion move you to care for the wounded and marginalized, and may the Spirit’s presence guide you to live in unity and peace. Go in the power of God’s grace. **Amen.**



THE FIGHT FOR
Civil Rights

**THE CIVIL RIGHTS MOVEMENT IN
FLORIDA: ST. AUGUSTINE SIT-INS (1964)**

St. Augustine became a key battleground in the Civil Rights Movement. Leaders like Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. and local activists staged sit-ins and marches, facing violence to challenge segregation.

“But let justice roll down like waters, and righteousness like an ever-flowing stream.”

AMOS 5:24

St. Augustine was a critical location for the Civil Rights Movement, with students, clergy, and community leaders holding sit-ins and peaceful protests against segregation. These actions often met with hostility and violence, yet the activists pressed on in the spirit of nonviolence. Their faith-fueled commitment to righteousness and justice resonates deeply with the call of the prophet Amos, who urged God’s people to let justice flow unabated. In reflecting on their actions, we are prompted to consider how our faith influences our response to systemic inequality. Are we willing to stand for equity, even when it is risky or uncomfortable? The story of the St. Augustine sit-ins challenges us not just to remember past victories but to actively work against ongoing injustices in our communities. The call for justice is continual and unending—like an ever-flowing stream.

Devotional Reflection: Consider the courage of those who stood for justice, even in the face of great danger. How can the church support modern movements for equity and equality?

Call to Action: Advocate for fair treatment and equity within your community and commit to ongoing education about systemic racism.

Musical Selections

“We Shall Overcome” (TFF #270) – A defining anthem of the Civil Rights Movement, it embodies the determination and faith of the activists.

“I Want Jesus to Walk with Me” (TFF #127) – A song of comfort and solidarity in the midst of struggle.

Weekly Prayer: God of righteousness and mercy, we remember with gratitude the brave men and women who sat in protest for freedom’s sake. Embolden us to speak truth when we see injustice and to act with compassion in the face of hatred. May we, like them, draw on faith to guide our actions toward peace, equity, and the flourishing of all. In Jesus’ name, we pray. **Amen.**

Offering Prayer: Gracious Lord, in gratitude for the blessings we enjoy, we bring these offerings before you. May they be used to support ministries that break down barriers, foster understanding, and champion justice. Empower us as your church to use all our resources—material and spiritual—to advance your kingdom of righteousness and peace. **Amen.**

Blessing: May the God of justice and mercy anoint you with courage to seek what is right. May Christ’s compassion open your eyes to those who are denied dignity, and may the Spirit sustain you as you let justice roll down like mighty waters. Go in peace and serve the Lord. **Amen.**



Modern

JUSTICE MOVEMENTS

MODERN JUSTICE MOVEMENTS: THE LEGACY OF THE DREAM DEFENDERS (2012-PRESENT)

Formed after the killing of Trayvon Martin in Sanford, Florida, the Dream Defenders is a youth-led organization advocating for social justice and systemic change.

“What does the Lord require of you but to do justice, and to love kindness, and to walk humbly with your God?”

MICAH 6:8

Formed in the wake of Trayvon Martin’s death in Sanford, Florida, the Dream Defenders is a youth-led organization dedicated to social change, racial justice, and systematic reform. Their work continues a tradition of activism that stretches back to the earliest movements for liberation in Florida. By voicing the concerns of marginalized communities, they embody the prophetic charge of Micah 6:8—seeking justice, practicing kindness, and fostering humble dialogue. Their efforts remind us that the call to justice is not bound by time or generation. As new challenges arise, God continues to inspire people to envision a more just world. We are all invited to join in that vision: standing against racism, promoting equitable policies, and nurturing a society rooted in love. The question for each of us is: How will we respond to God’s requirement to do justice, love kindness, and walk humbly?

Devotional Reflection: Reflect on how faith can guide and sustain modern justice movements. How does the Gospel call us to action in the face of ongoing inequality?

Call to Action: Partner with or support organizations working toward racial and economic justice in Florida and beyond.

Musical Selections

[“We’ve Come This Far by Faith”](#) (TFF #222) – A powerful hymn of faith and perseverance, perfect for reflecting on ongoing justice efforts.

[“What A Fellowship, What A Joy Divine \(Leaning On the Everlasting Arms\)”](#) (TFF #220) – This hymn speaks of comfort and hope found in trusting and leaning on the everlasting arms of the Lord.

[“We Are Marching in the Light of God \(Siyahamba\)”](#) (TFF #145) – Often sung in justice-focused gatherings, “We Are Marching” proclaims unity, forward movement, and faith-led action. Like the Dream Defenders who organize and advocate for systemic transformation, this hymn emphasizes walking together in God’s light toward a more just world.

Weekly Prayer: God of every generation, we thank you for the bold witness of the Dream Defenders and all who work tirelessly for justice today. Stir in us a holy discontent when we witness oppression, that we might be moved to action. Empower us to love mercy, practice compassion, and walk with humility as we co-labor with you in building a more equitable world. Through Christ our Lord, we pray. **Amen.**

Offering Prayer: Holy One, we bring our gifts with a humble heart, asking that you multiply their impact. Let our giving reflect our desire to stand alongside those who fight for justice. Use these offerings to bring hope, foster dialogue, and create lasting change in our communities and beyond. **Amen.**

Blessing: May God’s Spirit fill you with wisdom, compassion, and courage to seek justice for all people. May Christ lead you in kindness and humility, and may the love of the Creator embolden you to strive for peace and equity in every corner of life. Go in the power of God’s abiding grace. **Amen.**

Additional Resources

FORT MOSE

ARTICLE

- [Fort Mose: The First Free Black Town in the U.S.](#)

BOOK

- *Fort Mose: Colonial America's Black Fortress of Freedom* by Kathleen Deagan and Darcie MacMahon

VIDEOS

- [Fort Mose: The First All-Black Settlement in the U.S.](#)
- [Florida Frontiers: Fort Mose America's First Free Black Community](#)

Musical selections from [*This Far by Faith \(TFF\): An African American Resource for Worship*](#) hymnbook

ROSEWOOD MASSACRE

ARTICLES

- [Rosewood, Florida, marks 100 years since race massacre](#)
- [Rosewood Massacre Decimates Black Florida Community](#)

BOOKS

- [*Black America Series: Alachua County, Florida*](#) by Lizzie PRB Jenkins
- [*Lizzie's Rosewood Race*](#) by Lizzie Robinson Jenkins

WEBSITE

- The Real Rosewood Foundation - www.RosewoodFlorida.com

VIDEO/FILM

- [The Rosewood Massacre of 1923 and its Enduring Legacy](#)
- [The 1997 film "Rosewood"](#) by John Singleton with actors Ving Rhames and Jon Voight



Additional Resources

CIVIL RIGHTS

ARTICLES

- [The Civil Rights Movement in Florida](#)
- [The St. Augustine Movement \(1963 - 1964\)](#)

VIDEO

- [Dr. King and Florida: Andrew Young Crossing](#)

MODERN JUSTICE MOVEMENT

ARTICLES & ONLINE SOURCES

- Dream Defenders Official Website - www.DreamDefenders.org
- [Dream Defenders, A New Generation, Fights For Civil Rights In Florida](#)
- [10 Years On: What's Changed Since Trayvon Martin's Death?](#) A decade after the unarmed Florida teen was killed, three people touched by his life reflect on the cultural movements sparked by his death.

VIDEO

- [Dream Defenders March 40 Miles from Daytona to Sanford](#)
- [Dream Defenders Take Over Florida for Trayvon Martin](#)