



400th Anniversary of the First Landing of Enslaved Africans in English North America



On Sunday, August 25, Christ Church will join a national movement to commemorate the 400th Anniversary of the start of African slavery in America. Our Presiding Bishop, The Most Rev. Michael Curry, invited all Episcopal parishes to join in this national remembrance. We are partnering with the National Park Service at Ft. Frederica for this commemoration and working to include other local participants. We will ring our bells for four minutes at 3:00 pm, one minute for each century of the remembrance. We hope to host a lecture addressing the history of slavery on St. Simons at 2:00 pm - details are being worked out now.

The National Park Service has had a series of events at the site of the original landing, all of which culminate the weekend of August 24-25. August 25th is designated as the Day of Healing, and churches are asked to toll their bells for four minutes at 3 pm. As the oldest church on St. Simons,



and one of the oldest in the state, Christ Church's history contains the history of slavery on these shores. Interesting aspects of that history include the recognition that General Oglethorpe prohibited slavery in what would become Georgia until he was later over-ruled by royal decree in 1751. We also know the story of the Ebo (Igbo) slave rebellion, which resulted in the deaths of a shipment of slaves brought here in 1803. There is also plenty of history around the plantation era of

the Island, with at least one plantation's estimated slave population reaching 500 souls.

As Terry E. Brown, Superintendent of the Ft. Monroe National Monument, the site of the first African landing articulates, "It is important to underscore the word COMMEMORATION because it can easily be confused with CELEBRATION. This is not a celebration. There will be moments for that, however, we must respectfully honor, lift up, and embrace this international story and the role that the United States has played. For hundreds of years, slavery was the most profound and vexatious social problem plaguing this nation. The institution of slavery deserves close study because of the disastrous impact it created, if for no other reason. This is our opportunity to officially remember the



*"My humanity is bound up in yours,
for we can only be human together."*

DESMOND TUTU

trials and tribulations as well as the contributions of Africans and African Americans. It is our moment to embrace the West African concept of Sankofa, which teaches us that we must go back to our roots in order to move forward."

By gathering for learning and prayer, and ringing our bell in commemoration, we acknowledge the pain and horror of an era of history we wish hadn't happened, and do our part to embrace the effort to offer healing however we might. We hope you can join us on the 25th.

For more information on the commemoration in general:

[Event Page](#)

[NPS Booklet](#)

[Our Presiding Bishop's Invitation](#)