

Christ Church



WOODBURY, N. J.

HIGHLIGHTS IN THE HISTORY
of
CHRIST CHURCH
Woodbury, New Jersey



PUBLISHED JANUARY, 1971

ACKNOWLEDGMENT

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DEDICATION

TO THOSE WHO HAVE BEEN FAITHFUL

The following is a brief summary of the history of the church in the town of Woodbury, gathered from hearsay among old residents of the town, but principally compiled from data given by one who has been a communicant of the church for over twenty-five years.

With this entry in Volume 1 of the Parish Register the written history of Christ Church begins. A history, however, is always more than mere facts and figures, names and dates, or places and things. It is the story of a people, and in this particular instance the story of the people of God in the city of Woodbury.

What follows will in large measure have been derived from our own parish records, the records of the Gloucester County Historical Society, and the Journals of the Diocese of New Jersey. We must remember, however, that it is the very nature of record keeping that entries be brief, clear and concise. Therefore, it becomes our task to look beyond the record of any accomplishments, to the people of God who made the same possible. We are dealing here with lives and a series of true labors of love. This is the history of our heritage at Christ Church, of the dedicated

men and women who have secured it for us, and of the challenge that their lives raises for us. With these thoughts in mind, let us begin.

The Episcopal Church did not always have a place of worship in the City of Woodbury. There was a time when a few faithful souls would gather where they could to worship God. During the episcopate of Bishop Croes (1815-1832) services were only occasionally held in the town, either by the Bishop himself or by the priests in charge of the parishes at Clarksboro and Chew's Landing. The faithful in Woodbury for a period of 18 years (1815 - 1832) worshipped under the spiritual direction of Bishop Croes and the rectors of Clarksboro and Chew's Landing: Frs. Richard Hall and J. Glancey Jones. On October 31, 1832, the Rt. Rev. George Washington Doane was consecrated Bishop of New Jersey. From the date of his consecration Bishop Doane made and kept annual appointments in the city. These services were held in the old Court House where large congregations and neighboring clergy would be present to meet the Bishop. Thus the first era of the history of the Episcopal Church in the city of Woodbury closes with ever increasing numbers of the faithful gathering to worship under the direction of their Bishop and the rectors of

Clarksboro and Chew's Landing.

In 1854 the first regular and organized attempt to introduce the services of the church was made. Bishop Doane in May of that year commissioned The Rev. William Herbert Norris as a missionary to Woodbury. The newly appointed missionary arrived in Woodbury having in his possession a letter of introduction from Bishop Doane, the text of which follows:

Riverside, 15 May 1854

My dear Mr. Carter,

This will introduce to you the Rev. Mr. Norris. He is instructed to remove to Woodbury and undertake the establishment of a Church there. I commend him to your kindness. You will show him the cure and aid him in its accomplishment.

Your faithful friend

G. W. DOANE

But Woodbury was far from being a bastion of the Episcopal Church at that time. Upon Fr. Norris' arrival the outlook was dim. There were few churchmen in the area. A large majority of the townspeople were of Quaker ancestry and the old ties were still very strong.

Father Norris, however, was undaunted by this bleak situation and on the Feast of Pentecost, June 4, 1854, the missionary work began at Temperance Hall. This building

had been erected in 1848 by the Samaritan Lodge Division #47 of the Sons of Temperance. It was composed of three stories with a two story dwelling on either side of a central hall. The third floor was one large room which was used for lodge meetings during the week and for Episcopal worship services on Sunday mornings. This third story meeting place came to be referred to as the "Upper Room", a title that provided a bond of unity between the efforts of the small church in Woodbury and the first Church of the Apostles, both begun at Pentecost. Doubtless this similarity of circumstances provided a constant source of inspiration for the faithful in Woodbury and for their spiritual leader, Fr. Norris. In the first services in the Upper Room there were none of the fine appointments that are usually associated with the service of the church. The services were humble and yet dignified, and for the congregation who had waited so long for regular worship Fr. Norris' small pocket communion set was as beautiful as if it had been of the most elegant proportions. They came to worship God and worship they did.

While regular services continued in the Upper Room a meeting had taken place to determine the organization and building of a church. As a result of this meeting a committee

consisting of Fr. Norris, John K. Wright, George Manly, John Downing, and Benjamin F. Carter was appointed Treasurer of the Fund. On a motion from Mr. George Manly at that meeting it was resolved that the organization, when complete, should be known by the name of "Christ Church". Subsequently, Dr. Norris and Messrs. Manly and Carter were appointed a committee to procure a suitable building lot. Throughout this period of planning, purchasing, and eventually building, the Upper Room remained the central place of worship. From that humble room in Temperance Hall was to emerge a spirit that would eventually see the building of a beautiful church. These men and women had witnessed the ministry of Word and Sacrament in their lives and in the lives of their children and they were now ready to build the Lord's house, but they would never forget the Upper Room.

On March 24, 1855, Fr. Norris purchased from Benjamin Lord, the lot on which the present church stands, together with the house on the corner of Delaware and Wood Streets. Two days later Fr. Norris deeded the lot, in consideration of \$500 to William Herbert Norris, John K. Wright, George Manly, Edward Pierson and Benjamin F. Carter, in trust for church purposes. On July 26, 1855, the cornerstone for the proposed structure was laid by Bishop Doane and the event was

duly recorded in his journal.

July 26, 1855

On Thursday, 26, I laid the corner-stone of Christ Church, Woodbury; and made the address. The Rev. Messrs. Norris, the Missionary, Bartlett and Graham, (of the Diocese of South Carolina) were present. I found the roots of the church already well set, in a soil, where some have thought, it never could secure a lodgment. But, "all men have not faith".

Bishop Doane obviously felt a strong sense of identity with the efforts to build Christ Church as the following excerpts from his Journals reveal.

April 27, 1856

On Sunday, 27, (fifth after Easter) in the upper room occupied by the congregation of Christ Church, Woodbury, the Missionary, the Rev. Mr. Norris, read morning prayers, and catechised the children, and I examined them, preached, confirmed three persons, and administered the Holy Communion. This has been a most successful enterprise; through God's blessing, on the Missionary's indomitable perseverance. The Church is nearly completed. It is a stone structure, of surpassing beauty.

April 20, 1857

On Monday, 20 April, in Christ Church, Woodbury, the Rev. Messrs. Norris, the Missionary, and Forgas, read morning prayers, the Missionary catechised the children, and I examined them, preached, confirmed five persons, and

administered the Holy Communion. Mr. Norris has already done wonders, in ground, which some thought hopeless. The Church is "beautiful, exceedingly".

The present structure was completed in 1856, and subsequently consecrated by Bishop Doane on Thursday, September 17, 1857. It must have been a truly memorable occasion for the Bishop. Perhaps his thoughts wandered to those many services held in the old Court House and in the Upper Room and to the faithful few who had gathered there. At any rate he was deeply moved and in his last report to the Diocesan Convention in 1858, he spoke these words.

September 17, 1857

On Thursday, 17 September, I consecrated Christ Church, Woodbury. The request to consecrate was read by the Missionary, the Rev. William Herbert Norris, and the Sentence of Consecration by the Rev. Elvin Keyser Smith. Morning Prayer was read by the Rev. Messrs. Garrison and Weld, the Rev. Dr. Odenheimer (of the Diocese of Pennsylvania), and the Rev. Mr. Mitcheson, reading the Lessons. I preached, and administered the Holy Communion; the Rev. Dr. Coleman (of the Diocese of Pennsylvania) reading the Epistle, and the Rev. Messrs. Graham and Durborow, of the same Diocese, assisting in the distribution. This was a day of gladness, and of gratitude, to many hearts, besides my own. Year after year, for many years, I have preached to large congregations, in the Court House; never to

more than two or three families, that professed and called themselves Churchmen; and it has passed into a proverb, of the vicinage, that the Church could never be planted in Woodbury. Nor could it, in the ordinary way. But the Missionary and his admirable wife gave themselves to the work. They had counted the cost; and they incurred it. Personal and domestic privations, they esteemed as nothing. Their vocation was to build a Church, which should be paid for; and to educate their children. God has blessed them, in the one. He will not fail them, in the other. From that upper room, up the steepest of all stairs, their worship was transferred to the holy and beautiful House, which has been the object of so much exertion, and so many prayers. And Christ Church, Woodbury, solid in stone, and "beautiful, exceedingly", and fitted for all sacred uses, stands, in the eye of God, the very gem of the Diocese.

Five years after the consecration of the new church Fr. Norris personally purchased Temperance Hall from the Franklin family at a cost of \$1,700. Undoubtedly the memories of that Upper Room had not waned. Then on the 20th of October, 1866, Josiah Lippincott and his wife deeded a lot on the south side of Delaware Street (opposite the church) to the Trustees of Christ Church. This lot was later to become the site of the Sunday School Chapel (old Parish House).

During the nineteen years of Fr. Norris' leadership of the parish, there were no organizations other than the Board of Trustees. The sittings in the church had always

been free. There was a weekly celebration of the Holy Eucharist, and for the larger part of each year there had been daily prayers. The services were supported in part by the weekly offerings, and to a great extent by Fr. Norris himself.

In the fall of 1873, Fr. Norris resigned his appointment as missionary, intending to travel in Europe. It has been reported that this decision was in no small part influenced by Fr. Norris' poor health. At this time, the Right Rev. William H. Odenheimer, who had succeeded Bishop Doane as the Diocesan Ordinary, appointed the Rev. William H. Lewis as Missionary-in-charge of Christ Church effective October 1, 1873.

Upon his arrival in Woodbury, Fr. Lewis set in motion the programs that would eventually establish Christ Church, Woodbury, as an incorporated parish. The corporation, titled "The Rector, Wardens, and Vestrymen of Christ Church in the City of Woodbury" was formed on April 10, 1874, with the Reverend William H. Lewis, Jr., the Rector; Messrs. Robert K. Neff and Benjamin F. Carter, the wardens; and Messrs. Henry C. Foote, Samuel H. Ladd, David Cooper, Samuel G. Twells, Theodore Glover, Henry C. Clark, and Frank I. Foote, vestrymen. The Charter of Incorporation was duly recorded at the County Clerk's Office on May 16,

services at Mantua, N. J., intending to make that a mission of Christ Church, Woodbury. The services were held in the Room of the Masonic Lodge, which was kindly offered for the purpose. In April, 1875, a subscription was started for erecting a suitable chapel -- amt. subscribed to June 1st about \$1,000. Chapel opened Aug. 27th, 1875 by Bp. Scarborough.

How incredible that is! Christ Church on the same year that it achieved parish status was already thinking of the spiritual needs of others, and the mission Church of St. Barnabas is to this day serving the people of Mantua.

In June of 1875, Christ Church Guild was organized with the Rector presiding at the initial meeting. September of that year saw work begun on the Sunday School Chapel of Christ Church. The Chapel was located on the old Lippincott lot on the south side of Delaware Street. This work was soon completed and the Chapel was opened with a ceremony led by the Rt. Rev. John Scarborough, Bishop of New Jersey, on the 26th of November, 1875. Fr. Lewis resigned as Rector of Christ Church in 1878, and the Reverend George M. Bond was called to be the new Rector. The Bonds lived in the house owned by Fr. Norris on the corner of Delaware and Wood Streets (now the Rectory). Fr. Bond's

1874. The proper papers were subsequently presented at the annual convention of the Diocese of New Jersey and Christ Church was admitted into union with the convention. It had been twenty years since the name Christ Church had been chosen at a meeting in Fr. Norris' home in 1854, and now Christ Church was a full fledged parish with its first Rector. Feelings ran very high among those who were loyal to the new Rector and those who were equally loyal to the older Missionary, Fr. Norris, upon whose return from Europe found himself without a church. Factions developed within the Church. There were those who identified themselves as Norrisites and those who were known as Lewisites. At Easter the Lewisites wouldn't use the white Altar Cloth made by the Norrisites and instead borrowed a large tablecloth from Paul's Hotel. The factions, however, were short lived. There was much to be done and Christ Church was about to enter one of the most prosperous epochs in the history of the parish.

Large congregations filled the church each Sunday, and in her prosperity Christ Church did not forget her humble beginning. The following entry is found in Volume 1 of the Parish Register.

In October, 1874, the Rev. Mr. Lewis began

services at Mantua, N. J., intending to make that a mission of Christ Church, Woodbury. The services were held in the Room of the Masonic Lodge, which was kindly offered for the purpose. In April, 1875, a subscription was started for erecting a suitable chapel -- amt. subscribed to June 1st about \$1,000. Chapel opened Aug. 27th, 1875 by Bp. Scarborough.

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sister, Miss Bertha Bond sang in the church choir and occasionally filled in as organist at an instrument that was supplied with air through the pumping of a handle that was hidden behind a screen.

During Fr. Bond's tenure as Rector, the former Missionary to Woodbury, Fr. Norris, died on February 18, 1880, at the age of 66. He was buried in the church yard of St. James the Less in Philadelphia, where two sons had previously been interred. Two days after his death the Vestry of Christ Church passed and published the following resolution.

Christ Church, Woodbury, N. J.
February 20, 1880

At a meeting of the wardens and vestrymen, held this evening in reference to the death of the Rev. William Herbert Norris, it was

Resolved, That the vestry of this church has received with deep regret the intelligence of the death of the Rev. William Herbert Norris, in the sixty-sixth year of his age, which occurred in the city of Philadelphia on Wednesday last, the 18th, inst.

His long connection of twenty years with this parish as its founder, benefactor, and its first minister; his life of sacrifice and devotion during those years in the cause of Christ and His Church; his faithful and learned teaching of the Word of God; his warm sympathy in the time of trial and affliction will not and cannot be forgotten.

Resolved, That the church be suitably draped in mourning for a period of thirty days.

Resolved, That these proceedings of the vestry be attested by the secretary, published in The CHURCHMAN, and communicated to the family of the deceased.

EDWIN D. MULLEN
Secretary of the Vestry

Apparently there was an immediate proposal to place a memorial tablet in the church. The proposed location of having it placed within the Altar rails met with opposition. Mr. Benjamin F. Carter wrote to the Rev. Dr. T. F. Davies (later to be consecrated a Bishop) of St. Peter's Church in Philadelphia asking either his opinion or recommendation regarding the proposed location for the memorial tablet. Dr. Davies wrote in reply:

Philadelphia
717 Pine Street
7th April 1880

My dear Sir,

The objection to placing a Memorial tablet within the rails of the Altar, to the memory of a former Rector, is new to me, but I confess that it comes home to me with considerable force. At the same time the usage of the Church both in England and America has given a degree of sanction to such a similar memorial within the Chancel.

Thus in Trinity Church, New York, the Astor Reredos upon which is inscribed the name of the late Wm. B. Astor: and an instance comes into my mind as I write of a Brass Altar Cross to the memory of the late Bp. Odenheimer which has been recently presented to my own Church. In Trinity Church, New Haven, Conn., which the late Mr. Norris attended while a student at Yale College, Bp. Jarvis, the 2nd Bp. of Connecticut is buried beneath the Altar, and beside the large Chancel window, I think within the Altar rails, is the Tablet to his memory. I think therefore that if you decide upon the position within the rails that you have precedents to justify the decision: at the same time I like the idea of the why association connected with the Altar and its immediate surroundings being that of the One Great Sacrifice.

I am, dear Sir
Very respectfully yours,

THOS. F. DAVIES

Benja. F. Carter, esq.

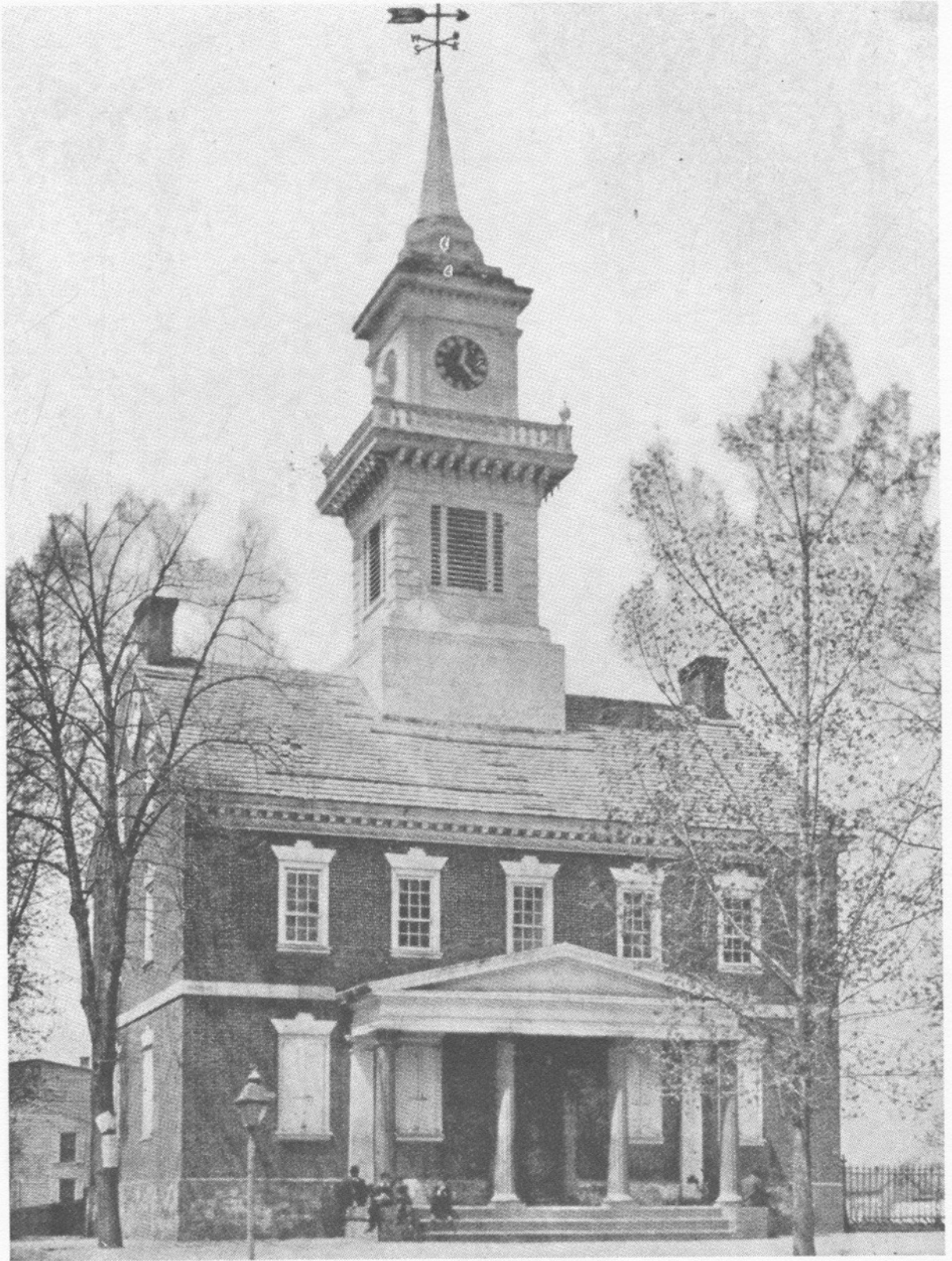
The Memorial Tablet was placed on the wall of the Sanctuary, just inside the Altar rail on the Epistle side, where it is still located.

In November of 1884, the Rev. Howard E. Thompson was called as Rector of Christ Church. In his diary Fr. Thompson noted his arrival on the 27th of November, 1884, as follows:

Thanksgiving day -- first day of residence in Woodbury -- arrived at 3.45 P.M. -- took possession



*The Right Reverend
George Washington Doane, D.D., LL. D.,
Second Bishop of New Jersey
Born May 27, 1799
Died April 27, 1859*



Old Court House, Woodbury—1787-1885.

Rumeli, 13 May 1874
My dear Mr Carter,

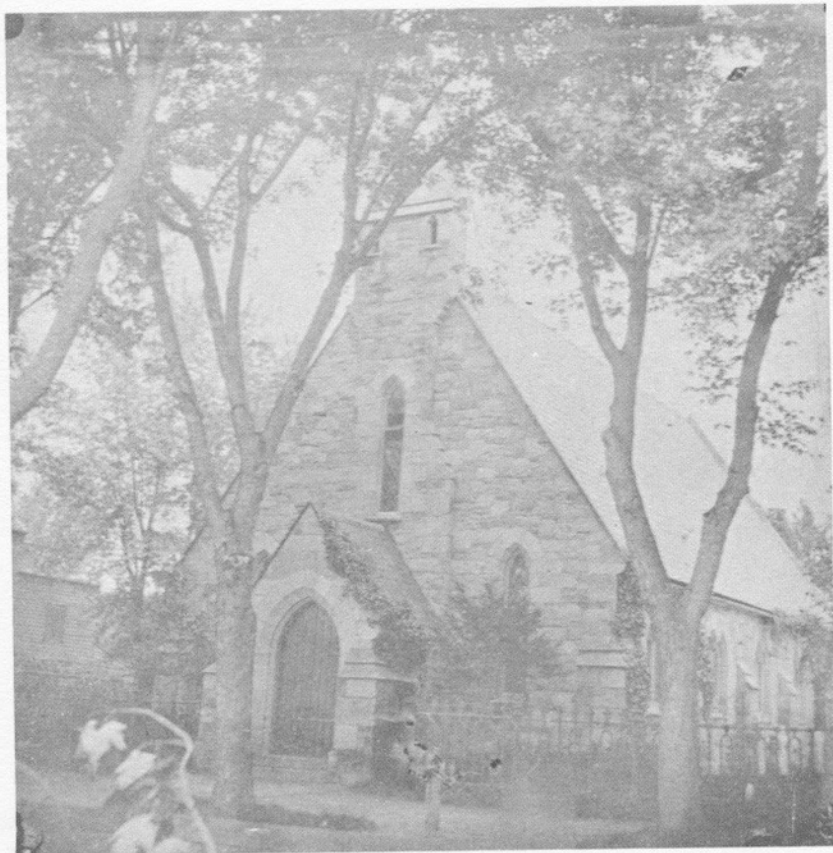
Thy wife introduces
to you the Rev Mr Davis. He
is inclined to remove to Woodbury,
and undertake the establish-
ment of a Church there. I am
wondering how to you Bishop. You
will have him for a time and
and then as it accomplishes

Yours faithfully
Bishop Doane

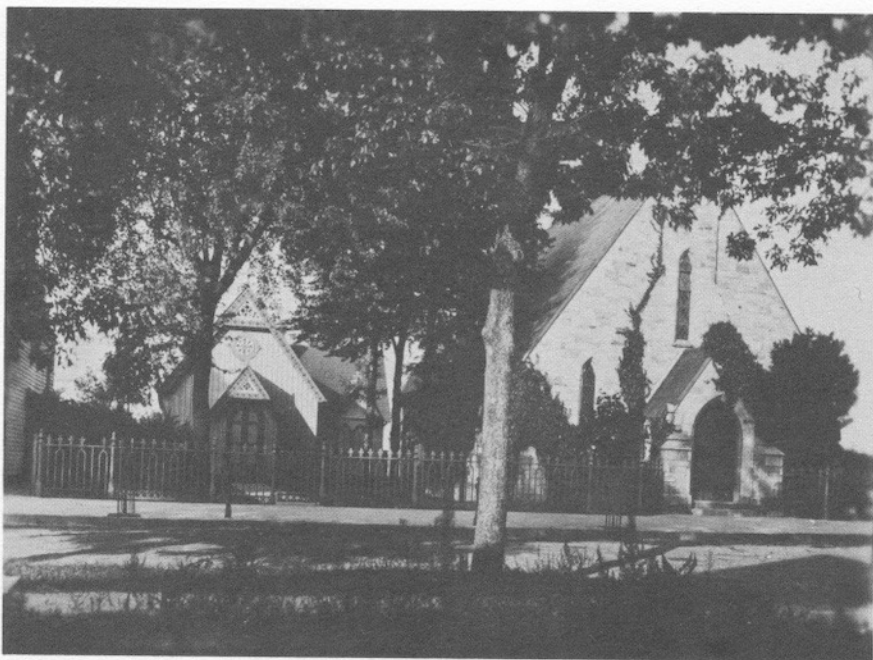
Chas Doane



Temperance Hall c. 1900.



Christ Church, Woodbury, N. J.



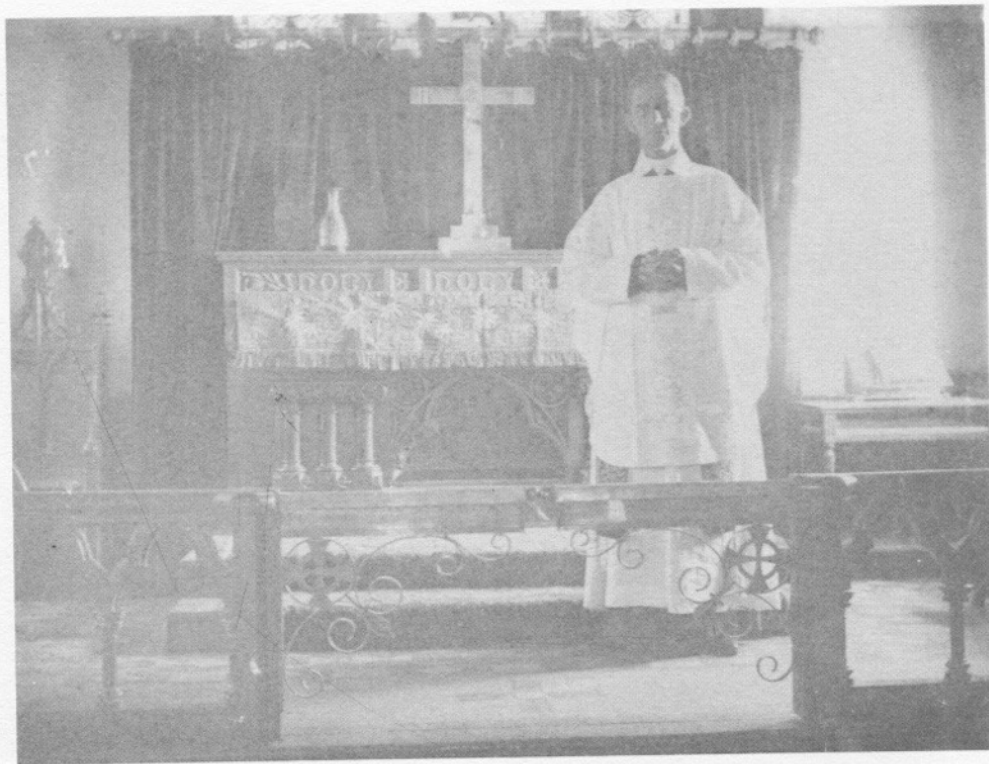
Sunday School Chapel after it was moved from the Lippincott lot in 1886.



Interior of the Old Parish House (Sunday School Chapel) 1886–1917.



Chancel and Sanctuary, Christ Church 1880–1890.



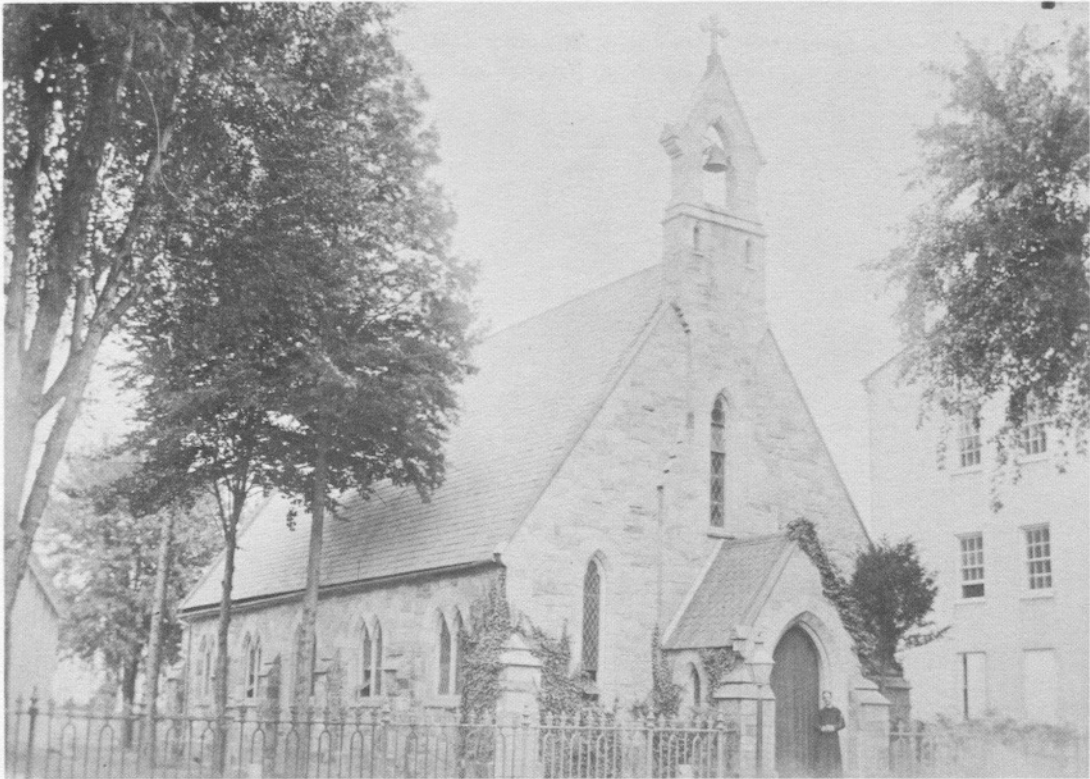
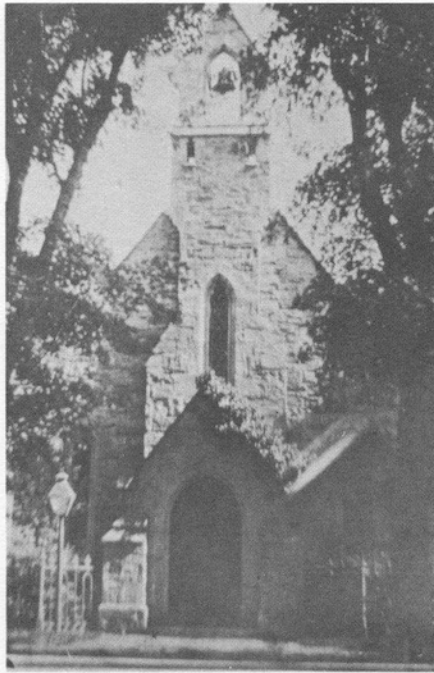
Sanctuary sometime after 1890 and before 1921.



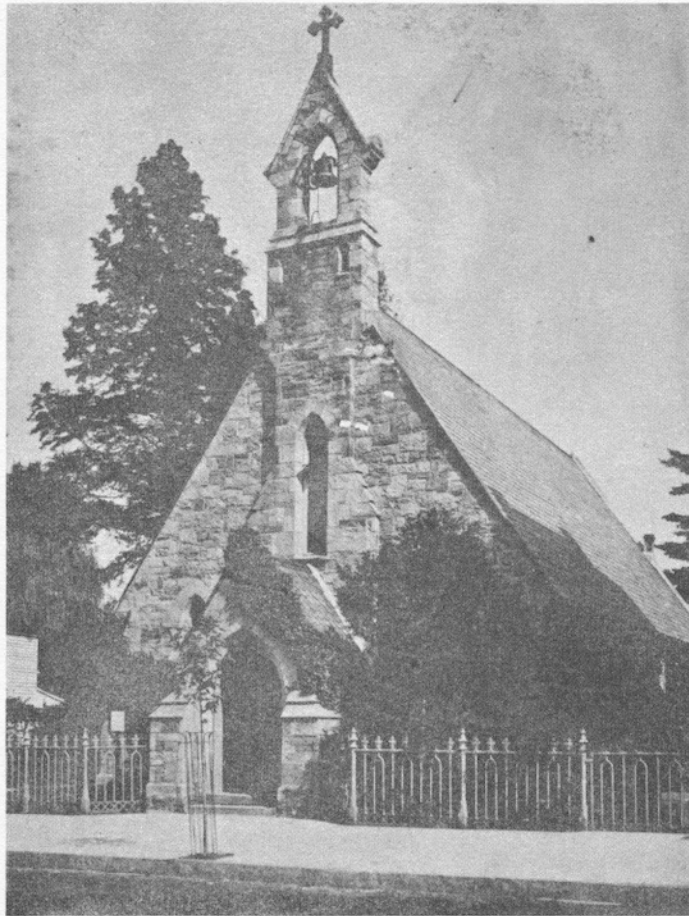
Church, Temperance Hall, and remodeled Rectory. The house on the corner is now behind the structure that occupies this location. c. 1896.



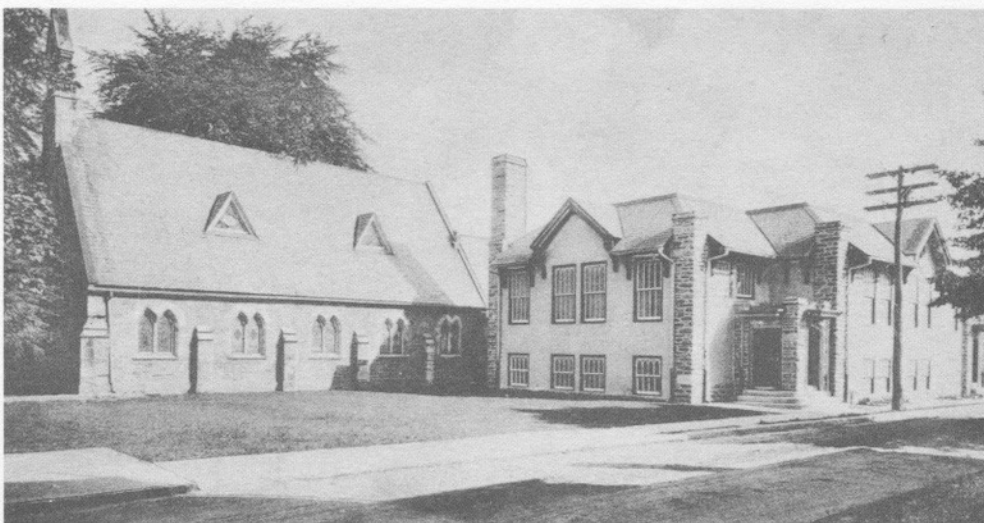
Christ Church in its Easter finery before the introduction of Electric Lighting, c. 1900.



Two views of Christ Church.



Exterior of Christ Church.



The New Parish House after its completion in 1914.



Church interior after 1923 and before the renovations of 1951.



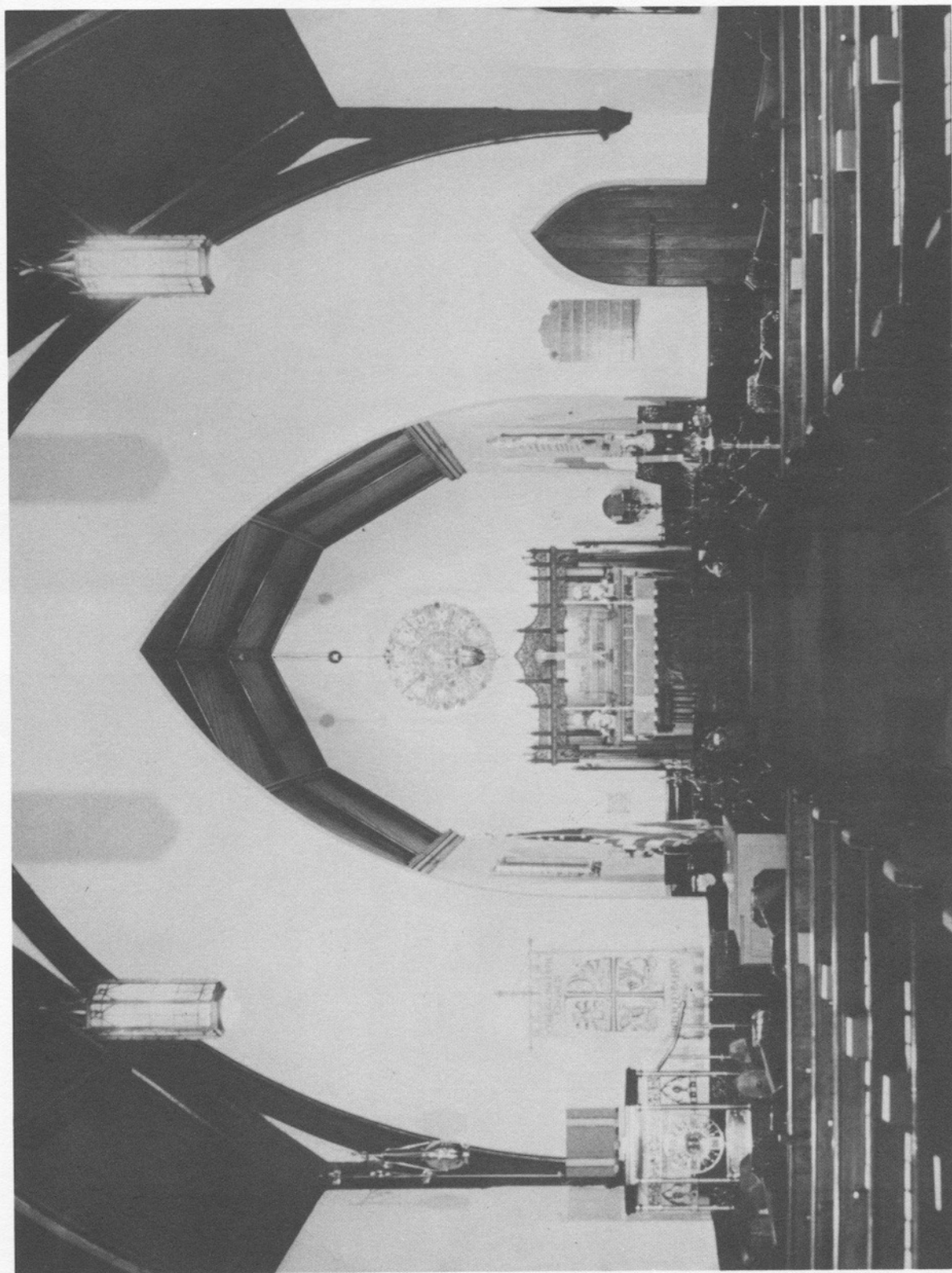
Interior 1960.



Chancel and Sanctuary 1960.



Easter 1966.



Christ Church interior, January 1971.

of rooms at Newton's Hotel, Nos. 34 & 35 -- was tendered a reception in the evening at residence of Mr. Henry C. Foote, Junior Warden -- about 125 in attendance -- very pleasant.

Then on the 30th he wrote:

Advent Sunday -- first Sunday of Rectorship. Large congregation, wore vestments for the first time here. First Sunday night service. Began course of sermons on the Four Last Things.

On the 5th of December, the new Rector began Friday services, which he noted were "well attended". For December 20th there was this entry:

First Set of linen Eucharistic Vestments completed by Miss Lydia Pierson, from pattern furnished by the All Saints Sisters of S. Clement's Parish, Philada.

On December 21st of the following year the Norris house, located between the Church and Wood Street, was purchased. When Fr. Norris died in 1880, the property was inherited by his widow, Juliet Rawle Norris. At the time of her death in 1883 it was passed on to her son, Dr. Herbert Norris, along with the old Temperance Hall. He in turn on December 21, 1885, deeded the house to the Vestry at a price of \$4,300.

Having secured this property the Vestry turned its attention toward the possibility of purchasing Temperance Hall. Fr. Thompson's diary records their decision.

Vestry decided to purchase the property on the other side adjoining the Church, thus gaining possession of the entire block fronting on Delaware and between New and Wood Streets.

Then on the 18th of March, 1886, Dr. Herbert Norris deeded Temperance Hall to the Vestry for \$3,500. The Upper Room was once again to be a place of ministry. In that same month the Sunday School Chapel was moved from across the street to a location behind the Rectory (Norris House) and between the Rectory (Norris House) and the Church. The property on the south side of Delaware Street was sold to a Mr. Harry Neilson for \$1200 to become the site of two dwelling houses. Christ Church, then, had acquired an entire city block on Delaware Street and bounded by Wood and New Streets. Then in October, the Vestry canvassed the parish for subscriptions for one year to pay off a note for \$1500. Quite unexpectedly, however, Mrs. John S. Twells gave \$5000 to pay off the existing debts on the Rectory and Temperance Hall. The parish subscriptions, therefore, were applied to

repairs and improvements of the property. The debts were "liquidated, and the mortgages cancelled. Laus Deo" (Fr. Thompson's Diary).

Fr. Thompson obviously had a gift for touching lives. During his stay as Rector church organizations thrived. To recall but a few of these, there was Christ Church Guild, St. Agnes Guild, Youngmen and Boy's Bible Class, an Acolytes Guild, Youngmen's Guild, Guild of Holy Innocents, and the Brotherhood of St. Andrew. Fr. Thompson's Diary reveals his delight at having an acolyte to assist him at the 7:00 A. M. Eucharist.

Sep. 12 - 12th S. after Trinity. First Celebration at 7 A. M. with a server. Robert Poole, 12 years old, acting in that capacity.

Also during his rectorate many physical improvements and additions were made, and numerous gifts and memorials were given to the church. But lest we think that the Kingdom had been firmly established in Woodbury there is this interesting and humorous sidelight. Many of the older members of the parish thought that Fr. Thompson was too "high". Some even thought that he had a "brass Phobia" and that his taste left a great deal to be desired especially in regard

to the processional cross. One little old lady wouldn't go to a service if she knew it was to be carried. However, one day she was trapped. She was sitting about three pews from the front when lo and behold it was carried past her before she realized it. But she was not to be undone. At the Recessional she left her pew and marched out of the church - ahead of the Cross.

The normal parish tiffs, however, did not slow down the work of the Church. There was much to be done, and many people had not yet heard the "good news" of Jesus Christ. Fr. Thompson extended the work of the Church in Paulsboro by serving as missionary there. Then, perhaps the greatest tribute that could be given to a priest came in 1890. The men of his parish, themselves, began to work actively to spread the Gospel. Fr. Thompson's Diary records the event.

"Feb. 16th, 1890 Quinquagesima Sunday St. Faith's Chapel at Red Bank opened after years of disuse. The work to be conducted by young men of the Saint Andrew's Brotherhood. Frank Cramer and Frank Boulter there the first Sunday. About 25 souls in attendance."

Subsequently an organ, hymnals and prayer books, and a lectern and prayer desk were obtained for the Chapel. In November of 1895, Fr. Thompson resigned as Rector leaving

behind him a legacy in property, furnishings, and spirit that continues to influence the shape of our corporate worship at Christ Church.

To replace Fr. Thompson the Vestry called the Rev. A. L. Urban as Rector. The responsibility for the Paulsboro mission changed hands, and in the Vestry minutes that recorded the call of Fr. Urban, was this item.

On motion Dr. Clark. That in consideration of doing away with the Paulsboro Mission \$200 be added to the salary making it \$1200 and Rectory which was unanimously agreed to.

During Fr. Urban's rectorate the Rectory was completely remodeled and veneered with stone. Another major change was the installation of a new pipe organ that was powered by a water motor. The pipes were decorated with a light blue color and gold design. The old hand pumped organ was placed in the Sunday School. No longer were the efforts of the organ pumper to be heard emanating from behind that feeble screen in the Church.

To Fr. Urban's lasting pride, on New Year's Day 1900, the Vestry adopted and signed the certificate which recommended his son for admission to the Sacred Order of Priests. Ralph Earnest Urban was probably the first man from Christ

Church to be Priested, and he eventually was consecrated as Suffragan Bishop of New Jersey on November 11, 1932. The circle of Christ Church's ministry continued to spread. From a ministry beginning with a humble missionary priest in Fr. Norris, had risen up man from among those same people to become a chief pastor of the entire flock. Fr. Urban certainly had reason to be proud, and so also did his church. In June of 1902, Fr. Urban left the church that had sent his son on the road to the priesthood.

There was no Rector at Christ Church until the Reverend Malcolm Taylor assumed the Rectorate March 15, 1903. While Father Taylor was Rector, the triangular windows were cut into the roof of the Church, the ceilings covered with ceiling boards and the interior re-decorated (January and February, 1904). Beginning in May 1905, stained-glass Memorial Windows were placed in the Church. This project lapped over into the Rectorate of the Reverend James McIlheny, who came to Christ Church the 11th of June, 1906, upon the resignation of Father Taylor in January (effective the first).

In December, 1906, a choir room was built underneath the Church with a stairway coming up into the Church in the back of the Nave. It was removed several years later, when it was considered to be a fire hazard. Electricity was introduced

in the Church in November, 1907, the old gas lamps installed during Fr. Thompson's rectorate being converted. During 1907, a lot was purchased in the Clarksboro cemetery and the remains of those interred in the yard of Christ Church were moved to the new lot in Clarksboro. Even to this period of time, there were no regular contributions to the support of Christ Church. There were about thirteen people, or around seven families supporting the parish. The women of the Parish Aid Society and of the Christ Church Guild gave much time and work to the parish.

Father McIllheny resigned the Rectorship in October, 1908, and his replacement came in February, 1909. The Reverend Edgar Campbell served Christ Church until February, 1912. While Father Campbell was Rector, Christ Church had a fire. A news clipping records this event.

Women communicants of Christ Protestant Episcopal Church, at Woodbury, braved the fire which attacked the building today, and rescued the altar cloth, Bible and bishop's chair from the burning altar.

The fire started in the basement from the heater and quickly communicated to the body of the church by way of the flues.

When the smoke was seen issuing from the roof Mrs. Edgar Campbell, wife of the rector, and several other women parishioners forced their way into the blazing building and saved what they considered its most valuable contents.

Firemen succeeded in saving the building.

This fire occurred in April, 1911. On May 1, "Mr. Speakman moved that the Vestry donate \$25 to St. Agnes' Guild for renewal of Altar Linens damaged in the recent fire". The motion was passed.

After the resignation of Father Campbell, it was over a year before Christ Church had another Rector. The Reverend Howard M. Stuckert assumed the Rectorship in April, 1913, a position which he held until his resignation in September, 1918. During his Rectorship, Father Stuckert's father drew up the plans for a new Parish House. Work was started in July, 1914, and the Parish House was completed by December of the same year, despite many setbacks. Gone now was Temperance Hall with its beloved Upper Room, but in its place there arose a magnificent structure. It is worth reproducing the news release concerning this building that we take so much for granted.

OPEN NEW PARISH HOUSE

Christ Church Places a Fine New Building
at the Service of the Whole Community

60th Anniversary and Annual Fair and Supper

It is not often that a church is able to erect

a Parish House and place it at the service of the town or community for benevolent, philanthropic and educational purposes. Christ Church, Woodbury, enters upon a new stage of its existence with the opening of its fine new Parish House.

The building is 45 feet wide by 73 feet long, one story and basement, part stone and part stucco. The building will be lighted by both gas and electricity and heated by the Broomell Vapor System, which is the best system obtainable for the purpose. Heat may be gotten up more quickly than in any other system and it can be regulated so finely that a fourth part of any radiator can be turned on or off.

The interior plastering is a sand finish. All the interior wood finish is of oak, the beauty of which is unsurpassed. The gymnasium in the basement is wainscoted in oak over seven feet high. Triple flooring is laid in the basement, which makes it as dry and warm as the upper floor. On top of four inches of tar concrete was placed a two inch hemlock floor and on top of that tar felt and a first class maple floor. The gymnasium which has a ceiling twelve feet high, will also be used for a dining hall and connected with it is a thoroughly modern kitchen, 26 feet long and 14 wide, equipped with dresser, an eight burner gas range, drop tables, enamel sink and windows for serving.

Great care has been exercised even in the placing of the lights to meet every need of the work. Provision has been made for drawing off the odors of the kitchen by an electric fan. The locker room is provided with shower baths and cement floor. The choir room which is exceptionally large and accommodating, being 16 by 33 feet, is connected with the church through the Sacristy which has been enlarged and rearranged.

The auditorium upstairs will seat 250 people and

has a stage 24 feet wide with curtains. Two drawing rooms each 15 feet long equipped with hot and cold water, makes this auditorium the finest in Woodbury, if not the largest. It's hoped that there will be frequent requests for its use for lectures, concerts, and entertainment for philanthropic and religious purposes. The Rector's office and the Ladies' Guild room are also on this floor. The latter room contains an open fireplace. There are three large store closets besides others. The electric fixtures are of exceptional beauty. Only by a visit to it can one appreciate the attention given to details, the substantial workmanship, the beautiful interior finish and the completeness of this building. Many constructive features have been employed which have never before been seen in Woodbury.

The total cost of the building including the furnishing is \$14,000. Mr. Joseph B. Best, of this city, is the contractor, and the architect for it is Mr. J. Franklin Stuckert, of Philadelphia. Mr. Theodore W. Muller is furnishing the heating plant and Mr. Thomas Hutchinson the electric wiring.

This article appeared on page one of the Gloucester County Democrat. One cannot escape the feeling of pride and accomplishment that permeates its every word. Over 100 students had at their disposal this splendid facility and the ministry of Christ Church parish widened once again to embrace God's world.

In February of 1917, the Sunday School Chapel (old Parish Hall) was sold to the Seventh Day Adventists for a sum of \$75. It was then moved to a site on W. Barber Ave.,

where it served as their place of worship.

At a special meeting of the Vestry on July 15, 1918, Fr. Stuckert tendered his resignation as Rector effective August 31, 1918. Immediately the Vestry began preparations for seeking a new Rector.

On September 9, 1918, a call was extended to the Rev. Robert G. Williams, then serving at St. Wilfreds', Camden. The text of the letter was as follows:

Woodbury, N. J.
Sept. 9, 1918

Rev. R. G. Williams
#60 South 30th St.
Camden, N. J.

Dear Sir,

At a meeting held this evening by the Wardens and Vestry of Christ Church, Woodbury, N. J., it was unanimously agreed that a call be extended to you for the rectorship; the remuneration to be \$1500.00 per annum, with free use of the rectory adjacent to the Church.

Should you decide to accept as we trust you will, the matter will have to be put before Bishop Matthews for his approval, and then we will give you final confirmation.

We will say that we received a letter some days ago from the Bishop in which he sanctioned our giving you consideration.

Yours very truly,

Fr. Williams accepted the call and became the tenth

priest to serve the people of Christ Church. He then began a long and arduous ministry, but also an extremely fruitful one. Fr. Williams came to Christ Church on the footsteps of a war that had shocked the minds and hearts of all Christians. He led his flock through the Great Depression, through the Second World War, and the Korean Conflict, all the while guiding them and nourishing their faith in God. Fr. Williams gave himself not only to his church and diocese, but to the community at large by serving in many civic projects. In recognition of his devoted service to the Diocese of New Jersey. Fr. Williams was made an Honorary Canon of Trinity Cathedral in Trenton by the Right Reverend Wallace John Gardner. The service of institution was held in Christ Church in 1949.

In 1951, under the direction of Canon Williams, the properties of Christ Church were improved and expanded. The Pulpit and Lectern were moved to their present locations. The organ was completely rebuilt and improved with the organ pipes being placed in a small room above the entrance to the Chancel. During the alterations a general redecoration of the Church was carried out under the supervision of Mr. Ralph Kurtz, a Vestryman. A new wing was added to the Parish House from

plans drawn by Mr. Earl L. Daily, a Vestryman.

In the spring of 1954, a Curate, the first in the history of Christ Church, was obtained. The Reverend John Van Sant. This precedent setting increase in the ministerial staff bore witness to the ever expanding circle of influence through which Christ Church was touching lives. Following Fr. Van Sant and continuing to the present has been a succession of Curates who have ministered to this parish, and who in the process have found the shape for their future ministries wherever they may have been or will be.

During the latter part of May, 1956, Christ Church celebrated the one hundredth year of continuous services in the Church, and used the occasion to hold a testimonial dinner for Canon Williams. These excerpts from the Woodbury Times record the tone of the celebration.

CHRIST CHURCH PLANNING SPECIAL
SERVICES FOR 100TH ANNIVERSARY

Plans are now being made for the celebration of the 100th anniversary of Christ Episcopal Church, of Woodbury, with special services on Sunday, May 20, with the Rt. Rev. A. L. Banyard, Bishop of the Diocese of New Jersey, being present.

A testimonial dinner will be held on May 23 in honor of the Rev. Canon Robert G. Williams, rector of the church.

May of 1956 will mark the 100th year of continuous services in Christ Church and Canon Williams is completing 38 years of devoted service as rector.

Three services will be held on May 20. Holy Communion will be celebrated at 8 A. M. and approximately 50 people will be confirmed at the 11 o'clock service. The clergy of the community will be invited to attend the evening service.

The committee for the celebration said that so much enthusiasm has been exhibited that the caterers will serve the dinner in the Woodbury Armory in order to accommodate all of the people. Tickets are already on sale.

Woodbury Daily Times - May 24, 1956

CHRIST CHURCH RECTOR HONORED WITH DEGREE AT TESTIMONIAL DINNER

The Rev. Canon Robert G. Williams, rector of Christ Episcopal Church since 1918, was honored last night at a testimonial dinner that climaxed the 100th anniversary of the church. -----

Tributes Paid

Tributes were paid to Canon Williams -- as an outstanding churchman, a humanitarian, and a civic leader -- by Mayor Henry W. Peterson, representing the city; Dr. Harold Simmerman, representing the service clubs of Woodbury, and The Rev. G. Wendell Jung, representing the Ministerial Association.

Mayor Peterson said that Canon Williams had contributed greatly to community life, as well as doing outstanding work in his ministry for the church, and pointed out that he had given aid and assistance to hundreds of people who had gone to him seeking counsel and comfort.

Dr. Simmerman said that his association with Canon Williams had revealed him to be a man with a warm, human sense of humor that "is so essential in human relationship". He also said that as a Rotarian "he has exerted a tremendous influence in his activities in that field" and "has been an inspiration to many men who have been associated with him in the service organization".

Canon Williams was referred to by the Rev. Jung as the "dean" of the Ministerial Association and said that "he has brought honor to that title" and has "inspired his brother clergymen".

Bishop Speaker

Bishop Banyard, in his address, said that Woodbury has become one of the foremost parishes in the diocese and that Canon Williams is one of its foremost clergymen. -----

A letter written by Mr. Robert C. Hendrickson, American Ambassador to New Zealand summarizes the heritage and future of Christ Church.

American Embassy
Wellington, New Zealand
March 27, 1956

My dear Rector:

Though a vast ocean and a mighty continent presently separate the Hendricksons from home and family, our clear memories of the simple beauty of that little church on Delaware Street in Woodbury serve to remind us each day that without God, the Father, and His precious Son, Our Lord, there would be no great cause for missions such as the one upon which we embarked more than a year ago - so, as we are reminded that this year marks the 100th Anniversary of the

establishment of Christ Church, we give thanks to Divine Providence for the spiritual influences of its foundation members and those who have so devotedly served its cause over the past century. From early boyhood I have known a goodly number of its Rectors, its Vestrymen, and for more than 50 years I have known most of its parishioners. It is from the hands of these good men and women, living and dead, and their labors that we in the parish today enjoy this rich heritage called Christ Church, Woodbury. Thus, as we dedicate ourselves anew to foster and perpetuate their good works, let us give thanks to the Almighty for their lives and their devotion to God and country.

As Christian men and women who are privileged to carry on the unfinished work of those who have gone before us, it is most fitting that in the course of these 100th Anniversary ceremonies we should highly resolve that 1956 shall mark the beginning of an unprecedented growth in the life of our church which will serve as an appropriate memorial to its sons and daughters for all time to come. That the anniversary ceremonies may be one of the biggest events in the life of the church will be among my prayers throughout the year.

With all good wishes to your committee, the Vestry, the congregation and your good self, I am,

Sincerely,

(signed) ROBERT C. HENDRICKSON
American Ambassador

On Sunday afternoon November 3, 1957, Canon Williams was honored by his Seminary. The honorary degree of Doctor of Sacred Theology was to have been conferred at the commencement exercises of the General Theological Seminary in

May of 1957, but because of illness Canon Williams was unable to attend, so representatives of the Seminary came to Woodbury and within the walls of Christ Church paid tribute to this fine pastor and scholar. In the spring of 1960, Canon Williams resigned as Rector of Christ Church, bringing to a close a ministry of loving service that lasted 42 years. The Vestry then called the Rev. William V. Rauscher to be Rector, effective August 1, 1960.

Fr. Rauscher's ministry has touched many lives in the ten years he has served Christ Church, but here we deal with a time that has not yet passed into the realm of history. It is better to leave the evaluation of this ministry to the hands of our children. We are too close to the source. Much could be written, but we must not give in to the temptation. We know very well what has been done, but we do not yet know what awaits on the horizon.

Postscript

We have journeyed together through time and space. We have seen the continual development of a band of Christians from the time they worshipped together in private homes to the present moment. It must be remembered that behind each entry in that history, however hastily recorded, however in-

significant it seemed, were the lives of hundreds of faithful people. They were people whose lives were as complicated as ours and who faced the perennial problems that afflict mankind: war, depression, sickness and death, doubt and uncertainty. But through all of the crises they collectively and individually faced, they had a church to come to and because they had a church, they had a mission to the world. Today we live and move and worship within that heritage that was secured for us. It falls to us then to take that heritage and improve upon it, for as we have seen, the Church never ceased to expand its circle of ministry. We shall all die, but the Church shall go on. We thank God in this history for the labours of his faithful servants throughout the ages. As we worship in their presence and in the presence of their achievements, let us pray that yet unborn generations may thank God for our work as they write the History of Christ Church, Woodbury.

Bishops of New Jersey

John Croes

(November 19, 1815
(to
(July 30, 1832

George Washington Doane

(October 31, 1832
(to
(April 27, 1859

William Henry Odenheimer

(October 13, 1859
(to
(Diocese Division

(NEW JERSEY DIVIDED INTO TWO DIOCESES IN 1874))

(February 2, 1875

John Scarborough

Clergy of Christ Church

May , 1854)
)
) to)
) William Herbert Norris

September , 1873)

October , 1873)

William E. Lewis

to)
) 1878)

George M. Bond

1878)
) to)
) 1884)

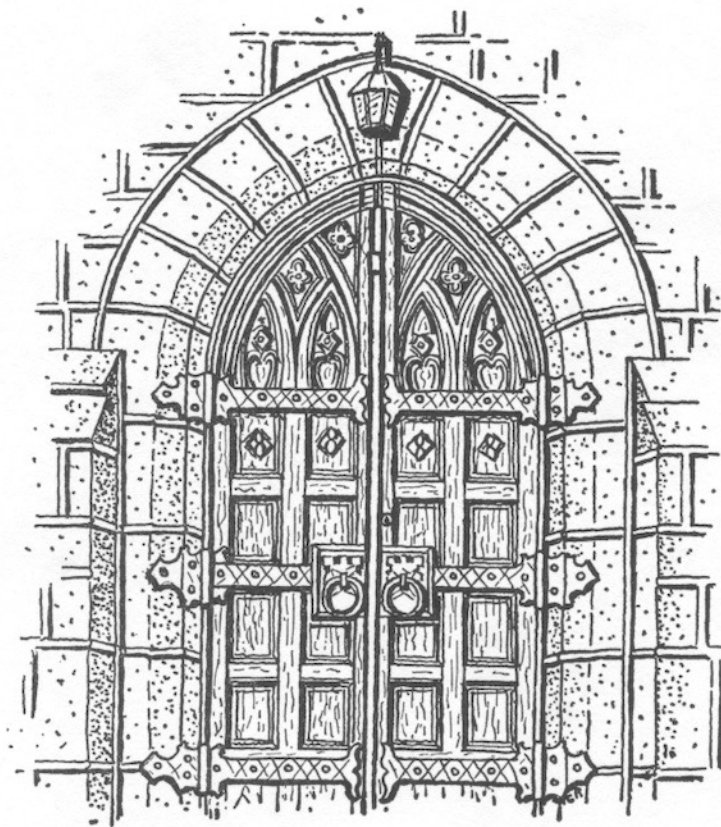
November 30, 1884)
) to)
) Howard E. Thompson
) November , 1895)

May , 1896)
) to)
) Abram L. Urban
) June 1, 1902)

March 15, 1903)
) to)
) Malcolm Taylor
) December 31, 1905)

June 11, 1906)
) to)
) James O. McIlhenny
) October , 1908)

February , 1909)
) to)
) Edgar Campbell
) February , 1912)



Behold, I stand at the door and knock