



Did you know Charles Bennett Ray...

Charles Bennett Ray was a prominent African-American abolitionist, the owner and editor of the weekly newspaper *The Colored American*, and a notable journalist and clergyman. Born a free man in Falmouth, Massachusetts, Charles was the son of mail carrier Joseph Aspinwall Ray and his wife Annis Harrington. He attended Wesleyan Seminary, studying theology, and then in 1832 enrolled as the first black student at Wesleyan University in Middletown, Connecticut, although his enrollment was revoked less than two months later after white students protested. He moved to New York City in 1832 and opened a boot and shoe store. Charles became a Methodist minister and later a Congregational minister, serving as pastor of two predominately white churches in New York City -- Crosby Congregational Church and Bethesda Congregational Church. He was a strong supporter of the temperance movement, and was a member of the American Missionary Association, the African Society for Mutual Relief, and co-founded the Society for the Promotion of Education Among Colored Children.

In the early 1830s Charles became involved in the abolitionist movement, and became a prominent promoter of the Underground Railroad. His paper, *The Colored American*, promoted "the moral, social, and political elevation of the free colored people; and the peaceful emancipation of slaves." He was married twice: first in 1834 to Henrietta Green Regulus, who died two years later in childbirth; and again in 1840 to Charlotte Augusta Burroughs. They had seven children, including the first female African-American attorney, Charlotte E. Ray, and her sister, poet Henrietta Cordelia Ray, known for her 80-line ode, "Lincoln."

...was a Congregationalist?

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400 YEARS OF *Faith*
AMERICAN
CONGREGATIONALISM
SINCE 1620

Call To Worship

L: Pilgrims are we, O Lord God, we come

C: 400-year-old travelers with Your Son

L: When we have been weary, You have restored our souls

C: And set us on the path again, of redemption

L: We come to this hour seeking refreshment, courage, and the will

C: To continue this journey toward the community of heaven

Invocation (in unison)

We remember this day our Pilgrim forebears, whose constant prayers and unshakable courage brought them to this land we now call home. They brought their sins, their cares, their temptations, too, and found their help and strength from You. We approach You with the same needs and the hope that this hour may be for us a time of grace and empowerment to live with courage as Christ's new pilgrims. Amen

Historical story by: Rev. Garry Fisher

Liturgy by: Rev. Tom Richard