

## First Baptist Church's Gallery of Distinguished African Americans



IRST BAPTIST CHURCH in Lexington has a dedicated art gallery where portraits of 16 eminent African American men and women are on permanent exhibition.

First Baptist's gallery is one of just 13 such dedicated art exhibition spaces in American churches.

The portraits were painted by Beverly Tucker, the Lexington artist, who presented them to the church in 2021 on the occasion of its 154th anniversary.

The Baptist congregation was formed in 1867 to help Lexington's Black community, in the aftermath of the Civil War, in meeting "the challenges of transition from slavery to freedom." Members built the present Gothic Revival-style

brick church building themselves in 1894 and 1895, sometimes working by candlelight.\* The church, with its two towers, remains a local landmark and in 2006 was designated for inclusion in the National Register of Historic Places by the U.S. Park Service.

Beverly Tucker, who created the gallery portraits, is a local preservationist who was president for two terms of Historic Lexington Foundation and is a frequent partner of First Baptist in its community and history-related outreach. She has a Ph.D. in psychology and was a college teacher and administrator in Texas before moving to Lexington in 1997.

\* Theodore C. DeLaney in *Rockbridge Historical Society Proceedings*, Volume X (1990), p. 148.

### THOSE WHO LED

#### FIRST BAPTIST CHURCH GALLERY OF DISTINGUISHED AFRICAN AMERICANS



1 **MARIAN ANDERSON**  
1897-1993  
Pathbreaking,  
versatile singer



2 **JAMES BALDWIN**  
1924-1987  
Pioneering writer  
on race and social issues



3 **FREDERICK DOUGLASS**  
1818-1895  
Abolitionist, orator,  
writer, educator



4 **W. E. B. DU BOIS**  
(1868-1963)  
Activist, sociologist, editor,  
educator; NAACP founder



5 **LANGSTON HUGHES**  
(1901-1967)  
Leading thinker and writer in the  
Harlem Renaissance



6 **MARTIN LUTHER KING, JR.**  
(1929-1968)  
Nobel laureate who had a dream



7 **YARROW MAMOUT**  
(1736-1823)  
Freed at age 60; became a businessman



The Rev. McKinley Williams,  
pastor of First Baptist Church  
of Lexington, and Beverly Tucker,  
portrait artist, in the church gallery



8 **JESSEY NORMAN**  
(1945–2019)  
Activist and  
Metropolitan Opera’s leading light



9 **BARACK OBAMA**  
(1961– )  
44th to be elected president,  
and the first African American



10 **ROSA PARKS**  
(1913–2005)  
First Lady of Civil Rights;  
history-making bus passenger



First Baptist Church of Lexington,  
built by its members, 1894–95,  
and now on the National  
Register of Historic Places



11 **JACKIE ROBINSON**  
(1919–1992)  
No. 45 brilliantly broke  
baseball’s color barrier



12 **SUSIE KING TAYLOR**  
(1848-1912)  
First African American teacher;  
first nurse, women's rights hero



13 **SOJOURNER TRUTH**  
(1797-1883)  
Former slave; advocate for abolition  
and women's rights



14 **HARRIET TUBMAN**  
(1822-1913)  
Activist and pre-eminent conductor  
of the Underground Railroad

15 **AUGUST WILSON**  
(1945-2005)  
Leading 20th-century dramatist;  
he was awarded two Pulitzers

16 **CEDRIC WINS**  
(1963- )  
U.S. Army general; 15th superintendent,  
Virginia Military Institute



**CHURCHES IN THE UNITED STATES  
WITH PERMANENT ART GALLERIES**

- Basilica of St. Mary (Roman Catholic), Minneapolis
- Lincoln Berean Church, Lincoln Nebraska
- Carmel Mission (Roman Catholic), Carmel, California
- First Baptist Church, Lexington
- First Presbyterian Church, Fort Wayne, Indiana
- First Presbyterian Church, Greenville, South Carolina
- First Presbyterian Church, Lexington, Massachusetts
- Hennepin Avenue United Methodist Church, Minneapolis
- Plymouth Congregational Church, Minneapolis
- Rothko Chapel (nondenominational), Houston
- St. Ignatius Mission (Roman Catholic), St. Ignatius, Montana
- Saint Stephen's Episcopal Church, Richmond
- Trinity Cathedral (Episcopal), Phoenix



*Carmel Mission, California*



*Trinity Cathedral, Phoenix*