



## **TRAIL OF SOULS**

### **A Pilgrimage Toward Truth and Reconciliation**

**St. Margaret's Church, Westminster Parish**

**Annapolis MD 21409**

**[www.st-margarets.org](http://www.st-margarets.org)**

St. Margaret's Church, Westminster Parish, Annapolis (on the Broadneck Peninsula) is one of 30 parishes established by intent and without reference when the Maryland Colonial Assembly in 1692, meeting in St. Mary's City, declared the Church of England the official church of the royal Colony of Maryland. (Maryland had been a proprietary colony until 1689 and would regain proprietary status 25 years later.)

The nearly 325-year history, first as *Broade Necke* Parish and by 1696 Westminster Parish, spans 170 years when slavery was legal in Maryland. And while the parish served the spiritual needs of some enslaved and free persons of African descent, Westminster Parish also benefited from the atrocities of slavery and consistently misrepresented and omitted records of marginalized persons.

Historians believe slavery first came to Providence (by 1650, Anne *Arundell* County) and the *Broade Necke* Peninsula in 1649 with the arrival of Virginia Puritans. Maryland legalized slavery in 1664, and designated imported Africans *slaves for life*.

Founding members of *Broade Necke* Parish (at least three of the first six vestrymen were slaveholders) worshipped in a meeting house constructed by Puritans until 1696 when the first Westminster Parish house of worship was completed on the south bank of the Magothy River at Deep Creek (later Persimmon and today Cape St. Claire). By then, slavery was becoming vital to the area's agricultural economy.

As part of the Trail of Souls Pilgrimage, St. Margaret's Church dedicated five hand-crafted markers recalling its history during the period of slavery in Maryland.

## **Pilgrims on a Journey of Remembrance and Reconciliation**

**L:** Making a pilgrimage to holy places is an ancient discipline filled with the past, present, and future. We join in the quest for deeper understanding through thoughtful reflection and shared conversations. Commemorating Maryland's constitutional end of chattel slavery we strive to turn our minds back to a time and place we cannot truly envision, yet existed. We will follow the trail of souls who lived and worked, worshipped and prayed, enslaved and free, all created in the image of God, yet broken as we are.

**R:** *I will use this opportunity to draw closer to God and others. I will use this time to reconcile myself to the truth of our past. I will use this time to praise God for the many positive changes that have occurred from one generation to the next. I will strive to continue to do good in my lifetime so that future generations will live in greater peace and harmony. I will do these things with God's help.*

**L:** In the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit

**R:** *Amen!*

**L:** Lord, have mercy

**R:** *Christ, have mercy*

**All:** *Lord, have mercy*

**All:** *O God you made us in your own image and redeemed us through Jesus Christ your Son: Look with compassion on the whole human family; take away the arrogance and hatred which infect our hearts; break down the walls that separate us; unite us in bonds of love; and work through our struggle and confusion to accomplish your purposes on earth; that, in your good time, all nations, tribes and peoples may serve you in harmony around your heavenly throne; through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen!*

**ALL:** *God of grace, we know we are your beloved children. You have blessed us and asked us to be your caretakers and your disciples. Be among us as we travel the Trail of Souls. On this pilgrim journey, still our souls, free our minds, make us open to the Spirit and to each other. Be present as we look back at the truth of our past remembered; enable us to discover new truths and to enter new trails that may lead us from our present fears and insecurities, towards paths of love and trust. Help us to live into our baptismal promise, to strive for justice and peace among all people, and to respect the dignity of every human being. Amen!*



### First Station

**L:** Blessed be the God of all creation

**R: Let our shouts of praise be heard in all the earth!**

**Historical Marker I** Recalls *colored* baptisms, weddings, and burials in the 1800s held at St. Margaret's Church and conducted by its clergy for both enslaved and free persons of African descent.



### Second Station

**L:** Blessed be the God of all creation

**R: And praise God's name for ever and ever!**

**Historical Marker II** Recalls Sunday *colored* afternoon worship services held at St. Margaret's Church in the mid-1800s.



### Third Station

**L:** Blessed be the God of all creation

**R: We praise and exalt you forever!**

**Historical Marker III** Remembers that between 33 and 100 enslaved persons worked the White Hall (Whitehall) Plantation when owned by St. Margaret's Church from 1749-1764.



### Fourth Station

**L:** Blessed be the God of all creation

**R: From this time forth and for evermore!**

**Historical Marker IV** Acknowledges that enslaved persons likely served as unskilled laborers in the construction of three or four church buildings and a chapel of ease erected at four different locations during the period 1695 to 1851.



### Fifth Station

**L:** Blessed be the God of all creation

**R: Let our shouts of praise be heard in all the earth!**

**Historical Marker V** Acknowledges that enslaved persons were typically buried outside white-only portions of graveyards and church yards, and their first-name-only markers soon disintegrated.

**All:** *We thank you, God, for the blessing of family and friends, and for the loving care that surrounds us on every side. We thank you for setting us at tasks which demand our best efforts, and for leading us to accomplishments that satisfy and delight us.*

**All:** *We thank you also for those disappointments and failures that lead us to acknowledge our dependence on you alone. Above all, we thank you for Jesus; for the truth of Jesus' word and the example of Jesus' life; for his steadfast obedience, by which he overcame temptation; for his dying, through which he overcame death; and for his rising to life again, in which we are raised to the life of your kingdom. Amen!*

St. Margaret's Church has released a more complete TRAIL OF SOULS report . . . In-print for those who visit St. Margaret's on pilgrimage . . . On St. Margaret's web site for the virtual pilgrimage at [www.st-margarets.org/history-and-archives.html](http://www.st-margarets.org/history-and-archives.html) . Additionally a video presentation produced by St. Margaret's Church can be found at this same location.

This becomes part of St. Margaret's Church 2017 325th anniversary account. Contributing: Kathy Andrews, Barbara Breeden, Jean Clarke, Dalyn Huntley, Michael Winn, and David Boyce. Historical markers designed and made by Tommy Bowers with help from Clark Davidson.

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