



**February 7, 2021 – Epiphany 5 (B)
Absalom Jones Offering**

In honor of Black History Month and Blessed Absalom Jones, the first African American priest in The Episcopal Church, Presiding Bishop Michael Curry has invited Episcopalians everywhere to deepen our participation in Christ’s ministry of reconciliation by engaging with and supporting Episcopal Historically Black Colleges and Universities, known as HBCUs.

Congregations and individuals are urged to dedicate the offering from their observance of the Feast of Absalom Jones (February 13) to support the two Episcopal HBCUs: St. Augustine’s University in Raleigh, N.C., and Voorhees College in Denmark, S.C. “These schools bring educational, economic, and social opportunity to often resource-poor communities, and they offer many blessings into the life of the Episcopal Church,” Bishop Curry said. Donations to the HBCUs will provide much needed help to offer competitive scholarships and financial aid, attract and retain exceptional faculty, support cutting-edge faculty research, install new and upgraded technology campus-wide, and provide state-of-the-art classroom and athletic equipment.

“In light of our renewed covenant and commitment to the work of racial justice and reconciliation, I hope you will join me in supporting the Absalom Jones Fund this year,” the Presiding Bishop said.



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Jones was an African American abolitionist and clergyman, and the first African American ordained a priest in The Episcopal Church. He was born enslaved to Abraham Wynkoop in 1746 in Delaware. Jones moved to Philadelphia after his master sold his plantation along with Absalom's mother and six siblings. Jones bought his wife Mary's freedom and later was granted his own emancipation in 1784. In 1787, with his friend Richard Allen, they founded the Free African Society, a mutual aid benevolent organization that was the first of its kind organized by and for Black people. Jones was ordained a priest on September 21, 1802, faithfully serving the African Episcopal Church of St. Thomas in Philadelphia, which remains a vibrant congregation.



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“As we commemorate Blessed Absalom Jones, the first African American priest in The Episcopal Church, we have a unique opportunity to celebrate his memory and to honor the witness of two schools that continue to form new leaders,” Bishop Curry said. “In honor of Jones’ commitment to advancing the education of African Americans and promoting the development of African American leaders in all areas of life, The Episcopal Church is delighted to designate Saint Augustine’s University and Voorhees College as the beneficiaries of the 2021 Feast of Absalom Jones offerings.”

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Donations are accepted at episcopalchurch.org/givebcus. You can also text GIVEHBCU to 41444. For more information, contact Cecilia Malm, Senior Development Officer, at cmalm@episcopalchurch.org or (212) 716-6062.

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