

Historical Timeline of the Episcopal Diocese of Maryland

- 1608** Captain John Smith oversees the first Christian worship in the upper Chesapeake Bay.
- 1632** Virginia establishes a trading post on Kent Island; the Rev. Richard James is chaplain.
- 1634** Maryland granted by royal charter to Lord Baltimore as a proprietary colony
- 1649** The proprietor persuades the Maryland Assembly to pass the Act of Tolerance, affirming the legal rights of all Christians.
- 1650** First permanent Anglican ministry begins at St. George's, St. Mary's City.
- 1671** In what is now the Diocese of Maryland, another St. George's Church is established in Perryman on the upper Western Shore.
- 1692** The Anglican Church is established with 30 parishes and 8 clergy, supported by a tobacco tax paid by all white males.
- 1700** Anglican missions begun overseas when the Bishop of London sends the Rev. Thomas Bray as Commissary for Maryland.
- 1776** With 44 parishes and 53 clergy, the Anglican Church is disestablished by the State Assembly; only 15 of the clergy remain by 1780.
- 1779** Assembly passes the Vestry Act, allowing churches to retain title to land and buildings.
- 1780** Chestertown, Md. is the site of the meeting of Anglican clergy and laymen, evolving into the Diocese of Maryland and the founding of the Protestant Episcopal Church in the U.S.A. with 8 other states.
- 1792-1816** Thomas John Claggett of Maryland is the first bishop consecrated in America.
- 1812** Episcopal layman Francis Scott Key celebrates Maryland's patriotism in his now famous poem, honoring "the Power which hath made and preserved us a nation."
- 1816-27** James Kemp succeeds Claggett as bishop, promotes the first African-American congregation in the South, St. James' in Baltimore.

- 1829-38** Bishop William Stone; the Diocese survives but is split into "evangelical" and "catholic" factions.
- 1840-79** Diocese elects William Rollinson Whittingham, a professor at the General Seminary in New York, who unites the factions, supports the Union cause and promotes church growth: membership increases from 3,381 in 1839 to 12,267 in 1868; he consecrates 70 churches in 15 years.
- 1868** The Eastern Shore churches are set apart as the Diocese of Easton.
- 1879-83** Bishop William Pinkney helps heal the post-War divisions in the church.
- 1883-1911** Bishop William Paret; the church continues to grow in size and influence.
- 1895** The Diocese of Washington is set apart in the District of Columbia and four southern counties..
- 1911-1929** Bishop John Gardner Murray; in 1925 he is also elected Presiding Bishop of the national church.
- 1929-1943** Bishop Edward Helfenstein served from the Depression to the start of World War II.
- 1943-1963** Bishop Noble Cilley Powell; membership, congregations and clergy increase.
- 1963-1971** Bishop Harry Lee Doll oversees new ministries in social services.
- 1971-1985** Bishop David Keller Leighton leads Diocese through revisions to the Book of Common Prayer and Hymnal, and the ordination of women.
- 1972-1980** William Cox serves as bishop suffragan.
- 1985-1994** A. Theodore Eastman is bishop, builds diocesan center.
- 1989-1995** Charles L. Longest serves as bishop suffragan, then bishop-in-charge in 1994; he retires in 1997.
- 1995** Diocese consecrates Robert W. Ihloff as 13th Bishop of Maryland.
- 1998** John L. Rabb becomes bishop suffragan.