

Sermon Outline - Sun, February 14th, 2021 – The Dream and the Hope of the Slave
(Romans 4:3,16-21 ; Hebrews 11:1-3;12:1)

Overview: This month as we celebrate Black history Month we are exploring the theme “The Dream and the Hope of the Slave.” Last week we focused on Harriet Tubman and were reminded that someone dreamed of you, that their struggle and sacrifice made your life possible and that it is our job to dream of a better future for the next generation. Today we lean into the story of Richard Allen the founder of the AME Church.

Story Exegesis

- We celebrate the Biblical story, but God’s intervention in the world did not end with the stories in the sacred text and so we lean into the story of Richard Allen
- Richard Allen was born Feb 14th, 1760 (would be 261 today) in Delaware.
- He was born enslaved by Benjamin Chew who was a Quaker born lawyer who became the Chief Justice of The Supreme Court of Pennsylvania (trained by Alexander Hamilton)
- Later owned by Stokely Sturgis and like Harriet Tubman he experienced how slavery separated families
- Methodism came to his community and he felt called to be a preacher, his slave owner felt convicted to let his slaves buy their freedom and Allen was able to work and buy his
- Allen engages w/ the Methodist movement which in early days opposes slavery and he joins St Georges Church in 1786→ story of the exodus from St. George’s in 1787
- Early on he tries to participate in a multi-racial church, but incidents like St George’s and Methodist denomination backtracking on slavery make him move to start an independent Methodist denomination in 1816 → Hold Methodist theology but create new institution

Key Points – How does New Roots Fit Into the AME

- Allen’s dream was for a Methodism that could be a liberatory force. White supremacy made that impossible.
- We are fulfilling now what Allen hoped for in his time.
- How are we leaning into this legacy intentionally and how do we think about it within our congregation and within the denomination
- God’s promise to Abraham was not just to Abraham’s family but that God would bless everyone through Abraham’s family. I wasn’t to suggest that it is also possible that Allen’s legacy was not only for Black people, but that it was always meant to flow to all people and change the world.

Core Questions –

1. When you hear the story of Allen, what sticks out to you? Are their parts of his life and legacy that encourage and challenge you in your life?
2. In what way is New Roots actively living out the legacy and where are their opportunities for us to go deeper in building and expanding the AME tradition?
3. What conversations do you/we need to have about white supremacy and hierarchy within the Christian tradition and how can we actively work to create a new vision that leans into Allen and more importantly God’s vision of who we are called to be?