

“Our
Freedom We
Shall Retain”

AFRICAN AMERICAN
ORDINATION IN THE EPISCOPAL
CHURCH

*Celebrating
Absalom
Jones*



Catholicity vs. Racial-Religious Identity

The Political vs. the Spiritual

Assertion and Advocacy \neq Aggression

Reconciliation and assertion are not antithetical

Social location

Preliminary
Remarks

Founding

to

Revolution

1691 and the House of Burgesses

The promises of the Revolution

Absalom Jones

Born enslaved in 1746, Delaware

Separated from family in 1762

Married to Mary in 1766

Mary's freedom purchased in 1778

Jones freed in 1784 at 38 years old

Absalom Jones

1791, left St. George's Methodist Episcopal Church

1792, Co-founded "First African Church" in Philadelphia and allied with the Episcopal Church

1794, Ordained a Deacon

1802, Ordained a priest

Died, 1818

Absalom Jones

At a meeting of the Vestry of St. Thomas's, or the African Episcopal, Church, held on Wednesday, February 11, 1808.

Resolved, That the thanks of the Vestry be presented to the Rev. Absalom Jones, for his sermon preached in the said Church, on the first day of January last; and that he be requested to furnish a copy of the same to be printed.

Extract from the Minutes,

WILLIAM COLEMAN, Secretary.

Toward Civil War

The effort to Evangelize (but how and why?)

- A spectrum of motives
- The threat of Christianity to enslavers

“Don’t get political”

The Schism that wasn’t a Schism

“The Protestant Episcopal Church
of the Confederate States of America”

Reunion and Exodus

Jim Crow, Baptized

The Sewanee Canon Compromise

The Threat of Black Bishops

An integrated Church?

Who speaks for Black Episcopalians?

Pauli Murray



- 1910 Born in Baltimore
- 1914 Moves to Durham to live with her aunt Pauline
- 1923 Father murdered by a white man
- 1926 Graduates high school
- 1933 Graduates from Hunter College
- 1940 Arrested for refusing to give up her seat on a bus. Fellowship of Reconciliation.
- 1944 Graduates from Howard Law School
- 1945 Graduates with L.L.M. from Berkeley and passes CA Bar

Pauli Murray



1951 Wrote "States' Law on Race and Color"

1964 Civil Rights Act passed, Murray co-authors "Jane Crow and the Law: Sex discrimination and Title VII"

1965 Receives J.S.D. from Yale

1966 Founding of NOW

1973 Starts Divinity education at General at 62; before approval of women as ordination candidates

1977 Ordained a priest in the Episcopal Church at 67 years old.

1982 Mandatory retirement from active ministry

1985 Died in Pittsburgh, PA

Barbara Harris



- 1930 Born in Philadelphia, attended Saint Barnabas Church
- 1960s Church of the Advocate; Chief PR exec at Sun Oil Co.; Selma
- 1974 Crucifer at the Ordination of the "Philadelphia 11"
- 1979 Ordained a Deacon
- 1980 Ordained a Priest at 50 years old
- 1980-1984 Priest-in-charge at St. Augustine of Hippo in Norristown, Pennsylvania and chaplain at Philadelphia County Prisons

Barbara Harris



1984-1988 Executive director of the Episcopal Church Publishing Company

1988 Voted Suffragan Bishop in Massachusetts (by a slim margin);
A first for a black woman in the Anglican Communion

2002-2007 Retired , but continued to serve in the Church; became an
Assisting Bishop in Washington DC

March 13, 2020 Died in Lincoln, MA at 89 years old.

NEW YEAR'S ANTHEM,
Sung in the African Episcopal
Church of ST. THOMAS.

Jan. 1, 1808.

WRITTEN BY MICHAEL
FORTUNE.

Then, we our freedom shall retain,
In peace and love, and cheerful toil:
Plenty shall flow from the wide main,
And golden harvests from the soil.

Ye nations that to us restore
The rights which God bestow'd on all;
For you His blessing we implore:
O! listen further to His call!