THE REV. ABSALOM JONES

Disappointed at the racial discrimination he experienced in a local Methodist church, Absalom founded the Free African Society with Richard Allen in 1787, a mutual aid society for black Americans in Philadelphia. The Free African Society included many people newly freed from slavery after the American Revolutionary War.

In 1794, Jones founded the first Black Episcopal congregation, and in 1802 he was the first African American to be ordained as a priest in the Episcopal Church of the United States. He is listed on the Episcopal calendar of saints. He is remembered liturgically on the date of his death, February 13, in the 1979 Book of Common Prayer as "Absalom Jones, Priest, 1818".

The national Episcopal Church remembers his life and service annually with a Lesser Feast on the anniversary of his death, February 13.

Note: The portrait below of Absalom Jones is by Raphaelle Peale, first son of the American painter Charles Willson Peale, well-known for his large portrait of George Washington. Peale survived several wives and had 16-17 children most named after prominent artists. Peale's first born daughter was named after Angelica Kauffman a well-known female artist of her time. Emmanuel Church Webster Groves was founded by Richard John Lockwood and Angelica Peale Robinson Lockwood. Angelica Lockwood was the daughter of Archibald Robinson, granddaughter of Angelica Kauffman Peale Robinson and great granddaughter of Charles Willson Peale.



The Rev. Absalom Jones portrait 1810