

Justice & Diversity Team News for February 2026

Black History Month: Remembering the Past to Shape the Future-



In February, we observe Black History Month, a time set aside to honor the history, faith, resilience, and contributions of Black Americans. But this commemoration is more than a calendar observance; it is a spiritual and communal practice rooted in remembering truthfully and living faithfully.

Black History Month began in 1926 as Negro History Week, created by historian Dr. Carter G. Woodson and the Association for the Study of Negro Life and History (now ASALH). Woodson believed that history shapes identity, and that those who are denied their history are denied their full humanity. His goal was not simply celebration, but education. Now in 2026, the ASALH theme is A Century of Black History Commemorations, recognizing this hundredth anniversary. <https://asalh.org/black-history-themes/>

Woodson chose February deliberately, building on traditions already present in Black communities that honored the lives of Abraham Lincoln and Frederick Douglass. In doing so, he invited the nation not to create a new tradition, but to deepen an existing one. Over the decades, this observance grew. What began as a week expanded into a month, officially recognized in 1976, and embraced by schools, churches, libraries, and communities across the country. Black History Month has become a space for storytelling, learning, and faithful witness. This is especially important in times when parts of our shared history are challenged, minimized, or erased.

As we observe this month, may we not only learn, but also reflect, pray, and act. And may our remembrance shape how we live together, well beyond February.

Learn more: Association for the Study of African American Life and History (ASALH) - As the organization that founded Black History Month, head here for articles, timelines, and ideas for celebrating.

History.com's Black History Month Overview - An article on the origins and significance of Black History Month in U.S. history, with plenty of photos.

<https://www.history.com/articles/black-history-month>

Gilder Lehrman Institute Black History Resources - This site has books read aloud, lists of books to read, recorded discussions, and whole online classes. (highly recommend!)

<https://www.gilderlehrman.org/>

National Archives & Library of Congress Materials (blackhistorymonth.gov) - This one site is a launching point to explore all the resources from across the national museums and archives. <https://www.blackhistorymonth.gov/>

Kalamazoo Public Library - KPL is honoring some of the formative Black men and women who have impacted the founding and growth of Kalamazoo. Read, watch and listen to their stories!

<https://www.kpl.gov/>

Looking ahead to Lent - The Justice and Diversity Team is collaborating with the Education Committee to lead a special series from JustFaith Ministries called Unbound: Seeking the Freedom of God's Love (Sundays 2/22-3/26).