



St. Michael Celebrates Black History Month - 2026

A Century of Black History Commemorations: Honoring the Legacy of Dr. Carter G. Woodson

This year marks **100 years since the first Negro History Week**, launched in 1926 by **Dr. Carter G. Woodson**, known as the **Father of Black History**. The 2026 national theme, “**A Century of Black History Commemorations**,” invites us to reflect on how the study and celebration of Black history have shaped our faith, culture, and national conscience.

Woodson, the son of formerly enslaved parents and one of the first African Americans to earn a Harvard Ph.D., founded the **Association for the Study of African American Life and History (ASALH)** to preserve stories ignored by textbooks. He chose the second week of February—honoring **Frederick Douglass** and **Abraham Lincoln**—to remind the nation that truth and freedom walk hand in hand.

Faith and Education Hand in Hand

Woodson’s vision was shared by **Mary McLeod Bethune**, educator and adviser, and the **Sisters of the Holy Family**, founded by **Venerable Henriette Delille** in 1842. They championed education as liberation. Faith communities continue this mission today, affirming the dignity of every human person and recognizing that every culture enriches the Body of Christ—**a principle rooted in Catholic social teaching**.

By 1976, fifty years later, **President Gerald Ford** extended the week into **Black History Month**, urging Americans to honor the “too-often neglected accomplishments of Black Americans.”

Why It Matters Today

A century later, efforts to restrict or erase lessons on race and history remind us why Woodson’s work endures. Commemorating Black history is an act of truth and faith. It calls us to preserve memory, confront injustice, and celebrate the countless ways Black Americans have shaped our Church and country.

As we begin this centennial observance, may we honor the pioneers who insisted that Black history is American history—and carry forward their mission with courage, gratitude, and hope. Dr. Woodson wrote, “**We have a wonderful history behind us, and it will inspire us to greater achievements if we study it.**” May this centennial year renew our commitment to remember, teach, and celebrate that history in faith and unity.

Over the coming weeks, St. Michael AAMEN will share contributions Black Americans have made to our country in the areas of education, inventions, medicine, science and athletics.