

NEWS RELEASE
For Immediate Release

EVENT WWI Centennial Concert & Centennial Memorial Gardens Dedication
 Keynote Speaker: Diane Rehm
 WWI Music by The Maryland Military Band

DATE Sunday, June 3, 2018 (1:00 - 3:00 pm)

LOCATION Epiphany Chapel & Church House, the only WWI Chapel in the United States
 Dedication of Centennial Memorial Gardens and Monument
 1419 Odenton Road, Odenton, Maryland

FOR MORE INFORMATION/CONTACT

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DESCRIPTION A Unique Voice — 100 years of Hospitality & Diversity as the only WWI Chapel in the United States

On June 3, 2018 the congregation of Epiphany Chapel & Church House and the Maryland WWI Centennial Commission welcome the public to an outdoor concert and dedication of a WWI Centennial Monument with keynote speaker, Diane Rehm. The event includes WWI music by The Maryland Military Band, vintage cars, reception and an opportunity to discover online information about family members who served in WWI. The Rt. Rev. Carl Wright, Episcopal Suffragan Bishop for the Armed Forces will preside at the dedication.

Diane Rehm, whose own father was deployed through Camp Meade to the trenches of WWI, will address the crowd—“Keeping Faith in Troubled Times.” Rehm is a much admired journalist, author and speaker who has been the recipient of numerous awards including the Peabody Award, the National Humanities Medal, and the Walter Cronkite Faith and Freedom Award. Her program, *The Diane Rehm Show*, was distributed nationally and internationally by National Public Radio until her retirement in December, 2016. She now hosts a weekly podcast, *On My Mind* (NPR) “featuring newsmakers, writers, artists, and thinkers on issues she she cares about most: what’s going on in Washington, ideas that inform, and the latest on living well as we live longer.” Her father, Wadie S. Aed, a naturalized U.S. citizen born in Mersin, Turkey, enlisted and

served in France with the United States Army, Camp Meade Detachment 147th Infantry 37th Division at the age of twenty-two.

BACKGROUND

Built in 1918, the Chapel was a home-away-from-home for young soldiers being deployed through the newly created Camp Meade. The facility included office space for chaplains who provided counseling and social engagements for soldiers. Second-floor rooms were furnished to provide overnight accommodations for family members wanting to say “good-bye” to their husbands and sons. The facility was established to welcome “representatives of other religious bodies” and to include “reinforcements to the Chaplains of the colored regiments.” Though segregation was the accepted norm in American society in 1918, a Chapel scrapbook of letters and schedules reveal a greater vision across these racial lines. The Rt. Rev. John Murray, Bishop of Maryland and later the Presiding Bishop of the Episcopal Church, announced, “You could not have done a better thing. Any man in the Camp shall be free to visit you on Sundays; and your workers will be welcome amongst us.”

The Chapel has been restored with financial help from the Maryland Historical Trust and is a National Register Historic Site. Included in the restoration of the Chapel is a Chaplains’ Peace Garden which includes bronze plaques with the names of 2,929 WWI chaplains. Included are 163 Navy chaplains, 2,766 Army chaplains, and among them 24 rabbis and 108 African Americans. The Chapel also features a WWI social history museum staged as it was in 1918 as sleeping quarters with bunk beds, original posters, victrola, trench art, uniforms, and items of everyday life and culture during WWI.

In time for its centennial, the Chapel’s cemetery has been redeveloped as the Centennial Memorial Gardens with a half-acre open-space outdoor chapel created with granite boulders from a Maryland quarry and featuring dozens of iron poppies forged by blacksmiths from Belgium.

There is more to the story. The current congregation is a vibrant multiracial community involved with refugee resettlement and at-risk children. As was the story one hundred years ago, inclusive communities are still not the norm in the United States. There are approximately 350,000 congregations of faith in the United States. Fewer than 5% of these congregations are multiracial. “Multiracial” is defined as “no one group is 80% of the community.” In a country still struggling with racial prejudice, economic injustice and the systemic immutability of white privilege, Epiphany Chapel & Church House, this 100-year old relic, remains a unique voice in troubled times.

