

June Observances of Multicultural Interest

From CUMC's Multicultural Committee

Pride Month is a vibrant and inclusive celebration that honors the LGBTQ+ community, their history, achievements, and ongoing struggle for equality. It began after the Stonewall riots in New York City, gay liberation protests triggered by a law enforcement raid on a gay bar. Pride Month serves as a powerful reminder of the importance of acceptance, diversity, and love. It brings together individuals, organizations, and communities to advocate for LGBTQ+ rights and celebrate the progress made towards a more inclusive society. Having just celebrated Catalina's 5th anniversary as a Reconciling Church, Pride Month reminds us that the fight for LGBTQ+ equality, acceptance and human rights is much more than a declaration of intent: it requires ongoing effort.

Juneteenth, celebrated on the nineteenth, is a commemoration of the date in 1865 that the last slaves in the Confederacy were told by an Army General in Galveston, Texas, that President Lincoln had ended slavery on January 1, 1863, with the issuance of the Emancipation Proclamation. Yes, it took two and half years for the news to reach them! The holiday, which President Biden made a federal holiday in 2021, is known as the oldest commemoration of the end of slavery in the U.S. While it has long been celebrated nationwide in Black communities and was revitalized during the civil rights movement, many other Americans have known little of it until somewhat recently. Like the first Independence Day, this day calls for joyous celebration: special services or programs, holiday cookouts, parades and music.

World Refugee Day is an international day designated by the United Nations to honor refugees around the globe. It falls each year on June 20th and celebrates the strength and courage of people who have been forced to flee their home country to escape conflict or persecution. World Refugee Day shines a light on the rights, needs and dreams of refugees, helping to mobilize political will and resources so refugees can not only survive but also thrive. While it is important to protect and improve the lives of refugees every single day, international days like World Refugee Day help to focus global attention on the plight of those fleeing conflict or persecution. While there have been refugees across the world for centuries, it hardly seems possible that there's been a more propitious time to think about, and pray on, the problems faced by today's refugees, estimated at over 30 million people; think of the Sudan, Gaza, Syria, Ukraine and those in our own hemisphere.