



ANNUAL REPORT 2019

Let Freedom Ring Foundation

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LETTER FROM THE PRESIDENT



As the first President of the Let Freedom Ring Foundation, I am happy to report that it has been a rewarding, yet challenging year. We began with the hope that we could start a Foundation that would work with our partners in the community to increase awareness of the historic significance of the First Baptist Church organized in 1776, and its role in Virginia history, which began here in the Historic Triangle. We renewed and strengthened our partnerships with the Colonial Williamsburg Foundation, Jamestown Yorktown Foundation, the Virginia Department of Historic Resources and the National Park Service. We increased our digital footprint with a new website and increased our use of social media in order to share relevant and timely information on our work and to reach members of the public from across the nation. During Black History Month 2019 we launched the “Beyond February” initiative to celebrate Black History all year with the filming of our mini-documentary entitled “History Half Told is *UnTold*” to premier in October 2020. This is the right time and the right place in history for our work to matter. We were introduced to the nation in 2016 with the ringing of our Freedom Bell to open the National Museum of African American History and Culture. The sound that summoned our nation to a place of healing and called attention to the unfinished business of dealing with race in the commonwealth and the country.

As we move forward in 2020, I expect another year filled with events that are significant, demanding but most of all rewarding. We will work with local architects and exhibit designers to develop and build exhibits that give the visitor a museum quality experience when they come to learn of the Historic First Baptist Church and to ring the Freedom Bell. This will require a great fund-raising effort that is our principal focus for the year. Our goal is to raise the needed \$100,000 to fund a portion of this major project. We have already begun and will continue our campaign throughout the year. We look forward to doing great things in 2020!

Connie Matthews Harshaw
President

BOARD OF DIRECTORS

The Foundation began with fifteen (15) directors consisting of eight (8) elected directors from the First Baptist Church and seven (7) directors appointed from the community in 2018. In 2019 the Board expanded to include two (2) additional voting members, two (2) non-voting honorary members and an advisory panel. The current Board of Directors consists of nine (9) elected directors from the First Baptist Church and eight (8) directors appointed from the community for a total of seventeen (17).

Officers

Connie Matthews Harshaw (Elected)
President

Ronald J. Monark (Appointed)
Vice President

Linda Hunter Rowe (Appointed)
Secretary

Donald C. Hill (Elected)
Treasurer

Directors

Jody L. Allen, Ph.D. (Appointed)

Nathaniel Brown (Elected)

Martine Charles (Appointed)

Rev. Dr. Julie Grace (Elected)

Rev. Juanita Graham (Elected)

Mike Holtzman (Appointed)

Barbara Hamm Lee (Appointed)

T. Montgomery (Monty) Mason (Appointed)

Liz Montgomery (Elected)

Garson P. Orange (Elected)

William Turner (Elected)

Chynita Turner-Pryor (Elected)

Jeanne Zeidler (Appointed)

Honorary Members

Amiah Brown

Xavier Jordan

TO OUR SUPPORTERS

Message from the President

We established the Let Freedom Ring Foundation in 2018 to focus specifically on protecting and preserving the history and artifacts of the First Baptist Church, organized in 1776. As we approach our second year in operation, we are excited by your support and motivated to achieve more than we have over the last year. On behalf of the Board of Directors, I want to express our sincere gratitude to each of you for your commitment and dedication to the Foundation.

Financial Highlights

We set a modest \$25,000 fund raising goal for our first year to handle start-up costs. We are happy to report that we exceeded our goal by \$30,000 with more than \$15,000 of in-kind services provided by our partners.

Operating Highlights

Over the last year we accomplished all of the goals outlined in our 2019 Budget. This could not have been done without the hard work of each of the directors and support from our community partners. We were successful in developing marketing and program materials to educate and inform the public of our mission and goals.

For more than 243 years, the members at the First Baptist Church have worshipped, prayed, and celebrated their collective faith as one of the oldest African American churches in the Nation.

Looking Ahead

In 2020 the Foundation plans to both honor the rich and diverse history of the church and focus on collecting, documenting, preserving and presenting the complete story of the African American religious experience in Williamsburg.

FINANCIAL SUMMARY

The Foundation met or exceeded all of its 2019 program goals and initiatives. We were successful in getting excellent administrative and program support at or below the budgeted amount. We provided support for the After Angelo program associated with the Tenacity: Women in Jamestown and Early Virginia exhibit of the Jamestown-Yorktown Foundation during Black History month in 2019 at no cost. We worked with the Colonial Williamsburg Foundation to begin the updates and modifications to the Let Freedom Ring Challenge for 2020, by acquiring all of the data and content of the 2016 public service announcements. We completed four of the five shoots required for the mini-documentary. We closed the year with a positive balance and set an ambitious goal of \$100,000 for fundraising in 2020.

	Budgeted	Actual
2018 Carryover	\$ 13,256.00	\$ 13,256.00
Revenue		
Board Donations	\$ 7,500.00	\$ 5,750.00
Public Donations	\$ 25,000.00	\$ 4,725.00
Grants	-	-
Other	-	\$ 33,836.00
First Baptist Church	\$ 5,000.00	\$ 5,000.00
McGuire Woods	-	\$ 11,347.84
Total Revenue	\$ 50,756.00	\$ 73,914.84
Expenses		
Attorney's Fees	\$ 5,000.00	\$ 16,347.84
Insurance	600.00	\$ 1,044.00
Administrative Support/Stipend	\$ 7,500.00	\$ 6,182.00
Donations to FBC	\$ 2,500.00	\$ 2,500.00
Supplies	\$ 300.00	\$ 2,687.00
Printing	-	\$ 1,379.00
Marketing/Development	-	\$ 41,629.00
Total Expenses	\$ 15,900.00	\$ 71,768.84
Net Earnings		\$ 2,146.00

SPECIAL THANKS TO OUR DONORS



Bert Bateman, President of Towne Bank, Williamsburg presents donation to Connie Matthews Harshaw and William Turner of Let Freedom Ring Foundation

\$ 5,000 - \$25,000

- Barry and Doris Fortney
- J. Michael and Connie Matthews Harshaw
- Let Freedom Ring Board of Directors
- MARC Global Communications*
- McGuire Woods, LLP*
- NCNW - Potomac Valley Section
- Williamsburg Community Chapel

\$ 500 - \$ 4,999

- Hazel and Bobby Braxton
- Elaine Crump
- Eleanor R. Feroleto
- John and Patricia Griffith
- Lisa McClennon
- Towne Bank
- Village Bank
- Alfred and Diane Woods

\$1 - \$ 499

- Davita T. Alston
- Rev. Lucille Arrington
- Charles Bell
- Betty Brown
- Camilla Buchanan and Debra Hill
- Jimmy Cook
- Hazel Doswell
- Sharon and John Dunn
- James Harris
- Phyllis Johnson
- Zachary Meredith
- Davidlena Myers Hill
- Ralph Phillips
- Eddie and Minnie Robinson
- Andrew (Bob) Spraggins
- MaryAnne Stomback
- Connie Walker

Note: **In Kind*

Looking Back 2019



Notifying the public of the Let Freedom Ring's renewed partnership with the Colonial Williamsburg Foundation



Working in partnership with the Jamestown Yorktown Foundation – February 2019



Dr. Katherine Rowe, the first female President of William & Mary celebrates Black History Month 2019 with First Baptist Church



St. Martin's Episcopal Church's annual tour and ringing of the Freedom Bell



Henry Hart, Virginia's Poet Laureate writes a poem inviting the nation to celebrate Independence Day in Williamsburg, Virginia with mention of the Freedom Bell



Zena Howard, the architect behind the National Museum of African American History and Culture with Ben Boone of William & Mary climb into the steeple for a view of the Freedom Bell guided by Liz Montgomery

Virginia's 41st Lieutenant Governor and second African American elected in the Commonwealth of Virginia greets Pastor Reginald F. Davis during the 243rd anniversary of First Baptist Church



United States Senator Mark Warner worships with First Baptist and rings the Freedom Bell for Justice, Equality and Peace

Looking Forward 2020

In the coming year we will collect and care for African American artifacts that can be shared with the public. We will complete the production of the Foundation's mini-documentary, "Half Told is *Un*Told" that integrates African American history with American history and tells the complete story of the church from the 18th through the 21st century.

We began work with Stemmann and Pease Architects of Williamsburg and 1717 Design of Richmond to examine options for the redesign of the existing display and exhibition spaces at the church's current site. Working with a team of designers, architects and historians, we will present options to the church that will improve the visitor experience beginning in 2020. This will



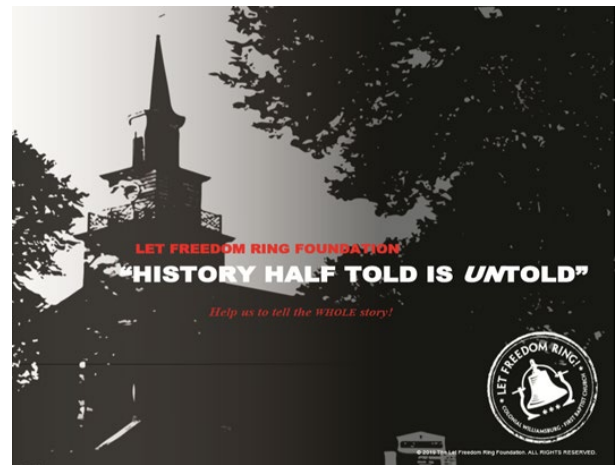
take several years to put together. It all begins with an idea.

Objects are selected, researched, and conserved.

Scripts are written, edited, and re-written. A design team uses those ideas to create a drawing of the proposed display or exhibition. When a final design is reached, then the exhibition can be built. Walls are put up and cases are constructed, if needed. Only then can curators begin actual object installation. The artifacts at the Historic First Baptist Church currently are displayed in haphazard arrangements in several locations in the church building.

They are in

need of proper display and contextual information for the tour experience and for their long term preservation. These artifacts consist of furniture, documents,



vessels, photos, record books, Bibles, and books. Some of these were brought from the Nassau Street brick church.

Improved Space for Small and Large Group Tours

The artifacts at the Historic First Baptist Church are at some risk of loss and damage until proper storage and display can be achieved. The Foundation members will work with the History and Tour Ministry and a professional team of experts to review the existing space and to determine if there are opportunities for technology updates and modifications to the interior design of exhibit space during 2020. The Foundation will present concept drawings such as the following to the First Baptist Church in 2020 for discussion. There is no anticipated cost for this initiative in fiscal year 2020. The directors will work to obtain a grant and will provide an estimated budget for this project in early 2021.



Artist rendering of re-designed entry
at First Baptist Church



Alternate view of re-designed
entryway



A re-imagined museum space with displays of history and information for tours



Another view of museum including Nassau Street artifacts

Improved large group meeting space with enhanced audio-visual capability



We met with the following team in November 2019 to request support for this initiative and were fortunate enough to hear from those experts on what was needed to move forward. Our Board will work with them to realize our goals for 2021:

John Crank
Principal of 1717 Design in Richmond

David Stemann and Ed Pease
Stemmann-Pease Architects in Williamsburg

Dr. Ed Jackson
Executive architect for the MLK Memorial in Washington, DC

Julie Richter
Director, National Institute of American History & Democracy
Lecturer, Lyon G. Tyler Department of History, College of William & Mary
Formerly in the Department of Historical Research, Colonial Williamsburg Foundation
She has completed in-depth research on the enslaved and free black population of Williamsburg

Kym S. Rice
Interim Director of the Corcoran School of the Arts and Design
George Washington University in Washington, DC
Curator and designer of the original Lilly Foundation-funded African American religion exhibit in the Taliaferro-Cole stable on Nassau Street in Williamsburg and in FBC on Scotland Street
Co-editor of *World of a Slave: Encyclopedia of the Material Life of Slaves in the United States*, 2 vols, 2011)

Martha Katz-Hyman
Assistant Curator, Jamestown-Yorktown Foundation
Co-editor with Kym Rice of *World of a Slave*
Curator on the exhibit team for the exhibit of African American Bruton Heights School

NEXT STEPS

During 2020 the Foundation will launch an aggressive fundraising campaign to make design and architectural improvements to the historic church. We will work with the History and Tour Ministry to review and decide on the number and types of changes to the physical space that are needed to improve the visitor experience. Once the design(s) has been chosen, a preliminary budget will be drafted and presented to the congregation for a vote. The financial support provided by the Foundation will be included in the budget proposal. If the congregation votes to proceed, architectural drawings will be completed with graphics and images. The designs will be sent out for competitive pricing and a contractor selected. It will not be a quick process. Parts must be installed and the project must be supervised and coordinated through to completion. The Foundation will continue its fundraising efforts to support this initiative through 2023.

Please join the Let Freedom Ring Foundation as we continue to make history in 2020.

The Let Freedom Ring Foundation is a tax deductible 501(c)(3) nonprofit organization with tax identification number is 83-1053673



LET FREEDOM RING FOUNDATION

PROTECTING AND PRESERVING OUR HISTORY