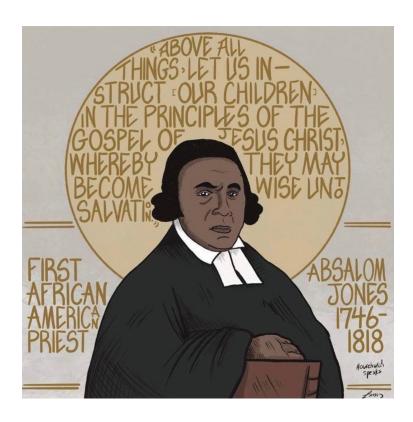
Commemorative Holy Eucharist in Witness to the Life and Ministry of Blessed Absalom Jones First Black Priest in The Episcopal Church



The Black Clergy Caucus of The Episcopal Diocese of Long Island



Saturday, February 22, 2025 11:00 am

The Cathedral of the Incarnation Garden City, New York **Absalom Jones** was born enslaved to Abraham Wynkoop a wealthy Anglican planter in 1746 in Delaware. He was working in the fields when Abraham recognized that he was an intelligent child and ordered that he be trained to work in the house. Absalom eagerly accepted instruction in reading. He also saved money he was given and bought books (among them a primer, a spelling book, and a bible). Abraham Wynkoop died in 1753 and by 1755 his younger son Benjamin had inherited the plantation. When Absalom was sixteen Benjamin Wynkoop sold the plantation and Absalom's mother, sister, and five brothers. Wynkoop brought Absalom to Philadelphia where he opened a store and joined St. Peter's Church. In Philadelphia Benjamin Wynkoop permitted Absalom to attend a night school for black people that was operated by Quakers following the tradition established by abolitionist teacher Anthony Benezet.

At twenty, with the permission of their masters, Absalom married Mary Thomas who was enslaved to Sarah King who also worshipped at St. Peter's. The Rev. Jacob Duche performed the wedding at Christ Church. Absalom and his father-in-law, John Thomas, used their savings, and sought donations and loans primarily from prominent Quakers, in order to purchase Mary's freedom. Absalom and Mary worked very hard to repay the money borrowed to buy her freedom. They saved enough money to buy property and to buy Absalom's freedom. Although he repeatedly asked Benjamin Wynkoop to allow him to buy his freedom Wynkoop refused. Absalom persisted because as long as he was enslaved Wynkoop could take his property and his money. Finally, in 1784 Benjamin Wynkoop freed Absalom by granting him a manumission. Absalom continued to work in Wynkoop's store as a paid employee.

Absalom left St. Peter's Church and began worshipping at St. George's Methodist Episcopal Church. He met Richard Allen who had been engaged to preach at St. George's and the two became lifelong friends. Together, in 1787, they founded the Free African Society a mutual aid benevolent organization that was the first of its kind organized by and for black people. Members of the Society paid monthly dues for the benefit of those in need. At St. George's, Absalom and Richard served as lay ministers for the black membership. The active evangelism of Jones and Allen, greatly increased black membership at St. George's. The black members worked hard to help raise money to build an upstairs gallery intended to enlarge the church. The church leadership decided to segregate the black worshippers in the gallery, without notifying them.

During a Sunday morning service a dispute arose over the seats black members had been instructed to take in the gallery and ushers attempted to physically remove them by first accosting Absalom Jones. Most of the black members present indignantly walked out of St. George's in a body.

Prior to the incident at St. George's the Free African Society had initiated religious services. Some of these services were presided over by The Rev. Joseph Pilmore an assistant St. Paul's Episcopal Church. The Society established communication with similar black groups in other cities. In 1792 the Society began to build the African Church of Philadelphia. The church membership took a denominational vote and decided to affiliate with the Episcopal Church. Richard Allen withdrew from the effort as he favored affiliation with the Methodist Church. Absalom Jones was asked to provide pastoral leadership and after prayer and reflection he accepted the call.

The African Church was dedicated on July 17, 1794. The Rev. Dr. Samuel Magaw, rector St. Paul's Church, preached the dedicatory address. Dr. Magaw was assisted at the service by The Rev. James Abercrombie, assistant minister at Christ Church. Soon thereafter the congregation applied for membership in the Episcopal Diocese of Pennsylvania on the following conditions: 1) that they be received as an organized body; 2) that they have control over their own local affairs; 3) that Absalom Jones be licensed as layreader, and, if qualified, be ordained as minister.

In October 1794 it was admitted as the African Episcopal Church of St. Thomas. The church was incorporated under the laws of the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania in 1796. Bishop William White ordained Jones as deacon in 1795 and as priest on September 21, 1802.

Jones was an earnest preacher. He denounced slavery, and warned the oppressors to "clean their hands of slaves." To him, God was the Father, who always acted on "behalf of the oppressed and distressed." But it was his constant visiting and mild manner that made him beloved by his congregation and by the community. St Thomas Church grew to over 500 members during its first year. The congregants formed a day school and were active in moral uplift, self-empowerment, and antislavery activities. Known as "the Black Bishop of the Episcopal Church," Jones was an example of persistent faith in God and in the Church as God's instrument. Jones died February 13, 1818.

PRELUDE

So Glad I'm Here Guide My Feet This Little Light of Mine Negro Spiritual Negro Spiritual William Farley Smith

PROCESSIONAL HYMN

Blessed Absalom

1 Born in bondage, born in shackles, Born stripped of all dignity, Abs'lom Jones was bound, determined, That he would one day be free. Blessed Abs'lom, leads us, guides us, In the bonds of unity.

2 Seeking to expand horizons, Bible, primer he did find; To each word he was attentive, Learning, lest he fall behind. Blessed Abs'lom, liberates us From the prison of our mind.

3 When in Philadelphia settled, He sought persons in great need, Dedicated to empow'rment, His own people did he lead. Blessed Abs'lom, pray that we from All indiff'rence may be freed. 4 One fine morning, while at worship, Wrested from his knees in prayer; He, his friends, were thus evicted: "You no more may praise God here." Blessed Abs'lom, pray that we may Stand steadfast and persevere.

5 Founded he Saint Thomas' Church For Afric's sons and daughters blest; Full-fledged members of Christ's Body,

They no longer were oppressed. Blessed Abs'lom, pray that we may Be the church at Christ's behest.

6 Blessed Abs'lom Jones, first priest of Afric's stock within our fold; May we, inspired by your witness Raise up priests with hearts of Gold! Blessed Abs'lom, pioneer, prophet May your story long be told.

7 Praise to Christ the Liberator;
Praise creator ever blest;
Praise the Spirit, Source of comfort,
North to south, and east to west;
Blessed Abs'lom, priest, exemplar,
In God's bosom now at rest.

OPENING ACCLAMATION

Bishop Blessed be the one, holy, and living God. People Glory to God for ever and ever. Amen.

THE COLLECT FOR PURITY

Almighty God, to you all hearts are open, all desires known, and from you no secrets are hid: Cleanse the thoughts of our hearts by the inspiration of your Holy Spirit, that we may perfectly love you, and worthily magnify your holy Name; through Christ our Lord. **Amen.**

GLORIA IN EXCELSIS

LEVAS 243

THE COLLECT OF THE DAY

Bishop The Lord be with you.

People And also with you.

Bishop Let us pray.

Set us free, heavenly Father, from every bond of prejudice and fear; that, honoring the steadfast courage of your servant Absalom Jones, we may show forth in our lives the reconciling love and true freedom of the children of God, which you have given us in your Son our Savior Jesus Christ; who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God now and forever. **Amen.**

THE FIRST LESSON

Isaiah 42: 5-9

Thus says God, the Lord, who created the heavens and stretched them out, who spread out the earth and what comes from it, who gives breath to the people upon it and spirit to those who walk in it: I am the Lord, I have called you in righteousness, I have taken you by the hand and kept you; I have given you as a covenant to the people, a light to the nations, to open the eyes that are blind, to bring out the prisoners from the dungeon, from the prison those who sit in darkness.

I am the Lord, that is my name; my glory I give to no other, nor my praise to idols. See, the former things have come to pass, and new things I now declare; before they spring forth, I tell you of them.

Reader The Word of the Lord People Thanks be to God.

PSALM 126 LEVAS 273

THE SECOND LESSON

Ephesians 4: 1-6

I therefore, the prisoner in the Lord, beg you to lead a life worthy of the calling to which you have been called, with all humility and gentleness, with patience, bearing with one another in love, making every effort to maintain the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace. There is one body and one Spirit, just as you were called to the one hope of your calling, one Lord, one faith, one baptism, one God and Father of all, who is above all and through all and in all.

Reader The Word of the Lord People Thanks be to God.

HYMN - LEVAS 61

The Right Hand of God

THE HOLY GOSPEL

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

People Glory to you, Lord Christ.

This is my commandment, that you love one another as I have loved you. No one has greater love than this, to lay down one's life for one's friends. You are my friends if you do what I command you. I do not call you servants any longer, because the servant does not know what the master is doing; but I have called you friends, because I have made known to you everything that I have heard from my Father.

Deacon The Gospel of the Lord People Praise to you, Lord Christ.

SERMON The Reverend Canon Professor D. H. Kortright Davis, D.Phil.

THE NICENE CREED

We believe in one God, the Father, the Almighty, maker of heaven and earth, of all that is, seen and unseen.

We believe in one Lord, Jesus Christ, the only Son of God, eternally begotten of the Father, God from God, Light from Light, true God from true God, begotten, not made, of one Being with the Father. Through him all things were made.

For us and for our salvation he came down from heaven: by the power of the Holy Spirit he became incarnate from the Virgin Mary, and was made man.

For our sake he was crucified under Pontius Pilate; he suffered death and was buried.

On the third day he rose again in accordance with the Scriptures; he ascended into heaven and is seated at the right hand of the Father.

He will come again in glory to judge the living and the dead, and God's kingdom will have no end.

We believe in the Holy Spirit, the Lord, the giver of life, who proceeds from the Father and the Son.
With the Father and the Son he is worshiped and glorified.

He has spoken through the Prophets.

We believe in one holy catholic and apostolic Church. We acknowledge one baptism for the forgiveness of sins. We look for the resurrection of the dead, and the life of the world to come. Amen.

THE PRAYERS OF THE PEOPLE

"A Liturgy of Thanksgiving for Absalom Jones" (adapted) The Reverend Jermonde Taylor

Let us offer prayers for God's people in every place, saying: "Hear our prayer."

God of freedom and justice: We celebrate today your servant, Absalom Jones, the first person of African ancestry ordained in The Episcopal Church. Empower your Church, O God, and the Episcopal Diocese of Long Island, its people and its clergy. Teach us how to continue the ministries of reconciliation and peace and to grow Absalom Jones' ministry of racial justice.

God of power and goodness: Hear our prayer.

God who hears, you put the tears of our forbearers into your bottle, recording them in your book: Help the nations of the world hear their citizens' concerns by responding to injustice, war, and slavery with actions that lead to peace.

God of power and goodness: Hear our prayer.

God who created, Blessed Absalom reminded us that sacrifices must be accompanied with action: Guide our feet to run the race without getting weary. Keep us focused on the fight for equality.

God of power and goodness: Hear our prayer.

Healing God, deliver those who call upon your name: Inspire our hearts with hope as we offer prayers for all who suffer in body, mind, or spirit. Assist them to grow from strength to strength as they come to know you more fully.

God of power and goodness: Hear our prayer.

God of compassion, you hear your people's cries and prayers in heaven: Help us remember that we stand on the prayers of our ancestors. As they prayed for current and future generations, so must we pray today for our sisters and brothers who have died and for those yet to come.

God of power and goodness: Hear our prayer.

The Bishop then prays

Almighty God, you created all people and blessed us by making us in a wondrous variety. As you were with Blessed Absalom, be with us as we seek to make "Your kingdom come, your will be done, on earth as it is in heaven." Support each of us as we work to do your will, that together we may make a difference. This we pray through Jesus Christ our Lord. **Amen.**

THE PEACE

Bishop The peace of the Lord be always with you.

People And also with you.

WELCOME AND ANNOUCEMENTS

Dean Sniffen

OFFERTORY ANTHEM

Elijah Rock

Moses Hogan

Today's offering supports the ongoing work and ministry of The Black Clergy Caucus and our Episcopal Historically Black Colleges and Universities – St. Augustine's University (Raleigh, NC) and Voorhees College (Denmark, SC). To make a donation by check, please make it payable to Diocese of Long Island with "Absalom Jones Offering" in the memo line.

THE GREAT THANKSGIVING

Bishop The Lord be with you.People And also with you.Bishop Lift up your hearts.

People We lift them to the Lord.

Bishop Let us give thanks to the Lord our God.People It is right to give him thanks and praise.

It is right, and a good and joyful thing, always and everywhere to give thanks to you, Father Almighty, Creator of heaven and earth. For the wonderful grace and virtue declared in all your saints, who have been chosen vessels of your grace, and the lights of the world in their generations. Therefore we praise you, joining our voices with Angels and Archangels and with all the company of heaven, who forever sing this hymn to proclaim the glory of your Name:

SANCTUS AND BENEDICTUS

LEVAS 255

Sung by all.

Holy, holy, holy Lord, God of power and might, heaven and earth are full of your glory. Hosanna in the highest. Blessed is he who comes in the name of the Lord. Hosanna in the highest.

The Bishop continues

We give thanks to you, O God, for the goodness and love which you have made known to us in creation; in the calling of Israel to be your people; in your Word spoken through the prophets; and above all in the Word made flesh, Jesus, your Son.

For in these last days you sent him to be incarnate from the Virgin Mary, to be the Savior and Redeemer of the world. In him, you have delivered us from evil, and made us worthy to stand before you. In him, you have brought us out of error into truth, out of sin into righteousness, out of death into life.

On the night before he died for us, our Lord Jesus Christ took bread; and when he had given thanks to you, he broke it, and gave it to his disciples, and said, "Take, eat: This is my Body, which is given for you. Do this for the remembrance of me."

After supper he took the cup of wine; and when he had given thanks, he gave it to them, and said, "Drink this, all of you: This is my Blood of the new Covenant, which is shed for you and for many for the forgiveness of sins. Whenever you drink it, do this for the remembrance of me."

Therefore, according to his command, O Father,

Bishop and People

We remember his death. We proclaim his resurrection. We await His coming in glory.

The Bishop continues

And we offer our sacrifice of praise and thanksgiving to you, O Lord of all; presenting to you, from your creation, this bread and this wine. We pray you, gracious God, to send your Holy Spirit upon these gifts that they may be the Sacrament of the Body of Christ and his Blood of the new Covenant.

Unite us to your Son in his sacrifice, that we may be acceptable through him, being sanctified by the Holy Spirit. In the fullness of time, put all things in subjection under your Christ, and bring us to that heavenly country where, with Blessed Absalom and all your saints, we may enter the everlasting heritage of your sons and daughters; through Jesus Christ our Lord, the firstborn of all creation, the head of the Church, and the author of our salvation. By him, and with him, and in him, in the unity of the Holy Spirit all honor and glory is yours, Almighty Father, now and forever. **AMEN**.

THE LORD'S PRAYER

Bishop And now, as our Savior Christ has taught us, we are bold to say,

People

Our Father, who art in heaven, hallowed be thy Name, thy kingdom come, thy will be done, on earth as it is in heaven. Give us this day our daily bread. And forgive us our trespasses, as we forgive those who trespass against us. And lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil. For thine is the kingdom, and the power, and the glory, for ever and ever. Amen.

THE BREAKING OF THE BREAD

Bishop Alleluia. Christ our Passover is sacrificed for us.

People Therefore let us keep the feast. Alleluia.

AGNUS DEI LEVAS 270

COMMUNION MEDITATION

Devon Webster, violin

HYMN - LEVAS 153

Lord I have seen thy Salvation

POST COMMUNION PRAYER

Eternal God, heavenly Father, you have graciously accepted us as living members of your Son our Savior Jesus Christ, and you have fed us with spiritual food in the Sacrament of his Body and Blood. Send us now into the world in peace, and grant us strength and courage to love and serve you with gladness and singleness of heart; through Christ our Lord. **Amen.**

BLACK NATIONAL ANTHEM - LEVAS 1

Lift Every Voice and Sing

FINAL BLESSING

Bishop Our help is in the Name of the Lord;

People The maker of heaven and earth.
Bishop Blessed be the Name of the Lord
People From this time forth and forever more.

Bishop The blessing, mercy and grace of God Almighty: the Father, the

Son, and the Holy Spirit, be upon you, and remain with you

forever.

People Amen.

FINAL HYMN - LEVAS 225

Oh Freedom

DISMISSAL

Deacon Go in peace to love and serve the Lord.

People Thanks be to God.

POSTLUDE We Shall Overcome Carl Haywood

The Black Clergy Caucus of the Episcopal Diocese of Long Island exists for the mutual support, uplift and enrichment of Black clergy in the Diocese. The Black Clergy Caucus strives to be a valued resource to our Diocese by articulating the concerns of our communities in the parish and public square, and by celebrating the contributions of our people who transformed the wider Episcopal Church and changed the world.

The Reverend Leandra Lisa Lambert, President
The Reverend Canon Dr. Frederick Walker, Vice-President
The Reverend Gilberto A. Hinds, Treasurer & Chaplain
The Reverend Canon Eddie Alleyne, Secretary
The Reverend Darrell L. Tiller, Assistant Secretary

2025 ABSALOM JONES COMMEMORATION COMMITTEE

The Reverend Canon Eddie Alleyne, Chair Mr. Quincy J. Dover
The Reverend Gilberto A. Hinds
The Reverend Myldred Previl
The Reverend Jennifer VanCooten-Webster
The Reverend Canon Dr. Frederick Walker





The Reverend Canon Professor D. H. Kortright Davis, D.Phil., is Professor of Theology at Howard University School of Divinity. He is also Rector Emeritus of the Holy Comforter Episcopal Church in the District of Columbia, where he was the Rector (part-time) from 1986 to 2013. He has also served on the Anglican/Roman Catholic International Commission, appointed by the Archbishop of Canterbury and the Pope. He has been a member of the Faith And Order Commission of the World Council of Churches, as well as a member of the Inter-Anglican Theological and Doctrinal Commission.

Dr. Davis is a native of Antigua, West Indies, and was trained for the Anglican priesthood at Codrington College, Barbados,

where he also worked as Acting Principal, and Vice-Principal, and Lecturer, for some time. He was ordained Deacon in 1965, and priest in 1966, for ministry in the Anglican Communion. Additionally, he was a founding Executive of the Caribbean Conference of Churches, and was the Coordinator of its Inaugural Assembly in Kingston, Jamaica, in 1973. In the U.S.A., Dr. Davis is Commissary (Ecclesiastical Ambassador) to two Dioceses in the Church in the Province of the West Indies (CPWI), has been an occasional External Examiner for the University of the West Indies (UWI).

He has authored several books and chapters, and numerous articles. His list of books includes: Mission For Caribbean Change; Cross And Crown In Barbados; Emancipation Still Comin'; Can God Save The Church? In Praise of Congregations; African Creative Expressions Of The Divine; Serving With Power: Reviving The Spirit Of Christian Ministry; and Compassionate Love And Ebony Grace; We Belong To Big Church; Changing Winds of Change. His ongoing research interests focus on issues of Forgiveness, Gratitude, and Reconciliation among people of African heritage and descent.

Dr. Davis joined the Howard University Faculty in 1983 as an Associate Professor, and was promoted to Full Professorship in 1987. He has earned degrees from the University of London (B.D.), the University of the West Indies (M.A. in History), and the University of Sussex (UK) with the Doctor of Philosophy (D.Phil.). He has also been awarded Honorary degrees from The General Theological Seminary (D.D), St. Paul's College, Lawrenceville, Virginia (D.D.), The Virginia Theological Seminary (D.D.), and The University of the West Indies conferred on him the Doctor Laws degree (LL.D.) in 2010.

He and his late wife Joan are the parents of two daughters and one son, and five grandchildren.

PARTICIPANTS IN TODAY'S CELEBRATION

The Right Reverend Lawrence C. Provenzano, *Presider Bishop of Long Island*

The Reverend Canon Professor D. H. Kortright Davis, D.Phil. *Preacher*

The Very Reverend Canon Michael T. Sniffen, Ph.D. Dean of Long Island

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The Reverend Jennifer VanCooten-Webster

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Members of parishes from across our diocese and The Diocese of Long Island Union of Black Episcopalians

HONORED GUESTS

The Right Reverend Daniel Allotey, Assisting Bishop, Diocese of Long Island
The Right Reverend Ernest Flemming, Bishop of the Northeastern Caribbean & Aruba,
The Rev. Michael Clarke, D. Min. Principal, Codrington College, Barbados

The Annual Black Clergy Caucus Retreat

Theme: RECONCILING WITH EACH OTHER
Date: Thursday, March 13, 2025, 10:00 am - 3:00 pm
Venue: Thomas Berry Place, 86-45 Edgeton Blvd. Jamaica, NY 11432

Retreat Leader: Mr. Donald Washington

Donald Washington, Jr., is the director and executive producer of Inside Story, a video series designed to reach audiences both inside and outside of prison walls. He is also a member of the Brooklyn Public Library's Welcome Home team and the leader of the First Baptist Church of Crown Heights' Rephidim Ministry. Donald holds a graduate degree from the New York Theological Seminary and a Bachelor of Science degree from Mercy College. Previously, Donald was the co-founding president of the Back-To-School Fund, a fundraising group supplementing the educational needs of children with incarcerated parents in New York State prisons. In 2015, he was presented with the Ossie Davis Award for his excellence in community service by Hudson Link for Higher Education. Donald was a contributor to "The Zo," winner of the 2021 Edward R. Murrow Award for Excellence and Innovation and recipient of an Emmy nod in the area of News & Documentary.

Please email the Secretary at **jseta7@gmail.com** to confirm your attendance by February 28th. Also, please let us know if you have any food allergies or dietary restrictions.

THE CATHEDRAL LEADERSHIP

THE CHAPTER

The Right Reverend Lawrence C. Provenzano, DD., Bishop of Long Island
The Very Reverend Canon Michael Sniffen, PhD., Dean of the Cathedral
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Ms. Mia Jealous-Denk, Mr. Michael Eng, Canon Charles Janoff, Esq., Chancellor, Dr.
Lorna Lewis, The Rev. Canon John Merz, Ms. LaVerne Mitchell,
Mr. Keith Okrosy, The Rev. Gideon Pollach,
The Rev. Canon Kate Salisbury, Mr. Dennis Walcott.

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Ms. Martha Ripp, Ms. Carolyn Ver Pault

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The Rev. Canon Adam Bucko, Director of the Center for Spiritual Imagination
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The Rev. Cameron Walker, Curate
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Mr. David Preston, Associate Organist/Choirmaster
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