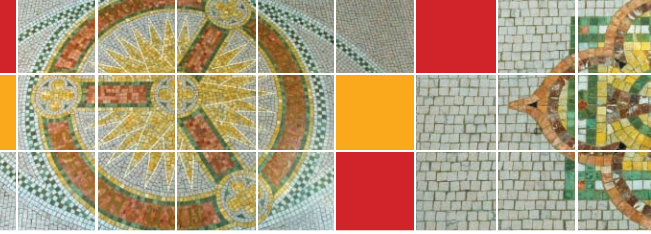


Trinity Episcopal Church - Early History

- The first clergymen of the Episcopal Church visited the Wyoming Valley in 1772, but for nearly forty years no regular services of the Episcopal Church were held here. The Episcopalians worshipped with other members of the Old Ship Zion after it was built in 1812. In 1814, the Rev. Jackson Kemper of Philadelphia performed the first recorded baptism according to the Prayer Book Rite in the village.
- In 1817, St. Stephen's Church was chartered by the Commonwealth and shortly afterwards the Episcopalians decided to build a church of their own. The new church was consecrated in 1823.
- A period of intense missionary activity began in 1849 with the founding of St. James' Church, Pittston, and continued through 1892. During this period of activity, six Wyoming Valley churches were founded, including our Trinity Church. There were eleven in attendance at the initial meeting held on July 2, 1883.
- The members elected to serve on the first Vestry were: James McCabe, Senior Warden; R. D. Lacoë, Junior Warden; John Howell, W. B. Culver, T. D. Grier, William Allen and A. G. Mason. These men made arrangements to purchase the lots on which our church now stands, at a cost of \$2,500.
- The first Parish meeting was held on April 18, 1885, at which time the following men were elected to the Vestry: E. G. Mercur, Senior Warden; R. D. Lacoë, Junior Warden; E. R. Troxell, W. B. Culver, S. B. Bennett, A. G. Mason and C. H. Phillips, Secretary.
- With the acceptance of the Rev. D. Webster Coxe, of Fairmont, Ohio, to become pastor, the first service was held in Ferguson Hall on Sunday, October 13, 1885. There were 62 names on the list of Communicants.
- The stakes were driven on the site of the new church on September 14, 1885, with the first service being held in the Sunday school room on Christmas Day, 1886, and the first service in the church proper taking place on March 10, 1889.
- Trinity Guild and the Young Ladies Guild were both organized as early as 1885, and both worked tirelessly toward the contribution of equipment for the new church. The latter guild purchased the pipe organ for \$1,500 and disbanded after their accomplishment, while Trinity Guild remained a permanent organization, helping in the payment of interest and principal of the mortgage which amounted to \$6,000 and was held by Thomas Ford.
- Rev. James P. Buxton of Drifton, Pa., was called to serve as rector to succeed Rev. Mr. Coxe who resigned. The Rev. Mr. Buxton was followed by the Rev. Edward Henry Eckel of Delaware, who assumed the rectorship on April 12, 1891.

RATEFUL REMEMBRANCE
OF
MARGARET LACOE WHITE
1864 - 1935
FOR HER GENEROUS LEGACY



A meeting for consideration of the propriety of forming an Episcopal Church in West Pittston was held at the residence of Mr William Allen on River Street West Pittston at 8 o'clock P.M. July 2nd 1883.

A copy of an excerpt from Trinity's Historical Minutes referring to an initial meeting on July 2, 1883 to discuss the desire to establish an Episcopal Church in West Pittston.

A copy of an excerpt from Trinity's Historical Minutes referring to a motion made by West Pittston resident Ralph Lacoë on July 2, 1883, to establish an Episcopal Church in West Pittston.

On motion of Mr R D Lacoë Mr John Howell was elected Chairman, and on motion of Mr Wm Allen Dr B P Horroff was elected Secretary. Mr R D Lacoë offered the following Resolutions, which were adopted Resolved, 1st That it is the sense of this meeting that the time has arrived when it is necessary for the good of the Church at large and the welfare of our people in this Borough and vicinity, that a separate parish of the Protestant Episcopal Church of the United States be formed in West Pittston.

We the undersigned, agree to pay the amounts set opposite our respective names for the purpose of buying a lot and building a Chapel or church in the borough of West Pittston for the Parish.

An excerpt from Trinity's Historical Minutes referring to the promise of initial donations of supporters to purchase a lot and build an Episcopal Church in West Pittston.

An excerpt from Trinity's Historical Minutes listing some signatures of supporters to purchase a lot and build an Episcopal Church.

R. D. Lacoë	twenty five hundred dollars	\$2500.00
Wm Mason	Five hundred	200.00
W B Culver		300.00
James M Lacoë	Parish	250.00
John Howell	Parish	500.00



An excerpt from Trinity's Historical Minutes referring to the name to be given to the new Episcopal Church to be established.

By motion the choice of name was left to the Ladies.
On motion of Mrs Wm Sumner, the name of Trinity Church, was adopted.

On motion Mr James McLeub was elected Senior Warden, and Mr R.D. Laco was elected Junior Warden

An excerpt from Trinity's Historical Minutes and the first meeting of the elected vestrymen at the residence of R.D. Laco on July 21, 1883, regarding the election of a Senior Warden and Junior Warden.

The subject of calling a pastor being before the meeting, it was resolved that the senior warden Mr E.G. Mercus be directed to extend a call to the Rev W.W. Coxe, at a salary of one thousand dollars per year, and that in case Mr Coxe should accept the call, he be requested to come to us as soon as he conveniently can.

An excerpt from Trinity's Historical Minutes at the 19th Meeting of the vestry on September 14, 1885

Early History (cont.)

- During Rev. Mr. Eckel's tenure, there was a period of great and varied activity in parish organizations. These included: Junior Branch of the Woman's Auxiliary, Chancel Guild; Industrial School, and the Penny Savings Bank and Clothing Bureau.
- The Vestry By-Laws were adopted in 1894, and a number of additions and improvements were made throughout the church and Sunday school room. Rev. Mr. Eckel tendered his resignation on September 14, 1896. The Rev. Frank P. Harrington was named the new rector on November 29, 1896 and he served until May 29, 1905. It was during this period that the communicants increased from 134 to 201.
- The parish debt had been wiped out by July 21, 1902 through coal royalties, "talent" work and special offerings, plus a direct subscription.
- The church was consecrated on October 14, 1902 by the late Rt. Rev. Ethelbert Talbot, D. D. and Bishop of the Central Pennsylvania Diocese. A luncheon reception was held at the Exeter Clubhouse.
- Mrs. Margaret Laco White offered to build the parish a rectory in September, 1902 as a memorial to her father, R. D. Laco, who was a member and Junior Warden of the first Vestry. Ground was broken for its construction in April 1903 and it was completed and occupied by Rev. Mr. Harrington, January 27, 1904.
- The work of erecting and equipping the church buildings had been so thoroughly and adequately done in the past years that no great material changes were to be recorded for some time. A notable improvement was the construction of a tile floor of Tennessee marble in the sanctuary and the choir aisles, with symbolic figures and inscriptions, done in memory of Mrs. Ann Hughes, by her three sons.
- A number of other memorials were presented in the ensuing years, such as the Chancel Prayer Book and Hymnal, processional cross, and contributions to the endowment fund.
- The Rev. G. H. Kirkland, former rector of St. James, served as a supply rector following Rev. Mr. Harrington's resignation. The Rev. Edward Darlington Johnson became rector on December 15, 1905, his rectorship terminating on March 15, 1912, when he returned to his former charge at Brunswick, Maine.
- The Rev. Arthur J. Glasier was appointed rector on September 1, 1912. During his stay at Trinity, a new set of by-laws were adopted and the weekly envelopes system was inaugurated. Two major improvements were the steam heating system that cost \$687 and the purchasing of a new carpet for the church proper at the cost of \$487.13. The entire church and rectory were redecorated at the cost of \$5,418.28.

Early History (cont.)

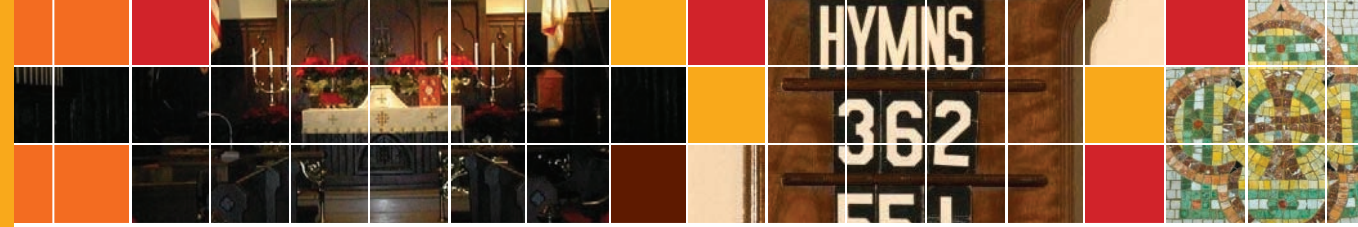
- Rev. Mr. Glasier conducted a mission for one week, with a total attendance of 884. The Vestry approved a motion to dispose of the old Communion Service. Additional gifts were presented including Eucharistic lights and \$500 for the endowment fund.
- The Rev. Albert E. Greanoff was called by the Vestry to fill the vacancy left by the resignation of Rev. Mr. Glasier in 1918, with Rev. Mr. Greanoff assuming his duties here in July of that year. It was in October of that year that church services were forced to be suspended due to an outbreak of influenza. Many more memorials were given and the Vestry approved a move to purchase 200 new hymnals by a subscription plan. The Sunday School membership stood at 150 in 1921. On November 13, 1923, Miss Louise Farrer was appointed a member on the Vestry and the only Vestrywoman until 1972. In 1924, Willis J. Parker, a member of the church, was ordained as a deacon.
- The Rev. George R. Hewlett took over the reigns of the ministry at Trinity in June, 1927, succeeding Rev. Mr. Greanoff who resigned December 1, 1926. During the two years Rev. Mr. Hewlett was here, the women's organizations replaced the kitchen stoves and 150 revised Prayer Books were purchased.
- The Rev. A. E. Koch became the new rector in August, 1929 and served until April 1932. During this term, new lights were placed in the church and the interior was given a new paint job. Rev. D. Dickinson followed Rev. Koch in a matter of days as the new rector, and he retired in October, 1932.
- The Rev. Eugene A. Heim answered the call of the Vestry, December 1, 1932. The church observed its 50th anniversary in 1933. The amount of \$5,000 was bequeathed to the church by Margaret L. White for the upkeep and repair of the rectory in 1935. Many more memorial gifts were presented to the church during the next several years. The budget for the church in 1937 amounted to \$3,960. New chairs for the Sunday school room were purchased that year.
- In 1938, St. Margaret's Guild had a sign erected on the church lawn. The Sunday School received a piano in 1939, and the budget for that year was up to \$4,015.
- In 1940 the church was the recipient of \$273.60 for coal mined and marketed from the Top and Marcy veins under the church property. The WPA laid new sidewalks and curbing along the church and rectory. Repairs had to be made to the church due to cave damage in 1941. The Hughes Memorial window was installed and dedicated June 8, this same year. On September 10, 1942, an honor roll was placed in the church for names of those members serving in the armed forces, and the Vestry and Rector presented Prayer Books to the boys

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An excerpt from Trinity's Treasurer's Statement, submitted to the membership at a parish meeting on April 26, 1886.

R. D. LACOE, TREASURER,

IN ACCOUNT WITH TRINITY CHURCH, WEST PITSTON.

Dr.

Sunday collections,	\$ 189 08
Subscriptions,	885 50
Special collections,	72 32
Ladies' Aid Society,	70 70
Balance due Treasurer,	1 88
	\$1,219 48

Cr.

Mr. Lacoe reported the progress made in building Church, and it was decided to finish basement at once and to enclose the upper part of the Church building.

An excerpt from Trinity's Historical Minutes at the 27th meeting on August 27, 1886."

An excerpt from the Letter of Resignation of first Trinity's Rector, dated February 22, 1890.

To the Wardens and Vestry of Trinity Church.

Gentlemen

"After careful consideration and prayer for the Divine guidance, I humbly resign my position as the rector of Trinity Church West Pitston, to take effect on Saturday the 22nd day of February A. D. 1890

Affectionately your friend and well-wisher
 (Signed) Webster Cook D.D.

History

and men called. Miss Elizabeth Kuschel was appointed organist October 3, 1944, succeeding Miss Mabel Repp.

- Rev. Mr. Heim resigned October 1, 1945 and was succeeded on September 15 that same year by the Rev. Gordon A. Reigler. William Grinrod resigned as choir director in 1946 and was replaced by Willis Netter. The budget for 1947 was \$5,360. Rev. Dr. Evans of Scranton served as supply rector following Rev. Mr. Reigler's resignation October 1, 1947
- The Rev. Walter C. Eastburn assumed the rectorship of Trinity on November 1, 1948. The Men's Club that year began to hold their annual turkey supper, which continued for several years after. The men purchased young turkeys and had Drs. J. P. and Charles Kuschel raise them. The present lights in the Sunday School were installed in 1950. A cash gift of \$1,000 was received from the estate of Maude Verplank. The Vestry adopted a \$6,585 budget for 1951. A new altar, dassal and brasses were placed in use in the Sunday school room in 1952. The Vestry put a subscription plan in action to pay for a new heating system that was installed on January 13, 1953. Numerous small improvements were made in both the church and Sunday school room during 1955 and 1956. Rev. Mr. Eastburn resigned in June, 1956.
- The Rev. John J. Shaw became our fourteenth rector on September, 1956. Frederick Nittel succeeded Willis

Netter as the choir director. A new Girl Scout Troop was organized in the church during 1956. New electric service and a stoker were installed in the rectory.

- During 1957, an Acolyte Guild was formed by E. Olin Thomas, a weekly bulletin was being published and distributed by the rector and the men and women of the church were busily engaged in a "Fix Our Father's House" campaign, at which time a great number of improvements were carried out. The Sunday school was also reorganized by Mrs. Shaw. Howard Lewis was appointed Sexton of the church on June, 1957.
- The Rev. John J. Shaw tendered his resignation in July of 1958 to return to Punxatawney, Pa., where he was formerly Asst. Rector. Services after the Rev. Mr. Shaw's departure were carried on by guest ministers and by Lay Readers George Weiskerger and Fred Eshelman. Many repairs were made in September and October of 1958 to the Church and the Rectory. Grounds were beautified by the planting of new shrubs. Trees that had been destroyed by blight were replaced. In November, 1958, the parish celebrated its 75th Anniversary. Participants in the service of Thanksgiving included two former rectors: The Rev. Walter C. Eastburn and the Rev. John J. Shaw; the Rev. Willis J. Parker, (a son of the parish) and the Venerable Dean T. Stevenson.

- The Rev. Henry G. Russell became the rector in March, 1959. Parking near the church was becoming a problem and in 1966 the Jones property across Spring Street was purchased for \$8,500.00. The house was demolished and a fund drive was started to pay for the paving of the lot.
- In 1967, through the generosity of Joseph F. Dohrer, a scholarship fund was created. The interest derived from this fund is given to members of Trinity entering professions in the humanities field.
- The Rev. Henry Russell retired in August, 1971 and the Rev. James P. Stevenson, rector of St. James, Pittston, served as supply priest until November, 1972. During this period, the Vestry discussed with the St. James Vestry the possibility of a shared ministry. At a special meeting held in May, 1972, the parish decided to seek and secure a separate rector for Trinity.
- In June, 1972, Hurricane Agnes caused devastating floods in the Wyoming Valley. A donation of \$1,000.00 from Bishop Gressle was distributed among parish flood victims. The retired rector and Mrs. Russell took shelter in the rectory while repairs were being made to their flood-damaged home in Kingston.
- Following an unsuccessful search for a rector, the Bishop proposed that the Rev. Peter H. Igarashi, who was on a Sabbatical from Sewanee University, Tennessee, be appointed as priest-in-charge for one year.
- At a special meeting in March, 1974, a proposal was accepted to join a cooperative parish to be known as Upper Valley Parish with St. James, Pittston; and Calvary, Wilkes-Barre, for a trial period of three years.
- When Dr. Igarashi returned to Sewanee in July of that year, the Rev. Henry F. Fairman was called to be rector of Upper Valley Parish with the Rev. James P. Stevenson as associate rector.
- Combined Church School sessions were held in Calvary Church on Saturday mornings and Junior and Senior High School students met at Trinity on alternate Sunday evenings.
- The problem of maintaining the church organ became critical in late 1976 and it was decided to purchase a rebuilt organ from the S. G. Bullions and Co. at a cost of \$8,000.00. The organ was installed in 1977 in the transept of the church beneath the original organ pipes. Chimes were donated by Mr. and Mrs. James Yates. Money contributed to the Henry G. Russell Memorial Fund was allocated to this project because of Mr. Russell's great love of music. Harriet and John Taylor presented new Prayer books in memory of their mother.
- In May, 1978, the Rev. Henry Fairman submitted his resignation to devote full time to his studies and the Rev. James P. Stevenson was appointed priest-in-charge. The Upper Valley Parish trial period was extended to December of that year and the possibility of a merger

History (cont.)

with St. James and Calvary was raised. Two special parish meetings were held to consider all aspects involved. In January, 1979, the parish voted against a merger at its annual meeting.

- During the next two years, there was considerable renovating and remodeling. Contributions to the Helen Kresge Memorial fund were allocated to kitchen remodeling. Gas grills were purchased by the Woman of Trinity to be used for the annual pancake and sausage suppers.
- During this period Trinity Church consistently engaged with other churches in the West Pittston community, in an effort to build community and strengthen ecumenical relations.
- In 1995, Reverend James P. Stevenson, rector of Trinity since 1978, and the Church's vestry began extensive renovations and construction on the building to modernize the building's facilities while preserving its original beauty. The Vestry was comprised of Rebekah Malkemas, Senior Warden; John Williams, Junior Warden; Paul Williams, Treasurer; Paul Neff, Assistant Treasurer; James Bencho, John Eshelman, Michael Hoover, Keith Weiskerger and Jean Yates. The board hired engineer, John Gamble to lead the effort. The vast majority of the work was performed by 3D Construction. Renovations of the Church were broken into three

phases. Phase I started in March, 1996 and focused on the exterior of the Church. Restoration began on the building with the repainting of all the masonry work. The undercroft windows were also replaced and all exterior trim was painted. Work was completed on Phase I in 1997.

- Phase II began in May, 1997 and focused on the interior of the Church. Construction and renovations were done on the undercroft of the Church. New floors and a new kitchen were put in and the building was brought up to code. Work was also done on the Sunday school room and restrooms. A new boiler and heating system were installed and the building was completely rewired. Finally, the building was made handicap accessible and an elevator was added onto the Church. Phase II was completed in 1998.
- Phase III began in May, 1998 and focused on cleaning and preserving the wood inside the Church, as well as making repairs to the damaged plaster in the nave, narthex and sanctuary. In addition, carpeting and new subfloors were installed and the brass in the building was refurbished. Finally, improvements were made in the Sacristy.
- All renovations were completed by 1999 at a total cost of \$900,000.00

- A rededication ceremony was held on Sunday, October 25, 1998, with the Right Rev. Paul Marshall, eighth Bishop of the Episcopal Diocese of Bethlehem, officiant for the ceremony.
- The Rev. James Stevenson retired in 2000 and the Vestry began a search for the calling of a new rector.
- On April 2, 2001, The Rev. John Major was called as rector and was instituted during Sunday Eucharist on June 24th of the same year with Bishop Paul Marshall as officiant.
- During the period of 2002-2008 the large debt generated from the late 1990's renovation was paid and Trinity Episcopal Church grew to be especially diligent to remain immersed in its mission, "to live and build holy community." Service and outreach to neighbors, the larger community and our world grew to become a parish focus and an array of new ministries called Trinity's Good Neighbor Outreach Ministries were established. The parish ministry outreach services were made available to serve the lost, wounded and needy of the region.
- A Parish Life Events Team was established during this period to oversee the discussion, creation and implementation of parish sponsored social events that help to strengthen the parish efforts "to live and build holy community." With a focus on fellowship, fun, and

hospitality, this team serves to coordinate an annual calendar of activities that serve the common good of all the people of the parish. Some annual parish events on Trinity's calendar have regularly included Shrove Tuesday Pancake, Egg and Sausage Dinner, 5 Giant Neighborhood Yard Sales annually on First Saturdays of May-September, Appreciation Socials [Women and Men], and an annual Pasta and Meatball Dinner.

- A several year emphasis on the exploration of the topic of "stewardship" led to the articulation of a variety of ministry opportunities available to parishioners. Ministries embraced by young and old alike include liturgical ministries such as Ministry of Reader, Crucifer, Acolyte, Chalice Bearer, Ministry of Greeter, Altar Guild, Trinity Adult Ensemble, Youth Episcopal Singers [Y.E.S.] Senior Section, Youth Episcopal Singers [Y.E.S.] Junior Section, Usher, Sunday Gift Bearers, Lay Eucharistic Minister. Adopt-A-Garden (Volunteers from the parish adopt areas of Trinity Grounds for the beautification of the property), Church School Teacher, Church School Aide, Child Care Aide, Fund Raising Group, and Office Assistants are among other opportunities made available for Christians to share their time, talent and treasure for the parish's good and the good of all God's Church. The annual Trinity Stewardship Honor was introduced as a way to affirm and recognize individuals

History (cont.)

and families of the parish who have a strong history of living out their baptismal vows and provide clear, strong witness to the Christian concept of stewardship as a way of life.

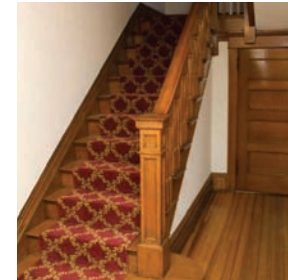
- Church School highlights over the years during this period included meetings every Sunday for all age groups and with an emphasis on "Take-Home" Faith Lessons to supplement the Sunday experience. In addition, the last Sunday of the month was established as Youth Ministry Sunday where youth exercise their time and talent gifts by sharing in the liturgical ministries. An annual calendar of social events for youth was adopted to include Valentine's Day Social, Family Breakfast with the Easter Bunny and Egg Hunt, Parish Cook-out and Picnic, Family Autumn Outing and Saint Nick's Visitation.
- Continuing Christian education opportunities for adults were reintroduced to the parish calendar including "The Journey," a year-long, at-home bible study, seasonal faith forums, the regular dissemination of Christian faith enrichment materials, and a variety of faith enrichment courses available through the Diocese of Bethlehem.
- In 2006, The Rector and Vestry reintroduced the annual Thanksgiving Dinner that was first introduced in 1948

and combined it with an annual invitation for spiritual renewal, humble thanksgiving for our blessings and the rededication and consecration of ourselves to God. Also serving as an "Estimate of Giving" event, parishioners have an annual opportunity to prayerfully reflect on their level of involvement in the parish and support for the Christian mission.

- Additional developments during this period included the introduction of Mondays: Days of Prayer, computerization of membership lists and Trinity's Treasury information, the beginning development of a parish web-page, finalization of comprehensive compilation of all property assets, annual Rector and Vestry reviews and updating of a comprehensive Ministry Workplan, regular ground and building inspections, annual financial audits and involvement in a regional evangelization and media effort along with Episcopal churches of the north and central region of the diocese designed to tell the region's population about the many good things that are happening in The Episcopal Church in Northeast Pennsylvania.

■ CHRONOLOGY OF CLERGY

- The Rev. Daniel Webster-Coxe.....October 1, 1885 – February 22, 1890
- The Rev. James Plummer Buxton.....June 1, 1890 – December 1, 1890
- The Rev. Edward Henry Eckel.....April 12, 1891 – October 1, 1896
- The Rev. Frank P. Harrington.....November 29, 1896 – May 29, 1905
- The Rev. Edward J. Johnson.....December 16, 1905 – March 15, 1912
- The Rev. J. Arthur GlasierSeptember 1, 1912 – May 27, 1918
- The Rev. Albert E. GreanoffAugust 1, 1918 – November 30, 1926
- The Rev. George R. HewlettJune 1, 1927 – May 31, 1929
- The Rev. A. E. Koch.....August 1, 1929 – April 30, 1932
- The Rev. John H. Dickinson.....April 30, 1932 – October 1, 1932
- The Rev. Eugene A. Heim.....December 1, 1932 - October 1, 1945
- The Rev. Gordon A. Riegler.....October 1, 1945 – October 1, 1947
- The Rev. Walter C. Eastburn.....November 1, 1948 – September 1, 1956
- The Rev. John J. ShawSeptember 7, 1956 – August 10, 1958
- The Rev. Henry G. Russell.....March 15, 1959 – July 31, 1971
- The Rev. Peter H. IgarashiJune 3, 1973 - June 30, 1974
- The Rev. Henry F. FairmanJuly 3, 1974 – July 30, 1978
- The Rev. James P. StevensonAugust, 1978 – August, 2000
- The Rev. John C. MajorApril 2, 2001 – Present



- When bishops traveled long miles to visit the parish they were welcome to stay overnight in the parish house in a room designated as The Bishop's Room. Much of the room's furniture is the original furniture reserved for bishop's of the late 19th Century.