

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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HISTORIC MT. ZION CHURCH TO LIVE STREAM SPECIAL COMMEMORATION OF 50TH ANNIVERSARY OF FREEDOM SUMMER MURDERS

PHILADELPHIA, MISS., MAY 29, 2014 – On Sunday, June 15, at 3:00 p.m., the Historic Mt. Zion United Methodist Church will hold a special service to commemorate the 50th anniversary of the murders of civil rights workers James Chaney, Andrew Goodman, and Michael Schwerner. In June 1964, a tragic chain of events visited Mississippi; Mt. Zion, which was burned down, was in many ways the epicenter of it all.

Chaney, Goodman, and Schwerner were arrested after visiting members of Mt. Zion, whose church had been burned down by a group looking for Chaney and Schwerner.

(More details about Freedom Summer can be found [here](#).)

“We’re commemorating their sacrifice,” says Pastor Peggy Gibson, leader of Mt. Zion. “The historic location of our church, the significance of its destruction and rebuilding, and the mark of fifty years’ passage make this the perfect time and place for us to commemorate the work that James Chaney, Andrew Goodman, and Michael Schwerner did and made possible.”

Representatives of each victim’s family will attend: Julia Chaney Moss, sister of James

Chaney; David Goodman, Andrew Goodman's brother; and Rita Bender, widow of Michael Schwerner.

Gibson stresses the momentum motivated by the killings, when 1,000 committed young people entered Mississippi to conduct voter registration drives and set up freedom schools, and that the Civil Rights Act of 1964 was signed into law less than two weeks after the three men disappeared.

During the ceremony, trailblazers for civil rights in Mississippi will be honored as "Drum Majors for Justice," in homage to Martin Luther King Jr., who said, in 1968, "If you want to say that I was a drum major, say that I was a drum major for justice. Say that I was a drum major for peace. I was a drum major for righteousness. And all of the other shallow things will not matter." They will receive "Blind Justice" statues, symbolizing objectivity in the application of justice.

Also to be honored are former Student Nonviolent Coordinating Committee (SNCC) chairman and current U.S. Congressman John Lewis (D-GA); Bob Moses, SNCC leader and developer of the Algebra Project; former Mississippi Governor William F. Winter; Bishop Duncan Gray III of the Mississippi Archdiocese of the Episcopal Church; former Mississippi secretary of state Dick Molpus; Dave Dennis, former Mississippi director of the Congress of Racial Equality (CORE); Freedom Summer veteran and Freedom '64 founder Roscoe Jones; and Bishop James Swanson of the Mississippi Annual Conference of The United Methodist Church. Movement veteran and author Florence Mars will be honored posthumously.

A live stream of the service, viewable from computers, smart TVs (via YouTube), and mobile devices, will be available at this URL: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ci45-kBAnIs>

Please contact Pastor Peggy Gibson, of Mt. Zion, with any questions or for further discussion of this historic service.

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