



# The Union of Black Episcopalians: For Just Such a Time as This

Curious about UBE? The UBE story cannot be told without discussing the history of the Black Episcopal Church.

Beginning with the establishment of the African Episcopal Church of St. Thomas by Absalom Jones in 1792 in the city of Philadelphia, through the appointment and election of over 49 Black Bishops, there has always been a strong corps of Black leaders in the Episcopal Church. People like James Holly, Henry Delaney, Alexander Crummell, Mattie Hopkins, John Walker, Tollie Caution, Charles Lawrence, Deborah Harmon Hines, Barbara C. Harris and notably the Most Rev. Michael B. Curry, the first African American Presiding Bishop of the Episcopal Church, have paved the way for the full inclusion of black people in the life of The Episcopal Church at every level.



Read on for a snapshot of how the history of the Union and of the Black Episcopal Church unfolds. Then join us, as a member or an ally, in taking our place as leaders in pursuing God’s Beloved Community and in standing with all oppressed people. Membership information is found on the back page. UBE – The Episcopal Church’s best response for just such a time as this.

For more information, contact us at [leadership@theube.org](mailto:leadership@theube.org) or by phone at 703-461-1881.

## Historical Progression

Era of Exclusion and Independence (1794-1844)

Congregational & Institutional Expansion (1844-1883)

The Fear Factor Period (1883-1913)

The Treading Water Years (1918-1962)

The Age of White Liberalism (1962 – present)



## Historically Black Congregations: Roots and DNA

Cauldron for Leadership Development

Entrenchment in Community

Active in Social, Political, Economic Engagement

Partnership with Mission Allies

Not without a struggle!





# Historical Progression

## Era of Exclusion and Independence (1794-1844)

1787 Absalom Jones and Richard Allen ejected from St George’s Methodist Church for refusing to worship in the slave gallery. Earlier the same year they had formed the **Free African Society** which gave birth to the African Church which became the African Episcopal Church of St. Thomas.

1792 African Church established. Establishment marks the founding of St. Thomas Church, Philadelphia.

1794 Members of African Church decide to affiliate with Episcopal Church. St Thomas Church, Philadelphia dedicated. First black congregation in the Episcopal Church and its leader, Absalom Jones, first black priest.

HBCs arise out of exclusion and rejection (it took 50 years before the first diocese, Connecticut, granted black parishes and their rectors voice and vote at diocesan conventions) and out of necessity in responding to social, economic and political conditions. Civic and engagement involvement with the issues of the day became a vital part of the DNA of black congregations.

1795 Absalom Jones becomes a deacon.

1804 Absalom Jones becomes a priest. Independent black church movement is spreading.

1808 Peter Williams helps found the **African Association for Mutual Relief**



1818 Second oldest black Episcopal Church, St. Philip’s, formed with Peter Williams Jr. as founder and first rector. Began under the guidance of Trinity Parish. St. Philip’s produces a long line of notable and distinguished rectors including Hutchens C. Bishop, Shelton Hale Bishop, M. Moran Weston, and Chester L. Talton.

1819 Peter Williams Jr. ordained a deacon.

1824 St. James, Baltimore, first black church established below Mason-Dixon line. Founded by William Levington who was ordained at St. Thomas. St. James is known for presenting many noted black clergy for ordination.

1826 Peter Williams Jr becomes a priest.

1828 **African Dorcas Association** established by Peter Williams.

1844 St. Luke’s Church in New Haven, CT founded by Eli Worthington Stokes; was first black parish admitted to a diocesan convention upon its founding. Membership included the first Bishop of Haiti, James T. Holly, and WEB DuBois.



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St. Luke's also contributed several of its "sons" for ordination. A number of them went on to establish other black parishes: Charles Cummings founded St. Augustine's in Kansas City, Missouri; Alfred Brown, a former rector at St. Luke's, began the Church of Our Merciful Savior in Louisville, Kentucky; and Alonzo Johnson was rector of St. Monica's in Hartford, Connecticut, a mission started by St. Luke's.

### Congregational & Institutional Expansion (1844-1883)

1845 St. Matthew, Detroit MI established.

1849 Calvary, in Charleston, SC established.

1854 Good Shepherd, in Mobile AL established.

1856 St. Augustine's, Brooklyn NY established.

1856 **The Protestant Episcopal Society for Promoting the Extension of the Church Among Colored People**, begun by James Holly, forms. It is defunct by 1861.

1861 American Civil War 1861–65

1865 Reconstruction Period 1865–1877

1865 **Formation of the Protestant Episcopal Freedom Commission** which set up many schools for blacks like St. Augustine's College in Raleigh and St. Paul's College in Lawrenceville, VA. Commission defunct by 1906.



Several southern dioceses, fearing large numbers of blacks would seek membership in white parishes and that newly established black churches would request full status in diocesan conventions, enacted canonical regulations restricting black representation, and the mixing of the races in local congregations.

1867 **St. Augustine's Normal School and Collegiate Institute** founded, Raleigh, NC.

1874 James T Holly consecrated bishop of Haiti. First black bishop invited to a Lambeth Conference in 1878.

1878 St. Thomas, Chicago established.

1878 Bishop Payne Divinity School established in Petersburg, VA.



1879 St. Luke's Washington DC, where Alexander Crummell served as rector, established.



## The Fear Factor Period (1883-1913)

1883 Southern Bishops, clergy and laity meet at Sewanee to address “the Negro problem”. Proposed the Sewanee Canon that would allow any bishop or diocese to segregate the races in any manner they deemed necessary.

1883 Crummell forms the **Convocation of Colored Clergy** to lobby for the defeat of the Sewanee Plan.

In the years following the 1883 Convention virtually every southern diocese incorporated the provisions of the so-called Sewanee Canon into their diocesan constitutions and canons. What was not accomplished on the national level was enacted on a diocesan level—the effective disenfranchisement of black Episcopalians.

1884 First African American congregation, St. Augustine’s, Galveston established in Texas.

1885 Samuel David Ferguson consecrated IV Bishop of Liberia. He was the first black bishop to have a seat in the House of Bishops with all rights and privileges.

1885 St. Athanasius, Brunswick, Georgia established.



1886

**Conference of Church Workers Among Colored People** forms and comes up with alternate proposal to establish an autonomous missionary district with its own bishop, but in union with General Convention. Alternate proposals made in 1889, 1904, and in 1907 which called for the creation of Suffragan Bishops.

1886 Holy Cross, Pittsburgh established.

1888 St. Paul Normal and Industrial School established in Lawrenceville VA

1908 St. Bartholomew’s, Cambridge MA established.

1918 Two black bishops chosen, Edward T. Demby (Diocese of Arkansas) and Henry B. Delaney (Diocese of North Carolina - St. Augustine’s College) as first to serve in the United States.



## The Treading Water Years (1918-1962)

1922 George F. Bragg writes the first historical account of blacks in the Episcopal Church. *History of the Afro-American Group of the Episcopal Church*.

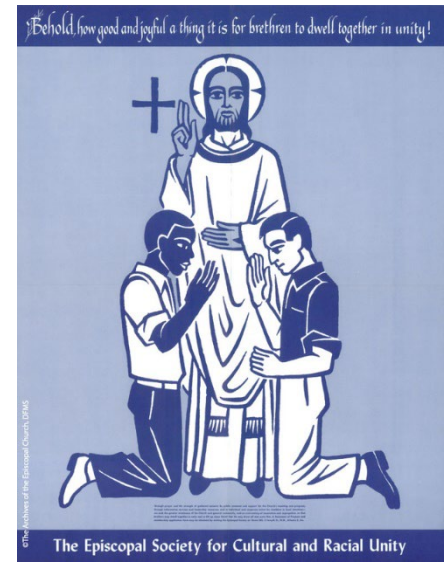
1937 Bravid Harris appointed the Episcopal Church’s Secretary for Negro Work. In 1945 Tollie Caution took over. Tollie became known as the dean of black clergy.

**It would be 44 years before another black bishop was consecrated in the Episcopal Church. However the Conference of Church Workers Among Colored People worked diligently and met regularly to provide support to black clergy and congregations through the mid-1960s.**



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- 1957 **Episcopal Society for Cultural and Racial Unity** forms to remove all vestiges of segregation from the life of the Church. Their work continues until 1969.
- 1962 John Melville Burgess elected Suffragan Bishop of the Diocese of Massachusetts. Burgess was the first diocesan bishop to serve in the United States from 1970-1975.



## The Age of White Liberalism (1962 – present)

- 1960 Influence of White Liberals stressed an interracial approach to the church’s work among blacks.
- 1968 Establishment of the **Union of Black Clergy and Laity** in response to devastating effects of the civil rights rebellion of 1967 in American cities. 1967 General Convention adopts a program of self-help but did so without consulting black church leadership. This organization later becomes the **Union of Black Episcopalians**.

Bolstered by the immigration of Anglicans from the Caribbean and the West Indies, there are about 100,000 baptized black Episcopalians in approximately 220 black parishes and missions, and a substantial number of black in predominately white congregations. Of the 6,778 clergy in The Episcopal Church, 216 identify as African American.

According to The Episcopal Church’s Office of African Descent Ministries, over the past 145 years there have been 50 Black Bishops consecrated in The Episcopal Church. These Bishops hail from the African Diaspora, as well as Africa, with Bishop James Theodore Holly being the first and Bishop Ketlen A. Solak the latest.

The Most Reverend Michael Bruce Curry was elected in 2015 to serve as Presiding Bishop and Primate. We are honored and blessed by his longtime leadership in The Episcopal Church.



## Institutional Development

As the sequential history suggests, paralleling the development of historically black churches was the creation and growth of ancillary organizations that helped further the mission and aim of historically black congregations (i.e., to overcome the exclusion and rejection that characterized the larger church response to the presence and involvement of blacks in Episcopal Church life). Key dates and developments are summarized below.

- 1787 Jones and Allen form **Free African Society** which birthed the African Church which became the African Episcopal Church of St. Thomas.
- 1808 Peter Williams helps found the **African Association for Mutual Relief**.
- 1828 **African Dorcas Association** established by Peter Williams.
- 1856 **The Protestant Episcopal Society for Promoting the Extension of the Church Among Colored People**, begun by James Holly, forms. It is defunct by 1861.
- 1865 Formation of the **Protestant Episcopal Freedom Commission** which set up many schools for blacks like St. Augustine's College in Raleigh and St. Paul's College in Lawrenceville, VA. Commission defunct by 1906.
- 1878 Virginia Theological Seminary founds **Bishop Payne Divinity School** as a segregated seminary for black students in Petersburg, Virginia. Bishop Payne Divinity School closes in 1949.
- 1883 Crummell forms the **Convocation of Colored Clergy** to lobby for the defeat of the Sewanee Plan.
- 1886 **Conference of Church Workers Among Colored People** forms.
- 1957 The **Episcopal Society for Cultural and Racial Unity** organizes. Lasts for 12 years.
- 1959 **Episcopal Society for Cultural and Racial Unity** forms to remove all vestiges of segregation from the life of the Church. Their work continues until 1969.
- 1968 Establishment of the **Union of Black Clergy and Laity**. Later becomes the **Union of Black Episcopalians**.



## About UBE

Organized in 1968 as The Union of Black Clergy and Laity, UBE is the proud inheritor of the work of black Episcopalians and earlier organizations such as, the Convocation of Colored Clergy and the Conference of Church Workers Among Colored People, which were dedicated to justice and the ministry of Blacks in the Episcopal Church. The name was later changed to The Union of Black Episcopalians.

The Union of Black Episcopalians advocates for the African Diaspora by encouraging the involvement of Black people in the total life of the church - on every level and in every way - mission, stewardship, evangelism, education, leadership, governance and politics. The Union is committed to translating these words into Christian action for all Episcopalians and at all levels of the church.

## Mission

To unify the diverse cultures, concerns and gifts of Black Episcopalians by providing preparation and encouragement for living the Baptismal Covenant and fully participating in the mission and governance of The Episcopal Church.

## Vision

- To create awareness about clergy vocation to young men and women of the African diaspora
- To promote strong lay and ordained leadership in the Episcopal Church and the Anglican Communion.
- To incorporate fiscal responsibility into the life, work and ministry of UBE.
- To create a systematic approach of ensuring that Black Congregations and Communities of African descent are sustainable and viable within their vineyards.
- To be a community of vigilance and action regarding matters of injustice, especially the effects of racism in the Church and society.

## Chapters

The Union of Black Episcopalians is a 501(c)(3) non-profit organization with chapters throughout the United States. Its membership also includes the Caribbean, Africa, Canada and Latin America. Chapters are the Union's strongest link in a ministry that functions at the Diocesan, Provincial and National Church levels. Financial support from the chapters and individual members are the chief support of UBE. The Union, through the supervision of the National Board of Directors, helps to organize chapters, but chapters are encouraged to develop their own local priorities and programs in keeping with UBE's Mission and Vision.

## Chapters and Interest Groups

(Chapter affiliation must be renewed annually)

### NORTHEAST REGION

Ms. Louise Hannibal  
[louisehbh@aol.com](mailto:louisehbh@aol.com)

#### Chapters

Bishop James Theodore Holly- Diocese of Western NY  
 Northwestern Pennsylvania, Buffalo, NY  
 Diocese of New York- New York City & Vicinity  
 Diocese of Long Island-Garden City, NY  
 Hartford- Hartford Connecticut

### MID-ATLANTIC REGION

Ms. Helen Sharpe-Williams, Director  
[helen.sharpe-williams@earthlink.net](mailto:helen.sharpe-williams@earthlink.net)

#### Chapters

The Rev. James Solomon Russell-Diocese of So. VA  
 Earl B. Scott- Diocese of New Jersey  
 The Rev. Dr. Pauli Murray- Diocese of Maryland  
 Philadelphia-Diocese of Pennsylvania  
 Crummel-Cooper- Diocese of Washington, DC  
 Bishop Nathan Baxter- Diocese of Central PA

### MID-WEST REGION

Ms. Wendy Wilson Walker, Director  
[ww8300@yahoo.com](mailto:ww8300@yahoo.com)

#### Chapters

The Rev. Emery Washington- Diocese of Missouri  
 Diocese of West Missouri- Kansas City, MO  
 Bishop Quintin E. Primo- Chicago, IL  
 Wilma Ruth Combs - Cleveland, OH  
 Episcopal Diocese of Indianapolis- Indianapolis, IN

### WESTERN REGION

The Rev. Dr. Mauricio J. Wilson  
[rector@stpaulsoakland.org](mailto:rector@stpaulsoakland.org)

#### Chapters

H. Belfield Hannibal- Diocese of Los Angeles  
 Northern CA/Vivian Taylor- Diocese of California  
 Karl & Virginia Washington-Diocese of Arizona  
 Pacific Northwest-Diocese of Olympia/Diocese of Oregon

### SOUTHWEST REGION

Mr. Dwight Ward, Director  
[ten94dw@gmail.com](mailto:ten94dw@gmail.com)

#### Chapters

The Rev. John D. Epps - Houston, TX  
 Myra McDaniel - Austin, TX  
 Artemisia Bowden - San Antonio, TX  
 Father Curtis Sisco, Jr. - New Orleans, LA



### Chapters and Interest Groups (cont.)

#### SOUTHEAST REGION

Mrs. Lavonnie Perry-Claybon, Director

[lpclaybon1@gmail.com](mailto:lpclaybon1@gmail.com)

#### Chapters

Diocese of Atlanta- Atlanta, GA

Canon Nelson Pinder of Central FL-Orlando, FL

Fr. John E. Culmer- Tampa, FL

Fr. Sidney B. Parker- Jacksonville, FL

Fr. David Henry Brooks- Tallahassee

FL Theodore R. Gibson- Miami, FL

Charlotte Angels- Charlotte, NC

The Rt. Rev. Edward T. Demby- Mason, TN/Memphis, TN/  
Forrest City, AR

#### INTEREST GROUPS

Triad Piedmont- Greensboro, NC

East Tennessee- Diocese of East TN

Virginia Theological Seminary, Diocese of VA

### UBE National Board of Directors

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The Rev Kim L. Coleman

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The Rev. Canon Dr. Lynn A. Collins

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Mr. James Pierce

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The Rev. Deacon Linda Tardy Wilson, Retired

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Lavonnie Perry Claybon, Southeast

M. Dwight Ward, Southwest

Wendy Wilson Walker, Midwest

The Rev. Mauricio J. Wilson, Western

#### YAYAC

(Young Adults, Youth and Children)

Mrs. Maya Latimer, YAYAC Coordinator

#### At-Large Members

The Rev. Dr. Dee Wellington Bright

### APPLICATION FOR NATIONAL UBE MEMBERSHIP OR RENEWAL

Name \_\_\_\_\_

Address \_\_\_\_\_

City \_\_\_\_\_ State \_\_\_\_\_

Phone ( ) \_\_\_\_\_

Fax ( ) \_\_\_\_\_

E-Mail \_\_\_\_\_

Parish \_\_\_\_\_ Diocese \_\_\_\_\_

UBE Chapter Affiliation \_\_\_\_\_

#### Type of Annual Membership (Please check one)

- Regular At-Large (w/o chapter) ..... \$175
- Regular Member w/chapter ..... \$75
- Family Membership w/chapter ..... \$100
- Sr. Member (65+) w/o chapter ..... \$100
- Sr. Member (65+) w/chapter ..... \$55.00
- Youth (ages 12-17) ..... \$25
- Student (ages 18-21) ..... \$35
- Young Adult (18-30) w/chapter ..... \$75
- Young Adult (18-30) w/o chapter ... \$175

#### Life Memberships

(pay difference between levels to advance)

- Diamond ..... \$5,000
- Platinum ..... \$2500
- Gold ..... \$1500
- Silver ..... \$750
- Bronze ..... \$500

**Associate Membership (Episcopal Seminarians and Deacons in Formation only)** Free

#### Sponsors (Payable annually)

- Parish/Mission Sponsor ..... \$250/yr.
- Organizational ..... \$500/yr.

**Annual Chapter Assessment** ..... \$200.00

**To make a credit card payment online, go to**

<https://www.ube.org/DONATE/donate-online.html>

**Make checks payable and mail to:**

**Union of Black Episcopalians  
3737 Seminary Road, PMB #121  
Alexandria, VA 22304**

**Contact: [leadership@theube.org](mailto:leadership@theube.org)**