



Celebrating the Black Heritage of Our Church

The Bob Marley (Emancipation) Mass

February 1, 2026 at 4:30pm

*The Cathedral Church of St. James
Diocese of Toronto • Anglican Church of Canada*

LAND ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

This sacred land is the territory of several Indigenous Nations - the Wendat, the Haudenosaunee, and the Anishnaabe, and the Métis peoples, with special recognition to the Mississaugas of New Credit. We also acknowledge that we are on the shores of Niigaanigichigami/Lake Ontario. This territory is governed by the Dish With One Spoon Wampum Belt Treaty, an agreement between the Haudenosaunee Confederacy and the Anishnaabe Confederacy to peaceably share and sustain the life of the Great Lakes. In the spirit of that Treaty we seek to place at the centre of our gatherings the values of respectful reciprocity, diversity, peace, responsibility, and mutual aid.

Welcome to St. James Cathedral

Presider The Right Reverend Andrew Asbil
Bishop of Toronto

Co-Celebrants The Right Reverend Riscylla Shaw (*Suffragan Bishop*)
The Right Reverend Kevin Robertson (*Suffragan Bishop*)
The Reverend Canon Dr. Stephen Fields (*Vicar & Sub-Dean*)

Homilist The Right Reverend Deon K. Johnson
XI Bishop of Missouri

Deacon The Reverend Denise Byard
Assistant Curate, St. Luke, Peterborough

Assisting Clergy The Reverend Canon Kristen Pitts (*Canon Missioner*)
The Reverend Matthew Waterman (*Assistant Curate*)

Bishop's Chaplain Paul Seddon, ODT

Reader Andre Lynn, ODT
Chair, the Bishop's Committee on Intercultural Ministry (BCIM)

Communion Ministers Canon Dr. Anita Gittens, ODT, Brainerd Blyden-Taylor

Intercessor & Choreographer Constance Kendall, ODT

Dancers One Love Dancers

Musicians MOKA, *Caribbean Fusion Band*

The Marley Mass – An Introduction

By The Reverend Canon Dr. Stephen Fields

“Given the image of him as a smiling, joint-smoking peacenik that has proliferated since his death in 1981, it’s easy to forget just how angry Bob Marley was. His music spoke to colonialism (“Small Axe”), poverty (“Them Belly Full [But We Hungry]”), the necessity of achieving political agency (“Get Up, Stand Up”), and the challenge of exercising it (“Burnin’ and Lootin’”) with a righteousness and frustration that made him as much a figurehead to punk rock as to the reggae he helped export to the world. He may have been ambivalent about politics (he once said it was pretty much the same thing as church—a way to keep people ignorant), but it wasn’t because of their underlying possibilities; it was the way the political system had been twisted by the tyranny and greed of people in power that troubled him. And if his music sounded sweet and made you want to dance, it’s because, as his sometime publicist Vivien Goldman once put it, he knew that if he hooked you with the melody, you’d have to listen to what he had to say.” (Source - primarywave.com/writer/bob-marley)

Is there a Theology of Bob Marley? Yes! In his body of work, we see a message that is both timeless and extremely relevant. His songs echo the cries of the oppressed, the call to unity, and the hope for liberation. He challenges us to see God not as a distant observer but as an active force in the struggle for justice. He invites us to embody love that is bold, transformative, and inclusive. Marley's theology is a call to action—a reminder that faith is not passive but revolutionary. It calls us to resist the "Babylon system," to stand with the oppressed, and to believe in a God who is not only with us but within us.

Bob Marley's music transcends mere entertainment. It provides a theological lens through which we can explore themes of justice, redemption, liberation, and hope. His songs, deeply rooted in Rastafarian spirituality, often reflect a yearning for freedom and equality, resonating with the biblical narrative of God's preferential concern for the oppressed.

For Christians, his work challenges us to reflect on how faith engages with the realities of oppression and the promise of redemption. Marley's lyrics invite us to participate in God's mission of reconciliation and freedom, inspiring us to “get up, stand up” in faith and action. His legacy endures as a call to embody love, unity, and justice in our lives and communities.

Marley's theology, like his music, no matter the mood, compels us to dance, even as we fight for a better world.

February 6, 2025 (Bob Marley's 80th birthday)

ORDER OF SERVICE

Prelude – Band Plays “One Love, One Heart”

Band plays “Coming from the Cold” (Instrumental)

GATHERING OF THE COMMUNITY

Bishop God is here.
People **God will never forsake us.**
Bishop The Reign of God is joy.
People **Thanks be to God.**
Bishop The Reign of God is peace.
People **Thanks be to God.**
Bishop The Reign of God is justice.
People **Thanks be to God.**
Bishop What does the Lord require of us?
People **That we do justice, love kindness, and to walk humbly with God.**
Bishop We hunger and thirst for justice and righteousness.
People **Let us eat the Bread of Justice. Let us drink of the Cup of Mercy.**
Let us sing and make music unto God.
Bishop Joy and peace to you!
People **Justice and mercy for all. Thanks be to God.**

Welcome

The Right Reverend Andrew Asbil

Opening Song & Dance - Coming In From the Cold

In this life, in this life, in this life
In this, oh sweet life
We're (we're coming in from the cold)
We're coming in (coming in), coming in (coming in)
Coming in (coming in), coming in (coming in)
Coming in from the cold!

It's you, it's you, it's you I'm talking to
Well, you (it's you), you (it's you), you I'm talking to now
Why do you look so sad, and forsaken?
When one door is closed, don't you know, other is open?

Would you let the system make you kill your brotherman?
No, no, no, no, no, no! No, Dread, no! Woo!
Would you make the system make you kill your brotherman?
(No, Dread, no!)
Would you make the system get on top of your head again?
(No, Dread, no!)
Well, the biggest man you ever did see was - was just a baby

In this life (in this life)
In this (in this life, oh sweet life):
Coming in from the cold!
We're coming in (coming in), coming in-a (coming in)
Coming in (coming in), ooh! (coming in)
Coming in from the cold!

The Collect

Bishop

Let us pray.

Liberating God, you call us to love you with all our heart, soul, mind, and strength, and to love our neighbours as ourselves: write your word upon our hearts and bind us together in one heart and one love. As we celebrate Black History Month, shape us by the witness of those who have struggled for justice, that our worship may be lived in truth, and your reign may draw near among us. Through Jesus Christ our Lord.

People

Amen.

THE PROCLAMATION OF THE WORD

Please be seated.

The First Reading

Deuteronomy 6:1-9

Reader

Now this is the commandment—the statutes and the ordinances—that the Lord your God charged me to teach you to observe in the land that you are about to cross into and occupy, so that you and your children and your children's children may fear the Lord your God all the days of your life, and keep all his decrees and his commandments that I am commanding you, so that your days may be long. Hear therefore, O Israel, and observe them diligently, so that it may go well with you, and so that you may multiply greatly in a land flowing with milk and honey, as the Lord, the God of your ancestors, has promised you.

Hear, O Israel: The Lord is our God, the Lord alone. You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart, and with all your soul, and with all your might. Keep these words that I am commanding you today in your heart. Recite them to your children and talk about them when you are at home and when you are away, when you lie down and when you rise. Bind them as a sign on your hand, fix them as an emblem on your forehead, and write them on the doorposts of your house and on your gates.

Reader Hear what the Spirit is saying to the Church.
People **Thanks be to God.**

Gradual Song – War

Until the philosophy which hold one race
Superior and another inferior
is finally and permanently discredited and abandoned
Everywhere is war, me say war.

That until there are no longer first class
and second class citizens of any nation
Until the color of a man's skin
is of no more significance than the color of his eyes
Me say war.

That until the basic human rights are equally
guaranteed to all, without regard to race
A dis a war.

That until that day
the dream of lasting peace, world citizenship
rule of international morality
will remain in but a fleeting illusion
to be pursued, but never attained
Now everywhere is war, war.

And until the ignoble and unhappy regimes
that hold our brothers in Angola, in Mozambique,
South Africa sub-human bondage
have been toppled, utterly destroyed
Well, everywhere is war, me say war.

War in the east, war in the west
war up north, war down south
war, war, rumours of war.

And until that day, the African continent
will not know peace, we Africans will fight
we find it necessary and we know we shall win
as we are confident in the victory.

Of good over evil, good over evil, good over evil
Good over evil, good over evil, good ever evil.

Please stand.
Mark 12:28-34

The Gospel

Deacon The Lord be with you.

People **And also with you.**

Deacon The Holy Gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ according to St. Mark.

People **Glory to you, Lord Jesus Christ.**

Deacon One of the scribes came near and heard the Sadducees disputing with one another, and seeing that Jesus answered them well, he asked him, 'Which commandment is the first of all?' Jesus answered, 'The first is, "Hear, O Israel: the Lord our God, the Lord is one; you shall love the Lord your God with all your heart, and with all your soul, and with all your mind, and with all your strength." The second is this, "You shall love your neighbour as yourself." There is no other commandment greater than these.' Then the scribe said to him, 'You are right, Teacher; you have truly said that "he is one, and besides him there is no other"; and "to love him with all the heart, and with all the understanding, and with all the strength", and "to love one's neighbour as oneself",—this is much more important than all whole burnt-offerings and sacrifices.' When Jesus saw that he answered wisely, he said to him, 'You are not far from the kingdom of God.' After that no one dared to ask him any question.

Deacon The Gospel of Christ.

People **Praise to you, Lord Jesus Christ.**

Sermon

The Right Reverend Deon K. Johnson

The Band plays “One Love”

One Love! One Heart!

Let's get together and feel all right.

Hear the children cryin' (One Love!);

Hear the children cryin' (One Heart!),

Sayin': give thanks and praise to the Lord and I will feel all right;

Sayin': let's get together and feel all right.

Prayer of Intercession

Please adopt a posture of prayer.

Leader Loving God, we come to your seeking justice, freedom, and peace in our world, saying “*One love, one heart, let's get together and feel all right.*”

Response **One love, one heart, let's get together and feel all right.**

Leader For the day when the philosophy which hold one race superior and another inferior is finally and permanently discredited and abandoned. For justice among nations and for an end to oppression and inequality. Help us to work tirelessly for fairness and equity. We pray

Response **One love, one heart, let's get together and feel all right.**

Leader For the day there are no longer first-class and second-class citizens of any nation. For those suffering under systems of injustice, poverty, and corruption, we cry out to you. Comfort the grieving, the oppressed, and the downtrodden. May we act as your hands and feet, bringing relief and hope. We pray

Response **One love, one heart, let's get together and feel all right.**

Leader For the day when the colour of one's skin is of no more significance than the colour of their eyes. For freedom from all forms of bondage, be it physical, mental, or spiritual. Grant courage and wisdom to those seeking liberation and let us stand in solidarity with them. We pray

Response **One love, one heart, let's get together and feel all right.**

Leader For the day when the basic human rights are equally guaranteed to all, without regard to race. For peace in our communities and across the world. Help us to sow seeds of reconciliation, understanding, and forgiveness, that we may truly live in harmony with one another. We pray

Response **One love, one heart, let's get together and feel all right.**

Leader For the day when the dream of lasting peace is not a fleeting illusion

to be pursued but will finally be attained. For ourselves, that we may live as peacemakers, bringing your justice and mercy into our daily lives. Teach us to “get up, stand up, stand up for our rights,” always rooted in your love and truth. We pray

Response
Bishop

One love, one heart, let's get together and feel all right.

Gracious God, unite us in the spirit of love and peace, empower us, and guide us to act justly, love mercy, and walk humbly with You. We ask this through Christ, our Redeemer. Amen.

Response

One love, one heart, let's get together and feel all right.

The Peace

Please stand.

Bishop

Where there is justice,

People

There is peace.

Bishop

May the peace of the Lord be always with you.

People

And also with you.

We offer each other a sign of peace as the band plays “One Love”.

The Band plays “One Love”

One Love! One Heart!

Let's get together and feel all right.

Hear the children cryin' (One Love!);

Hear the children cryin' (One Heart!),

Sayin': give thanks and praise to the Lord and I will feel all right;

Sayin': let's get together and feel all right.

An offering will now be taken to support the life and ministry of the Cathedral.

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THE CELEBRATION OF THE EUCHARIST

Offertory Song – Exodus

Exodus!
Movement of Jah people!
Oh-oh, yeah!
Heaven will tell to let me tell you this
Men and people will fight ya down, tell me why!
(When ya see Jah light) ha-ha-ha-ha-ha!
Let me tell you if you're not wrong, then, why?
Well, everything is all right
So we gonna walk, alright!
Through the roads of creation
We the generation, tell me why!
(Trod through great tribulation), trod through great tribulation

Exodus! Alright
Movement of Jah people!
Oh, yeah! Oh, yeah! Alright!
Exodus!
Movement of Jah people! Oh, yeah!

Yeah-yeah-yeah, well! Uh!
Open your eyes
(And look within)
Are you satisfied?
(With the life you're living), uh!
We know where we're going, uh!
We know where we're from
We're leaving Babylon
We're going to our Fatherland

Exodus!
Movement of Jah people! Oh, yeah!
(Movement of Jah people!) Send us another brother Moses!
(Movement of Jah people!) From across the Red Sea!
(Movement of Jah people!) Send us another brother Moses!
(Movement of Jah people!) From across the Red Sea!
(Movement of Jah people!)

Exodus! Alright! Ooh, ooh!
Movement of Jah people! Oh yeah!
Exodus!
Exodus! Alright!
Exodus! Now-now! Now-now!
Exodus!

Prayer over the Gifts

Bishop Gracious God, we bring these gifts to your altar, symbols of our labor and love. Bless them to build your kingdom of justice, where the oppressed find dignity, where hearts and nations are reconciled; and where every soul is released to live in your freedom. Transform our offerings and we who give them that we may be instruments of your grace in this broken world. Through Christ, who is our peace, we pray.

People **Amen.**

The Great Thanksgiving

Bishop The Lord is here.

People **We are here.**

Bishop Lift your hearts and lips in praise.

People **We lift them to God with joy.**

Bishop Let us give thanks.

People **It is always good to come together in praise and thanksgiving, with joyful expectation of God's reign that is and is to come.**

Bishop Blessed are you, gracious God, creator of heaven and earth; we give you thanks and praise through Jesus Christ our Lord, for you created us in your image. As you called your prophets of old, you call us in our time to proclaim the good news of your justice, peace, and love.

We find ourselves in a jungle, where our feet are not bound but we are not free, yet we remember your promise that justice will roll down like waters, righteousness like an ever-flowing stream, and that the lion and lamb will lie down together. Knowing that until the philosophy which holds one race superior and another inferior is finally and permanently discredited and abandoned, there will be always be war, injustice, inequality and inequity, we join our voices with angels and archangels

and all the company of heaven singing the “Redemption Song” of our emancipation from mental slavery and of your power to set us free.

Band plays the opening bars of “Redemption Song”.

All **Holy, holy, holy Lord, God of power and might, heaven and earth are full of your glory. Hosanna in the highest.**

Bishop As your Christ approached his final stand against injustice and every form of evil and sin, we join with those who followed him saying,

All **Blessed is the One who comes in the name of the Lord, the One who enfleshed justice, peace, and love, and now calls us to unity and action. Hosanna in the highest.**

Band repeats the opening bars of “Redemption Song”.

Bishop Holy God, from the day your Son, who came that all may have life in all its fullness, announced that your Spirit had anointed him to bring good news to the least, the last, and the lost, he was pursued by his adversaries. When he recalled how the prophets, Elijah and Elisha, restored the child of the poor woman in Sidon and healed the leper, Naaman the Syrian, he was rejected by his own people. Later, he was falsely accused, arrested, tried, and condemned to death. On the cross, he opened his arms to all and for all. In his resurrection we celebrate his victory over death and rejoice in his promise of a new creation.

People **Let's get together and feel all right.**

Bishop On the night he was betrayed, he took bread, gave thanks, broke it, and gave it to his disciples, saying: "Take, eat; this is my body, given for you. Do this in remembrance of me."

This bread is the Bread of Justice,

People **It is the Bread of Life.**

Bishop After supper, he took the cup, gave thanks, and gave it to them, saying: Drink this, all of you. This is my blood of the new covenant, shed for you and for many for the forgiveness of sins. Whenever you drink it, do this in remembrance of me."

This cup is the Cup of Mercy,

People **It is the Cup of Liberation.**

Bishop Through his body and blood, you call us to be one in love, to seek justice, and to live in peace. We lift our voices with all creation, singing

songs of freedom and proclaiming the mystery of our faith for we know that Christ has died. Christ is risen. Christ will come again.

People

Let's get together and feel all right.

Bishop

With this bread and cup, we remember your saving act of Redemption and the promise of your Reign. Send your Holy Spirit, upon these gifts and upon us. As we eat and drink at this table, empower us for the work ahead. May we commit ourselves to your revolution of love and resolve not to provide comfort for those whose belly is full and who are intent on keeping others hungry. May we stand firm and strong, not complicit with the oppressor, but with those who defend the poor, rescue the marginalized, and liberate the oppressed. Until that day when we all come together to sit at your heavenly banquet, help us to continue to work for the time when your will is done on earth as it is in heaven.

Through Christ, with Christ, and in Christ, in the unity of the Holy Spirit, all praise and glory are yours, Creator God, Power of the Most High, now and forever. So, until that day, we sing “Redemption Song” with all God’s children.

Band repeats the opening bars of “Redemption Song”.

Bishop

All

As our Saviour taught us, let us pray,
**Our Father in heaven,
hallowed be your name,
your kingdom come,
your will be done, on earth as in heaven.**

Give us today our daily bread.

**Forgive us our sins
as we forgive those who sin against us.**

**Save us from the time of trial,
and deliver us from evil.**

**For the kingdom, the power, and the glory
are yours, now and for ever. Amen.**

Silence

The Breaking of the Bread

Bishop

God of justice and mercy, you prepare a banquet for us in your

kingdom.

All **Happy are those who eat the Bread of your Justice and drink of the Chalice of your Mercy.**

Redemption Song

Old pirates, yes, they rob I;
Sold I to the merchant ships,
Minutes after they took I
From the bottomless pit.
But my hand was made strong
By the hand of the almighty.
We forward in this generation
Triumphantly.

Won't you help me sing
these songs of freedom
Are all I ever have:
Redemption songs
Redemption songs

Emancipate yourselves from mental slavery;
None but ourselves can free our minds.
Have no fear for atomic energy,
'Cause none of them can stop the time
How long shall they kill our prophets,
While we stand aside and look
Oh! Some say it's just a part of it:
We've got to fulfill de book.

Won't you help me sing
these songs of freedom
Are all I ever have:
Redemption songs
Redemption songs
Redemption songs

The Communion

Bishop These are the gifts of God, and they are for the people of God.

People **Thanks be to God.**

- *All are welcome to receive the Holy Sacrament or a blessing at the Main Altar or at the Lady Chapel (at the front of the right aisle). Gluten-free hosts are available there upon request.*
- *It is not permitted to dip the bread in the wine for health reasons.*
- *You are welcome to come forward to receive a blessing by crossing your hands over your chest.*
- *Please follow the directions of the sidespersons. Thank you.*

Communion Song – Could You Be Loved

Could you be loved and be loved?

Could you be loved and be loved?

Don't let them fool ya

Or even try to school ya! Oh, no!

We've got a mind of our own

So go to hell if what you're thinking is not right!

Love would never leave us alone

Ay, in the darkness there must come out the light

Could you be loved and be loved?

Could you be loved, wo now, and be loved?

Love your brotherman

(Could you be, could you be, could you be loved?)

(Could you be, could you be loved?)

(Could you be, could you be, could you be loved?)

(Could you be, could you be loved?)

Don't let them change ya, oh

Or even rearrange ya

Oh, no
We've got a life to live
They say, "Only, only
Only the fittest of the fittest shall survive"
Stay alive, eh
Could you be loved and be loved?
Could you be loved, wo now, and be loved?

Say something (Could you be, could you be, could you be loved?)
(Could you be, could you be loved?)
Say something, say something
(Could you be, could you be, could you be loved?)
Say something (Could you be, could you be loved?)

Communion Song – Three Little Birds

Don't worry about a thing
'Cause every little thing gonna be alright
Singing, "Don't worry about a thing
'Cause every little thing gonna be alright"

Rise up this morning, smiled with the rising sun
Three little birds pitch by my doorstep
Singing sweet songs of melodies pure and true
Saying, "This is my message to you-ou-ou"

Singing, "Don't worry about a thing
'Cause every little thing gonna be alright"
Singing, "Don't worry about a thing" (Don't worry)
"'Cause every little thing gonna be alright"

Prayer after Communion

Please stand.

Bishop

Let us pray.

God of justice, peace, and freedom, we thank you for feeding us with the body and blood of Christ, a foretaste of your Reign that is and is to come. Strengthen us to walk in the way of justice, to sow peace in a troubled world, and to proclaim freedom for all who are bound. May your Spirit guide us to live as witnesses of your love, until all creation is restored in Christ our Saviour.

People

Amen.

The Blessing

Bishop May the God who created you in love and made you free, the Son who redeemed you and set you free, and the Holy Spirit who sustains and keeps you free, bless, preserve, and guide you this day and always.

People **Amen.**

Closing Song – Get Up, Stand Up

All Get up, stand up. Stand up for your rights
Get up, stand up. Don't give up the fight
Get up, stand up. Stand up for your rights
Get up, stand up. Don't give up the fight

Preacherman, don't tell me
Heaven is under the Earth
I know you don't know
What life is really worth
It's not all that glitters is gold
'Alf the story has never been told
And now you see the light
Stand up for your rights

Get up, stand up. Stand up for your rights
Get up, stand up. Don't give up the fight
Get up, stand up. Stand up for your rights
Get up, stand up. Don't give up the fight

You see, most people think
Great God will come from the skies
Take away everything
And make everybody feel high
But if you know what life is worth
You will look for yours on Earth
And now you see the light
You stand up for your rights

Get up, stand up
Stand up for your rights
Get up, stand up
Don't give up the fight
Get up, stand up
Stand up for your rights!
Get up, stand up
Don't give up the fight!

Dismissal

Deacon Followers of Jesus Christ, inspired by the Holy Spirit, serve the world
that God loves and for which Jesus died. One love

People **One Heart.**

Postlude – Band Plays “One Love, One Heart”

ABOUT THE PREACHER

The Right Reverend Deon Kevin Johnson is the eleventh bishop of the Episcopal Diocese of Missouri. He was elected on November 23, 2019, and was consecrated and installed on June 13, 2020. He is the first Black gay bishop in the Episcopal Church.

A native of Barbados, Johnson emigrated to the United States when he was 14 years old. He studied at Case Western Reserve University and graduated with a Bachelor of Arts in English and History in 2000. He also graduated with a Master of Divinity from the General Theological

Seminary in 2003. He was ordained deacon on June 15, 2003, and priest on December 19, 2003. After ordination, he served as associate rector at Christ Church in Shaker Heights, Ohio, until 2006, when he became rector at St Paul's Church in Brighton, Michigan.

His service to the wider church community includes the Executive Council of The Episcopal Church, the Taskforce for Liturgical and Prayer Book Revision, and the Office of African Descent Ministries. He also serves on the advisory boards and councils of Sewanee: The University of the South and General Theological Seminary.



THEOLOGICAL PERSPECTIVES / BIBLICAL CONNECTIONS ON MARLEY'S SONGS USED IN THE LITURGY

COMING IN FROM THE COLD - *A Call to Grace and Belonging*

This song reflects themes of redemption, grace, and inclusion, speaking to those who feel marginalized or rejected. Marley's lyrics echo the Gospel's message of welcoming the outcast and broken-hearted (Luke 15:1-7), much like the Prodigal Son's return (Luke 15:11-32). The refrain, *"It's you, it's you I'm talking to,"* mirrors God's personal call to each individual, inviting them out of despair and into hope (Matthew 11:28). The song reminds us that God's grace calls us in from the "cold" of sin, isolation, and injustice, offering healing, community, and love.

WAR – *A Prophetic Cry for Justice*

Based on Haile Selassie's speech to the United Nations General Assembly on October 4, 1963, this song is a powerful condemnation of racial injustice and oppression, aligning with the biblical call for justice (Amos 5:24, Micah 6:8). The refrain, *"Until the philosophy which holds one race superior and another inferior is finally and permanently discredited and abandoned,"* reflects the vision of equality in Christ (Galatians 3:28). Like the prophets of old, Marley calls for action, reminding believers that peace and justice are central to the Reign of God. (Luke 4:18). The song challenges Christians to actively work toward a world where all people are treated with dignity and love

ONE LOVE - *The Call to Unity and Reconciliation*

This song is an anthem of love, unity, and hope, mirroring Jesus' teachings on reconciliation (John 17:21). It envisions a world where divisions are healed, and love overcomes hatred, aligning with God's desire for harmony (Ephesians 4:3). Paul urged the early church to break down walls of hostility (Ephesians 2:14-16), and Marley echoes this call, inviting all to embrace the love that binds humanity together. In a world marked by racial, social, and economic divisions, "One Love" is a prophetic call to reconciliation, urging people to unite in peace.

EXODUS - *A Journey Toward Liberation*

Inspired by the Israelites deliverance from Egypt (Exodus 14), this song speaks to both spiritual and physical liberation, mirroring the Christian journey toward salvation (Galatians 5:1). Marley's call to "*move out of Babylon*" reflects a deeper spiritual exodus from systems of oppression, embodying the hope of God's ultimate reign. The song invites reflection on God's liberating power, reminding believers that faith requires action, perseverance, and trust in divine guidance. Like the Israelites, we are called to journey toward a promised land—whether physical, spiritual, or social—trusting in God's plan for deliverance.

REDEMPTION SONG - *Freedom Through Christ*

A meditation on suffering, freedom, and hope, this song calls for spiritual liberation, much like Paul's teaching in Romans 12:2, "*Be transformed by the renewing of your mind.*" The opening line, "*Emancipate yourselves from mental slavery,*" echoes Jesus' promise of true freedom (John 8:36) and the redemptive work that releases humanity from sin (Galatians 5:1). Marley's song is a prayerful anthem, reminding believers of their responsibility to live in the freedom Christ has won and to work for the liberation of others. True freedom, as Scripture teaches, is not just political or physical but also spiritual, calling us to reject destructive ideologies and embrace God's truth.

COULD YOU BE LOVED - *The Nature of Divine Love*

This song celebrates unconditional love, warning against distortions of its true meaning. It echoes 1 John 4:7-8, which calls believers to love as God loves, and challenges listeners to reflect on their capacity to receive and give genuine love. "*Don't let them fool you, or even try to school you,*" cautions against worldly influences that distort the essence of love. The Bible teaches that love is both a gift from God and a calling for God's people: "*We love because God first loved us*" (1 John 4:19). This song reminds us that God's love is unearned and freely given, inviting us to embrace it fully.

THREE LITTLE BIRDS - *Trust in God's Providence*

With its reassuring refrain, “*Don't worry about a thing,*” this song echoes Jesus' teaching on trust (Matthew 6:25-34). Marley's lyrics reflect a childlike faith in God's provision, reminding believers to cast their cares on God (1 Peter 5:7). Just as Jesus assured his followers that God provides for the birds of the air and the flowers of the field, this song calls us to rest in divine faithfulness. In a world filled with anxiety, Marley's message serves as a gentle yet profound reminder that God is in control and that faith allows us to find peace in His care.

GET UP, STAND UP - *Faith in Action*

This anthem of resistance calls for justice, reflecting the biblical mandate to defend the oppressed (Isaiah 1:17). Marley's lyrics challenge believers to embody their faith through action, aligning with James 2:17: “*Faith by itself, if it has no works, is dead.*” Like Jesus confronting injustice (Luke 4:18-19), this song urges us to stand for righteousness and truth. It echoes the prophetic tradition of speaking truth to power and reminds Christians of their duty to advocate for justice, ensuring that faith is not just a belief but a call to transformative action in the world.

Upcoming Diocesan Events in 2026

February

Clergy Pre-Lenten Day – Tuesday, February 10 (*St. James Cathedral*)

(*in-person & livestreamed*)

Speaker: Dr Kristen Deede Johnson, Principal of Wycliffe College

Property Resources Workshop – Wednesday, February 18 – 4-5:30 pm (*Online*)

March

Community of Deacons Retreat – Friday, March 13 – Saturday, March 14 (*SSJD Convent*)

Blessing of Oils and Renewal of Ordination Vows – Tuesday, March 31 –

10:30 am (*St. James Cathedral*)

April

Youth Leaders Theology Day – Saturday, April 25

Diocesan Confirmation Service – Sunday, April 26 – 4:30 pm (*St James Cathedral*)

May

Volunteer Conference – Friday, May 1 – Saturday, May 2 (*Hockley Valley Resort*)

Ordination of Transitional Deacons – Sunday, May 3 – 4:30 pm (*St James Cathedral*)

Property Resources Workshop – Wednesday, May 13 – 4-5:30 pm (*Online*)

Diocesan Clergy Conference – Monday, May 25 – Wednesday, May 27 (*Trent University*)

Speaker: Dr Paolo Ueti, Diocese of Brasilia

September

ReCharge – Diocesan Youth Retreat – Friday, September 18 – Sunday, September 20 (*Medeba*)

Property Resources Workshops – Wednesday, September 23 – 4-5:30 pm (*Online*)

October

Outreach Conference – Saturday, October 17

November

Children's Ministry Conference – Saturday, November 7

(*Bayview Glen Alliance Church, Toronto*)

Property Resources Workshops – Wednesday, November 18 – 4-5:30 pm (*Online*)

The Bishop's Company Dinner – Friday, November 20

(*Sheraton Parkway Toronto North*)

Other dates for 2026, and further details on the above events, will be announced as they are determined.