



Did you know Elizabeth Jennings Graham...

Elizabeth Jennings Graham was an African-American teacher, civil rights figure, and church musician. She was born free in March 1827, one of five children in the home of Mr. and Mrs. Thomas Jennings.

Thomas was a freeman, a successful tailor and an influential member of New York's black community. He was an inventor and was the first known African-American holder of a patent in the United States. His wife, also Elizabeth, was a prominent woman and a leader of the Ladies Literary Society of New York, founded to promote self improvement among black women through community activities, reading, and discussion.

On Sunday, July 16, 1854, Elizabeth Jennings Graham boarded a street car to attend the First Colored Congregational Church, New York City, where she was organist. The conductor ordered her to get off. When she refused, the conductor tried to remove her by force. Eventually, with the aid of a police officer, Jennings was ejected from the streetcar. At that time street car companies were private and most operated segregated cars. Her case was decided in her favor in 1855, and it led to the eventual desegregation of all New York City transit systems by 1865.

Elizabeth later started the first kindergarten for African-American children, operating it from her home on 247 West 41st Street until her death in 1901. In 2007, New York City co-named a block of Park Row "Elizabeth Jennings Place" after a campaign by children from Public School 361.

...was a Congregationalist?

Celebrating 400 Years of American Congregationalism
Learn more about our Congregational History at naccc.org



Call To Worship

L: We come to worship, celebrating 400 years since the landing of the Pilgrims.

C: **They founded a life together based on faith in God and Christ's constant care.**

L: They dared to rise up and create a country based entirely on leaning on God.

C: **And so we come week after week, but especially this year thanking God for our life together as God's Pilgrim people.**

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 and all their differences, seek dignity and peace. Amen

Historical story by: Rev. Garry Fisher

Liturgy by: Rev. Tom Richard