



# ***Mt. Paran Presbyterian Church***

***An Historical Timeline  
In Words and Pictures***

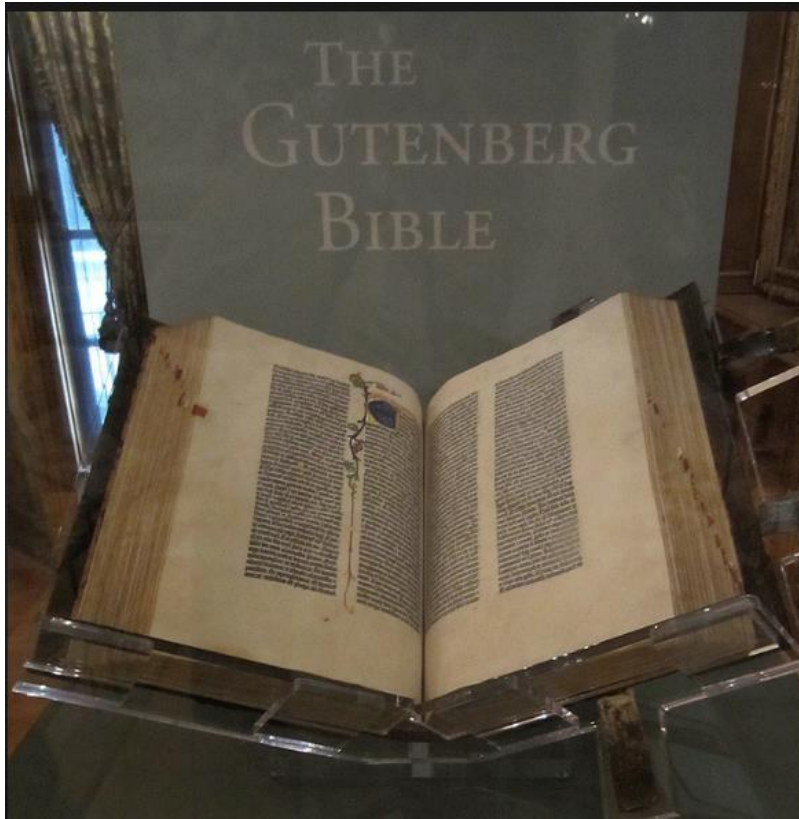


*In the beginning was the Word...*

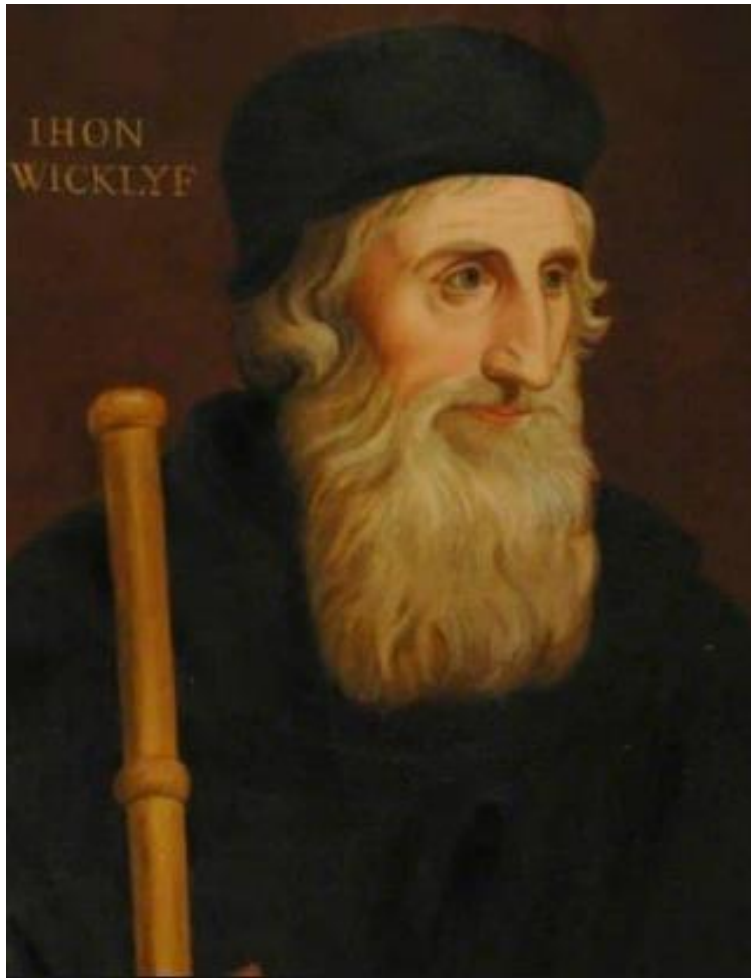
*Eventually brought to all  
God's people in  
print by Johannes*

*Gensfleisch zur  
Laden zum*

## *Gutenberg in (1455)...*



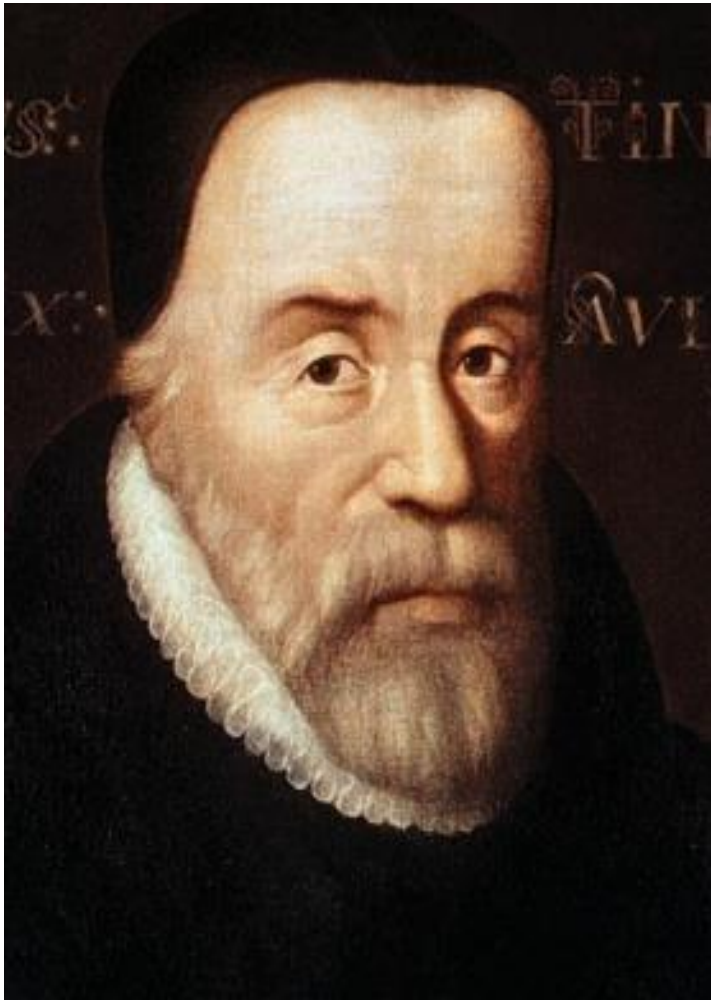
*The Gutenberg Bible, also called the Forty-two-line Bible, or Mazarin Bible, was the first complete book extant in the West and the earliest printed from movable type, so called after its printer, Johannes Gutenberg, who completed around 1455.*



*John Wycliffe was one of the first persons to attempt translating key books of the Bible from Latin into the language of the English people in 1384. Translations were often considered to be heretical. The invention of movable type and the printing press led to change.*



*Mass printing of the Bible facilitated the Reformation led by Martin Luther, John Calvin, and John Knox.*



*William Tyndale was expelled from the Roman Catholic Church for attempting to translate the Latin Bible into English. In 1526, Tyndale's first English translation of the new Testament was printed in Germany. He was convicted of Heresy and executed in 1536. However his work, The Obedience of a Christian Man, provided a rationale to Henry*

*VIII for the break of the Church in England from the Roman Catholic Church.*

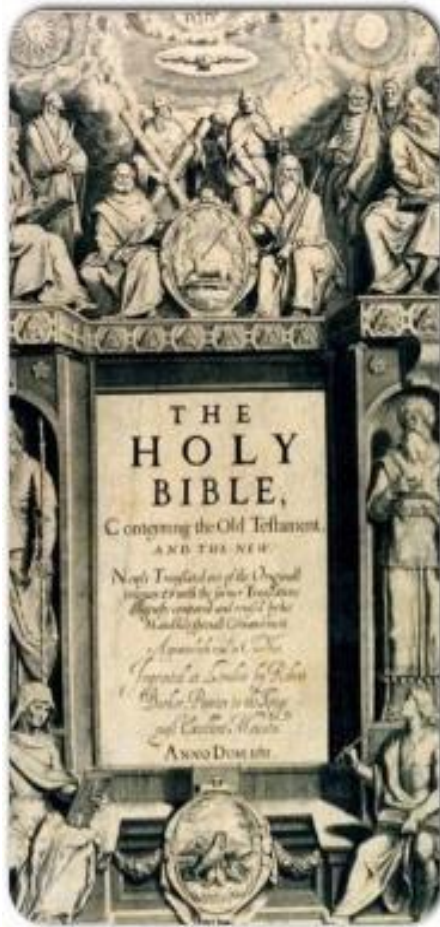


*Named “Defender of the Faith” by Pope Leo X for refuting Martin Luther’s criticisms of the Roman Catholic Church in 1521, King Henry VIII of England began a break with the church in the 1530s known as the “Henrician Reformation”. From this division, the Church of England, also known as the Anglican or Episcopal Church, was born.*



Thomas Cranmer (1489–1556),  
Henry VIII's Archbishop of Canterbury  
and editor and co-author of the first  
and second Books of Common Prayer.

*Archbishop Thomas Cranmer became a moving force behind the reformation of the church in England under Henry VIII. He was the author of the Book of Common Prayer. Later, However, the reigns of Henry VIII's children, alternately supporting either the Church of England or the Roman Catholic Church, led to many years of religious and political division in the land.*



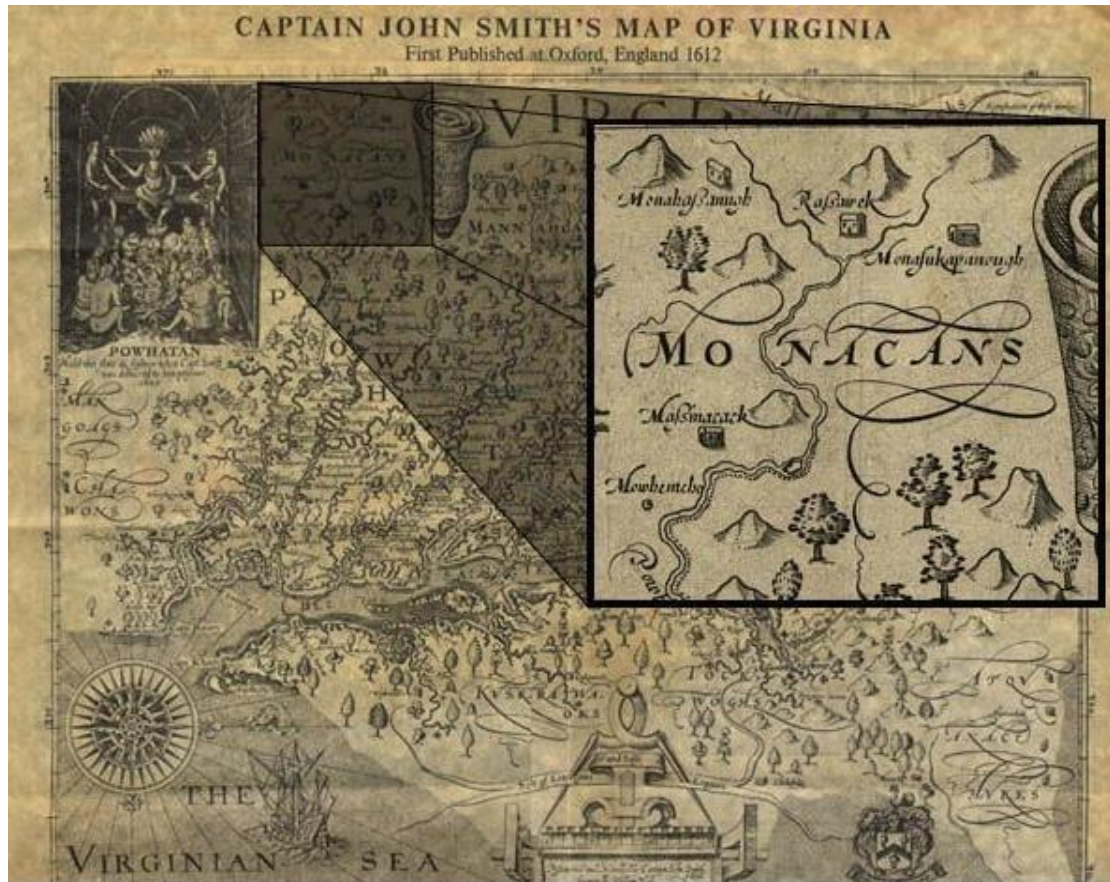
*King James I, who already ruled Scotland, succeeded the last of Henry's children, Elizabeth I, in 1603. He was influenced by the Calvinist beliefs of John Knox. An English translation of the Bible was commissioned by James I. It was published in 1611.*



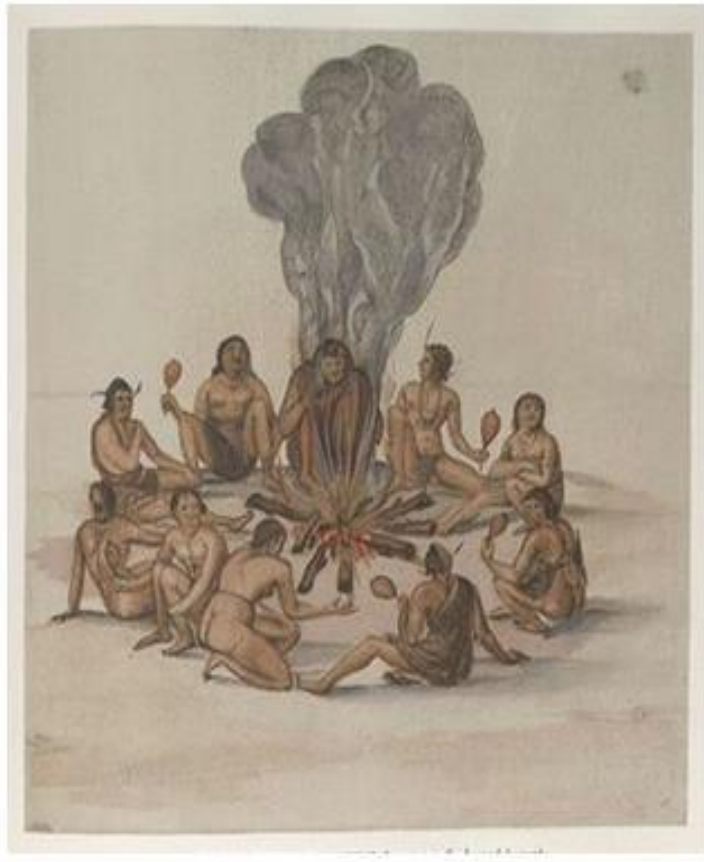
*James I also granted the Virginia Company of London the right to establish a colony in The colony would be known as Virginia, named after his aunt, Elizabeth I, known as “The Virgin Queen”, who had named him as her successor.*



*Captain John Smith was selected to lead the expedition to establish the colony of Virginia. It's first settlement was established in 1607. It was named "Jamestown", in honor of King James 1. Under his leadership the colony prospered and settlement spread throughout Virginia.*



*John Smith included on his maps of the colonies the names of many of the local Native American people including the Monacans.*



*Native American people had been here for over 10,000 years before the first European colonies were founded.*



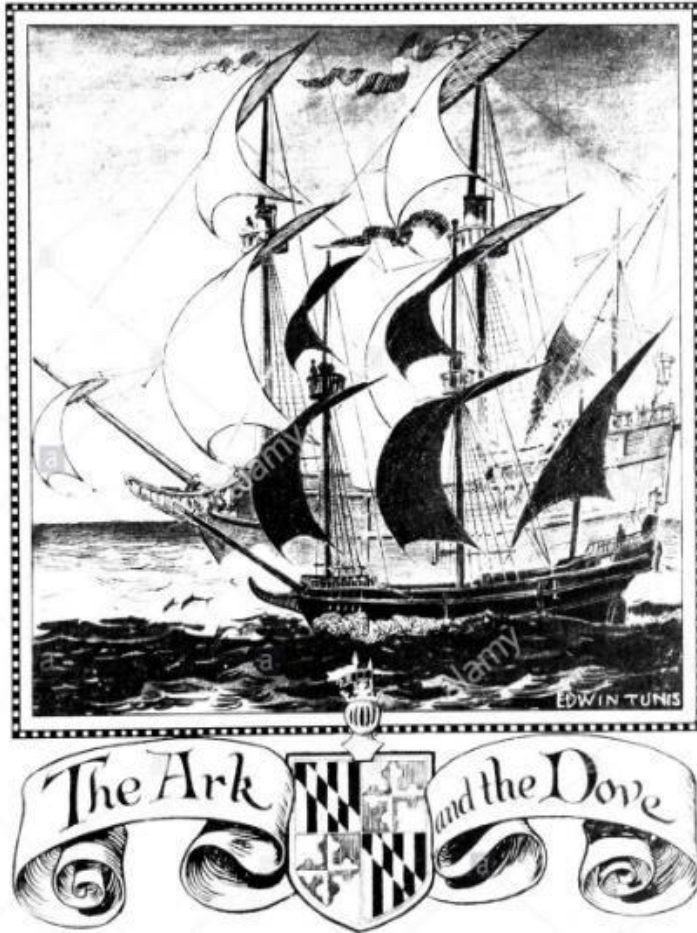
*The Monacan Nation, headquartered in Amherst County, Virginia, has survived almost four hundred years since the first settlers landed at Jamestown. Today the tribe numbers over 2,000 people, as more descendants discover their heritage and return to Amherst to celebrate their Indian culture.*



*Land grants were also given by King James I to loyal Catholics, like George Calvert, first Baron of the Manor of Baltimore in the Irish province of Leinster. George Calvert later requested an additional charter to establish a colony on the mid-Atlantic coast of North America.*

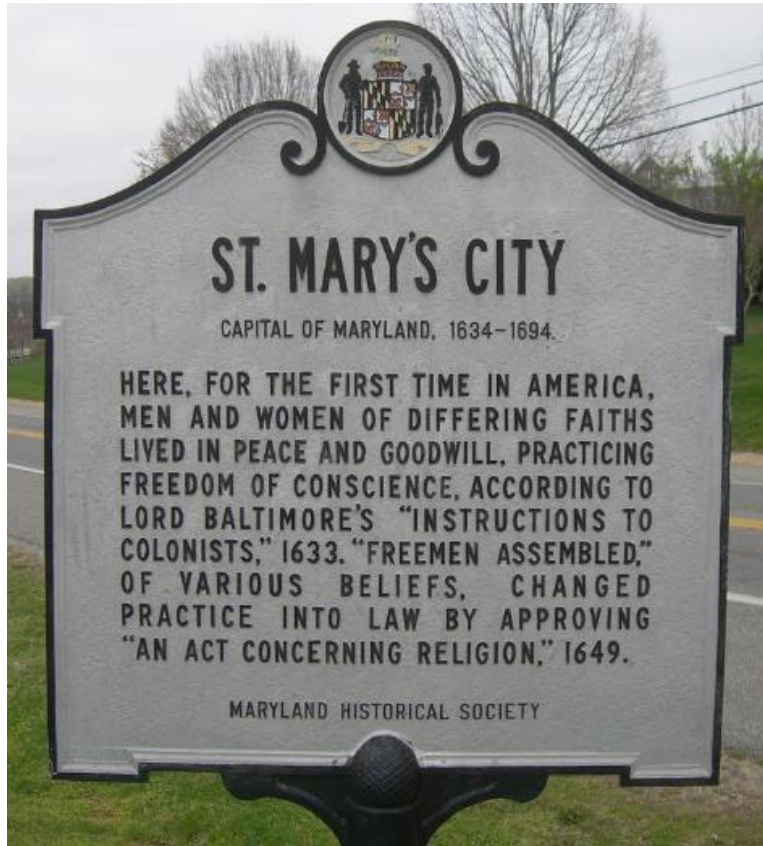


*I, honored George Calvert's request, but Calvert died five weeks before the grant was issued. It passed to his son, Cecil Calvert, to serve as a safe refuge for English Catholics. In 1632, the new colony, formed from the northeastern portion of Virginia, was named Maryland in honor of the Catholic wife of King Charles, Queen Henrietta Maria.*



*Two ships, named the Ark and the Dove, set sail in 1633 from the Isle of Wight off the coast of England with colonists who established the first settlement in the new colony. Located at St. Mary's City, it remained the capital of Maryland from 1634 to 1694.*

*War between royalists and parliamentarians (1642 to*



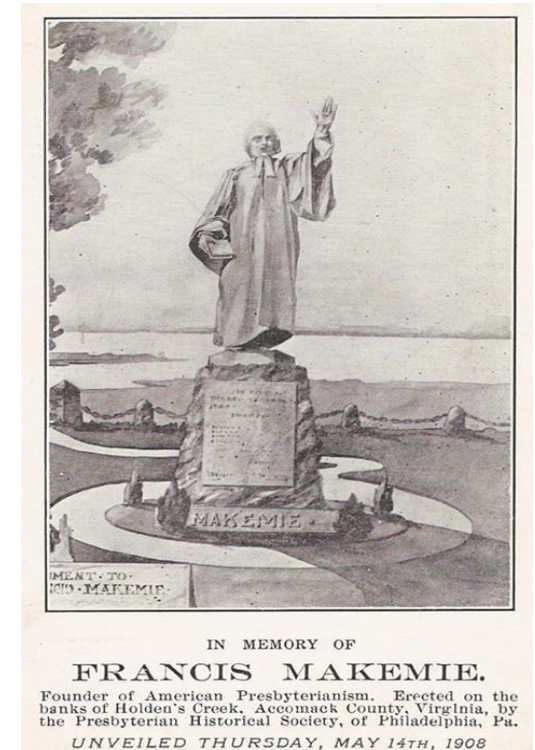
*1645) ended with Charles I being defeated, captured, tried, convicted of treason, and executed in 1649. To preserve their control of Maryland, the Calvert family supported the passage of an act of toleration, which allowed Protestant settlement in e formerly Catholic colony.*



*Since Presbyterians had not been welcomed in the colony of Virginia, Colonel William Stevens, a member of the Maryland governor's council, proposed inviting an ordained Presbyterian minister to serve the colony of Maryland in 1680.*



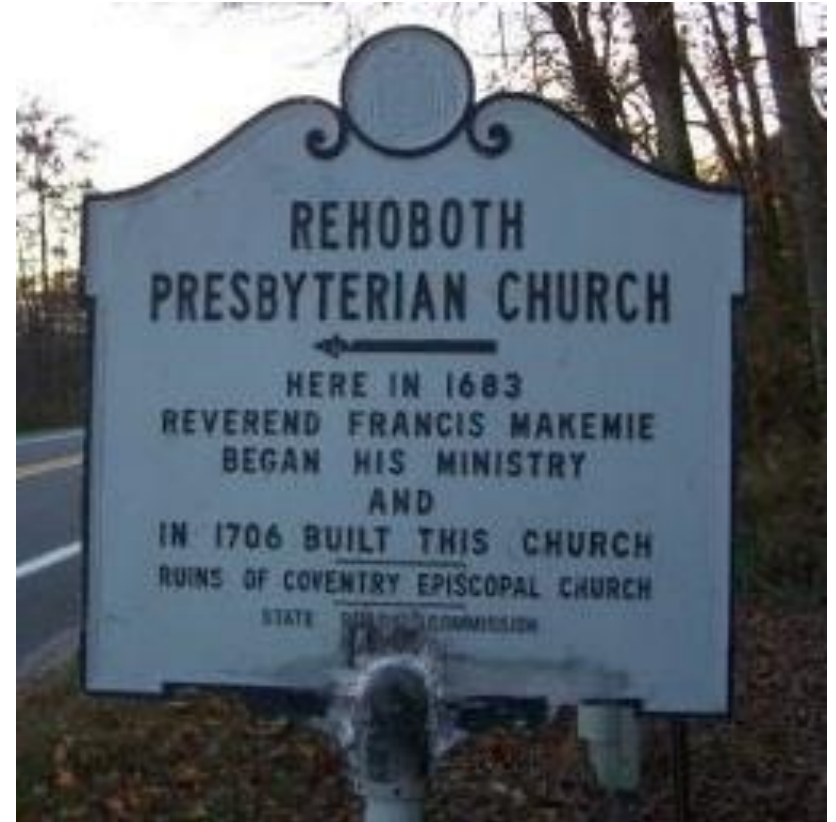
*Francis Makemie  
Responded to the  
call in 1682 and  
was granted land  
for a church in  
Maryland in 1683.  
Rehoboth  
Presbyterian  
Church was built in  
1706. It still stands.*





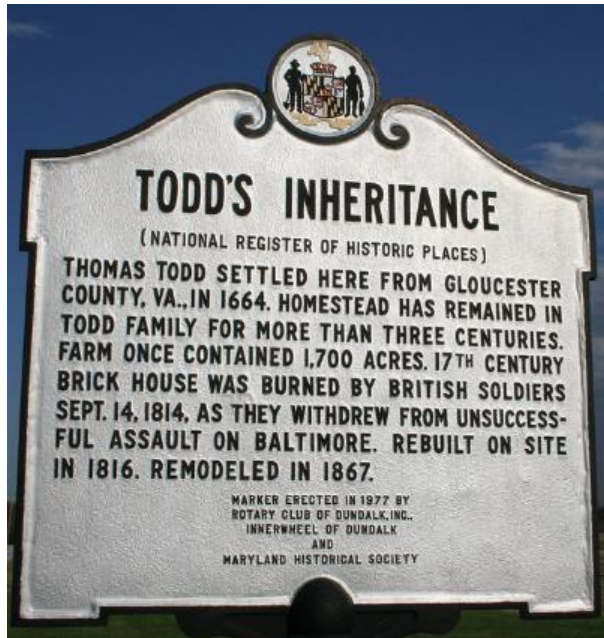


**FRANCIS  
MAKEMIE**  
1658 - 1708  
Father of American  
Presbyterianism



*During the 1600s and early 1700s, the Calvert family sold and made grants of land to settlers seeking to make their fortunes through trade, mining, quarrying, milling, and farming cash crops. In Maryland, the greatest cash crop was tobacco. Large plantations and even small farms focused on tobacco as their main cash crop. Most of the labor in the 1600s was provided by family members, hired help, or indentured servants bound to work for seven years before their release as freedmen. But by the early 1700s, slaves from the Caribbean Islands, South America, and eventually directly from Africa became a key part of the workforce, especially for families controlling large tracts of land, such as the Dorseys, Worthingtons, Ridgelys, Howards, Cockeys, and Todds. Most of these families were Episcopal, except for the Carrolls, who were Roman Catholic.*

*The original St. Paul's Episcopal Church (Church of England) in Maryland was founded at Patapsco Neck. It was the first of three Episcopal parishes in Baltimore County, authorized by an act of the Maryland Assembly in 1692.*

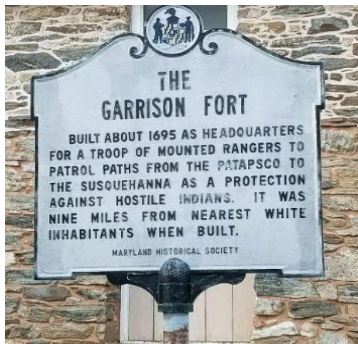


*In March of 1714, landowner **Thomas Todd III** led his fellow vestrymen to petition the governor to remove their clergyman, Reverend William Tibbs, “A man of limited spirituality, but a prodigious desire for strong drink and ample fees.” Dissatisfied with the response to their request, he later petitioned the Baltimore County court to allow him to use his home in North Point as a meeting place for Protestant Puritans known as Presbyterians.*

- *Thomas Todd III* contacted business interests in London to secure a minister for the congregation meeting at his home.
- In September of 1715, the first Presbyterian worship held within the present bounds of the Presbytery of Baltimore occurred in the home of Thomas Todd (who had died in June of that year leaving behind a widow and three children).
- The service was led by the **Rev. Hugh Conn**, who answered the call and was approved by the Delaware Presbytery on September 21 and ordained in October of 1715.
- Within the year, Hugh Conn married Thomas Todd's widow, Elizabeth and later moved their meeting place to the south side of the Patapsco near Curtis Creek, renaming it "**the Patapsco Presbyterian Church**".

- *In 1717, Conn suffered the loss of his wife Elizabeth and their infant daughter of the same name.*
- *Hugh Conn served this flock for two more years, then departed because the congregation as small and poor and his ministry did not prosper.*
- *Reverend Hugh Conn relocated to Prince Georges county and was installed as the minister of Bladensburg Presbyterian church in 1719. He served this congregation for 33 years until his death there in 1752, when he collapsed and died while preaching a funeral sermon.*
- *Reverend Charles De La Noe later served this the Patapsco Church as settlers headed west along the Patapsco Valley. and new locations for worship.*

- *The **Soldiers Delight** portion was bounded by an old Indian trail, renamed “Old Court Road” and “Joppa Road”, on the east and the Patapsco River on the west.*



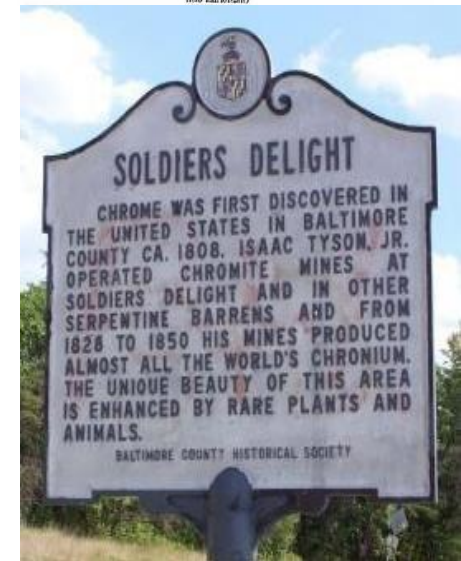
- *Settlers were attracted to the west side of Baltimore County by land rich in iron, chromium, and copper which could be mined.*
- *Lucrative land grants were available for those willing to create watermills to grind grain or to provide power for industrial ventures such as textile mills.*
- *Place and road names such as Owings Mills, Painters Mill, Cockeys Mill, Ellicott and Lyons Mill reflect this.*

- *Forts and rangers were needed to protect those who ventured west.*
- *Itinerant preachers served the settlers.*



*St. Thomas Episcopal Church (Church of England) was authorized in 1742 to serve Anglican “forest inhabitants” as well as soldiers garrisoned in the area. This church still stands on St. Thomas Lane in Garrison Forest.*

- *Presbyterians served by itinerant ministers continued to be served by meeting in private homes. People moved west, into the Patapsco Valley. The Patapsco Presbyterian Church moved to the western fringe of Baltimore County, where it was known as “Soldiers Delight Church”. Mary Todd Worthington, granddaughter of Thomas Todd III, and her husband John Worthington owned lands bordering the Patapsco River in Western Baltimore County, including a home just **north** Lyons Mill Road. Presbyterians moving into the area may have met on or near their property for worship before erecting a log meeting house on the **south** side of Lyons Mill Road on a site known as “The Plains of Paran”.*



of



*Who were the people that worshipped on this site when it was just a simple building made of logs from this area ?*

- *The people of Soldiers Delight were somewhat different. One observer referred to them as “the most primitive people within 50 miles of Baltimore”.*
- *They were independent, simple mannered hunters, farmers, millers, and miners who rode good horses and were served by itinerant preachers who spread the word not only to the people of Soldiers Delight, but also to folks living in Granite and Springfield.*
- *Women of such rural or back country settlements depended entirely on their own industry to produce the clothing, utensils, soap, candles, and medicines from herbs, roots, beer, brandy and cider for their dependents.*

## ***Why Is Mt. Paran So Important To the Baltimore Presbytery?***

*Mt. Paran is the Mother Church of all of the churches in the Baltimore Presbytery, as indicated by the minutes of the Presbytery of Philadelphia dated September 21, 1715.*

## *What factors affected the growth of Mt. Paran?*

- *Our church began in a colony under the control of Britain, a nation an ocean away.*
- *It was established in a place with an indigenous population that was sometimes hostile to settlers from afar.*
- *Our colonies were surrounded by others controlled by other foreign powers: France and Spain.*
- *Between 1715 and 1815 our church population was affected by the French and Indian War (1756-1763), The Revolutionary War (1775-1783) and the War of 1812 (1812-1815)*

- *The institutions of indenture and slavery affected the people of our colony and state for the decades leading to the Civil War (1861-1865).*

***All of the above affected the people of our community and our congregation over time, leading to fluctuations in our membership and the demands on our facilities.***

*Through each era of turmoil and transformation, our congregation displayed remarkable resilience. Members found strength in shared faith, coming together to support one another through uncertainty. As wars raged beyond our doors and societal shifts rippled through our lives, the church served as both anchor and haven, adapting to changing needs. New generations carried forward traditions while responding to the trials of their time, ensuring that the spirit of community endured even as the world around us evolved.*

## ***How did we come to this site?***

*Our present site was used by a few families, imperfectly organized, who had been worshipping in nearby homes, sparsely scattered in this area, Unable to support a full-time clergyman, they were served by any clergyman from the church of Baltimore Town willing to make the 15 mile journey, or by a visiting preacher from Deer Creek Church in Harford County, thirty miles away.*

*Shortly after the French and Indian War ended (1763), a quarter acre site was purchased for five shillings in 1766 and a log meeting house was created in by trustees William Lyon, William Weir. Robert Weir, Henry Jones, Henry Crook, John Ebert, William McIlvaine and Robert Gilchrist by a deed recorded*

*October 17, 1767. The grave of Robert Gilchrist was the first one in our cemetery, dated 1767.*

### ***What happened to the church in the late 1700s?***

*Activity at the church site was limited, Militias had just finished helping the British drive the French out of our colonial territory. Within a few years, the Revolutionary War demanded the service of fighting men. Women and children were often left to run their farms and businesses alone. Travel by preachers 15 to 30 miles to serve small rural congregations, so regular church services were limited. For a portion of this time, in the late 1700s and early 1800s, the log meeting house was used to shelter sheep,*

## ***The Re-Awakening!***

*It wasn't until after the end of the War of 1812 (1812-1815) that the population of the area grew sufficiently to build congregations that could afford to fund a clergyman to conduct regular services. Farmers began raising crops of corn, wheat, and tobacco. Mines and mills and quarries re-opened. Men returned from fighting and business began to boom. The B&O Railroad was chartered in 1827, linking Baltimore with Ohio. Trains brought coal and livestock east and shipped crops and manufactured goods west. The C&O canal linking Georgetown over 180 miles to Cumberland provided another link between Baltimore and western Pennsylvania and Ohio. Baltimore county and Randallstown grew.*

## ***Rebuilding the Church!***

*Baltimore County quickly became the second most populous county in the state of Maryland. But Randallstown was still very rural. Paying a full-time clergyman was expensive. As communities grew and wanted local churches to serve them, they shared clergy. Circuit riders (traveling ministers) could perform services at more than one church on a Sunday. Mt Paran partnered with Sykesville PC in 1857 and included Granite PC in 1870, with modest endowments from the Baltimore Presbytery three congregations could be served. They began concentrating on Improving their churches, Mt. Paran cut down trees on the property to fence in the cemetery and had the graveyard plotted so that grave sites could be sold for “no less than \$10.00” in 1877. Money was still an issue,*

## ***Church Member Support for Education, Law, and Medicine***

- *James I. Ridgely attended St. Mary's College, studied law at the University of Maryland, was admitted to the bar in 1828, elected City Councilman in 1835, Elected to the House of Delegates in 1838, was a member of the Constitutional Convention from 1849-1864 and Register of Wills from 1852-1864.*
- *Mrs. James Ridgely initiated the beginning of the Mount Paran Sabbath School.*
- *Robert Breckenridge Chapman, schooled at Princeton for the ministry, returned home to Randallstown after his father's death to help his family. He was Secretary of the Sabbath School in 1865. He became a teacher in the 1870s,*

*served as the Sunday School Superintendent, and became a Justice of the Peace.*

- *The Fite, Choate, Odell, Worthington, Stanfield, Phillips, Walters, Ward, Dorsey, Jean. Oursler, Chapman, Mansfield, Randall, Conrey, Block, and Offut families built a small wooden one-room elementary school house on land donated by George and Sarah Odell adjacent to a stream known as Powell's Run, by subscription. They employed a full-time teacher for students of all ages, for free during the "time after harvest, until spring planting". It was known as The School of Powell's Run". In 1842, the Maryland General Assembly allowed the incorporation of the school as a protected entity and in 1853 deeded the land and structure to the first "Baltimore County Board of School*

*Commissioners”, founded by George Odell. This later became the Board of Education of Baltimore County.*

- *Residents of Carroll County and Randallstown, including members of Mt. Paran, were instrumental in bringing quality medical care to Baltimore County as well. In 1962, community members, including Mt. Paran Member Florence Deitz, were involved in creating the Liberty Court Rehabilitation Center, which became Baltimore County General Hospital in 1963. Florence Deitz became a member of the Board of trustees in 1969, then served as secretary, second vice president, first vice president, and then president from 1989-1992. In 1993, the hospital was renamed Northwest Hospital Center.*

## ***Refurbishing the Church!***

*By the late 1880s, the session and the congregation embarked on a “substantial but economical” improvement of the old log church. They raised the roof by 2 and ½ feet, removing the old roof and rebuilding the interior with open trusses and braced rafters, and revealed sheathing in the “Old English Style”.*

*They also removed the old “crow’s nest” pulpit and choir box and installed a new pulpit centered at the front of sanctuary. Reversible wooden widow’s benches were installed. An eight-foot vestibule and gallery were added at the rear of the church*

*The “sheep-fold entrance was removed and the exterior covered with clapboard, painted in a color chosen by the ladies of the church. The cost: \$913,00*

*In the 1900s, “Twentieth Century” improvements included:*

- *Installation of stained-glass windows (Aug. 1924-Sept. 1925)*
- *Coal oil lamps replaced by electrified lamps (1945)*
- *Coal stove replaced wit oil furnace (1946)*
- *Pine Room added (1950-1953)*
- *Miss Kitty Fite donated approximately eleven acres of land to the church, connecting the property from Liberty Road to Lyons Mill Road in January of 1953.*
- *A brick pastor’s manse construction on the former Fite property (1957)*
- *The Fellowship Hall was built on the former Fite property in 1960*

## *How has the church changed over the years?*

- *Church membership in the United States peaked around 1960, with about 63.4% of the population affiliated with a religious organization.*
- *Attendance at religious services fell to 47% by 2020.*
- *Many traditionally large denominations (like the United Methodist Church, Presbyterian Church USA, and the Episcopal Church have seen sharp declines since 2000.*
- *In 1968, Mt. Paran Church (PCUSA) lost 89 members, who chose to affiliate with the Presbyterian Church of America (PCA) because of the “increasing liberal policies” of the PCUSA.*
- *Loss of membership affects not only attendance, but also the ability to afford sufficient financial support of the church to pay for a full-time ordained minister.*

- *Pastor Ron Martin Minnich, served as pulpit supply, then full-time ordained minister from 1980 through 1988,*
- *Mary Sickles, the last full-time ordained pastor served from January until November of 1989.*
- *Mark Diehl served the church as pulpit supply pastor from 1989-1992.*
- *Retired pastor James Salango then served the church on Sundays from 1992 until 2000.*
- *When Pastor Salango began having serious health problems in early 2000, Elder Michael Andrew Carter conducted church services in his stead until Elder Carter's sudden death in April of 2000.*
- *Pastor Salango passed away two months later.*

- *Pastor Christa Fuller Burns served as pulpit supply pastor to two churches from October of 2000 through December of 2001.*
- *Pastor Vernon Rushing served as pulpit supply pastor from 2002-2004.*
- *Edward Terry, who had joined the congregation by 2000 was commissioned as Lay Pastor on June 17, 2004. At that time, Mt. Paran had only 32 members.*
- *The session prayed to God to let us know whether our tiny congregation still had a purpose and to send us anyone that we could serve in His name... and He did!*

## ***The Church Reborn: 2000-2025***

*Since 2000, our church membership has grown by over 500%!*

*From a low of 32 official church members in 2000, we have grown to as many as 273 official members, plus many folks who attend regularly who have never officially “joined”. We have a Christian Women’s Fellowship (CWF) and a Christian Men’s Fellowship (CMF) that are both very active. From September through June, we offer...*

- *Sunday morning Bible study to adults and children from 9:45 until 10:30,*
- *Children’s Church for children from 3 years old through 3<sup>rd</sup> grade during the sermon,*
- *Teen Bible Study after the Sunday service,*

- *A mid-week on-line Zoom Bible Study, and*
- *SMORES, a program for children of elementary school age through middle school on Friday evening.*

*We also have an evangelism program that does outreach to nursing homes, senior centers, and youth service facilities.*

*Mt. Paran served as a site for community members to receive Covid vaccines during the Covid epidemic and provided several shipping containers of medical supplies to health facilities in Cameroon.*

*We have also hosted immigration workshops for folks needing help with documentation and legal advice.*

*The above growth has been accomplished under the leadership of **Pastor Edward Terry**, his wife **Lady Terry**, AND **Pastors Anita Bishop Johnson** and **Donna Lea**, whose congregation merged with Mt. Paran as we grew and have carried us forward as our leaders since Pastor Ed's retirement.*

*It is also important to recognize **Elder Emeritus Mildred Ecker**, clerk of the session, who, along with her husband **Charles Ecker** shepherded the church through this transformation. We also give sincere thanks to those members of our church who have faithfully served as elders and deacons throughout this process. Their guidance, support, and willingness to serve have made our growth possible.*

## *290<sup>th</sup> Anniversary Period Attire*



*Ed and Lady Terry*



*Mitzie and Charles Ecker*



*Celebrating Our Heritage*



*20 Years Ago*

# *310<sup>th</sup> Anniversary*



*Pastor Anita Bishop Johnson and Family*

# *Leading an active and service-oriented church.*

