



400 YEARS OF *Faith*
AMERICAN
CONGREGATIONALISM
SINCE 1620

Did you know John Brown...

Descended from Puritans, John Brown opposed slavery and aspired to Congregational ministry. Illness derailed divinity studies; instead, he followed his father's footsteps as a tanner. But he did become a noted abolitionist. His Pennsylvania tannery was a major stop on the Underground Railroad, aiding an estimated 2,500 escaping slaves.

Influenced by the 1837 murder of editor Elijah Lovejoy, the 1850 Fugitive Slave Law, and the 1856 sack of Lawrence, Kansas, Brown embraced violence to oppose slavery. He led the slaughter of five pro-slavery men at Pottawatomie Creek, Kansas—touching off that “bleeding” territory’s worst period of pre-Civil War bloodshed.

Leaving Kansas, Brown organized an armed revolt, on funds provided by wealthy Northeastern friends “with no questions asked.” On October 16, 1859, he led eighteen men in an attack on the U.S. Arsenal at Harpers Ferry, Virginia, hoping to spark a general uprising of slaves. He was soon isolated and was captured by U.S. forces under Colonel Robert E. Lee.

Unwavering in defiance, Brown was hanged in 1859. A song extolling his sacrifice, “John Brown’s Body,” became an unofficial anthem to which abolition-minded Union troops marched into battle two years later.

...was a Congregationalist?

Celebrating 400 Years of American Congregationalism
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Call To Worship

L: Redeem the time, O God, before it's gone and lost

C: When hearty pilgrim souls measured the cost

L: And made the long voyage with hopes of something new

C: We come to worship expecting something new!

Invocation (in unison)

As we celebrate our heritage, gracious God, teach us to be people who move fences and walls. Teach us to open doors and hearts to You and to Your people; to those who are the other, the strangers. Teach us to see You in the faces of those who do not look like us, who worship and pray from different texts and in different postures, and in different sacred spaces than we do. Teach us to move or remove fences that we might truly know those beyond our borders, borders that are made by humanity. This we pray in order that we might truly know people, who, in all their differences, seek dignity and peace. Amen

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