

Absalom Jones was born in slavery in Delaware in 1746.  He was the founder of the [African Episcopal Church of St. Thomas](http://www.aecst.org/index.html) in Philadelphia in 1792, the first Black Episcopal Church in America as it describes itself today.  The Church is celebrating its 225th anniversary this year.

In his younger years in Delaware, Absalom sought help to learn to read. When he was 16, his owner Benjamin Wynkoop brought him to Philadelphia where he served as a clerk and handyman in a retail store. He was able to work for himself in the evenings and keep his earnings. He also briefly attended a school run by the Quakers where he learned mathematics and handwriting. In 1770, he married Mary Thomas and purchased her freedom. It was until 1784 that he obtained his own freedom through manumission. He also owned several properties.

[“About Absalom Jones” African Episcopal Church of St. Thomas website](http://www.aecst.org/ajones.htm)

In 1802, Jones was ordained as the first African American Episcopal Priest.  Absalom Jones died on February 13, 1818 at his residence.  “The February 13th Absalom Jones Feast Day was added to the Episcopal Church Calendar in 1973. His ashes are enshrined in the altar of the Reverend Absalom Jones Chapel of the African Episcopal Church of St. Thomas, and a memorial stained glass window commemorates his life and work.” [[“About Absalom Jones”](http://www.aecst.org/ajones.htm)]

“His piety, pastoral faithfulness, and moral integrity were legendary.”

Here is a prayer he composed for the abolition of slavery and the slave trade, in an understated humble plea, “Give peace in our day we beseech thee, O thou God of peace! and grant, that this highly favoured country may continue to afford a safe and peaceful retreat from the calamities of war and slavery, for ages yet to come.”

**A THANKSGIVING PRAYER FOR THE ABOLITION OF THE SLAVE TRADE**

**Oh thou God of all nations upon the earth!  We thank thee, that thou art no respecter of persons, and that thou hast made of one blood all nations of men.  We thank thee, that thou hast appeared, in the fullness of time, in behalf of the nation from which most of the worshiping people, now before thee, are descended.  We thank thee, that the sun of righteousness has at last shed morning beams upon them.**

**Rend thy heavens, O Lord, and come down upon the earth; and grant that the mountains, which now obstruct the perfect day of thy goodness and mercy towards them, may flow down at thy presence.  Send thy gospel we beseech thee, among them.  May the nations, which now sit in darkness, behold and rejoice in its light.**

**May Ethiopia soon stretch out her hands unto thee, and lay hold of the gracious promise of thy everlasting covenant. Destroy, we beseech thee, all the false religions which now prevail among them; and grant, that they may soon cast their idols, to the moles and the bats of the wilderness.**

**O, hasten that glorious time, when the knowledge of the gospel of Jesus Christ, shall cover the earth, as the waters cover the sea, when the wolf shall dwell with the lamb, and the leopard shall lie down with the kid, and the calf and the young lion and the fatling together, and a little child shall lead them and when, instead of the thorn, shall come up the fir tree, and, instead of the brier, shall come up the myrtle tree: and it shall be to the Lord for a name and for an everlasting sign that shall not he cut off.**

**We pray, 0 God, for all our friends and benefactors in Great Britain, as well as in the United States: reward them, we beseech thee, with blessings upon earth, and prepare them to enjoy the fruits of their kindness to us, in thy everlasting kingdom in heaven; and dispose us, who are assembled in thy presence, to be always thankful for thy mercies, and to act as becomes a people who owe so much to thy goodness.**

**We implore thy blessing, O God, upon the President, and all who are in authority in the United State’s [sic]. Direct them by thy wisdom, in all their deliberations, and O save thy people from the calamities of war.**

**Give peace in our day we beseech thee, O thou God of peace! and grant, that this highly favoured country may continue to afford a safe and peaceful retreat from the calamities of war and slavery, for ages yet to come.**

**We implore all these blessings and mercies, only in the name of thy beloved Son, Jesus Christ, our Lord. And now, O Lord, we desire, with angels and archangels, and all the company of heaven, ever more to praise thee, saying, Holy, holy, holy, Lord God Almighty: the whole earth is full of thy glory.**

“A Thanksgiving Prayer,” Thanksgiving Sermon; the italicized portions are references to Scripture.  From [Give Us Grace, An Anthology of Anglican Prayers](https://www.amazon.com/Give-Us-Grace-Anthology-Anglican/dp/0819219622/), compiled by Christopher L. Webber.