



Diocese of Easton | Discernment Committee

HISTORICAL MILESTONES

THE DIOCESE OF EASTON

1632-1692 - Founding: Christ Church on Kent Island is the first Anglican congregation on Maryland's Eastern Shore. Maryland Colony founded with no Established Religion

1692-1776 – Colonial Period: Maryland becomes a Royal Colony and the Church of England becomes the Established Church, under the Diocese of London. Parishes formed throughout the colony.

1776 - American Independence. State of Maryland ends Church of England as Established Church.

1783-1867 – The Diocese of Maryland: Thomas John Claggett elected first Bishop of Maryland.

1858-1859: *First Eastern Shore attempt* to divide from the Diocese of Maryland; rejected at diocesan convention.

1867-1868: *Second Eastern Shore attempt* to divide from the Diocese of Maryland; approved by diocesan convention.

1868 - General Convention creates the Diocese of Easton.

Diocese of Easton elects Bishop Henry Champlain Lay as the First Bishop of Easton.

1869: Bishop Lay divides the diocese into three convocations

1876: Trinity Cathedral chapter established.

1888: Bishop William Forbes Adams becomes the 2nd bishop of Easton.

1913: Diocese adds lay members to the Standing Committee

1920: Diocese of Easton's Standing Committee rejects invitation from the Bishop of Delaware to consider a merger of the Dioceses of Easton and Delaware

George Davenport elected the 3rd bishop of Easton

1921: Bishop Davenport reorganizes the diocesan structure adding a Diocesan Council and various Departments.

1930: Diocese establishes Camp Wright on Kent Island

1939: William McClelland elected as the 4th bishop of Easton

1949: Allen Jerome Miller elected as the 5th bishop of Easton. Revised the diocesan canons and doubled the diocesan endowment

1965: Bray House Diocesan Center constructed, including Miller Hall.

1966: George A. Taylor elected as 6th bishop of Easton

1974-1978: Convention unable to elect a bishop after 26 ballots. Presiding Bishop intervenes and a new election results in the election of William Moutrie Moore, who was the Suffragan Bishop of North Carolina, as the 7th bishop of Easton.

1983: Elliott Lorenz Sorge elected the 8th bishop of Easton. Required parishes to use the 1979 Prayer Book; pushed for the inclusion of Black Episcopalians in leadership roles; advocated for the ordination of women clergy.

1992-1993: Martin G. Townsend elected Bishop Coadjutor and subsequently succeeds as 9th Bishop of Easton. Established Diocesan School for Total Ministry and oversaw a marked increase in deacons serving the diocese.

2003: James J. (Bud) Shand elected 10th Bishop of Easton. Employed diocese's first Youth Missioner; authorized same-sex marriage in church.

2014: Upon Bishop Bud's retirement, Bishop Henry Parsley was elected Bishop Provisional, guiding the diocesan discernment process.

2016: Bishop Santosh Marray elected 11th Bishop of Easton.

2025-2026: Bishop Marray resigns. The Standing Committee calls for a period of discernment to determine the future of the Episcopal Church on Maryland's Eastern Shore.

If you have any questions or comments, please submit an inquiry to the Discernment Committee on the Diocese's Transition web page:

<https://dioceseofeaston.org/transition/>