



*A Service of Remembrance and Reconciliation
and Unveiling of a Historical Marker*

*Wednesday, April 4, 2018
12:00 p.m.*

The long struggle to achieve justice, freedom, and peace includes confronting difficult aspects of our past.

Between 1854 and 1860, slave traders bought and sold thousands of enslaved people at 87 Adams Street, between Second and Third, just east of an alley behind Calvary Episcopal Church. Today's events are intended to remember the names of those who were sold at the site, to respect the dignity of their humanity, and to facilitate the process of reconciliation and healing in our community and our country.

Acknowledging the injustice and oppression that occurred on property now owned by the church helps to fulfill both our civic and religious obligations. It is a way of helping to bring about the "more perfect Union" described by the American founders and the "beloved community" envisioned by Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. Most important, it is a tiny step toward fulfilling our duty as Christians to help bring about the Kingdom of God.

In 1968, Dr. King came to Memphis to show solidarity with striking sanitation workers, who held signs that said, "I am a Man." Fifty years later, we stand with the sanitation workers, the enslaved sold behind Calvary Church, and the forgotten men and women in every generation who have aspired to claim their humanity as children of God.

At the Tower Bell, the people stand.

PROCESSION

Officiant The Lord is in his holy temple; let all the earth keep silence before him.

Habakkuk 2:20

Send out your light and your truth, that they may lead me, and bring me to your holy hill and to your dwelling.

Psalms 43:3

Officiant The Lord be with you.

People **And also with you.**

Officiant Let us pray. O God of unchangeable power and eternal light: Look favorably on your whole Church, that wonderful and sacred mystery; by the effectual working of your providence, carry out in tranquillity the plan of salvation; let the whole world see and know that things which were cast down are being raised up, and things which had grown old are being made new, and that all things are being brought to their perfection by him through whom all things were made, your Son Jesus Christ our Lord.

People **Amen.**

The people sit.

A READING

Isaiah 58:1-12

Shout out, do not hold back! Lift up your voice like a trumpet! Announce to my people their rebellion, to the house of Jacob their sins. Yet day after day they seek me and delight to know my ways, as if they were a nation that practiced righteousness and did not forsake the ordinance of their God; they ask of me righteous judgments, they delight to draw near to God. "Why do we fast, but you do not see? Why humble ourselves, but you do not notice?" Look, you serve your own interest on your fast day, and oppress all your workers. Look, you fast only to quarrel and to fight and to strike with a wicked fist. Such fasting as you do today will not make your voice heard on high. Is such the fast that I choose, a day to humble oneself? Is it to bow down the head like a bulrush, and to lie in sackcloth and ashes? Will you call this a fast, a day acceptable to the Lord? Is not this the fast that I choose: to loose the bonds of injustice, to undo the thongs of the yoke, to let the oppressed go free, and to break every yoke? Is it not to share your bread with the hungry, and bring the homeless poor into your house; when you see the naked, to cover them, and not to hide yourself from your own kin? Then your light shall break forth like the dawn,

and your healing shall spring up quickly; your vindicator[a] shall go before you, the glory of the Lord shall be your rear guard. Then you shall call, and the Lord will answer; you shall cry for help, and he will say, Here I am. If you remove the yoke from among you, the pointing of the finger, the speaking of evil, if you offer your food to the hungry and satisfy the needs of the afflicted, then your light shall rise in the darkness and your gloom be like the noonday. The Lord will guide you continually, and satisfy your needs in parched places, and make your bones strong; and you shall be like a watered garden, like a spring of water, whose waters never fail. Your ancient ruins shall be rebuilt; you shall raise up the foundations of many generations; you shall be called the repairer of the breach, the restorer of streets to live in.

The Word of the Lord.

People **Thanks be to God.**

ANTHEM *O Lord, please hear my prayer*

arr. Moses Hogan

Rhodes Singers; Dr. William Skoog, director

O Lord, please hear my prayer. In the morning when I rise. It's your servant bound for glory. O dear Lord, please hear my prayer. O Lord, please hear my prayer. Keep me safe within your arms. It's your servant bound for glory. O dear Lord, please hear my prayer. When my work on earth is done, And you come to take me home. Just to know I'm bound for glory; And to hear You say, "Well done!" Done with sin and sorrow. Have mercy.

REFLECTION

Sarah Eiland

Rhodes College, Class of '20

REFLECTION

The Rev. Dorothy Sanders Wells
Rector, St. George's Episcopal Church
Rhodes College, Class of '82

The people stand.

1 A - maz - ing grace! how sweet the sound, that
 2 'Twas grace that taught my heart to fear, and
 3 The Lord has prom - ised good to me, his
 4 Through man - y dan - gers, toils, and snares, I
 * 5 When we've been there ten thou - sand years, bright

1 saved a wretch like me! I once was lost but
 2 grace my fears re - lieved; how pre - cious did that
 3 word my hope se - cures; he will my shield and
 4 have al - rea - dy come; 'tis grace that brought me
 5 shin - ing as the sun, we've no less days to

1 now am found, was blind but now I see.
 2 grace ap - pear the hour I first be - lieved!
 3 por - tion be as long as life en - dures.
 4 safe thus far, and grace will lead me home.
 5 sing God's praise than when we'd first be - gun.

The people sit.

REFLECTION

The Rev. Scott Walters
 Rector, Calvary Episcopal Church

REMEMBERING THE NAMES OF THE ENSLAVED SOLD AT 87 ADAMS STREET

The names read today, found through careful research in local archives, represent only a small fraction of the total number of people sold at the site.

Read by Charles McKinney, Beverly Bond, Tami Sawyer, Phyllis Aluko, Keedran Franklin, Randell Gamble, Earnestine Jenkins, Suzanne Henley, Tim Huebner

The people stand.

A LITANY OF PRAYERS FOR FORGIVENESS,
HEALING, AND RECONCILIATION

Leaders, together:

God, our Creator, you have made all humankind in your image and likeness. We give thanks that we are all your people, beautifully and wonderfully made in the many races and cultures that dwell on your Earth.

All: We acknowledge together our fault—in not always seeing one another as your children, and in viewing one another as unworthy of your grace and mercy.

Leader: Thus says the LORD of hosts: Render true judgments, show kindness and mercy to one another; do not oppress the widow, the orphan, the alien, or the poor; and do not devise evil in your hearts against one another. (*Zechariah 7:9-10*)

Person(s) not of African Descent:

We mourn the fact that among our sisters and brothers who came to live in this land are those who, for more than 250 years, took part in the slave trade, owned slaves, or otherwise profited from the institution of slavery on North American soil. Slavery was at the very center of our community—with slave markets even sitting in the shadow of our churches, where we worshipped week after week. And, we express our remorse that, even after slavery had ended, segregation and discrimination openly continued, with the express support of our government, and that our churches and religious leaders often failed to stand with the oppressed to demand an end to oppression, but chose instead to stand with oppressors. To that end, even today, the lingering effects of our failure to love our neighbors as ourselves have allowed a plague of poverty and disenfranchisement to engulf our sisters and brothers of color in forgotten communities in our city. Lord, forgive us.

All: We ask God's forgiveness for our sins of commission and omission, and we beg the forgiveness of our neighbors.

Leader: And will not God grant justice to his chosen ones who cry to him day and night? Will he delay long in helping them? I tell you, he will quickly grant justice to them.
(*Luke 18:7-8*)

Person(s) of African Descent:

We who are children of African descent mourn for our ancestors who were enslaved, bound in chains, brought to this unfamiliar land, bought and sold as chattel, and who suffered hard labor, and brutal and inhuman conditions while others profited. We grieve that our ancestors were denied the very rights upon which this country was founded, and even 100 years after slaves in the United States were granted their freedom, our federal, state and local governments perpetuated laws that allowed us to be treated unfairly and unequally, as our communities celebrated the legacy of persons who had oppressed us. We praise you for all the saints, of all races and faiths, who have walked before us and given their lives to secure our freedom—in marches and on buses, in courtrooms and at lunch counters, in schools and places of public accommodation, and on the backs of sanitation trucks. We thank you for their witness and faithfulness to your commandments. And we ask your forgiveness, O God, for the times that in our weariness, frustration and impatience, we have failed to see all of your children as being entitled to your mercy and love. Lord, forgive us.

All: We ask God’s forgiveness for our sins of commission and omission, and we beg the forgiveness of our neighbors.

Leader: For the word of the LORD is upright, and all his work is done in faithfulness. He loves righteousness and justice; the earth is full of the steadfast love of the LORD.
(*Psalm 33:4-5*)

Leaders, together:

God, in your mercy, grant us grace to see one another as you see us all—humankind made in your image and likeness. Forgive us all our sins, and restore us to right relationship with you and with one another, so that our wounds may be healed.

All: Spirit of God, empower and strengthen us.

Leaders, together:

Make us conscious of the ways in which our blindness prevents us from seeing systems of oppression that continue to harm any of your people, and help us stand together to eradicate the lingering effects of racism that cripple our entire community.

All: Spirit of God, empower and strengthen us.

Leaders, together:

Help us to recommit ourselves, that we, like your son Martin Luther King, may resist oppression in the name of your love, and may seek for all your children the blessed liberty found in you, so that all of your people may know your justice and righteousness.

All: Spirit of God, empower and strengthen us.

Leaders, together:

Reconcile us to you, and to one another, that we may be refreshed and renewed for your work which lies ahead. Help us to undertake the difficult and long-overdue task of being in conversation with one another and working hand in hand with one another that your Kingdom may come.

All: Spirit of God, empower and strengthen us.

Leaders, together:

Lord, you have surrounded us with a great cloud of witnesses, and we remember before you this day those whose lives were traded for such a few pieces of silver in the shadows of your church in which we are gathered today. Grant to them eternal rest. Let light perpetual shine upon them. May their souls and the souls of all the departed, through the mercy of God, rest in peace.

All: Spirit of God, empower and strengthen us.

Leaders, together:

He has told you, O mortal, what is good; and what does the LORD require of you but to do justice, and to love kindness, and to walk humbly with your God? (*Micah 6:8*)

Leaders, together: Lord, have mercy.

All: Christ, have mercy.

Together: Lord, have mercy.

The people stand.

MY COUNTRY 'TIS OF THEE, for all to sing, using the words of W. E. B. Du Bois

“Of course you have faced the dilemma: it is announced, they all smirk and rise. If they are ultra, they remove their hats and look ecstatic; then they look at you. What shall you do? Noblesse oblige; you cannot be boorish, or ungracious; and too, after all it is your country and you do love its ideals if not all of its realities. Now, then, I have thought of a way out: Arise, gracefully remove your hat, and tilt your head. Then sing as follows, powerfully and with deep unction. They’ll hardly note the little changes and their feelings and your conscience will thus be saved.” —W. E. B. Du Bois, 1907

**1. My country 'tis of thee,
Late land of slavery,
Of thee I sing.
Land where my father's pride
Slept where my mother died,
From every mountain side
Let freedom ring!**

**2. My native country thee
Land of the slave set free,
Thy fame I love.
I love thy rocks and rills
And o'er thy hate which chills,
My heart with purpose thrills,
To rise above.**

**3. Let laments swell the breeze
And wring from all the trees
Sweet freedom's song.
Let laggard tongues awake,
Let all who hear partake,
Let Southern silence quake,
The sound prolong.**

**4. Our fathers' God to thee
Author of Liberty,
To thee we sing
Soon may our land be bright,
With Freedom's happy light
Protect us by Thy might,
Great God our King.**

BLESSING

PROCESSION

All are invited to follow the cross in procession outside for the unveiling of the marker.

The text below is on the marker to be unveiled today.

FORREST AND THE MEMPHIS SLAVE TRADE

From 1854 to 1860, Nathan Bedford Forrest operated a profitable slave trading business at this site. In 1826, Tennessee had prohibited bringing enslaved people into the state for the purpose of selling them. As cotton and slavery grew in importance, the legislature repealed the ban in 1855. Starting that year, Memphis emerged as a regional hub for the slave trade. In addition to the more than 3,000 enslaved people who lived and worked in Memphis at the time, thousands more flowed into and out of the city, as traders and their agents brought a steady supply of human cargo into town via roads, river, and rail. In 1854, Forrest purchased this property on Adams, between Second and Third, just east of an alley behind Calvary Episcopal Church. Most slaves were sold at lots like this one before ending up on plantations in the Mississippi Delta or further south. Horatio Eden, sold from Forrest's yard as a child, remembered the place as a "square stockade of high boards with two room Negro houses around...We were all kept in these rooms, but when an auction was held or buyers came, we were brought out and paraded two or three around a circular brick walk in the center of the stockade. The buyers would stand nearby and inspect us as we went by, stop us, and examine us."

Much of the slave trade in Memphis occurred on Adams Avenue. Located in the heart of town and connecting the riverfront steamboat landing to the Memphis and Charleston Railroad line, the street offered easy access to buyers and sellers. In 1855, the city directory listed eight slave dealers, including Forrest, five of whom were located on Adams. While his business practices mostly resembled those of other traders in town, Forrest uniquely engaged in the buying and selling of Africans illegally smuggled into the United States, in violation of an 1808 congressional ban. Several sources confirm that in 1859 Forrest sold at least six newly-arrived Africans "direct from the Congo" at his yard. Slave trading proved a growth industry, and by 1860 the number of slave dealers in Memphis had increased to ten, including six with addresses on Adams. In that year, Forrest sold this property and moved one block east, where he expanded his operations, while another group of slave dealers took ownership of this lot. Secession and war disrupted the slave trading business, and in 1861 Forrest went off to fight for the Confederacy. In the decades after the Civil War, many white southerners chose to portray Forrest as a military hero, thus excusing or ignoring Forrest's buying and selling of human beings.

Sponsored by Calvary Episcopal Church, Rhodes College, and the National Park Service
Dedicated 2018

In 2015, the Lynching Sites Project of Memphis first drew attention to the fact that the existing marker at B.B. King and Adams, placed by the Tennessee Historical Commission in 1955, referred only to Nathan Bedford Forrest's becoming wealthy from his "business enterprises" without revealing that he traded in enslaved people. A year later, Tim Huebner, Professor of History at Rhodes College and a member of Calvary Church, discovered that the existing marker actually stood at the site of Forrest's antebellum slave mart. In other words, Calvary's current parking lot was once one of the city's most active slave trading sites. With the support of the people of Calvary, in fall 2017 Prof. Huebner invited his students to research the history of slavery and the slave trade in Memphis in his "historical methods" course at Rhodes, with the ultimate goal of writing the text for a new marker. Local scholars helped to edit the final version of the text, and the Tennessee Civil War National Heritage Area and the National Park Service provided further support. The new marker, sponsored by Calvary Church, Rhodes College, and the National Park Service, will be unveiled outside immediately following the service.

PARTICIPANTS

The Rev. Scott Walters, *Officiant*
The Rev. Dorothy Wells, *Officiant*
The Rev. Paul McLain, *Assisting*
The Rhodes Singers; Dr. William Skoog, *Director*
Kristin Lensch, *organist*
Margaret Craddock, *lector*
Raymond Spence, *crucifer*
Nancy Harvey, *verger*
Vincent Astor & Jan Gwin, *bell-ringers*

PARTICIPANTS OUTSIDE AT THE UNVEILING OF THE
HISTORIC MARKER

Timothy Good, *National Park Service*
Dr. Marjorie Hass, *President, Rhodes College*

Special thanks to Glenn Bandy, Vincent Clark, Margaret Craddock, Wayne Dowdy, Jim Gabbert, Ian Hendry, Tom Momberg, Gayle Spence, Carroll Van West, and Brenda Woemmel.

The Litany of Prayers for Forgiveness, Healing and Reconciliation was written by The Rev. Dorothy Wells.

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All are welcome at Calvary.
Worship with us at 8 and 10 a.m. every Sunday.