

November 4, 2014

Dear Grace Church Family and Friends,

On Saturday, Grace Church served as one of the pilgrimage stations on the Diocese of Maryland's Trail of Souls: A Day of Repentance and Reconciliation (www.trailofsouls.org). We had over 100 people here, including four bishops, all of them interested in learning about our history and our transformation from a parish whose original church building had a slaves' gallery to the diverse, multicultural, generously-spirited congregation we are today.

While they were here, the pilgrims were able to see the historic Confederate grave marker at the corner of Georgia Avenue and Grace Church Road as well as the stained glass window in our balcony which features both a Confederate and Union soldier. We also highlighted the Grace Church Journey Quilts, which we removed from their usual place on the walls of the nave and displayed in the chapel so they would be more visible.

If you have not seen the quilts up close, I encourage you to spend some time looking at them, for each quilt square tells an interesting story. There is one square in honor of Madison Broadnax, who served as a Tuskegee Airman in his youth; and one remembering Helga Massa, a refugee from the Sudetenland; and another commemorating Vilma White's childhood in Panama. All three of them were parishioners of Grace Church. They were part of the fabric of our community, and their journeys represent our journey. Their story is our story.

Grace Church was honored to be part of the Trail of Souls and the Diocese of Maryland's commitment to address the legacy of slavery and racism in our church and in our country. It is only through acknowledging the wrongs of the past that we will build a better future. As Christians, we are to strive for justice and peace among all people, and respect the dignity of every human being. We have not always done that in this country, and it is important for us to say so, loud and clear, because then, and only then, will we step closer to the kingdom of God.

See you in church,
Andrew