

AMERICA 250

# KOINONIA

One bread, one body, one Lord, one faith, one baptism,  
one God and Father of all. 1 Cor. 10:17, Eph. 4:5

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## From the Presiding Bishop's Desk America 250 July 4, 2026 A.D.

The Most Rev. Leo J Michael

On the 250th anniversary of America's birth, the Holy Catholic Church Anglican Rite faces the very same quandary that confronted the founding fathers of our faith in the newborn republic. Then, as now, the Church stood at a profound crossroads: torn between faith in God and political loyalty; tasked with preserving the unadulterated Apostolic faith and order of the One, Holy, Catholic, and Apostolic Church against the pressures of secular dilution; and balancing the historic, godly authority of the episcopate with the necessary participation of a citizenry guided by the Gospel. These persistent tensions continue to be the chimes of our own times.

How we navigate our current circumstances—confronting the subtle, seemingly insurmountable challenges as the devil seeks to infiltrate every sphere of human existence—remains our defining battle. Yet, this invisible foe is ours to take on. It is solely by the grace of God and the guidance of the Holy Spirit that we can help a wandering humanity turn its eyes Godward. God, not man-made institutions, is the answer to life's deep afflictions. Today, too many worldly power-mongers attempt to claim dominion over the human soul. While the trials of our founding fathers were uniquely political, our recent decades have witnessed man-made disasters and moral catastrophes that have cost millions of lives. True morality has been displaced. Despite breathtaking technological and scientific advancement, the innocent continue to suffer.

The folly of our age has resulted in a profoundly confused identity surrounding human sexuality, encouraging individuals to reject the biological sex they were born with, rationalizing this confusion, and tragically failing to spare even young children. Many children are actively robbed of their innocence, goaded into becoming someone else while parents are systematically distanced under the guise of institutional schooling and care. Morality has reached a low ebb, echoing the eerie chant of the witches dancing around the cauldron in Shakespeare's *Macbeth*: "Fair is foul, and foul is fair"—a world where right is labeled wrong, and wrong is deemed right. Even within religious institutions, raw authority has frequently become the be-all and end-all of existence, to the severe detriment of the Savior of the world, who came not to be served, but to serve and to save the lost. We are sharply reminded of John Milton's warning in *Paradise Lost* of the prideful angel whom God "hurled headlong flaming from the ethereal sky."

Humanity is brilliant, yet its moral bankruptcy is fully exposed in these follies. The constant struggle of desiring to do good while ultimately choosing to do evil remains the defining human hubris. Humanity, for all its intelligence, cannot navigate its own moral or spiritual destiny; it stands in desperate need of Divine Providence. Scripture declares that the fear of the Lord is the beginning of wisdom. Only when

humanity reclaims an eternal perspective—realizing that it comes from God, belongs to God, and returns to God—will it find itself on a safe path.

Even now, we see a beautiful confluence of the world gathered for the international soccer tournament, where nations unite to cheer their teams through both victory and defeat. This celebration offers a glimpse of what heaven itself might look like: a multitude of souls who have obeyed God, standing in white robes washed clean in the Blood of the Lamb. Yet, we must remember that the secular can never become sacred. We are called to be in the world, but not of the world, keeping ourselves unspotted from its distortions.

The American people are inherently good-hearted, uniquely equipped to weep with those who weep and empathize during great human tragedies. Their love for humanity is consistently demonstrated through profound personal sacrifices. I have personally witnessed this goodness, compassion, and kindness in the wake of the devastating Southeast Asian Tsunami, which claimed countless lives in their sleep—leaving children without parents, parents without children, and wives without their families' sole breadwinners. Americans did not hesitate to step up and help. The soup kitchens, food pantries, and the little free pantries that have mushroomed across our neighborhood street corners continue to testify to a deeply caring people. As humanity scales the galaxies and engages in enchanting expeditions to the moon and beyond, the power of compassion remains intact. Ounces of compassion still exude from every heart.

As a bishop under the Chief Shepherd, my ultimate recourse is to bend my knees and beseech the Good Lord to sustain us through these times. We await His Second Coming, even as the entire creation groans for the glorious freedom of the children of God. A relentless tension persists between faith, sacred tradition, modernity, and secular accommodation in our sanctuaries. We must ask: When the Son of Man returns, will He find faith on the earth? More searchingly, what will God do with those stewards who demand to be served rather than caring for His lost sheep?

If I should die tonight, my sole desire is to rest in His grace as a servant who bore the heavy weight of shepherding and was found serving until his last breath. For once you are a priest, you are a priest forever.

Therefore, I say to our shepherds and religious leaders: do not rest on the laurels of your seats of power, nor lord your authority over the flock. To our political leaders: remember that your God-given authority to govern is intended solely to alleviate the physical and moral necessities of the people. To our judges: judge as the Just Judge would do, with unyielding mercy and compassion. And to my fellow human beings: let us respect one another's lives and dreams, standing as a resilient society that reflects the immutable truth that every single one of us is created in the image and likeness of God. What we believe must be the guiding rule of how we pray and how we live. There can be no disconnect. <><< Let's now delve into the great history of our church...



# Three Anglican Churches that Played Significant Roles in the Revolution

*Dr. Raymond A. Powell PhD*

Many Anglicans played important roles in the American Revolution. George Washington, commander of the Revolutionary Army, was a member of his local vestry. Thirty-four of the fifty-six signers of the Declaration of Independent were Anglicans. But just as a great number of American Anglicans were involved in the Revolutionary movement, some Anglican churches, and in two cases, Anglican church buildings, played important roles.

## The Old North Church (Christ Church), Boston, MA

Almost everyone knows the lines from Longfellow's "Paul Revere's Ride:" "One, if by land, and two if by sea." However, not everyone one knows that the Old North Church where the signal lanterns were to be hung was actually an Anglican parish, Christ Church Boston. Christ Church, built in 1723, is the oldest standing church in Boston. Its building would be used at crucial moments in the war both by the Patriots and the British.

Like many American Anglicans, the people of Christ Church had mixed opinions about the Revolution. Loyalist Anglican priest Rev. Mather Bayles, Jr., resigned as rector on April 18, 1775, in part due to political conflict. However, other members of the congregation supported the Revolutionary cause. The same night that Rev. Bayles resigned, sea captain John Pulling, Jr., a member of the Christ Church vestry tasked by Paul Revere with sending the signal, ascended the North Church tower to hang the two lanterns. Pulling was accompanied and assisted by the Christ Church sexton Robert Newman. The lights that sent Paul Revere on his ride, and led to the resistance at Lexington and Concord, were hung by Anglicans from an Anglican church.

About two months after the two lanterns sent their message, June 17, 1775, the Old North Church tower played a different role in the Revolutionary War. General Thomas Gage, British military governor and himself a parishioner of Christ Church, used the church tower as an observation post during the Battle of Bunker Hill. In the aftermath of the fighting, the British brought their wounded to the church which became a temporary field hospital. Eventually, about a hundred British casualties, including Major John Pitcairn, Gage's second in command, were buried in the church crypt.

After Lexington and Concord, Robert Newman was briefly taken into custody, but was eventually released. British authorities searched for John Pulling, but he and his family safely fled Boston. During the confusion and uncertainty of the war, Christ Church was closed from 1775-1778. There were rumors that General Gage wanted to strip it for firewood during a particularly harsh winter. However, like the Anglican Church in America, the Old North Church would survive to start ministry again in a new country.





The Role of Paul Revere's Lantern Lights - Language of Lighting

## 2. Henrico Parish Church (now St. John's Episcopal Church), Richmond, VA

The building of the Old North Church was used by both sides during the Revolutionary War. In contrast, the sanctuary of the Henrico Parish Church, which dates from 1741, was dedicated solely to the Patriot cause. It was in this church that Anglican layman Patrick Henry confronted his fellow Virginians with the stark choice, "Give me



Liberty or give me Death!" Among the audience that heard the speech were Anglicans George Washington, and Thomas Jefferson.

Henry made this famous statement in the course of Virginia's Second Revolutionary Convention. In fact, Virginia's Second, Third, and Fourth Revolutionary Conventions, held between 1775 and 1776, all met in the Henrico Church Sanctuary.

### 3. Christ Church, Philadelphia, PA

No other Anglican church buildings are as closely associated with the American Revolution as the Old North Church and the Henrico Parish Church. However, at least one other Anglican congregation was known for its connection to the American Revolution.

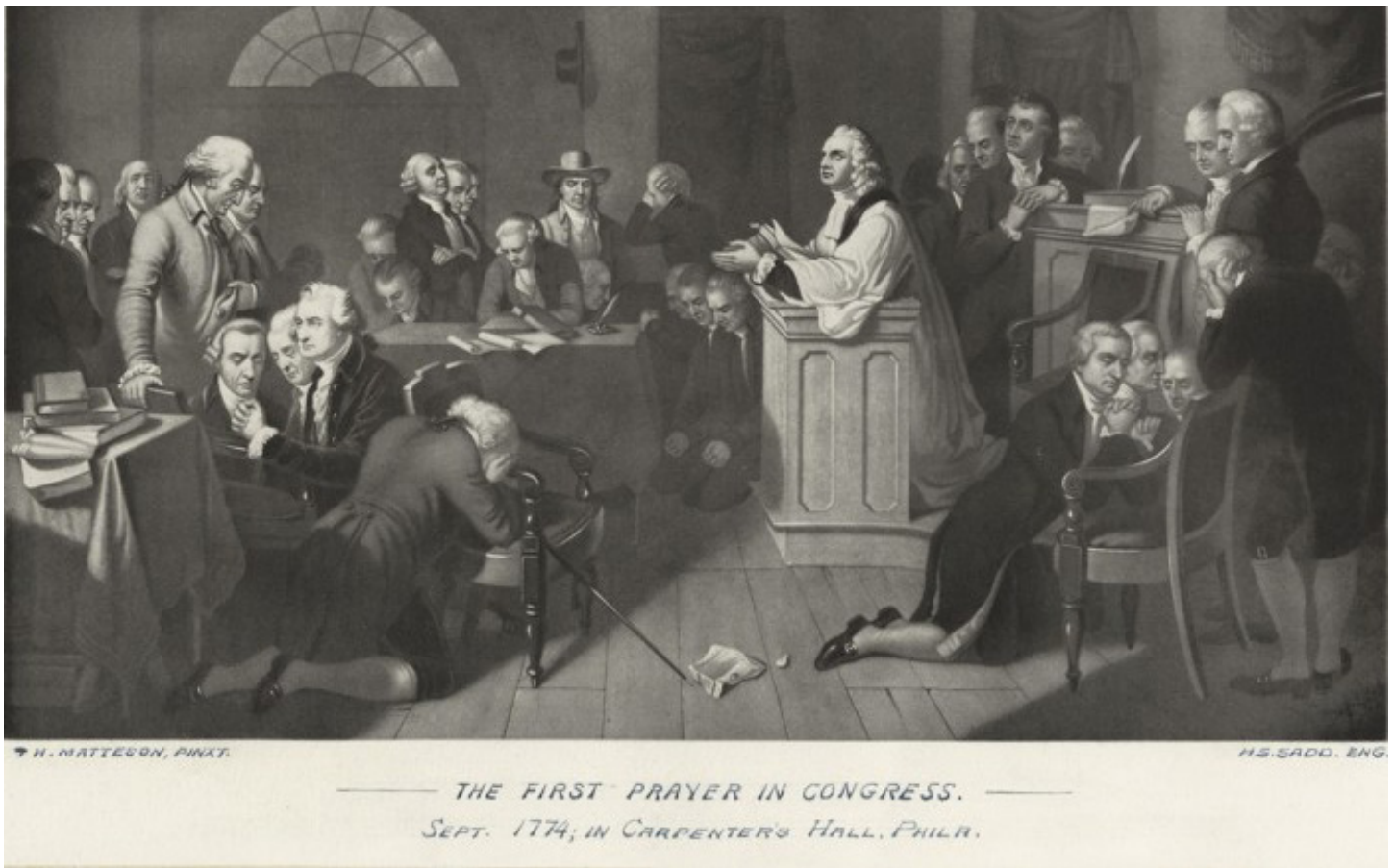
Christ Church Philadelphia was founded in 1695, the sanctuary built in 1744, and the steeple raised in 1754. It was the first Anglican parish in Pennsylvania, and for 56 years after the steeple was built, was the tallest building in America.

During the Continental Congress, many delegates (including Anglicans such as George Washington and non-Anglicans such as John Adams and Benjamin Franklin) attended worship there. Three signers of both the Declaration of Independence and the Constitution were members (Robert Morris, Benjamin Rush, and Francis Hopkinson).



[3g10298 GeneralWashingtonatChristChurc - Christ Church \(Philadelphia\) - Wikipedia](#)

On September 5, 1774, prior to the first session of the First Continental Congress, there was debate among the organizers about whether the inaugural meeting should be started with a prayer. Two Anglican laymen, John Jay and John Rutledge, both argued against, fearful that disagreement over who should pray would divide the division. The matter was settled by the Congregationalist Samuel Adams, who stated "I am no bigot. I can hear a prayer from a man of piety and virtue, who is at the same time a friend of his country." Adams then nominated Rev. Jacob Duché, rector of Christ Church, to open the congress in prayer. As a result, on September 7, 1774, the first official session of the Continental Congress was begun with a prayer by an Anglican clergyman. Duché was also appointed the first chaplain of Congress on July 6, 1776.



*"An 1848 print by Tompkins Harrison Matteson depicts the Rev. Jacob Duché offering the first prayer on Sept. 7, 1774, during an early First Continental Congress in Philadelphia, Pennsylvania. Photo: New York Public Library Digital Collection." [Philadelphia priests discuss the role of faith and government in event marking the First Continental Congress' 250th anniversary](#) – Episcopal News Service*

And the ministry of Christ Church Philadelphia to the Continental Congress did not stop there. When Duché began to have concerns about the Revolution, he was followed as rector of Christ Church by the future American bishop William White. Soon thereafter, White was called to serve as chaplain to the Continental Congress, an office he held from 1777-1789. He later served as chaplain of the Senate.

The history of Christ Church Philadelphia was so intertwined with the leading figures of the American Revolution that it has been called "The Nation's Church." As the home church of William White, it was also a birthplace for a new Anglican Church after the Revolution.

In a similar way, the Anglican church is also intertwined with the Revolution. Anglicans helped give the United States its start, and shaped the direction of the new nation, but the birth of this new nation was also a catalyst for a new beginning for Anglicanism, an Anglican church not tied to England or under the control of the English monarch.

The following sources were used for this article:

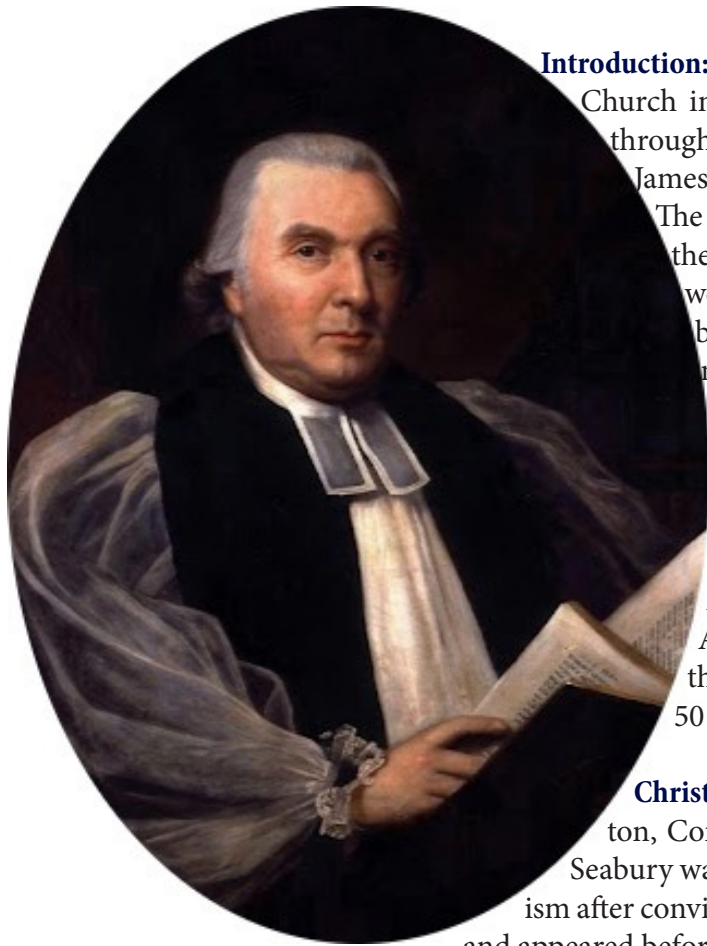
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# BISHOP SAMUEL SEABURY D.D.,

## FIRST AMERICAN BISHOP AND CHAMPION OF CONTINUING FAITH

Rt. Rev. Dr. Edmund Jayaraj D.D.



**Introduction:** Samuel Seabury is a memorable name in the Episcopal Church in the United States. The Apostolic Line was transmitted through him by the Scottish bishops who were still loyal to King James II who had themselves descended from the English Line. The Rite of Confirmation was first and firmly established in the United States. Also the Holy Mass as a Sacrifice and the work of the Holy Spirit in transforming the elements of bread and wine into the Body and Blood of our Savior was made sure by his inclusion of the Oblation and the Invocation based on the Scottish Prayer Book into our own American Book of Common Prayer. This is one of his enduring contributions to our Liturgy. He steadfastly championed the Nicene and the Athanasian Creeds to promote the primitive Catholic faith and fight tendencies of Deism, Methodism, secular thinking and infidelity of his times. An ecclesiastical visionary leader, he felt if faith is left to the vagaries of human mind, 'Christianity will disappear in 50 years.'

**Christian Formation:** Samuel Seabury was born in Groton, Connecticut on November 30, 1729. His father, also Samuel Seabury was a Congregationalist Minister. He converted to Anglicanism after convinced of the claims of episcopacy. He proceeded to England and appeared before the Society for the Propagation of the Gospel. They tried him and proved him for Holy Orders. Consequently, he was ordained Deacon and Priest by the Bishop of London. He returned to New London, Connecticut as a Missionary of the Society for the Propagation of the Gospel (SPG).

The young Samuel Seabury was educated at Yale University. After graduating from Yale, Seabury served as a Catechist for four years in Huntington, Long Island, N.Y., where his father's new mission was. He read the prayers and delivered sermons. He simultaneously read for orders under the direction of his father. Thereafter, he went to Edinburgh, Scotland to pursue medicine.

After a year in Scotland, Seabury applied for Holy Orders. He was examined and approved. He was ordained a Deacon on the Feast of St. Thomas, December 21, 1753 by the Right Reverend Dr. John Thomas, Bishop of Lincoln, acting for the ailing Bishop of London, the Right Reverend and Right Honorable Dr. Sherlock. Two days later, the Reverend Mr. Seabury was advanced to the priesthood by the Right Reverend Dr. Richard Osbaldiston, Bishop of Carlisle, also acting for the Bishop of London.

The Society for the Propagation of the Gospel (SPG), appointed Seabury as their Missionary in New Brunswick, New Jersey. Shortly afterwards he was moved to Jamaica, Long Island. He was inducted to this Living by the Governor, Sir Charles Hardy. Seabury was frequently called to officiate in Flushing, N.Y., beyond his ministerial borders which he cheerfully did. Both in Jamaica and Flushing he had to counter Quakerism and Methodism.

Seabury wrote to the SPG that Quakerism of his times had degenerated into infidelity to the true religion of Christ; it was in contempt of Christian Sacraments. They believed as if no redemption was needed; just an inner light was sufficient. They, reported Seabury further believed without any external worship they will be saved. Thus Quakerism, he added, had paved the way to Deism and infidelity to Christian Truth and Christ's Ordinances.

Seabury was a man of education and lover of Order and abhorred canonical and rubrical irregularities. He countered Whitefield's revival preaching and his misrepresentation of the Anglican Church as popish and that

she taught salvation is that of their own works and deserving. He constantly endeavored to set these things in their true light.

Need for a Bishop: The Treaty of Peace signed in Paris after the War with England by the Colonies on November 30, 1782 did not provide for the treatment of Loyalist Clergy like Seabury who were persecuted, some imprisoned and churches and properties burnt or confiscated. At best a clause was inserted that a recommendation will be made to the States for restitution. This turned out a meaningless recommendation because in the first place it was the States that persecuted the Anglican Church. No restitution can be expected from them who were dominated by the Dissenters. The Church in the United States needed a pure, valid and spiritual episcopacy.

#### **Election Convention in Woodbury, Connecticut:**

Accordingly, on March 25, 1783, ten clergymen of the Church of England in Connecticut met in secret, for fear of persecution, at the house of the Reverend John Rutgers Marshall in the village of Woodbury near Waterbury, Connecticut. There without a formal election selected two persons, the Reverend Jeremiah Leaming and the Reverend Samuel Seabury for either of them to travel to England and obtain the Episcopal consecration. Both these men were not at this meeting and Samuel Seabury, though born and educated in Connecticut did not have a ministry here but in neighboring New York where he had been a Chaplain to the King's army at one time. Seabury sailed to England at his own expense. His instructions were to secure the episcopacy through the English bishops failing which he should approach the non-Juring bishops of the Church of Scotland.

In a letter addressed to the Archbishop of Canterbury introducing the Reverend Samuel Seabury, the Reverend Abraham Jarvis, Secretary to the Convention in Woodbury noted that the urgency of the request was precipitated by a plan formulated in Philadelphia and spread among Southern Colonies (New York down to South Carolina) to have a 'nominal ideal episcopate, by the united suffrages of presbyters and laymen.' The Reverend William White, later Bishop of Pennsylvania was presumed to be its author. In short, an Episcopate but a Presbyterian form of church government. Another letter was sent to the Archbishop of York as well.

#### **Arrival in London and obstacles to Consecration:**

Dr. Samuel Seabury arrived in London on July 7, 1783. He first met with the Bishop of London who historically had been the Bishop for all the British colonies. He was

supportive of the need and justification for a resident bishop in the U. S. in view of the independence of the Colonies from British rule but that he would not take the lead in the matter. The Archbishop of York had left town and Seabury met the Archbishop of Canterbury who cordially received him just as the Bishop of London. He said that though a Royal dispensation can be obtained an Act of Parliament alone can dispense with the Oath of Allegiance to the King. He also would like to proceed with candor and transparency and would like to consult with other bishops and the opinion of the Archbishop of York.

The Bishops in England served two masters, Church and State. Several of them in particular, Canterbury, York and London were Members of Parliament in the House of Lords by virtue of their sees. They could not separate their spiritual offices from the temporal. The Connecticut clergy asked for a free, valid and purely ecclesiastical and spiritual episcopacy. In the end, the English bishops placed the following hurdles:

1. *'That it would be sending a bishop to Connecticut, which they have no right to do without the consent of the State.'*
2. *'That the bishop would not be received in Connecticut.'*
3. *'That there would be no adequate support for him.'*
4. *'That the oaths in the ordination office can not be got over, because the king's dispensation would not be sufficient to justify the omission of those oaths.'*

The Archbishop of Canterbury was convinced of the expediency, justice and necessity but after consulting with other bishops and the Attorney General felt an Act of Parliament will be needed.

Dr Samuel Seabury had spent more than a year in England at his own cost and his resources had been depleted. The last session of the Parliament failed to empower the Bishop of London to consecrate a bishop for the foreign lands even though it empowered him to ordain deacons and priests. Seabury felt he had reached the end of the road after many long and tortuous attempts to explain the hurdles in the way of assuming the episcopacy. He, therefore, now felt he should carry out one of his original instructions i.e. to petition the Scottish bishops to supply the Episcopacy.

#### **Turning to Scottish non-Juring Bishops:**

The bishops of the Scottish Episcopal Church who were non-Jurors because they still pledged their loyalty to the House of Stuarts instead of the House of Hanover be-

cause of their oaths at their consecration- just as Seabury was loyal to the King during the War because of his Ordination oaths- were otherwise held valid orders through the English Line of bishops going back to King Charles II. They knew Seabury had arrived in England for the purpose of obtaining the episcopacy and his ordeal. They had made known through Seabury's friends and acquaintances that they would be willing to supply the episcopacy if formally requested. In the meantime they would not meddle with the talks Seabury was having with the English bishops.

Before leaving for Scotland, Seabury informed the Archbishops of Canterbury and York as well as the Bishop of London of his intention to obtain the episcopacy through the Scottish bishops. They did not forbid him nor place any obstacles in his way. Silence is speech and in this particular case, their consent.

When Seabury arrived in Aberdeen, Scotland, the bishops met him. They tried him and proved him by examining his testimonials and conversing with him. On Sunday, November 14, 1784 Dr Seabury was consecrated to the episcopate by the Right Reverend Robert Kilgour, Bishop of Aberdeen and Primus; the Right Reverend John Skinner, his Co-Adjutor; and the Right Reverend Arthur Petrie, the Bishop of Ross and Moray. The fourth bishop, the Right Reverend Charles Rose, Bishop of Dunblane having previously signified his assent excused his absence by ill-health and great distance.

The ceremony was performed in the Chapel at the residence of Bishop Skinner. It was conducted "in the presence of a considerable number of respectable clergymen and a great number of laity." Bishop Skinner in his sermon underscored the duty that fell upon him and his

fellow bishops by saying: "As long as there are nations to be instructed in the principles of the Gospel, or a church to be formed in any part of the inhabited world, the successors to the Apostles are obliged, by the commission which they hold, to contribute, as far as they can, or may be required of them, to the propagation of those principles, and to the formation of every Church, upon the most pure and primitive model. No fear of worldly

censure ought to keep them back from so good a work; no connection with any state, nor dependence on any government whatever, should tie up their hands from communicating the blessings of that kingdom which is not of this world, and diffusing the means of salvation by a valid and regular ministry, wherever they may be wanted."

The following day, November 15, 1784, Bishop Seabury and the Scottish bishops signed a Concordat affirming full communion with the Episcopal Church and the Catholic remainder of the ancient Church of Scotland. In sum, they embrace the faith once and for all delivered to the saints; the Church is the Mystical Body of Christ of which Christ alone is its head and supreme governor; full communion

between the Episcopal Church in Connecticut and the Episcopal Church in Scotland; a desire for as near a conformity in Worship and Discipline as most agreeable to Apostolic Rules and the practice of the primitive church and that Bishop Seabury would endeavor to make the celebration of the Holy Eucharist conformable to the most primitive Doctrine and practice.

Before leaving for Connecticut, Bishop Seabury wrote to the Society for the Propagation of the Gospel



whose Missionary he was for 31 years that he be continued in that capacity. The SPG replied to him they cannot employ him any longer because of their charter. They did not recognize his Episcopal character but simply addressed him as Rev. Dr Seabury. The stipend he received from the Society came to an end. His friends in England would support him till the end of his vocation. He will also receive half the pension as the former Chaplain to the King's army in New York. Above all, he would depend on his heavenly father for his sustenance and that of his family. "He openeth His hands and filleth all things living with plenteousness."

#### **Back in the United States:**

Bishop Seabury arrived in New London, Connecticut on June 27, 1785. The clergy met in Middletown, Connecticut on August 2. They reaffirmed their earlier election of him and heard testimonial of his consecration. They knelt before him in the Chancel rail and Bishop Seabury gave his apostolic blessing. After thanking them he asked that they meet in Convocation the next day to receive his Charge to them. This was his first Charge to his clergy and Bishop Seabury charged them three things.

The first is fidelity to the gospel. Only the pure doctrines of the Gospel be 'fairly and earnestly and affectionately proposed, explained and inculcated; and that we suffer nothing else to usurp their place, and become the subject of our preaching.'

The second is recommending candidates for Holy Orders. The bishop shall lay hands suddenly on no man. He cannot be personally acquainted with every candidate. He has to rely on the recommendations of the clergy. Here he underscored the importance of selection which is founded on Can do versus Will do. Ability to do the job can be tested by examination of academic abilities. These are tangibles. But willingness to do the job will more than depend on what the bishop listed as intangibles i.e. good temper, prudence, diligence, capacity and aptitude to teach. These make a worthy and useful clergyman. If a man shall not be a useful clergyman he shall not be recommended whatever his moral character and literary attainments may be. 'It is always easier to keep such persons out of the ministry, than to get rid of them once admitted.' This calls for a careful observation of the candidate over an extended period of time. The clergy shall make no sudden recommendations.

The third is their immediate attention to the Sacred Rite of laying-on-of hands upon those who have been baptized, and, by proper authority admitted into the Christian Church called Confirmation. The bishop

exhorted, there is more to Confirmation than a mere affirmation of the baptismal vows. It implies and originally understood to imply as it has been handed down from the apostolic age and the primitive church, to mean the actual communication of the Holy Spirit to those who worthily received it.

The bishop said, "In Confirmation, by the imposition of the hands of the Bishop and prayer, we believe the Holy Spirit to be given for sanctification, i.e., for carrying into effect that regeneration which is conferred in Baptism. By Baptism we are taken out of our natural state of sin and death, into which we are born by our natural birth, and are translated, transplanted, or born again into the Church of Christ, a state of grace, and endless life; and by Confirmation, or the imposition of hands of the Bishop, when we personally ratify our baptismal vow and covenant, we are endued with the Holy Spirit to enable us to overcome sin, and to perfect holiness in the fear of God...For these reasons, the Christian Church has always appropriated this rite to the successors of the Apostles, the supreme order of the Christian priesthood."

Bishop Seabury was the first American Bishop to establish and spread the Rite of Confirmation in the United States. The Rubric states in order to be admitted to the Holy Communion, a person has to be confirmed by the bishop or is 'ready and desirous to be confirmed.' When there was no resident bishop in the Colonies, the priest taught the catechism to the baptized and admitted them to the Holy Communion 'as ready and desirous to be confirmed.'

**Rector and Bishop:** Bishop Seabury was made Rector of St James Church, New London which position he held till his death and throughout his Episcopate. He traveled by horse or in his sulky confirming, ordaining, consecrating churches, preaching and 'driving away strange and erroneous doctrines.'

**Address to Masonic Lodges:** The bishop was invited to address Masonic gatherings in New York and Connecticut on the Feasts of the holy Saints John, the Evangelist and the Baptist, to whom the lodges are dedicated. On these occasions the Right Reverend Brother was respectfully received. They heard their distinguished brother exhort them to brotherly love and benevolence. He himself exemplified these twin virtues in his own life. He freely dispensed his medical knowledge and skills to his impoverished parishioners and flock in the days following the ravages of war.

**Rejection of Arianism and Socinianism:** A believer in the Revealed religion Seabury warned of the existence of

Arianism and Socinianism. The former repudiated the eternal co-existence of the eternal Son and the latter which was anti-trinitarianism was the result of the former. The bishop said, the Scripture plainly declared, “I and the Father are one.” This means, one essence or substance. Also, there are three persons in the Godhead, the Father, the Word and the Holy Ghost and these three are one. (1 John 5:7). The ancient Christians living in the age following the Apostles understood thus.

To counter these heresies, the bishop vigorously defended the Apostles’ Nicene and the Athanasian Creeds. He criticized the dropping of the clause, ‘he descended into hell,’ in the Apostles’ Creed as rejecting our Savior’s Perfect Humanity. He wanted all three Creeds included in the Prayer Book but only two, the Apostles’ and the Nicene found a place. But he made provision for the optional use of the Athanasius Creed. In the Apostles’ Creed he made a proviso in the rubrics that in place of, ‘he descended into hell,’ it is permissible to read, ‘he went into the place of the departed spirits.’

Baptism, Confirmation and Holy Eucharist:

The bishop taught the clergy that children should be presented for baptism because it is not just an initiation or reception ceremony; it is a Rite whereby the child is regenerated and made a member of Christ’s mystical body and sealed with the Holy Spirit. He did not favor adults from Christian families showing up for baptism as it is dangerous to grow up to maturity in an unregenerate state. Also, private administrations of baptisms ought to be avoided. Further, in line with the ancient liturgies, he re-introduced the sign of the cross in baptism.

Holy Confirmation is a separate and distinct Rite apart from baptism. As such, it cannot be merged with baptism. It is not an extension nor a completion of baptism or a reaffirmation of baptismal vows. The bishop insisted it is a separate Rite where God the Holy Ghost and His gifts are transmitted and worthily received by the confirmands. They are advanced to the rank of adult Christians and are now eligible to ‘partake of the Holy Eucharist with their brethren – commemorating the death and sacrifice of their dear Redeemer, and participating in all the blessings of His atonement.’ Holy Communion is not merely a renewal of the Christian Covenant nor an empty remembrance of Christ’s death but a Christian Sacrifice as understood by the early church. The bishop said, “The primitive Christians

had very different sentiments from these, concerning the Holy Communion, and so I suppose our Church has also. They considered it not as the renewal of the Christian Covenant, but a privilege to which the Christian Covenant, into which we had been admitted by baptism, and which had been ratified in Confirmation, entitled us. Nor as an arbitrary command of God, to show his sovereign authority over us. Nor as a bare remembrance of Christ’s death. But as the appointed means of keeping up that spiritual life which we received in our



New-birth; and of continuing that interest in the benefits and blessings of Christ’s passion and death, which was made over to us when we became members of his mystical body. They called and esteemed it to be the Christian Sacrifice, commemorative of the great sacrifice of atonement which Christ has made for the sins of the whole world; wherein under the symbols of bread and the cup, the body and blood of Christ which he offered up, and which were broken and shed upon the cross, are figured forth; and being presented to God our heavenly Father, by his Priest here on earth, the merits of Christ for the remission of sins are pleaded by him, and we trust, by our great High Priest himself in heaven: And being sanctified by prayer, thanksgiving, the words

of institution and the invocation of the Holy Spirit, are divided among the communicants as a Feast upon the Sacrifice. And they did believe, that all who worthily partook of the consecrated Elements, did really and truly, though mystically and spiritually, partake of the Body and Blood of Christ,...We have therefore a right to believe and say, that in the Holy Communion, the faithful receiver does in a mystical and spiritual manner eat and drink the Body and Blood of Christ, represented by the consecrated bread and wine; and does thereby partaking the atonement made by the passion and death of Christ, having remission through him, of all past sins, and eternal life assured to him." Here he strongly emphasized Christ's declaration, "...Verily, verily, I say unto you, Except ye eat the flesh of the Son of man, and drink his blood, ye have no life in you." (John 6:53). No Holy Communion; no eternal salvation.

The bishop, in view of the inestimable benefits of Holy Eucharist, urged his flock to frequent communion. He praised women who were showing up to Holy Communion in greater numbers than men as they were the first witnesses to Christ's Resurrection.

Inclusion of Oblation and Invocation in the Consecration Prayer: Having said so of Holy Eucharist and in accordance with the Agreement he made with the Scottish bishops at his Consecration, the bishop included in the communion office of the prayer book, during the prayer of consecration included the Oblation and Invocation on the model of the Scottish Prayer Book which in turn were taken from the primitive liturgies of the ancient Oriental Church. This is Seabury's lasting contribution to the American Prayer Book.

These prayers stress the essentially sacrificial character of the Mass and at the same time repudiate the carnal presence of Christ in the Elements and priest-craft otherwise termed as transubstantiation.

### **Seabury and the Continuing Anglican Church:**

Why is Bishop Seabury important to us in the continuing Anglican Church and what is his impact. Sometimes, debates have been had even among clergy on what did we continue? Is it the English Reformation, the Elizabethan Church or the Edwardian ordinal or what?

Seabury is our clue to an understanding of this question. He contended at all times for the faith once for all delivered to the saints. He believed in the primitive catholic Faith in all doctrines and practices. These are revealed in the Holy Writ and interpreted by the ancient bishops and doctors of the church and embedded in the primitive liturgies. Christians ought at all times apprehend the Truth and not any philosophical systems. The

Church and its Rites are essentially sacramental in nature.

What he believed and practiced we continue.

### **Death and Burial:**



Bishop Seabury died on February 25, 1796 at the age of 67 after complaining of chest pains. He was buried on Sunday, February 28, 1796 at ancient public cemetery at New London, Connecticut. The inscription on the monument by his lifelong friend, the Reverend Dr. John Bowden reads as follows:

Here lieth the body of

**SAMUEL SEABURY, D. D.,**

**Bishop of Connecticut and Rhode Island,**

**Who departed from this transitory scene, February 25, 1796,**

**In the sixty-eighth (sixty seventh?) year of his age.**

**Ingenious without pride, learned without pedantry,**

**Good without severity, he was duly qualified to discharge the duties**

**of the Christian and the Bishop.**

**In the pulpit, he enforced religion; in his conduct, he exemplified it.**

**The poor he assisted with his charity; the ignorant he blessed with his instruction.**

**The friend of man, he ever desired their good;**

**The enemy of vice, he ever opposed it.**

**Christian! dost thou aspire to happiness?**

Seabury has shown the way that leads to it.

In 1849, the remains of the bishop were moved to a crypt under the division of the chancel of the newly built St James the Greater Church at New London.

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*George Thomas Linsley: The Episcopate of Samuel Seabury*

# Anglicans and the American Revolution

by Raymond A. Powell, PhD

## Anglicans in the New World

Although most Americans think of the Pilgrims on the Mayflower as the first Christian presence in the British Colonies, English settlers in Virginia arrived in America a decade before the landing at Plymouth Rock. Many of these settlers were Anglicans, and many traveled with the dual goals of finding a better life in the New World and serving God by doing so. Anglican worship services were held at Jamestown in 1607; America's oldest Anglican parish (St. John's in Hampton, Virginia) dates from 1610.

Although Anglicans could be found throughout the colonies, the church was weakest in New England and strongest in the Southern colonies. Anglican congregations included people both rich and poor, but Virginia aristocrats, people greatly influential in the colonies, tended to be Anglican – examples include Washington, Jefferson, Madison, and Monroe. The influence of these prominent lay people in colonies with no resident bishop would give American Anglicanism its distinctive form.

Rebecca Rolfe, better known as Pocahontas, America's best-known Native American convert to Christianity, was an Anglican. Anglicans were also the first American Christians to make serious efforts to share the faith with African Americans.

Through their connection with the Established (official state church) Church of England, Anglicans in America benefitted from their church's privileged position. Anglicans became "established" (the official church) in New York, Virginia, North Carolina, South Carolina, Georgia and Maryland. New York Anglicans established King's College, now Columbia University. English officials, eager to curry favor with the English monarch, sometimes denied non-Anglicans their rights and enforced out-of-date laws no longer valid in England discriminating against "dissenters." Anglican clergy at ordination swore an oath of loyalty to the king.

The relationship with the English monarch both benefitted and hindered Anglican ministry. Anglicans had official access denied to other denominations. At the same time, the close ties to the Church of England sparked anxiety and distrust by non-Anglican Americans. This question came to a head over the issue of an American bishop. American Anglicans were under the authority of the Bishop of London, and turned to him for ordinations. In Britain, bishops at the time were seen as officers of the King, appointed by him, controlled by him, and used to cement his authority. Many Americans feared a Church of England bishop for America would mean a loss of religious freedom. Interestingly, many American Anglicans were not enthusiastic about an American bishop either. Anglicans in America had discovered the value of lay input and lay leadership. Many of them feared an American bishop would restore English patterns of church government on thriving American Anglicanism. [Pocahontas](#) | [National Portrait Gallery](#) (Right)



## The Anglican Church and the Revolution

The Revolutionary spirit sweeping America created problems for Anglicans. The official head of the Church of England was the English monarch. The Anglican Prayerbook included prayers for the King and the Royal Family. For many Anglicans, their faith strongly linked loyalty to the crown with faithfulness to God. For these Anglicans, the Revolution caused serious theological issues. Ultimately, about half of all Anglican priests determined their loyalties lay with the English crown and not the Colonies.

Anglicans who supported the Revolution faced two challenges. The first was scriptural. “Fear God and Honor the King” (1 Peter 2.17) seemed to link faith with support of monarchy. The second was the Prayerbook collects. Was it possible to worship as a faithful Anglican while ignoring the requirements of the Book of Common Prayer?

The answer came in terms of theology and philosophy. The Anglican John Locke and other thinkers had made a claim that certain human rights were given by God. If these inalienable human rights were God-given, then anyone opposing these rights was opposing God. Suddenly, a bad king was no longer bad just in terms of politics, but also in terms of morality. Bad rulers were really evil rulers, and Christians were called to oppose them. For many American Christians, it was possible to see opposition to a bad king as a moral duty.

This is the case made by the Anglican Thomas Jefferson in the Declaration of Independence. The “Laws of Nature and Nature’s God” entitles people to choose their government. Defending the inalienable rights “endowed by their Creator” is the purpose of government; “whenever any Form of Government becomes destructive of these ends, it is the Right of the People to alter or to abolish it.” People should not change government lightly, but “when a long train of abuses and usurpations, pursuing invariably the same Object evinces a design to reduce them under absolute Despotism, it is their right, it is their duty, to throw off such Government.” The Declaration goes on to state “The history of the present King of Great Britain is a history of repeated injuries and usurpations, all having in direct object the establishment of an absolute Tyranny over these States” and lists 27 specific charges of the monarch’s attack on inalienable rights.

Although there was ambivalence, many Anglican Christians strongly aligned themselves with the Revolution. Anglican George Washington would command the Continental Army. Anglican Thomas Jefferson wrote the Declaration of Independence. James Madison, author of the Constitution, was Anglican. Thirty-four of fifty-six signers of the Declaration of Independence were Anglicans. An Anglican would open the first session of the Continental Congress with prayer, and then serve as Congressional chaplain. So many of the delegates to that Congress worshipped at Christ Church Philadelphia that it was nick-named “The Nation’s Church.”

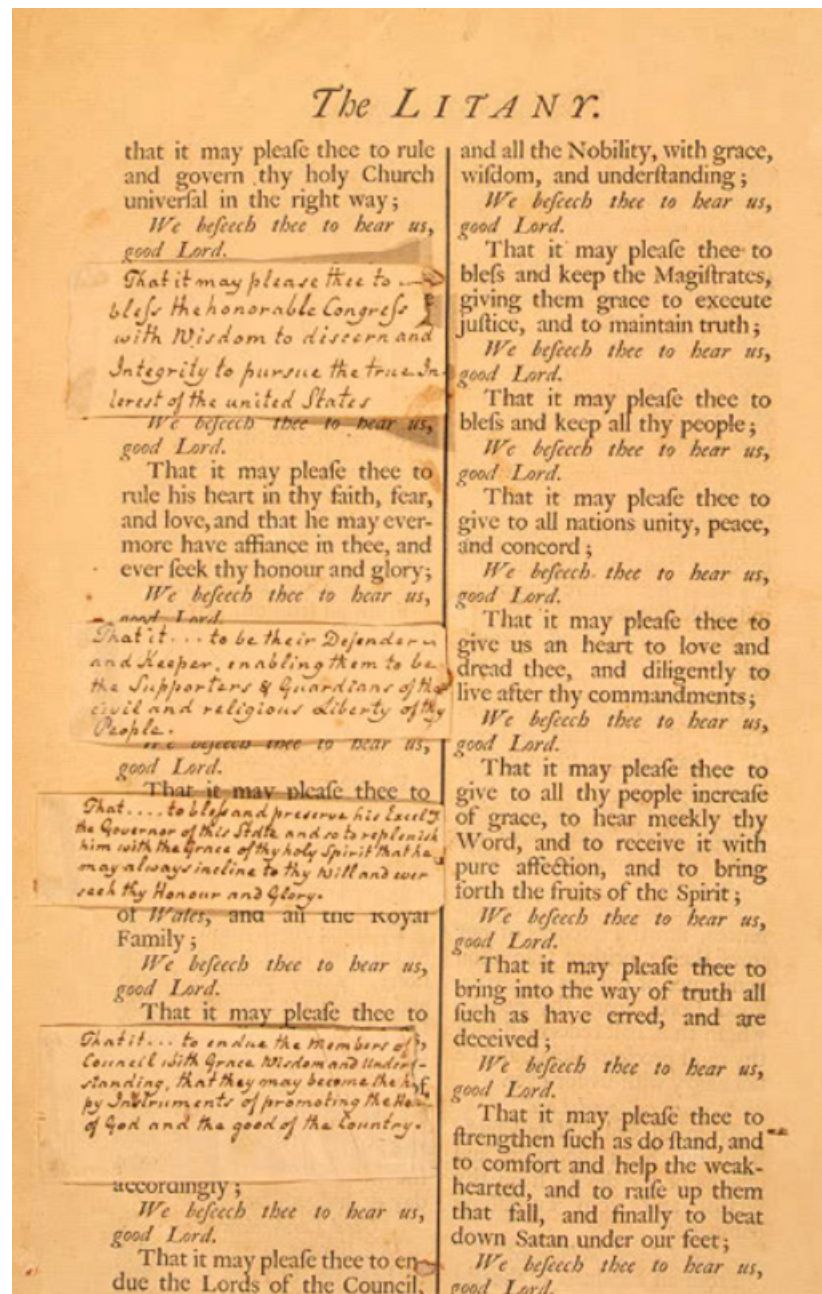


*“The Prayer in the First Congress, A.D. 1774. Stained glass and lead, from The Liberty Window, Christ Church, Philadelphia, after a painting by Harrison Tompkins Matteson, c. 1848. Courtesy of the Rector, Church Wardens and Vestrymen of Christ Church, Philadelphia (101).” The prayer was delivered by an Anglican priest, who would serve as chaplain to the Continental Congress.*

<https://www.loc.gov/exhibits/religion/images/vc006409.jpg>

So how did Anglican congregations deal with Prayerbook requirements to pray for the King? In Maryland, the

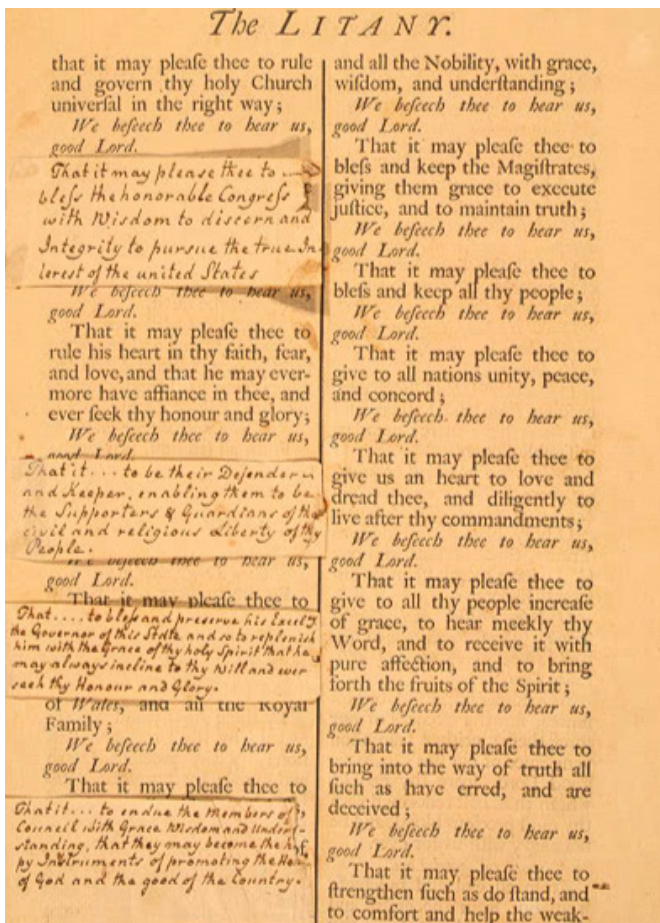
question was addressed by the government. As an Established/State Church, Anglicans were under government authority. "The Maryland Convention voted on May 25, 1776, 'that every Prayer and Petition for the King's Majesty, in the book of Common Prayer . . . be henceforth omitted in all Churches and Chapels in this Province.'" The rector of Christ Church (then called Chaptico Church) in St. Mary's County, Maryland, placed over the offending passages strips of paper showing prayers composed for the Continental Congress. The petition that God 'keep and strengthen in the true worshipping of thee, in righteousness and holiness of life, thy servant GEORGE, our most gracious King and Governour' was changed to a plea that 'it might please thee to bless the honorable Congress with Wisdom to discern and Integrity to pursue the true Interest of the United States.'"



Book of Common Prayer. England: John Baskerville, c. 1762. Washington National Cathedral Rare Books Library (95)

[Religion and the American Revolution - Religion and the Founding of the American Republic | Exhibitions \(Library of Congress\)](#)

"The problem was handled differently by Christ Church, Philadelphia. The rector, the Reverend Jacob Duché, called a special vestry meeting on July 4, 1776, to ask whether it was advisable 'for the peace and welfare of the congregation, to shut up the churches or to continue the service, without using the prayers for the Royal Family.' The vestry decided to keep the church open but replace the prayers for the King with a prayer for Congress: 'That it may please thee to endue the Congress of the United States & all others in Authority, legislative, executive, & judicial with grace, wisdom & understanding, to execute Justice and to maintain Truth.'"



Book of Common Prayer. London: Mark Basket, 1766. Courtesy of the Rector, Church Wardens, and Vestrymen of Christ Church, Philadelphia (96)

[Religion and the American Revolution - Religion and the Founding of the American Republic | Exhibitions \(Library of Congress\)](#)

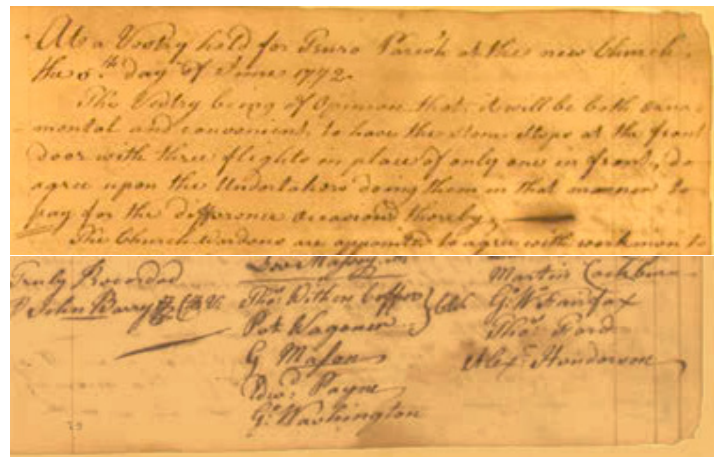
Ultimately, many Anglicans found a way to support the Revolution with conviction and conscience. And in so doing, by freeing the American Anglican Church from its connection to British monarch, it freed Anglicanism to be something different in the United States. Anglicans lost some of their privileges as an Established Church. However, in return, they were able to preach the Gospel without confronting anti-royalist sentiment. They were also free to develop a new polity that retained bishops but allowed for lay people to have a greater say in the church.

## George Washington

It is impossible to write about Anglicans and the Revolution without writing specifically about George Washington. Obviously, Washington was a great military and political leader as well as a successful businessman. But he was also a man of profound faith. Washington was extremely private about his religious beliefs. As a result, there has been much debate about his religious convictions and several different traditions attempt to claim him as their own or to discredit his Christianity. There are stories he received adult baptism by a Bap-

tist chaplain at Valley Forge, and that he converted to Catholicism on his deathbed. Modern accounts claim he was a Deist, or only involved in church because it was expected at the time of men of his stature. Some modern Evangelicals even conclude he was not really a Christian. Without knowing his most personal convictions, it appears that his beliefs were those of a typical Anglican Protestant of the Eighteenth Century and it is clear that his religious commitments went far beyond conventional practice.

“Washington was for many years a vestryman at Truro Parish, his local Episcopal Church. The entry of June 5, 1772, shows Washington and his neighbor, George Mason, the author of the Virginia Declaration of Rights, engaged in parish business, including making arrangements for replacing the front steps of the church, painting its roof and selling church pews to the members as a means of obtaining revenue. The minutes of the meeting also reveal that Washington and George William Fairfax presented the parish with gold leaf to be used to gild letters on ‘Carved Ornaments’ on the altar.” Washington’s time on the Vestry was not about accruing honors, but about service.



Excerpts from “The Vestry Book of Truro Parish, Virginia, 1732-1802. Manuscript volume. Manuscript Division, Library of Congress (152).” Washington’s signature can be seen on the last line.

[Religion and the Federal Government, Part 1 - Religion and the Founding of the American Republic | Exhibitions \(Library of Congress\)](#)

Washington was also deeply committed to religious freedom, not as a matter of religious indifference but from conviction. He intervened to protect Catholics from abuse during his time in the military, and gave generously to the building of Catholic churches in the colonies at a time when Catholics were deeply unpopular. (In an effort to include Catholics as Americans in popular understanding, Washington led the delegates to the Constitutional Convention to Mass at a nearby Catholic Church.) He also attended worship services for other Christian denomination: At various times, Washington is known to have worshipped with Presbyterians, Quakers, Congregationalists, Baptists,

and Dutch Reformed. In personal correspondence it is clear that he opposed an Established Church for the new nation. Although all the correspondence below is connected with his presidency, it only reinforces his previous words and actions about respect for religious freedom.

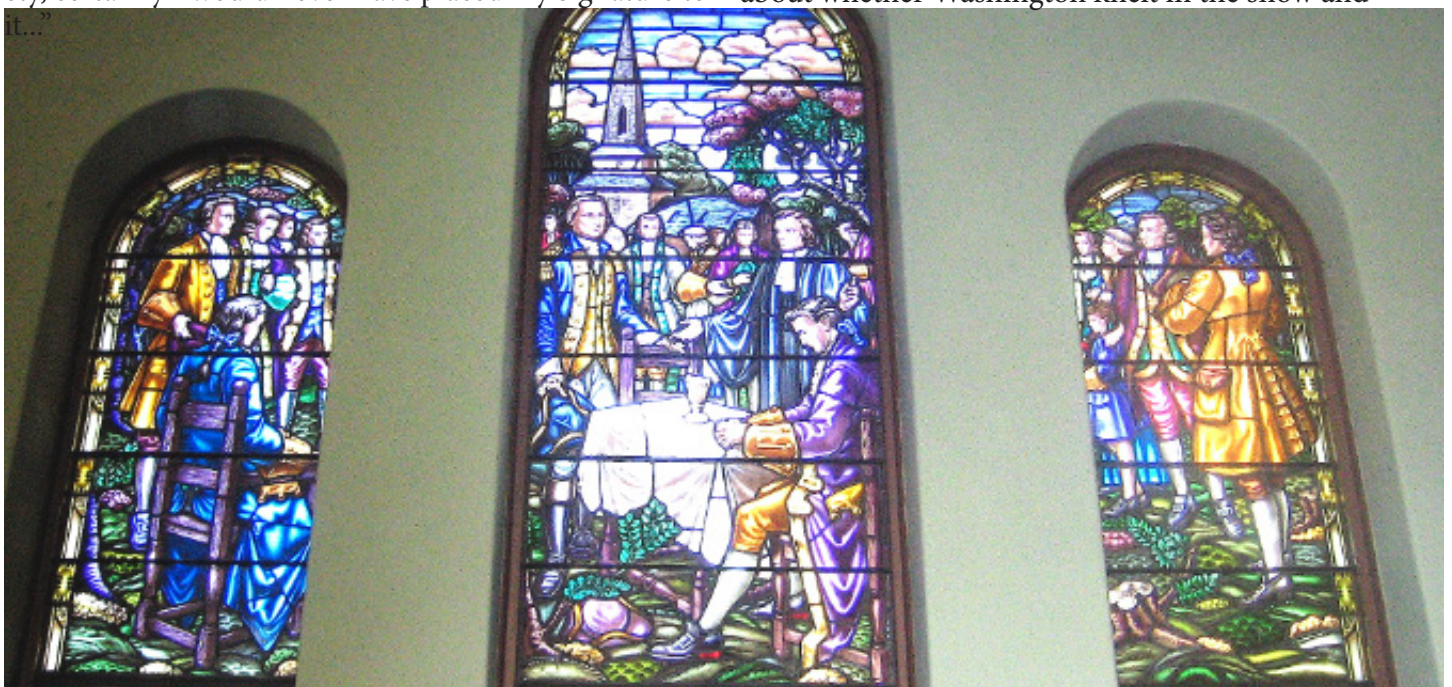
Washington “to Roman Catholics in America,” 1790: “all those who conduct themselves as worthy members of the Community are equally entitled to the protection of civil Government. I hope ever to see America among the foremost nations in examples of justice and liberality.”

Washington “to the United Baptists of Virginia,” 1789: “If I could have entertained the slightest apprehension that the Constitution framed in the Convention, where I had the honor to preside, might possibly endanger the religious rights of any ecclesiastical Society, certainly I would never have placed my signature to it...”

all church members attended regularly. Washington was conspicuous by his high rate of church attendance. One writer notes that Washington frequently referred to himself as “ardent,” “fervent,” “pious,” and “devout.” His high rate of church attendance suggest that this was indeed the case.

Above all, Washington was a man of prayer. Although extremely private about his faith, multiple contemporary sources testify that he prayed regularly, including kneeling mornings and evenings for prayer and Bible reading. As president, he issued the first National Thanksgiving Proclamation, framed in explicitly religious terms. As commander of the Continental Army, he continually called for corporate prayer and fasting, ensured units had chaplains, and credited God (Providence) with his military achievements.

There is currently a great deal of controversy about whether Washington knelt in the snow and



*The windows above commemorate George Washinton receiving communion at the Church on the Green (Morristown Presbyterian Church, NJ) in 1777. Washington approached the minister and specifically asked for permission to take communion. The service was held outside because the church's building was being used as a Small Pox Hospital.*

Washington “to the to the Hebrew Congregation in Newport, Rhode Island,” 1790: “For happily the Government of the United States, which gives to bigotry no sanction, to persecution no assistance requires only that they who live under its protection should demean themselves as good citizens...”

Washington was a committed church attender. As an example, after taking the oath of office in April 30, 1789, Washinton made his was to St. Paul’s Chapel to attend worship. Washington generally worshipped in Anglican churches. However, when travelling, he would often stop at the nearest church, regardless of denomination. Despite modern assumptions about the past, not everyone went to church in Colonial times, and not

prayed at Valley Forge as portrayed in popular art. It is not clear this event happened. However, it is certainly the kind of thing Washington would have done. He was a devout man who turned to God with his own needs and the needs of the community and nation. Whether or not he prayed that day in the snow at Valley Forge, he certainly prayed while he was at Valley Forge!

As commander in chief, George Washinton sent the following prayer in a Circular Letter to all governors and states in the new nation. The phrase “the United States” has been used to replace the various states and governors who received it. Otherwise, it is as he wrote it. Perhaps the prayer of this private man can indicate his own faith.

I now make it my earnest prayer, that God would have the United States in his holy protection, that he would incline the hearts of the Citizens to cultivate a spirit of subordination and obedience to Government, to entertain a brotherly affection and love for one another, for their fellow citizens of the United States at large, and particularly for their brethren who have served in the Field, and finally, that he would most graciously be pleased to dispose us all, to do Justice, to love mercy, and to demean ourselves with that Charity, humility and pacific temper of mind, which were the Characteristics of the Devine Author of our blessed Religion, and without an humble imitation of whose example in these things, we can never hope to be a happy Nation. Amen

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## +CROSS ROADS

Dr. Steve Yingling



I recently had my eyes opened to the complexities concerning the rebirth of the Anglican Church in America. The Holy Catholic Church Anglican Rite by definition,

has its see in England but is ordained by God to go forth and minister to the four corners of the earth. In parallel to ministry, it was the charge of the Crown to “make the world England.” Om keeping with that pledge England was overseeing her colonies in the New World. Due to geography, communications and administration were always a challenge. Over time tensions grew between the colonies and the crown, Distance did not make the heart grow fonder.

The Catholic and Apostolic Church over time, created its Liturgy and structure based on the teaching of Jesus as witnessed by the apostles and ever lived through Pentecostal revelation guided by the Holy Spirit. Bishops and clergy were thus ordained by the laying on of hands to maintain the faith, order and worship.

During the mid to late 1700s tension with the colonies and crown fulminated into a very adversarial marriage. The result was a war of independence forming the great union of thirteen autonomous states; the United States of America was born.

Basking in the light of freedom from the tyranny of England, the states held their newly won freedom very dearly and focused on defining it. One of the freedoms that was most precious was the freedom to worship in the one true church ordained by God. So began



the journey.

Any monarchy England included, gave itself the power to reign over its subjects and its proclaimed faith, Therefore the Apostolic Succession was not only ordained by God but was sanctioned by homage to the crown. And in the words of the Great Bard, “there in lays the rub’ In order for the Anglican Church to grow and flourish in the newly formed country of America it needed sancti-



fied bishops to oversee traditions,

Now that the United States had won self-governance, the individual states clung to autonomy rather than unity. The dust of victory settled, Anglicans faced:

- 1) No Bishops to preside
- 2) The desire of some members to expand the laity.

Instead of unifying it was fragmenting. Thus the great debate arose. The Factions in the debate were led by prominent members, namely Dr. Samuel Seabury, and Dr. William White. There were of course many other prominent figures, but these two leaders did in fact mirror the sentiments of both sides. In

any debate a monitor is typically employed to maintain the focus towards a solution. Thus enters Elizabeth Hamilton wife of a statesman who agonized over the dissensions that were impeding unity. The fall out of the debate was preventing peaceful worship and a healthy communion on the Sprit, Her passionate plea to worship in joy and nurture and teach the children walk to faith force her tin engage in the debate, God's wisdom

to create women to guide and rescue courageous men from falling into the abyss came to light., and she was pivotal influence in the conflict. Dr. Seabury's warrior spirit of demanding the purity of Apostolic Succession and Dr. White's innate understanding that the members of the faith were repulsed by being treated lie subjects must be equally addressed. Mrs. Hamilton's devotion to God and peace tipped the scale and the champions

of both factions bowed to the altar and as the church bells rang as though it was the Holy Spirit's confirmation (among them). At the cross-roads of life everlasting, we all travel down our own road, But the crosses we



must bear will lead us home.

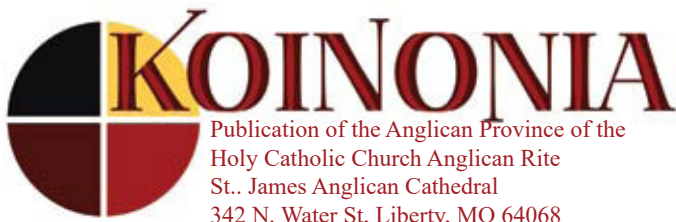
*The Critical Years produced on the Anniversary of America 250 by St. James Anglican Cathedral. on the left page - Bishop Samuel Seabury (Dr. Steve Yingling) Bishop William White ( Russ Parsons Jr) and Elizabeth Hamilton (Brenda Yingling) and Governor John Jay (Jerry McCaslin) on the right. Preserving the traditional faith through the Apostolic Succession and maintaing the Faith through Fatihful .*



# USA 250 CRITICAL YEARS



*Short film by St. James Anglican Cathedral, Liberty USA on the occasion of America250  
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