



# Jacob's Ladder



A NEWSLETTER OF OXFORD FIRST UNITED METHODIST CHURCH

Rev. Sapada Thomas, Pastor

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**JULY 4TH**  
**JUNETEENTH**  
**IS MY INDEPENDENCE DAY**

## **MOVING FORWARD,** **GLANCING BACKWARD**

**by Rev. Mattie Gipson**

As we move forward day by day, it bodes us well to take a glance backward. Our freedom as African Americans has now been legally and formally acknowledged. Juneteenth has been declared a legal holiday in the USA. But let's think about the many years it has taken for that to happen.

The Declaration of Independence, the Constitution of the United States of America, and The Bill of Rights all express blanket freedom for Americans. But just who is considered to be an American? Is it the indigenous people who were here when "Columbus sailed the ocean blue and discovered this land in 1492?" I think not because these so-called Indian savages were treated despicably and herded off to areas called reservations. Their land was taken and their customs all but obliterated.

What about the indentured servants who came here from other countries to work off their debts? Hmmm, not really. They, too, were kept in "their places."

And what about the hundreds of thousands of people of color who were stolen or bought from their native lands of Africa on ships under horrible conditions, many dying before they reached the shores of American soil? They were brought to this country to be enslaved and work to build up this country, to till the soil, to nurture the babies of the genteel ladies of the Southern planters, while having their own babies torn from their arms and sold off like chattel to work from sunup to sundown to enlarge the wealth of their owners. Freedom for these people-I think not!

And yet, each year, on July 4<sup>th</sup>, we celebrate Independence Day- the day when America celebrates the legal separation from Great Britain (that actually took place on July 2, 1776). I encourage each of you to read the Declaration of Independence, The Constitution of the United States, and the Bill of Rights and discern exactly to whom they were referring.

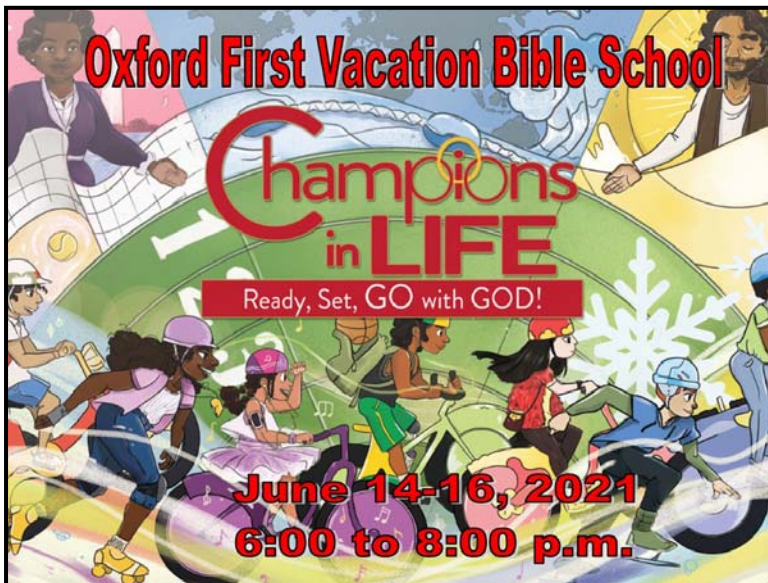
But for the grace of God and the strong

Spirits of a few people who believed that ALL MEN ARE CREATED EQUAL AND ENDOWED BY OUR CREATOR WITH CERTAIN INALIENABLE RIGHTS, we would still be shackled by the chains of slavery and unjust laws. Therefore, I implore you that during this season of celebrating our freedom, we take a backward glance at the sacrifices of a few to overcome the chains of injustice that were perpetrated by the

powerful majority.

Let's not forget those who took the words of AMOS 5:24 seriously: LET JUSTICE ROLL DOWN LIKE WATERS AND RIGHTEOUSNESS LIKE AN OVERFLOWING STREAM.

To God be the Glory for His mighty blessings!!



Using the theme: "Champions in Life: Ready, Set Go with God!" Oxford First UMC held its 2021 Vacation Bible School (VBS) from June 14<sup>th</sup> through the 16<sup>th</sup>. Children, youth, and adults experienced joy in knowing that Jesus makes each one a winner and that we are competing in life to reach the goal of the high calling of Jesus Christ, striving to all be "Champions of Life."

Minister Tressie Johnson was the VBS coordinator. She wants to thank all who helped to bring things together. We had the

following classes: ages 3-5, grades 1-4, grades 5-8, grades 9-12, and an adult class. We also had Arts and Crafts, along with outside fun and games like basketball and volleyball. It was a wonderful Spirit-filled experience all three nights. The following is a pictorial review.







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