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# DUKE DIVINITY SCHOOL



## THE SERVICE OF WORD AND TABLE IN COMMEMORATION OF THE LIFE OF ABSALOM JONES

Thursday, February 17, 2011  
Eleven twenty-five in the Morning

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Absalom Jones (1746 – February 13, 1818) was an African-American abolitionist and clergyman. Jones was born into slavery in Delaware in 1746. By 1785 he had purchased his freedom, and became a lay minister for black members in the interracial congregation of St. George's Methodist Church. In 1787, Jones, together with other black members, left St. George's, as they were tired of being segregated to a gallery and given second-class status in the congregation. They founded the Free African Society (FAS), first conceived as a non-denominational mutual aid society, to help newly freed slaves in Philadelphia.

At the beginning of 1791, Jones started holding religious services at FAS. This became the core of his congregation for a new church. Wanting to establish a black congregation independent of white control, Jones in 1792 founded the congregation of the African Church in Philadelphia. It petitioned to become an Episcopal parish. The church opened its doors on July 17, 1794, as the African Episcopal Church of St. Thomas, the first black church in Philadelphia.

Jones was ordained as a deacon in 1795 and as a priest in 1804, the first African-American priest in the Episcopal Church. Jones was also part of the first group of African Americans to petition the U.S. Congress. Their petition related to the 1793 Fugitive Slave Act. They criticized it for encouraging cruelty and brutality, and noted the danger which free blacks risked of being kidnapped and sold into slavery.

Jones was an earnest preacher who denounced slavery. To him God was the Father, who always acted on "behalf of the oppressed and distressed." St. Thomas Church grew to over 500 members during its first year. 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.



# THE WORD OF GOD

## PRELUDE

## \*ENTRANCE HYMN

Blessed Absalom  
LAUDE ANIMA

Words: Harold T Lewis; Music: John Goss

\*Verses 1 and 4 – 7 will be sung.

1. Born in bond-age, born in shack les, Born stripped of all dig ni ty,  
2. Seek-ing to ex pand hor i zons, Bi ble, pri-mer he did find;  
3. When in Phi la del phia set tled, He sought per-sons in great need,  
4. One fine morn-ing, while at wor ship, Wrested from his knees in pray er;

1. Abs'-lom Jones was bound, de ter mined, That he would one day be free.  
2. To each word he was at ten tive, Learn-ing, lest he fall be hind.  
3. Ded i ca ted to em pow'r-ment, His own peo ple did he lead.  
4. He, his friends, were thus e vic ted: "You no more may praise God here."

1. Bless-ed Abs'-lom, leads us, guides us, In the bonds of u ni ty.  
2. Bless-ed Abs'-lom, lib er ates us From the pri son of our mind.  
3. Bless-ed Abs'-lom, pray that we from All in diff' rence may be freed.  
4. Bless-ed Abs'-lom, pray that we may Stand stead fast and per-se vere.

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.

## \*GREETING

*Bishop* Blessed be God: Father, Son, and Holy Spirit.

*People* And blessed be his kingdom, now and for ever. Amen.

## \*THE COLLECT OF THE DAY

*Bishop* The Lord be with you.

*People* And also with you.

*Bishop* Let us pray

Set us free, O 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 for ever

*People* Amen

**OLD TESTAMENT READING WITH  
LITURGICAL DANCE INTERPRETATION**

Isaiah 61 1-4

**PSALM READING**

Psalm 137:1-6

**\*GRADUAL ANTHEM**

Poor Wayfaring Stranger  
Traditional, arr Lee Bratton

*Gospel Reader* The Holy Gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ according to John.  
*People* **Glory to you Lord Christ.**

**\*GOSPEL LESSON**

John 15:12-15

*Gospel Reader* The Gospel of the Lord.  
*People* **Praise to you Lord Christ.**

**SERMON**

**\*PRAYERS OF THE PEOPLE AND CONFESSION**

*Intercessor* Lord, in your mercy  
*People* **Hear our prayer.**

*Intercessor & People*

**Have mercy upon us, most merciful Father;  
in your compassion forgive us our sins,  
known and unknown,  
things done and left undone;  
and so uphold us by your Spirit  
that we may live and serve you in newness of life,  
to the honor and glory of your Name;  
through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.**

**\*ABSOLUTION**

**\*THE PEACE**

**PRAISE SELECTION**

What If God Is Unhappy?  
by Christopher Brinson

**\*THE HOLY COMMUNION**

*Bishop* The Lord be with you.

*People* **And also with you.**

*Bishop* Lift up your hearts.

*People* **We lift them up to the Lord.**

*Bishop* Let us give thanks to the Lord our God.

*People* **It is right to give him thanks and praise.**

*Bishop* Therefore we praise you, joining our voices with Angels and Archangels and with all the company of heaven, who for ever sing this hymn to proclaim the glory of your Name.



**\*SANCTUS**

(Introduction)

Ho - ly, ho - ly, ho - ly, ho ly, ho - ly

Lord God of hosts. Heav-en and earth are filled with your glo - ry. Ho -

san na in the high - est. Bless-ed is He who comes in the name

of the Lord, of the Lord. Ho - san - na in the

high - - - est, ho - san - na in the high - est.

Music: Grayson Warren Brown (b. 1948), *A Mass for a Soulful People*  
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\* We give thanks to you, O God, for the goodness and love which you have made known to us in creation.

\*...Therefore, according to his command, O Father,

*\*Bishop and People*

**We remember his death,  
We proclaim his resurrection,  
We await his coming in glory.**

\*.....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 for ever *People AMEN*

**\*THE LORD'S PRAYER**

*Bishop* Alleluia. Christ our Passover is sacrificed for us;  
*People* **Therefore let us keep the feast. Alleluia.**

**INVITATION**

**COMMUNION HYMN**

I'm a-Going Eat at the Welcome Table  
Traditional; arr Carl Diton  
(see PowerPoint)

**\*POST-COMMUNION PRAYER**

**All 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.**

**\*THE BLESSING**

**\*RECESSIONAL**

Revive Us Again  
William P MacKay and John H. Husband  
(see PowerPoint)

**\*DISMISSAL**

*Leader* Go in peace to love and serve the Lord.

*People* **Thanks be to God.**

**POSTLUDE**

\* *Please stand as you are able.*

\*\* *The Communion elements are in the form of bread and wine. All baptized Christians are welcome to receive, either in one kind or in both kinds.*

**Due to the divisive forces present in American society, African Americans have been asked to separate themselves during worship in many places over the course of American history. Today, we are all invited to the table of Holy Communion, and the choirs will process out of worship together, reminding us that we are one Body in Christ, called to go forth and serve the Lord as witnesses of reconciliation in a broken world.**

**PRESIDER AND PREACHER**

The Rt. Rev Michael Curry, Bishop of The Episcopal Diocese of North Carolina

**ASSISTING IN WORSHIP TODAY**

***Gospel Reader:*** Dr Joy J Moore, Associate Dean for Black Church Studies and Church Relations;

***Intercessors:*** Brittany Love, Middler MDiv and Kiki Barnes, Middler MDiv

***Liturgical Dance Coordinator:*** Marcia Norfleet, Middler MDiv

***Thurifer:*** Kiki Barnes, Middler MDiv

***Boat Bearer:*** Tom Warren, Senior MDiv

***Crucifer:*** Nita Byrd, Middler MDiv

***Torchbearers:*** Brittany Love, Middler MDiv and Christopher Hogin, Junior MDiv

***Lectors:*** Tom Warren, Senior MDiv and Marcia Norfleet, Middler MDiv

***Communion Servers:*** Dr William Turner, Associate Professor of the Practice of Homiletics; Dr Joy J Moore, Associate Dean for Black Church Studies and Church Relations; Dr Jo Bailey Wells, Associate Professor of the Practice of Christian Ministry and Bible, Director of the Anglican Episcopal House of Studies

***Organist:*** Dr David Arcus, Chapel Organist and Associate University Organist;

***Divinity Choir:*** Conducted by Dr Allan Friedman, Assistant Conductor and Admin. Coordinator for Chapel Music;

***Gospel Choir:*** Conducted by Sean Palmer, Senior MDiv., Jeremy Simmons, Junior MDiv., accompanist

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**TODAY AFTER CHAPEL**

Please join us for lunch after the service in 0012 Westbrook for a lunch discussion with the Rt. Rev Michael B. Curry on the topic, "Leadership in a Racially Divided Church."

Special thanks to Brian Bryant, President of Black Seminarians Union for organizing the music;  
Sanetta Ponton, Program Chair of Black Seminarians Union for organizing the lunch;  
and the Divinity Student Council for sponsoring the lunch.