



THE EPISCOPAL CHURCH IN CENTRAL PENNSYLVANIA

The Diocese of Central Pennsylvania

The Rt. Rev. Nathan D. Baxter, D.Min., S.T.D., D.H.L., D.D., Bishop of Central Pennsylvania

The Rt. Rev. Dr. Nathan D. Baxter was consecrated Bishop of the Diocese of Central Pennsylvania on October 21, 2006. The Diocese of Central Pennsylvania comprises 70 parishes and institutions in the 25 central counties of the Commonwealth. Bishop Baxter is a third generation clergyman, his grand father an African Methodist Episcopal preacher and his father a Church of God in Christ pastor. His mother was a Christian Educator.

Before his election, Bishop Baxter was rector of historic Saint James Episcopal Church (1744), Lancaster, the largest parish in the Diocese of Central Pennsylvania. During his tenure there, he served as member of the Finance Committee, Bishop's Advisory Committee, and as chair of Diocesan Deputation to the 2003 National Episcopal General Convention.

Prior to his tenure at St. James Church, Bishop Baxter served for twelve years as Dean of the National Cathedral in Washington, D.C. and Chief Administrative Officer of the Protestant Episcopal Cathedral Foundation, the corporation comprising the Cathedral's eight schools, colleges and auxiliaries. Before becoming Dean of the Cathedral, Bishop Baxter served as the administrative dean and associate professor of Pastoral Theology at Episcopal Divinity School in Cambridge, Massachusetts; seminary dean and associate professor of Church and Ministry at Lancaster Theological Seminary in Lancaster, Pennsylvania; and chaplain and professor of Religious Studies at St. Paul's College in Lawrenceville, Virginia. He has also served parishes in Virginia and Pennsylvania.

He is an associate of the monastic Order of the Holy Cross. By order of the Queen he was made a chaplain of the Most Venerable Order of St. John of Jerusalem. Memberships include Sigma Pi Phi Fraternity, the Cosmos Club of Washington, and a life membership in the Union of Black Episcopalians and the NAACP. He is an Army veteran and recipient of the Vietnam Cross of Gallantry with Palm, and the Combat Medic's Badge.

Bishop Baxter graduated from Lancaster Theological Seminary in 1976 with honors and prizes in homiletics and Christology, and earned a Doctor of Ministry degree there in 1984. He has completed further programs of study at the Graduate Theological Union in Berkeley, California, the Harvard Graduate School of Education and the Warren Deem Management Institute at the Columbia University Executive Center. In 1991, he was named an honorary alumnus of the Episcopal Divinity School.

Bishop Baxter has received numerous distinguished honors from colleges, universities and seminaries including eight honorary doctorates. In 1998 the Lancaster Theological Seminary endowed the Nathan D. Baxter Lectureship in African American Studies, at which Nobel Peace Prize Laureate Archbishop Desmond Tutu gave the inaugural lecture. The Washington National Cathedral established the Nathan D. Baxter Endowed Fund for Preaching. Lutheran

Theological Seminary in Philadelphia has a classroom donated in honor of his ecumenical ministry.

Fellowships include Fellow of the College of Preachers (1989), lecturer in the Harold R. Medina Seminar for Federal and State Judges at Princeton University (1999-2001). He was the inaugural Lecturer of the Stolberg Lecture Series Sponsored by the Roman Catholic Basilica Foundation (1996) and Preacher in Residence at Chautauqua Institute (2000-2002). In 1998 Harvard Divinity School awarded him a Charles E. Merrill Resident Fellowship.

During his ministry as Dean of the National Cathedral Bishop Baxter led many national worship events including President George W. Bush's first Presidential Inaugural Service. At the request of President William J. Clinton, he delivered the White House Millennium Prayer which was encapsulated for the next millennial celebration. Most notably, at the request of President Bush, he led the internationally televised National Day of Prayer and Remembrance Service at the Cathedral following the terrorist attacks of September 11, 2001. He has been selected as preacher for the funerals of many prominent Americans, including Thurgood Marshall, William Colby, William Fulbright, Clark Clifford, Pamela Harriman, Ron Brown and the American memorial service for Princess Diana, and directed the planning for the funeral of President Ronald Reagan. During his tenure the Center for Prayer and Pilgrimage and the Girls Choir were established; the staff and volunteer clergy corps expanded to include non-Episcopal ministers; and the Cathedral experienced its largest national campaign.

In November 2007, Bishop Baxter participated with national leaders in various fields in *By the People's Dialogues in Democracy: Life*, a production of McNeil Lehrer Productions. The four day dialogue was made into a documentary and televised nationally by PBS. In September 2008, he participated in *Faith, Politics and Society*, a panel discussion sponsored by WITF-TV (the local PBS station) and the Pennsylvania Human Rights Commission, addressing Americans' views and misunderstandings of Muslims and Islam.

Presently Bishop Baxter serves on the Pastoral Development Commission of the Episcopal House of Bishops and a Peer Coach for new bishops; and is the Honorary Chair of the National Board of the Union of Black Episcopalians.

Among his publications are *Visions for the Millennium*, the award winning *Challenge and Comfort: A Pastor's Thoughts for a Troubled Nation* and numerous sermons and essays on faith and public life.

Bishop Baxter is a native of Harrisburg, Pa. He is married to Mary Ellen Walker Baxter, a native of York, Pennsylvania. She is an educator and musician with degrees from Hampton University and Harvard University. The Baxters have two adult children, two foster children, and nine grandchildren.

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