



# HISTORICAL HEROES

OF BLACK CHRISTIAN FAITH



# REV. RICHARD ALLEN (1760 - 1831)

Rev. Richard Allen was a visionary leader, a devoted servant of God, and a trailblazer in the fight for spiritual and social liberation. Born into slavery in 1760, he found freedom not only through hard work but through an unshakable faith in Jesus Christ. After becoming a preacher, he recognized the deep racial injustices within the church and took a bold step to establish a place of worship where Black Christians could praise God with dignity and equality. In 1794, he founded Bethel African Methodist Episcopal (AME) Church in Philadelphia, which became the cornerstone of the first independent Black denomination in the United States—the AME Church. A tireless advocate for education, community uplift, and abolition, Allen's faith was not just a personal belief but a driving force for justice and empowerment. His legacy reminds us that the church is not only a house of worship but a foundation for freedom and progress.

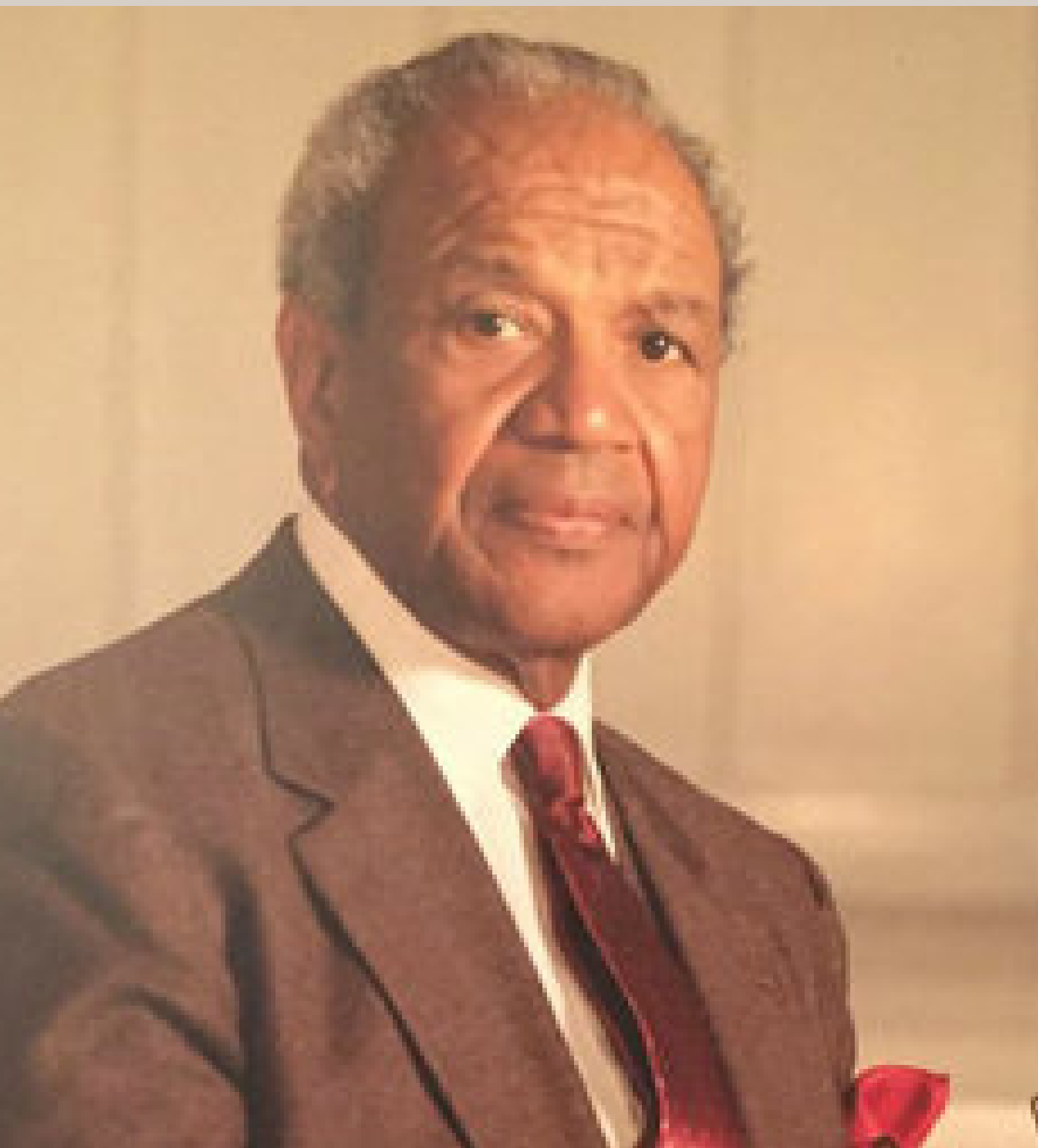


# FANNIE LOU HAMMER (1917 - 1977)

Fannie Lou Hamer was a woman of unshakable faith and fearless determination, whose love for God fueled her fight for justice. Born in Mississippi in 1917, she grew up in poverty as the daughter of sharecroppers, yet she never let hardship silence her voice. A devout Christian, she believed deeply in the power of faith and the call to stand up for righteousness. In the 1960s, she became a leading force in the civil rights movement, co-founding the Mississippi Freedom Democratic Party and working tirelessly to secure voting rights for Black Americans. Despite brutal beatings, wrongful imprisonment, and countless threats, she remained steadfast, often singing hymns like This Little Light of Mine to strengthen herself and others.

Her famous words, "I'm sick and tired of being sick and tired," became a rallying cry for those demanding justice. Fannie Lou Hamer's faith was not just personal—it was a beacon of hope and action, inspiring generations to trust in God and stand boldly for what is right. As we celebrate Black History Month, may her courage remind us that true faith moves mountains and that we, too, are called to be the light in the world.





# REV. GARDNER C. TAYLOR (1918 - 2015)

Rev. Gardner C. Taylor, known as the "Dean of American Preachers," was a masterful orator, a fearless advocate for justice, and a faithful servant of God. Born in 1918, he dedicated his life to preaching the Gospel with power, conviction, and poetic elegance. As the longtime pastor of Concord Baptist Church of Christ in Brooklyn, New York, he grew the congregation into one of the largest and most influential Black churches in America. A close ally of Dr. Martin Luther King Jr., Rev. Taylor used his pulpit as a platform for both spiritual renewal and social change, standing boldly against racial injustice while calling the church to be a beacon of hope. His sermons were known for their deep theological insight, rich language, and unwavering commitment to truth. He once said, "There is no way to preach the Gospel without preaching social justice," reminding us that faith is not passive—it demands action.



# DR. CHARLES H. WESLEY (1891 - 1997)

Dr. Charles H. Wesley was a scholar, minister, and historian whose life's work preserved and honored the rich legacy of African American faith and resilience. Born in 1891, he dedicated his career to educating, writing, and preaching, ensuring that the contributions of Black people, particularly within the church, would never be forgotten. As a minister, he used the pulpit to uplift and inspire, while as a historian, he authored over 30 books that documented the struggles and triumphs of African Americans, including the life of Rev. Richard Allen and the history of the AME Church. Dr. Wesley also served as president of Wilberforce University, the first private historically Black college in the U.S., where he mentored and shaped future leaders. He believed that faith and education were powerful tools for liberation, and his legacy reminds us that knowledge is a form of ministry.

