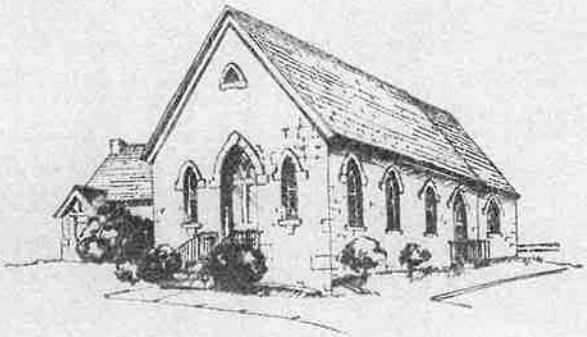
The First Hundred Years



Trinity Episcopal Church

Solebury, Bucks County, Pennsylvania

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Trinity Church

Solebury, Pennsylvania

by Charlotte Orr Gantz

Illustrations by Barbara McArthur
& Joanne McNaught

The Centennial Committee
of Trinity Episcopal Church
1976

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ACCORDING TO TRADITION, Trinity Chapel in Solebury owed its beginning to the Biles family of Circleview Farm on Old York Road in Solebury. Accounts varied: sometimes it was William J. Biles and his two nieces, Lizzie and Mary Jones; sometimes it was a sister-in-law, Mary Jones, who was the prime mover. In the latter case, William Biles was said to have had no hand in the matter. There was general agreement that in 1876 one had to go to Buckingham for an Episcopal service although Sunday School was conducted at Circleview Farm.

One hundred years later, how much of this can we accept as true? In some respects recollection erred. We know that the chapel was built in 1876 and that Trinity was incorporated at that time. It seems certain some members of the Biles family taught Sunday School at their farm. However, it seems equally certain that Episcopal services were held in Solebury for some time before the chapel was built. Our *Diocesan Church News* of 1916 states that the Trinity Solebury Chapel was founded in 1860 by Trinity Buckingham.

On December 20, 1876, the *Doylestown Intelligencer* carried the following item:

"A new church or chapel of the Episcopal denomination is now in course of erection at Centre Hill in Solebury. For some

time past services have been held in the schoolhouse by Rev. J. T. Carpenter of Centreville. These meetings are usually attended by fifty or sixty persons, which is quite as many as the small building will hold. Recently it has been determined to erect a chapel especially for religious services and application is being made to Court for a charter of incorporation. The vestry consists of several wellknown residents of the vicinity who have become interested in the enterprise and Mr. Carpenter will continue to perform the duties of the ministry. The new building is to be of stone, and is designed to accommodate about 100 persons. It will be of the Gothic style, and stand near the schoolhouse north of the York Road. It will be constructed so as to admit of enlargement if necessary. Most of the stone required has been presented for the purpose. On Friday last, the formal ceremony of laying the cornerstone was performed by Bishop Stevens of Philadelphia, assisted by Rev. Mr. Carpenter."

"Centreville" was, of course, Buckingham, and "Centre Hill" was the old name for Solebury village. The "schoolhouse" was the small stone building at the corner of Sugan and Route 263 (York Road) used until recently as a school library.

A second item from the Intelligencer of Oct. 12, 1909, relates specifically to William Biles. He was the accounting warden of Trinity Church Buckingham for many years, and in that capacity was in charge of legacies bequeathed to the church. He invested this fund (it amounted to $3,000) along with money of his own in Kansas mortgages (farm mortgages undoubtedly) and the whole amount was wiped out when the bonds were in default. He announced at the time that he would bequeath his farm to make up the loss, and did so, leaving his wife simply a life interest in his property. Mr. Biles died in 1896; his wife in 1909. On her death, his real and personal property was sold and the proceeds given to the Protestant Episcopal Church in the Diocese of Pennsylvania—the income to be used to help pay the salary of the rector.

All of this indicates that Mr. Biles' chief interest was in Trinity Buckingham. He is remembered as having contributed "a paltry sum" to the new chapel and in view of his close association with Buckingham, this is quite understandable. On the other hand, though the 1876 story made no mention of the Biles family, the Rev. Mr. Carpenter said in an annual report in 1894, "At Centre Hill we have a neat stone chapel erected through the efforts of the late Miss Mary M. Jones."

The loss of the legacies played an important part in the history of Trinity Buckingham and since there have long been close ties between the two churches, they affected Solebury as well. Before going into that, however, we need to review briefly the history of the older church.

The first services at Buckingham were held out of doors under some big oak trees, one of which is still standing. This was in 1837. With cold weather, the worshippers moved into a coach shop and they continued to use this until a church building was completed three years later. At that time Centreville, as it was then known, was admitted as a church in union with the Convention of the Diocese of Pennsylvania, indicating it was considered a parish.

Various rectors served the new church during the next two decades, at times devoting their efforts entirely to Centreville, at other times dividing their time between that parish and St. Paul's, Doylestown. In 1855, the rector at Centreville was William R. Griest (or Gries) and it was he who founded the mission at Centre Hill in 1860. The original stained glass window in the chapel there was given in his memory. (It's now at the north side of the chancel.) Mr. Griest left in 1861 to become an army chaplain during the Civil War. We have no records concerning the mission for the next twelve years but in 1874 the Rev. J. T. Carpenter became rector of Centreville and reported that he was conducting services in the schoolhouse at Centre Hill. In 1876, as we've noted, work was begun on a

chapel. The building proceeded through '77 while Mr. Carpenter continued "to hold services every Sunday evening at Centre Hill, the schoolhouse in which we worship being generally filled." He also said that about 150 individuals attended his services (in both churches no doubt) and that his Sunday School had 125 scholars.

In May of 1878 the Chapel was "approaching completion. $200 contributed now would enable us to occupy it with the old benches we now use in the schoolhouse; and $400 additional would finish it entirely and *free of debt.*"

The communities of both Buckingham and Solebury at this time were obviously populous and well-to-do. In 1876, land was donated to Buckingham by William Stavely (the Stavelys and Biles were either relatives or close friends). All indications point to the fact that Solebury residents paid for the new chapel, and in 1876 they also raised funds through the issuance of stock for the construction of a Community Hall to be erected on Old York Road north of the little schoolhouse. The contract for the Hall was awarded to Peter S. Naylor in May and his bid was $1805 —quite incredible by today's figures. As a matter of fact the chapel was valued somewhat later at only $1000 so the cost must have been in the neighborhood of the amount. The Hall was a more pretentious building, having an assembly room for dances, plays and parties on the second floor, while the main floor was used for a general store and the basement for voting and suppers prepared by various organizations in the area. It was here that our church suppers were held until 1933.

The Intelligencer referred to a "vestry" and since only a parish may have a vestry, there seems little doubt that Solebury considered itself such. The Diocese, however, always looked upon it as a mission and it was first to the Diocesan Board of Missions, later to the Germantown Convocation that Mr. Carpenter made his reports.

What was the chapel like when it was finally completed?

In general appearance it resembled the church today except that it stopped before the present chancel. Altar and pulpit stood where there are now front pews and the whole interior was much reduced in size There was no rectory, parish hall, basement, kitchen or Sunday School wing. The chapel even lacked a sacristy so that priests and seminarians had to assume vestments or robes before they came to the chapel. Inside, the floor was bare and most of the customary church furnishings were missing. School benches (made for children) were the only seats. It's unlikely that we had an organ or piano. A simple altar and some kind of cross undoubtedly stood at the western end and there may have been something that could serve as a pulpit. Mr. Griest died in 1872 but we can't be certain when the window was given in his name. Outside there were no horse sheds although shelter for horses and buggies was generally provided at the time.

2

NEVERTHELESS, THE CHAPEL seemed very good in '78 when the Bishop came out for a confirmation. He wouldn't come again for 17 years, for '78 and perhaps '80 marked the high point in our early history and the road from then on was largely downhill. Early in '79, Mr. Carpenter suffered a nervous breakdown and resigned from both his charges. The Rev. A. G. Baker took his place in 1880 and reported then that "the chapel has been entirely paid for and the debt on the parsonage [at Buckingham] removed." There were two Sunday Schools and "attendance at church is much larger than in years past." This happy situation didn't continue, however. Mr. Carpenter returned in 1882 and 1884 he said of Buckingham "the best that can be done is to keep the parish alive." Undoubtedly Centre Hill was in no better case.

Mr. Carpenter was now listed as Rector of Trinity, Centreville and of St. Luke's, Newtown. Apparently he was residing in Newtown and simply making visits to the other two churches. Again he was "stricken down by nervous prostration and his doctor advised him he would have to give up Centreville or Centre Hill." He elected to take our Chapel feeling, no doubt, that Doylestown would come to the rescue of Centreville (as it did) and having a particular concern for the church he had done so much to establish. But the distance for a sick man was too

great: it was then fifteen miles from Newtown to Buckingham and another five to Solebury. Most travel was by horseback or horse and buggy and in winter the dirt roads could become quagmires. We have to remember there were no culverts or drainage ditches then; neither were there snow plows nor cindering crews. Why did Mr. Carpenter move so far away? Probably because our two small churches could no longer support him. On the other hand, Doylestown could hardly be expected to take on Centre Hill as well as Centreville—again because of the difficulty of travelling. It was only four miles to Buckingham, but nine if one went on to Solebury.

From '84 to '86, the Rev. J. F. Taunt preached in Centreville as well as at St. Paul's. In '87, both churches were without a rector but in 1888 and '89, the Rev. George W. Eastman accepted both charges reporting that he had "officiated and preached at Centreville." From '86 to '89 no reports for Centre Hill were made to the Diocese. Mr. Carpenter continued as rector to St. Luke's, Newtown, and missionary to Bucks County during '85, '86 and '87, and it's to be assumed he made occasional visits to Centre Hill. In '87, however, he gave up St. Luke's and moved into Philadelphia, assuming charge of St. Alban's. At that point we can be certain his missionary efforts were abandoned again due to his recurrent illness.

In 1885, William Biles represented Centreville at the Convention as its accounting warden. Sometime during the '80s the loss of the legacies must have occurred. Both missions obviously suffered during this period from the lack of a guiding hand and from the resultant sharp decline in church membership.

Mr. Carpenter was again named missionary to Bucks County in 1889. Either our missions were so important to him that he felt the work had to go on, regardless of its effect on his health, or the new Germantown Convocation was convinced no one else could do the job, and on this ground persuaded him to return. He was promised the help of seminarians but his charges now

included Quakertown and Plumsteadville as well as Centre Hill and Centreville (the last now definitely being considered a mission). One can only say it was an onerous assignment in view of the fact that the average priest tried as a general rule to officiate and administer the sacraments at least once a month in each of his churches. The seminarian could hold regular services but could not give absolution nor unction, bless the sacraments for communion, or perform marriages, baptismal rites or burial services. The last three, however, could be performed by a deacon, and in a few cases our seminarians became deacons before they left us. In an emergency baptismal and burial rites could be undertaken by the lay reader. We know almost nothing about the seminarians of this period except that one was Hiram R. Hulse, later Bishop of Cuba.

In spite of having resumed his missionary work, Mr. Carpenter did not send in a report until '93. He then said that "occasional services are still held at Centre Hill," expenses being taken care of "by the Advancement Society which holds the property in trust." The situation had improved somewhat in 1894 when he reported that "During nine months of the year the Sunday School holds regular sessions and services are maintained on an average twice a month through the year." He also noted that "For several years an appropriation has been made to this Mission by the Advancement Society."

In '95, Bishop Whitaker came to the Chapel for a confirmation service, the first episcopal visit since '78, but while there were now fairly regular services and the Sunday School had thirty scholars, Communion was only given seven times and the total offerings for the year came to just $32.27. After its promising beginning, Centre Hill had sunk to an abysmally low point, and for the next twenty-five years it continued more or less at this level in spite of brief periods when a devoted seminarian or vicar expended extraordinary efforts to help it become better established.

Mr. Carpenter noted in '94 that a line could be drawn through Centre Hill and Centreville marking an important division in the County. The southern part was almost entirely Quaker; the northern, German-American. By inference there was little place for an Episcopal parish. He made no reference to the fact that the Solebury area was in poor shape financially but we can assume this had occurred since the Community Hall Association went into bankruptcy in '98 and their building was taken over by the school system. The basement, however, continued to be used for suppers until 1933 when our own parish hall and kitchen were completed. At that time, the Farmers' Club as well as Trinity Chapel gave up all use of the Hall, and in 1938 when it was no longer needed as a school building, it was sold to Joseph and Lillian Sandford. A marker "The Hall" still indicates its site on Route 263.

In 1896 Mr. Carpenter resigned for the last time, and a seminarian, Mr. T. A. Daughters, assumed responsibility. We would probably have been better off if such an arrangement had been made earlier. Mr. Daughters' efforts were concentrated on the two missions and his interest was such that he enlisted the help of his teachers at the Divinity School. Various priests came out monthly to administer the sacraments and preach, apparently without any compensation. In '97 the annual report stated that "Centre Hill has showed signs of awakened life and interest, the services are better attended and a class for confirmation is gathering. This little mission is again indebted to the Advancement Society for financial aid." (The Society for the Advancement of the Faith was founded by Bishop White in 1812 to aid missions in the Diocese.) Mr. Daughters continued his work in '98 but a new seminarian took over the following year. (Two years was generally the amount of time given by any one student since his period of study at the Divinity School was three years and most were not sent out until their second year.)

3

In '99, Mr. G. De Witt Dowling assumed charge and, like Mr. Daughters, brought a vital concern to his task. We are told, "His work has awakened a marked interest and activity in these two missions. Those interested in the Mission at Centre Hill have also contributed about $80 to erect horse sheds which are much needed and will encourage attendance at the worship."

Progress continued in 1900 and 1901 under Thomas Johnson. He was said to have "done a faithful and conscientious work at Buckingham and Centre Hill. During the time of his ministration there has been considerable material improvement; several handsome gifts have been made to Trinity Church Buckingham. New pews have been added; the old ones going to Trinity Chapel Centre Hill where proper seating accommodations were greatly needed." These pews from Buckingham were to serve us until 1949. Actually they were booths containing benches and resembled those still in use at Christ Church in Philadelphia and Bruton Parish Church in Williamsburg. For many years separate classes were held in the individual booths, each class being reasonably well separated from the others.

During Mr. Johnson's period here and probably also during Mr. Dowling's, their missions and all others "under the supervision of the Dean" were "visited once a month by a Presbyter for administration of the sacraments." It was decided

in 1901, however, that "so soon as sufficient means can be had for the purpose, it will be well to place a young man at Buckingham to reside there having charge of that Mission together with that at Centre Hill and that at Plumsteadville." This plan was carried out and on Nov. 1, 1901, the Rev. George W. Lamb, M. D. became the resident missionary in charge of all three churches. During the first five months it was said "he had proved a most acceptable minister to his people," and Buckingham and Centre Hill continued to prosper during his stay. It was said that "these two alone of all the missions in Bucks County have the expectation of attaining a condition of independence."

Unfortunately, Dr. Lamb resigned in 1905 and his successor, the Rev. R. G. Hamilton, stayed only a year, or possibly less, in spite of having been relieved of responsibility for Plumsteadville. The Rev. Herman Shaffer was appointed in 1906 but he, too, left shortly and the Convocation was forced to turn again to divinity students. William Alexander took charge of Trinity Church Buckingham and Trinity Chapel Centre Hill in 1907 and again we get reports of a decline. (We might note that as a mission, Trinity Buckingham should have been referred to as a "chapel." The term "church" was quite generally used to distinguish it from our chapel.) In 1907 there was "slight improvement but no marked change in Buckingham and Centre Hill" and in 1908 "as much improvement as could be expected in view of the fact that the missionaries are lay readers and non-resident."

The Rev. W. C. Emhardt of St. Luke's, Newtown, was now the itinerant missionary for Bucks County and he continued as the priest-in-charge of Centre Hill until 1919. One of his first assignments was to determine the number of Episcopalians in need of his services and he concluded that in the entire county there were only "about one hundred nominal church people of whom more than seventy had at one time been communicants."

When we recall that in 1877 Mr. Carpenter reported 150 individuals coming to his services in Buckingham and Solebury, it's obvious our church had suffered a tremendous drop in its following during thirty years; Centre Hill was not alone in its decline.

In 1909 and 1910, Robert B. McKay was the lay reader; Mary L. Phillips our treasurer. We had four communicants and just $10 was contributed to the salary of the lay reader. The situation improved briefly when the Rev. Thomas Bell took charge of the two missions. This ended, however, when Buckingham became a parish in 1911 and Mr. Bell closed his connection with the Mission to become their rector.

We noted earlier that the Biles property (assessed in 1909 at $4,250) went to the Diocese on the death of Mrs. Biles, the income to be used to help pay the rector's salary in Buckingham. It was this circumstance, of course, which enabled Buckingham to become a parish and it resulted in the severing of all formal ties between that church and Centre Hill until 1932. It also meant that we could not enjoy the services of any nearby resident priest.

From the late '80s to 1912, Bucks County missions had been under the Germantown Convocation. The jurisdiction of that Convocation was too widely spread, however, and in 1912 Bishop Rhinelander started the Country Center Mission to care for the missions in Bucks County. Newtown was chosen as the location for the Mission House and Mr. Emhardt was placed in charge. He had been given a car in 1911 and a second one was donated to the Mission in 1914. Both were given heavy use but we have to remember that even our main roads were unpaved as late as the '30s, and that the early cars seldom operated at speeds above 20 or 25 miles an hour. Mr. Emhardt and his few assistants were also trying to establish several new missions so that their visits to Centre Hill were probably infrequent.

While Mr. Bell was officiating, the church had actually accumulated $86.68 in offerings for the year. By 1915, this had dropped to $22.63—ample proof that services were irregular and interest had fallen off. Communicants were only 15; Sunday School scholars 19. To cover expenses (mostly the rector's salary) the Germantown Convocation was contributing $200; the Advancement Society $100. Henry Afflerbach was then the rector's warden and he continued as such in 1916. Arthur A. Bissey became lay reader in that year but his name is the only one we have for any lay reader from 1911 to 1919.

For the next two years Mr. Emhardt made no report either for Centre Hill or Newtown. The Rev. Charles T. Bridgeman became vicar in 1919 (although we were still under the supervision of the Country Center Mission) and for the first time we have a name familiar to some of our older church members.

We might point out here that "vicar" is the proper term for a priest or deacon in charge of a mission. A "rector" is a priest having charge of a parish. Apparently this distinction was not always made earlier. Mr. Carpenter, for instance, described himself as "rector of Centreville" long after that was recognized as a mission. Centreville also continued to have a vestry (although the legality of this was questioned) during its early period as a mission, and a mission today is not entitled either to an "accounting warden" or to a "rector's warden."

No report for Centre Hill was made in 1920 but in 1921 we know the vicar was the Rev. T. R. Hazzard. Miss Lucy A. Hellyer was our treasurer, 10 families were attending the services along with 17 other individuals and pupils numbered 30. The spelling has changed from Centre to Center Hill and we have Sunday School "pupils" instead of "scholars." These were minor changes. They took place along with some momentous ones.

4

In 1921, the Diocese agreed to buy the old Phillips Schoolhouse on River Road for $1,475. Services had been held here for some time before it became formally St. Philip's Chapel, and while we were to benefit from this new mission in our immediate neighborhood, it was also—alas!—a source of friction. Undoubtedly some members left Trinity for the new chapel. During the '20s when both missions were struggling to survive, a number of people advocated giving up Trinity and concentrating on St. Philip's since the latter was assured of regular attendance from the girls' school (Holmquist) close by. Since our chapel was over fifty years old and had been kept alive by the devoted efforts of churchmen, the Advancement Society and many laymen, this outcome was hard to accept. Not only the members of Trinity were unhappy about it but the general community as well.

Our financial difficulties led to the formation of the Trinity Sewing Circle. Eight women of Solebury met at the home of Miss Amy Ely, a church member, on January 28, 1921, with the aim of helping Trinity through the sale of their handiwork. The president, Miss Winifred Harding, was the chief promoter and was also a church member, but throughout its early years most of the members of the Women's Guild, as it came to be called, were not Episcopalians.

When its 20th anniversary was celebrated in 1941, the Rev. Waldo D. Parker, then head of the Country Center Mission, "said the guild was unique in that it could not exist without the aid of non-Episcopalians to whom it has taken the place of a local women's club. Despite the predominance of members of other faiths on its roster, however, its willingness to work for the financial support of the chapel has been remarkable. . . . Without the aid of the guild, the chapel could not meet its financial burdens. . . ." (*Church News,* Feb. 1941)

In view of its importance to us, we might add a few details about that first meeting. Dues were set at five cents a meeting. Miss Amy Ely, at whose house they met, lived next to the Hall. She and Miss Lucy Hellyer (the church treasurer) were the Sunday School teachers in the late teens and through part of the twenties.

At this point we should admit that many of our records are missing. The parish register prior to 1925 has been lost and we thought that most of the minutes of the Women's Guild (later the Women's Auxiliary and then Women of Trinity) before 1965 had been destroyed in a fire. Fortunately a summary of the Guild's activity between '21 and '41 was discovered, together with the minutes for '41, '42 '43. We also have a report of the annual church meeting for '41. Except for a few notes made by the Rev. Waldo D. Parker and some letters he kept, almost everything else that had any bearing on our early history was destroyed but the story so far has been pieced together from newspaper accounts, the *Diocesan Church News* and annual reports to the Diocesan Convention. We are also grateful to Trinity Buckingham and to St. Philip's for their help. From the '20s on we have been able to add much from the recollections of old residents but because of an understandable disagreement as to dates, we have had to make a number of arbitrary decisions. There may be inaccuracies; the essential part of the story we believe is correct.

Going back to the Sewing Circle (for which we *do* have records) the first sale was in May and there were booths for the various articles. Aprons went for five and ten cents. Ice cream, cake, candy and peanuts were also sold and the net profit was $95.66 including $15 in donations. A second sale in December of fancywork and home-baking brought in $77.73. The year's balance was $176.10.

In view of the pitiful amount of past offerings, this was a significant sum. Not all of it went to the church. The Ladies' Guild (as it was called in 1922) kept enough for its expenses, but a needed flow of money began to find its way to Trinity. In addition an organ fund was started and $97.66 was collected by the end of the year. Miss Lucy Hellyer offered to loan the balance but apparently this wasn't needed since we had $179.89 by February of '22.

We have referred to some of the rivalry with St. Philip's. Two missions so geographically close, however, justified the services of a vicar or seminarian. When Buckingham became a parish, we lost out because it was clearly unreasonable to send a divinity student out for a dozen or even two dozen churchgoers. With St. Philip's the picture changed. We probably owe it to the new chapel that Mr. Bridgeman and Mr. Hazzard came to us; both served at St. Philip's as well.

1n 1922 the offering was $169.12 and there was a donation of $61.80, we can assume from the Guild. Churchwomen then and later have been proverbially cautious about giving up their funds. Nothing was used for purposes other than for the church and for their expenses in raising money, but they were too unsure of future needs to venture more than a part of their earnings. However, their concern generated fresh interest in Trinity as can be seen from the jump in offerings.

5

THE FIRST SUPPER PUT ON by the Guild was in November of 1923 in the "election room" of the Hall. The kitchen was in a coal bin and the cooking had to be done on an oil stove but in spite of this the supper was a success, bringing in $105.80. Due to the lack of records we can't say for certain there were earlier suppers; we assume there were—particularly in the last century. For the next twenty years, however, they would be very popular and very successful.

Meanwhile Mr. Emhardt had given up direction of the Country Center Mission and his successor was the Rev. Samuel B. Booth, a man of great charm, but of strong and controversial opinions. A mystic and a high churchman, he did much to further the use of retreats for the clergy. He was not, however, a strong administrator nor a good disciplinarian. During his tenure the Mission was moved to a farmhouse in Wrightstown. This was in 1920. During that year he came out frequently to New Hope (the later St. Philip's). In 1921 Bishop Rhinelander presided at the consecration of St. Philip's, being assisted by the Rev. William Manning, Later Bishop of New York.

During 1923, '24 and '25 Mr. Booth is listed as the priest in charge of Center Hill. The Rev. Charles Collett served as vicar for the two missions during '23 and '24. Hugh Risdon was the treasurer at Center Hill and in '25 Thomas Bagg became the

warden. The offerings had now risen to $382.98 while parish organizations were contributing $93.43. Mrs. Bagg (whom we know as Ann Bower) was president of the Women's Guild during 1924 and vice president during '26 and '27. A June strawberry festival held on the chapel lawn had been added as a regular event and the Guild was now paying directly for needed services and church furnishings such as repainting the interior of the chapel, and buying new chairs, a carpet and Communion linen.

In 1923 help came to Trinity from an unexpected source. Mr. John Woodruff and his wife were then living in the big frame house (later owned by the Throckmortons) at the corner of Laurel and Sugan Roads. They were a quiet couple—not church people—who were generally here only for weekends since Mr. Woodruff was a lithographer and had a business in New York. It's said that a strong personal friendship developed between Mr. Woodruff and one of our clergymen. This might have been Mr. Collett but it's more likely it was Mr. Booth since he was known for his ability to win friends, as well as detractors. In any event Mr. Woodruff decided to come to the aid of the chapel by putting on clambakes behind the horse sheds, about where the parking lot now is.

He insured the first one with Lloyd's of London, payment to be made in case of an inch or more of rain. The rain fell and Lloyd's paid $1000 which went to Trinity. Furthermore the clambake was held in spite of the weather and proved a great success. There were other clambakes in the following two or three years and they were extremely popular—the clams, roasted in an outdoor pit, being pronounced "wonderful." All of this was for the benefit of the chapel.

Meanwhile, the Women's Guild continued to put on annual suppers and strawberry festivals and a few of the most active figures in that group should be described. Three dominated our church activities for almost two decades. Mrs. Elizabeth Frampton is mentioned by almost everyone who remembers those days. She was a strong-minded woman—one senses Mr. Parker found her difficult at times for if she thought the Diocese, for instance, should be held responsible for faulty repairs, she gave him no rest. At the same time her blunt comments were often very wise. She was secretary of the Guild at various times and an aunt of Miss Winifred Harding, who lived with her, and of Mrs. Edward M. (Marie) Paxson. The Framptons and Miss Harding had the old stone house (later owned by Herbert Boyd) near the corner of Comfort and Phillips Mill Roads.

Miss Harding was an early president of the Guild (which she started), in charge of the Sunday School for many years and the founder of the altar guild. Her work with the Sunday School was excellent and she devoted much of her energy to it from the '20s until her death in 1940. Those who knew her speak of her as a gentle kindly woman.

Her sister, Marie Paxson, was highly gifted as a musician and in many other fields. She put on pageants that drew large audiences, not only from Episcopalians, but from non-church members. A year or so after Miss Harding died she took over the Sunday School and continued to run it until 1954. She was our church organist and choir director for many years and was president of the Women's Guild during '42 and '43. It's likely she continued in office thereafter but our records end with '43. Those of us who remember her recall a forceful but gracious personality. A third sister, Miss Helen Harding, lived outside our area but took an active part in Guild and chapel affairs whenever she was here.

Mrs. Edwin (Mary Lear) Paxson lived next to Miss Amy Ely. Her husband was a carpenter and made some of the chairs used in the chapel as well as repairing others. Mary Lear Paxson took in select boarders such as the seminarians who spent weekends or summers here. She was vice-president of the Guild during its first four years and president from 1925 to 1934.

That fact alone bears witness to the respect in which she was held. It was she with Mrs. Frampton and Mr. F. B. Sanson who met with Diocesan representatives to decide upon the awarding of the contract for the parish hall and kitchen, and yet with all of this she was a retiring, quiet woman—totally unlike her cousin by marriage, Marie Paxson. People who knew her speak of her with affection but are unable to believe she carried out the office of president so well and for so many years. Much of the food for the suppers and festivals was prepared in her kitchen and carried to the Hall or chapel lawn.

Other names need less space. Anna Shupe served as president or other officer of the Guild for many years. Later she would be a valued treasurer of the Women's Auxiliary. Lelah Conner was an early secretary of the Guild. Violet McLeod (an active Guild member from the '40s on), Lelah McDonald and Clyde Conner are among her children. Genevieve Hawkins was treasurer of the Guild in the '40s and for some thirty-five years our church treasurer, carrying out her duties as such with great competence. She and Mary Tomlinson were the chief members of the altar guild, Miss Hawkins serving on it until shortly before she died; Miss Tomlinson being still an active member after forty-five years of service.

6

THIS ACCOUNT OF THE WOMEN of the Guild has carried us beyond the '20s, but it's time to go back to '25. A few years previously Bishop Rhinelander died and was succeeded by Bishop Garland. Mr. Booth had been a protege of the former but he and Bishop Garland clashed almost immediately. The new bishop was low church and authoritarian. He disapproved of everything Mr. Booth had done and was eager for his removal. The matter was solved when Mr. Booth was made Bishop of Vermont and the Rev. Jules Prevost took over direction of the Country Center Mission. Unfortunately, in trying to correct what he regarded as Mr. Booth's failings, Mr. Prevost acted at times with great harshness, alienating many church members who had loved and admired Mr. Booth. Much of this ill-feeling was centred in Langhorne and other missions close to Wrightstown. Solebury was fortunate in being as far away as it was and in being relatively untouched by the dissension. We saw Mr. Prevost only at brief intervals. Far more important to us were the lay readers from '25 to '30, particularly William R. McKean, Leon A. Shearer and John Ledger who were all described as very nice young men, well-liked by the whole community, Quaker as well as Episcopalian.

One has the feeling that for a decade or so there was an ecumenical spirit in our area. This was exhibited most strongly

in Community Day, an event sponsored by the Solebury Friends meeting and taking place on their grounds, but fully participated in by members of Trinity and St. Philip's. For over twenty years most of the community, young and old, gathered each fall for a huge picnic lasting a good part of the day. There were three-legged races, other traditional games and finally a baseball game for the men and boys. It wound up with ice cream provided by the Friends, and cookies baked by church women. Community Day fell upon hard times during the 2nd World War because of shortages and rationing. When the war was over, many newcomers had arrived in Solebury, and there was a suggestion that Trinity (or rather one of its supervising clergy) disapproved of such fraternizing. We had jumped the gun on the ecumenical movement.

One question has not been answered. How did the vicars and divinity students get here? Clergymen connected with the Country Center Mission undoubtedly had the use of a car, but during the '20s, we believe, the seminarians came by train to New Hope and were more likely to spend one night here either at Mary Lear Paxson's or at the home of a church member. John Richardson says in his history of Solebury Township: "Often the lay readers walked all the way from New Hope to the Chapel." We can only hope that on most occasions they were picked up at the station. Certainly they were often provided with meals.

Walking, however, was not as uncommon then nor regarded as such a hardship as it is today. Mary Tomlinson and her family were living on Creamery Road on the present Prange farm. She walked the mile to church and thought nothing of it, but because she had to walk she didn't run over the night before to check the altar. "We would usually come a little early," she said, "and if somebody had brought flowers, we would arrange them before the service. But it was all very haphazard

until Miss Harding started the Altar Guild and tried to make provision for flowers on a regular basis."

In 1929, the Rev. Waldo Parker (Stanley Parker's father) took over the Country Center Mission making his home in the Langhorne rectory. His special charge was to heal the wounds of the '20s and to impose some order and discipline among the missions. He was often very strict but much of this was due to the task imposed upon him.

The seminarian of the time, George H. Boyd, was just the opposite. Easy-going and full of charm, he made friends everywhere. Under his guidance, from '31 to '35, our small ecumenical movement reached its peak. The men's group which he started included Quakers as well as Episcopalians, and allowed card-playing and games as well as serious talks. He initiated square dances for the whole community (the caller being John Alcott, father of Edward Alcott who later managed the turkey farm on Sugan Road). He got out a weekly Chapel News using a small portable mimeographing machine. To the young people, particularly, he was a greatly loved figure.

From 1929 on, the seminarians—it was John Ledger, first, then George Boyd—usually took a train on Sunday morning to Langhorne, being met by Stanley Parker or his brother and driven to the rectory. There they picked up a church car and drove themselves to Solebury, returning to Langhorne after the services at Trinity and St. Philip's. From '33 on, for a period of about five years, Tom Bagg (Ann Bower's son), using his own car, was paid by the Mission to drive Mr. Boyd and others on their round of services. This may have been during the summer months. Mr. Bagg remembers taking them from Trinity Solebury to St. Philip's and then on to Holy Nativity in Wrightstown. This private chapel on the Tyler estate had been built for Mr. Booth, the Tyler family and a few other families on their property. Often only one person attended the service. From



month. The men helped me develop a little 'farm' there, with pigs, chickens, ducks, a cat with unlimited kittens and a dog. I was not married at the time so the future Mrs. Boyd spent week-ends with Mr. and Mrs. Ed Paxson." (This of course, was Mary Lear Paxson and the "stone house" on Sugan Road near the Cuttalossa was later owned by the Ansleys; after that by the Halls.)

It was a period of great activity. Church attendance was good, Mr. Boyd was very successful in raising money, and the young people took part in such ambitious productions as a Midsummer Night's Dream with the Rev. Ledru Stiffler playing Puck. The outdoor stage was lit by car headlights. A minstrel show was less successful because during rehearsals the young people staged a rebellion against the three women (Mrs. Frampton and her two nieces) whom they felt were dominating the church. All three resigned from the chapel and were absent for three or four months. The rebels, however, proved they could carry on, one of them playing the organ, others conducting Sunday School. We don't know what happened to the minstrel show, but they probably put that on as well. In the end the three Harding women returned taking up their regular duties again. Among the young people of this time were Violet, Lelah and Clyde Conner, Mary, Edith and Sarah Tomlinson, Edward and Joseph Funk, Bill McLeod, Elizabeth and Thelma Short, Elsie Armitage, Bill Tobin, Jenny Krier, Doug McArthur and Tom Bagg (the latter two during the summers).

After he was ordained, first as deacon in '33, then as priest in '34 Mr. Boyd spent all of his time here, carrying out full parochial duties. He left on Jan. 2, 1935, to assume charge of St. Peter's in Perth Amboy, much to the regret of Trinity and St. Philip's. He would like to have stayed here as the resident priest but the Diocese felt unable to pay the amount he was entitled to and the community was unable to make up the difference. It was unfortunate because much that he had built

up crumbled in the next few years. The men's club disbanded and the young people lost interest in the church. Attendance dropped and the chapel was hard put to it to keep going. Often there wasn't enough coal to heat the church or parish hall. Mrs. Frampton said bluntly, "Either Trinity or St. Philip's should be closed. Two Episcopal missions within three miles can't function with any great results."

For a year William F. Taylor acted as lay reader. Then we acquired the services of the Rev. Kenneth MacDonald, an elderly Scotsman living in Yardley who drove up each Sunday to officiate at Trinity and St. Philip's. His past history had not been good (Bishop Taitt was unhappy about our having to use him) and he was not popular at either chapel. Miss Louise Holmquist, the head of the girls' school finally asked him to leave St. Philip's and late in '36 or early in '37 the Rev. Mr. Steinmetz agreed to take their services. He was followed in '38 by Mr. Belleville.

Trinity struggled along with Mr. MacDonald until '40 when we were finally given another seminarian, a very serious-minded young man, David Evans, who boarded during the summer months with the Tobins. Our new student was shocked by the physical condition of the chapel. He found it "in a poor state of repair. It was dirty, it was dark, it was unkept, and it had a static air about it." With help from the community he had the interior repainted and he set the Women's Guild to work making a dossal (the hanging behind the altar) and a frontal (that on the front of the altar). Apparently we had had neither and the head of the Diocesan Altar Guild came out to show those at work on them how the hangings should be made. Mr. Evans also introduced candles on the altar for the first time. We still had no electricity, of course, and it seems doubtful there were lamps. St. Philip's, we know, had no lighting during the '30s. Other changes were made in the interior and the Diocesan

Church News carried a story about the improvements that had been made.

Mr. Evans had only a bicycle during his first summer but even so he organized a Sports Committee and a young people's group. His chief failure, which he admitted, was in having taken over the actual running of the Sunday School (Bill Tobin was then the superintendent) and in having introduced material which the teachers couldn't understand. Sunday School attendance dropped alarmingly and it was probably about this time that Marie Paxson took charge, bringing it back to its former state. He also discouraged any talking in church after the service and managed to have Community Day moved to the boys' school so that it should be less closely tied to the Friends. (The move was only for one year.) In other ways he indicated a feeling of rivalry with the Quakers and in spite of his devoted efforts, he didn't awaken the affection Mr. Boyd had done. Actually the ecumenical spirit also remained strong—Friends coming to the Chapel to sew for Red Cross during the war; members of Trinity sewing for Friends' Meeting almost to the present day.

Early in '41 the Women's Guild celebrated its 20th anniversary with a dinner at the home of Mrs. Daniel Hendricks, an active member at this time. We've quoted Mr. Parker's remarks on that occasion. At the end of the year the Country Center Mission was closed and Mr. Parker's association with Trinity came to an end.

Prior to this closing Buckingham had liquidated its debts in '38 and made a substantial recovery. A lay reader served that mission for a year changing the time of the service to 10 A.M. He was followed by a former priest, and then Mr. Charles Ehly, a seminarian, assumed charge in 1940. He was ordained as a deacon the following year (being then appointed vicar to Buckingham) and as a priest in '42. When Buckingham resumed its parish status that year, the Rev. Mr. Ehly was elected rector. At

the end of the year he agreed to act as priest in charge of Trinity Chapel and St. Philip's.

Mr. Ehly began his ministry by speaking of his earnest desire to bring the three churches together and to treat them as one parish. This effort, however, was doomed in spite of its apparent desirability. For one thing the most popular time for a Sunday service was 10 A.M. and it was impossible to provide this for all three. Mr. Parker once attributed the poor attendance at Buckingham to the 9:15 hour necessary for his schedule. St. Philip's complained during the '30s because the lay reader didn't reach them until 11:45 and finally asked to have that set as the official time so that the girls from the school didn't have to fidget for 15 minutes. Except at his last church, neither student nor priest could stop to talk to church-goers. It was also hard on the man conducting the services. Even with the help of a seminarian, the schedule was wearing particularly at Christmas and Easter.

During the '30s St. Philip's also felt it did not get its share of parochial services in spite of contributing more than Solebury did to the Diocese. (This was when we were still trying to meet payments on the parish hall and kitchen.) On the other hand Miss Holmquist invited outside priests (including non-Episcopalians) to officiate at the chapel without consulting Mr. Parker and she frequently asked to have the service modified to suit what she considered were school needs. All of this had producd a difficult situation.

Mr. Robert Lenhard came in as a lay reader when Mr. Ehly took over, the two having agreed to conduct alternate Sunday services at Solebury. By '44 Mr. Lenhard had become a deacon. He left at the end of the year, and shortly afterwards Mr. Ehly resigned as rector of Buckingham, turning his charge over to the Rev. Mr. T. Leslie Gossling. St. Philip's then elected to put itself under Buckingham. From early in '45 until early in '46 we had three lay readers: Anselm Broburg, George W. Morris

and Horace C. Prevost (a son of Jules Prevost). None apparently made much impact on the community.

The last was followed by the Rev. Robert Savage, a pleasant young man who rented an apartment from Mrs. Thomas H. Griest, in order to be a resident priest. He was denied kitchen privileges, however, and other difficulties made his residence there quite undesirable. He gave up at the end of a year. Allen F. Kremer filled in for a few months until we were able to secure the services of the Rev. Walter Malone in the spring of '48.

8

MEANWHILE THE GUILD was undergoing changes. In November of '42 a creamed chicken supper produced severe cases of poisoning; the cream sauce was the culprit. It was agreed the suppers would have to be given up although they had been the chief source of revenue. The women sought desperately for other means of raising money. There had always been a table for fancywork at the strawberry festivals and suppers but sewing had been secondary. Now they devoted whole days to it. They had bake sales and rummage sales at Rice's. They offered their services to the community for small payments.

The bazaars grew gradually out of these efforts. Minette Taylor thought they had had one when she was president of the Guild in '45. Others claimed a later date saying the first ones were at the Sandfords in the Hall, or at Ruby McArthur's. What seems to have happened is that a tea and card games (for which tickets were sold) became the occasion for selling fancywork and other articles, and that the number of such articles increased until the affair could properly be called a bazaar. In '44 the Guild had recovered sufficiently to start a fund for an electric organ and was able to purchase it in '46.

At the end of the '40s, roughly from '47 on, there was an influx of newcomers—Episcopalians—who settled in the village

and surrounding area and brought their talents, energy and financial aid to the church. There is no doubt that some of them were responsible for making the annual Christmas bazaar an outstanding event with Tanis Page designing and helping to make aprons that became prized Christmas gifts. Decorated Christmas cookies and shortbread (the latter contributed by Ruby McArthur) were in such demand it was seldom possible to make enough, although most of the churchwomen took part in their baking. Minette Taylor's bread along with cakes, pies and preserves donated by other cooks sold out promptly. Before describing later bazaars, however, we must return to other events of the late '40s.

When Walter Malone was installed as vicar in '48, the Diocese allotted $11,000 for the construction of a rectory. We had 50 communicants at that time, a Sunday School of 35 members and a budget of $1,600. A men's club had been functioning for a year and Bill Taylor was the "warden."

The rectory was built in '49 and that same year we enlarged the chapel by adding a chancel, putting a basement under it. Clyde Conner and his brother Dick had the contract for both buildings. Ed Short did much of the work. Joe McArthur was chairman of the committee which raised the funds, and the men's club, of which another newcomer, John Hawthorn, was now a member, dug the basement, by pick and shovel and a "bucket brigade," as well as repainting the chapel. As in George Boyd's time, this group included both Quakers and church members and for months Wednesday evenings were given over to the digging.

For the first time in this century Trinity assumed full responsibility for a major improvement. Its annual receipts now totaled $3,503.52 of which only $100 came from an outside source, our ever-faithful friend, the Advancement Society. In 1951 the old booths were finally replaced by regular pews, each given by individuals or families often as memorials. Other

memorials included lancet windows, reproducing the blue of the Valley Forge chapel windows, the pulpit and the lectern. The two last were built by the Conners from Walter Malone's designs and he added a great deal of hand-carving to the pulpit. Other furnishings our vicar begged from better established churches. Thus our altar was one that had been discarded by St. Gabriel's in Philadelphia. The chancel rail came from St. James Kingsessing and had rested blackened, with none of its brass visible, in their basement. Walter Malone took it to pieces, gave each section to a willing volunteer to be shined and then had Bill Tobin reassemble it. The credence tables were from St. Paul's in Doylestown; the prie-dieu came from Fallsington. It was Bill McLeod who drove miles to gather in these unwanted objects which to us were such treasures. All were refinished by church members. The new chancel with its furnishings and the pews were dedicated by Bishop Hart, September 15, 1951.

Not to be outdone by the men, the Women's Guild (now composed entirely of churchwomen and called the "Woman's Auxiliary of Trinity Chapel") initiated an ambitious project. This was a hand-lettered cookbook with recipes contributed by many of the women of the community (church and non-church) and illustrations from twenty-two of the County's leading artists. Chapter headings, the cover and the format were done by Joseph Sandford who served as art director, and he and John Bower, the chairman of production, conducted lettering classes for nine volunteers. Mr. Bower, an artist himself, lettered the recipe titles, preface and indexes and contributed the map and many small drawings. Published in 1950, Bucks Cooks proved an outstanding piece of work and has brought Trinity about $50,000 to date. Some of the early proceeds from it were used to pay for a church driveway, refurnish the kitchen, provide carpets for the church, and cabinets in the parish hall. They also helped pay for the chancel and basement.

Walter Malone, his wife and two girls were warmly received

in Solebury. He suited both St. Philip's and Trinity perfectly and we would have been happy to have had him stay indefinitely. By '54, however, thanks to his efforts, we were ready to become a parish and he felt it was time for him to move on.

Trinity declared its intent to become a parish at the annual meeting early in the year. The charter and by-laws were approved at a special congregational meeting following the annual meeting, and a vestry was then elected composed of Tom Park, Doug McArthur, Stanley Parker, Joe McArthur, John Hawthorn, Bill Tobin, Brad Algeo and Jack Moreton.

The following officers and committees were also established: secretary of the vestry, rector's warden, accounting warden, finance committee and church property committee. On May 4, 1954, Trinity was voted a member of the Convention and on June 15th it was duly incorporated. Walter Malone was elected first rector and at this meeting he announced his resignation effective October 31st. In the six years of his ministry the congregation had been quadrupled, the budget had grown six times its original size and approximately $40,000 had been spent on physical improvements including a new rectory, and a new chancel.

A major concern in '54 was what should be done about St. Philip's. This small chapel with its elderly and middle-aged congregation was very dear to Walter Malone. Most of the furnishings were the work of local artists and craftsmen, the chapel had warmth and charm, and its churchgoers were a friendly group. There was no Sunday School and, as a result, younger people with children came up to Trinity. The Holmquist School had been taken over by the Solebury Boys' School, and since none of the students were now required to attend church services, it was no longer a source of friction and Mr. Malone hoped our new rector would accept St. Philip's as an additional charge.

But this was not to be. Once again the problem was the time of the service. The Rev. J. Crofton Thompson, who had been

chosen as our new rector, was eager to try a family service primarily for young people and children at 9:30. We already had an 8:00 communion service initiated by Mr. Malone in 1950 at the request of the Parkers. Mr. Thompson felt that the usual 11:15 service should be continued because this was favored by older church members who were distracted by the presence of children. Obviously such a schedule left no time for any involvement beyond Trinity. St. Philip's found an answer by forming its own Sunday School and by using a vicar who combined church work with secular employment.

On Sunday, October 31st, Trinity held a farewell dinner for Walter Malone. The parish hall was filled with Hallowe'en and harvest decorations and most of his parishioners had gathered to say good-bye to a well-loved rector. Mr. Malone and his rector's warden, Tom Park, however, were strangely silent. When the dinner was over, they provided an explanation. After a small Hallowe'en party at his brother's, Mr. Thompson and his newly married wife were returning home when a car, ignoring a stop sign, crashed into them, killing Mrs. Thompson and their unborn child. Mr. Thompson asked for a month to adjust to his loss and the Rev. Ledru Stiffler was appointed to officiate during that time.

9

CROFTON THOMPSON CAME TO TRINITY as he had promised in December and his parishioners from the beginning tried to take the place of his lost family. He was included in all parties; any late afternoon visit produced an urgent invitation to dinner. Many families kept a little extra on hand to be sure there was always enough for the rector. He had a standing invitation for a weekly dinner in many homes.

Trinity continued to grow during his ministry and Mr. Thompson received recognition beyond his parish. He was much sought after as the leader in retreats for young people, he was the first Dean of the Bucks Deanery and was one of a group selected to offer the formal invitation to Bishop-Coadjutor-Elect Robert L. De Witt to come to Philadelphia. He remained at Trinity until his death in 1967.

In 1954 Marie Paxson ended her long years of service. She had been church school superintendent since the early '40s and organist, as far as we can tell, from the early '20s. Throughout she had never received any compensation and during those years she had trained both adult and children's choirs and had also given many concerts and directed many pageants, designed to benefit our church.

It wasn't to be expected that any one person could take her place. In fact for most of the two decades since then we have

had to go outside the church to find a professional paid organist. Only Bob Goldsborough of the seven who have filled this position came from our own ranks. Men of the church at various times have taken over the church school, but except for Bob Gantz who ran it for seven years, none have carried on for more than a short period.

Some of the choir members have a better record. Marie Paxson's choir during the early '50s was composed largely of young people, many of them from the Solebury Boys' School. By the time she retired, most had gone on to college, and Yolande (Nicky) Nikotaides who took her place had to assemble a new group. Of those who came to sing under her direction, Phil Sellers and Betty Fergusson are still continuing. Anne Melby has been a part of it for most of the twenty years, and while Middy Darnell and Ashby Saunders came in a little later, both were faithful members—Middy, until her death in '74; Ashby, except for a year or two's absence, to the present time.

Marie Paxson, her sister and aunt, as we have said, dominated the church throughout most of their lives. No one else has played such a role, but since their day a number have been important in the history of Trinity. We won't attempt to mention all who have made contributions—the list would be far too long—but a few, particularly those now dead, should be given space.

Joe and Ruby McArthur first came to Solebury to live in 1947 when Joe worked for a paint business in Philadelphia, but they had been spending many weekends here ever since 1920 staying with Ann Bower at her father's house on Creamery Road. (The Vansant house has been torn down—it was on the Hill House property.) Doug McArthur remembers walking from there to the Sunday School with Conners who also lived on Creamery Road. The senior McArthurs had come from Scotland and because this was all so new to them, much that happened made a vivid impression. Joe used to recount with glee the story of the clambake that was insured for $1000.

When he came to live here, he was no stranger to the old residents and almost from the beginning he devoted his energy and ability to the church. It was he, as we've said, who headed the fund drive for the chancel. We are sure he got the paint for the re-painting done in '49. He would get it again for another re-painting in '58. He served on the vestry many times and was often chairman of the property committee keeping a watchful eye out for needed repairs and clean-up jobs. Ruby devoted herself to the Women's Auxiliary serving as its president for many years. It was a loss to church and community when both died.

At various times their son Doug has held the demanding post of accounting warden while his wife Barbara has sung in the choir, had a part in most of the big sewing projects and made many unusual articles for the bazaars.

Another couple who gave much to Trinity were Tom and Marie Park. Tom was rector's warden in '54 and again in '64 and '65. He died in that year. Marie's training as a decorator came to the fore when she selected fabrics for Trinity and created new designs for the bazaar. She spent long hours sewing for the church. We have mentioned Bill Taylor's year as a lay reader. He filled in at other times and contributed two drawings to *Bucks Cooks*. His wife, Minette, a professional seamstress, gave unstintingly of her skill. She also sang in the choir, served on the altar guild, and produced many of the cookies sold at the bazaar. Bill died in the '60s, Marie in 1970, Minette in '75.

The fourth who should be included in this quartet of sewers is Tanis Page, daughter of the well-known artist, Daniel Garber. For years Tanis designed and helped make aprons; today her artistic skill continues to provide us with original and charming gifts for the bazaar. She, too, had a hand in many of the big sewing projects. Besides singing in the choir, Middy Darnell was our accounting warden when she died, and she, too, created imaginative bazaar gifts. Ann Bower is one of the few who go back to the '20s and was with The Women's Guild from the

beginning (although not continuously). She has played a part in much of Trinity's history.

For a time in the '50s, the parish rested from its huge labors at the start of the decade and settled down with its new rector. Then at the end of that period, new improvements began to cry out for attention. They were small at first: taking down the horse sheds in the mid-fifties, making new dossals—red, green, white and purple for the different church seasons—in '58. Minette Taylor did the last and she alone made four while it had taken five or six women to produce the original dossal in '41 (but then they made a frontal, too).

Tanis Page used some of the green material to make embroidered paramounts (markers) for the lectern, a pulpit fall, and a casket pall, having discovered when her father died that some of these were lacking and had to be borrowed for funerals. Barbara McArthur and Marie Park worked on the pall. Also in '58 there was another re-painting and Joe McArthur picked blue for the chancel, causing quite a debate over his choice. His stencils for the organ speakers which he designed, made and installed were less controversial.

But a real job lay ahead. For a good while we hadn't had enough room for Church School classes. One was held on the stage, one in the basement next to the heater, one in the rectory, far too many in the parish hall separated by flimsy screens. Real classrooms seemed essential. A common room with proper lighting would provide a place for the months of sewing and other work that went into the bazaar, and it would serve for meetings and many other purposes. A new kitchen would be very helpful and the rector needed an office.

During 1958, the need for additional Sunday School classroom space, better kitchen facilities, an activities room and a rector's office led the Planning Committee to study the problem of a necessary building program. Various arrangements were discussed with the Sunday School teachers, the women of the

church and the Finance Committee and it was decided that the required space could be provided by a building project costing in the neighborhood of $50,000.

Accordingly, a Building Fund Committee composed of Phil Sellers, Doug McArthur and Jack Moreton was selected and various professional fund raisers were consulted. The upshot of this study was a decision that Trinity "go it alone" and raise the necessary funds by a parish drive. Within a matter of several months about $40,000 was subscribed and we secured the balance by bank loan and from the funds available at low interest from St. Paul's Church, Chestnut Hill.

Crofton Thompson picked Jack Moreton as Building Chairman and with the help of a very active building committee a contract was signed with Jules Gregory, architect, in September, 1959—followed by the signing of a contract with George Vocke, builder, in November, 1959.

Building progressed in 1960 with dedication of the finished addition in early 1961 by Bishop Armstrong at a parish dinner in Doylestown to celebrate the occasion.

How well the new facilities met our needs has been amply demonstrated in the meantime.

Shortly after completion of the building, the Tom Park and Graham Redman memorial funds were graciously donated to the Church for a much needed, enlarged and black-topped parking area.

Crofton Thompson was anxious to see more use made of the addition during the week and suggested that a small group of mothers who were running a kind of nursery school move into the wing. Jean Parker assumed charge before long and it's now a formal beginners' school with regular teachers and a director, paying rent for use of the church property.

The elementary school at this time also asked for use of the parish hall as a classroom while they were adding to their own buildings. The rent from this helped pay for the wing and

allowed Trinity to provide a needed service for the community. The Farmers' Club had continued to use the parish hall for its monthly meetings and the Scouts (Boy and Cub) made use of other parts of the building.

By '62, the sewers were at it again—this time on a new curtain for the stage. The material was selected by Marie Park after much discussion in which Crofton Thompson took a lively part. Nothing that involved the church was too small for his attention. He had strong opinions and sometimes appeared to throw out a contrary view just for the heated debate it would cause. At such times there would be an impish gleam as if to say, "See how I've livened things up!" Marie Park and Barbara McArthur did much of the work on the curtain.

Kneelers were installed in '62 in place of the old hassocks. As usual, these were provided by the Women of Trinity (the new name for the Women's Auxiliary) since they alone had money for small improvements, the vestry having to use all of our regular income just to keep the church running. But a change was at hand. When the vestry was faced with the need for a bank loan, it seemed to some of the women that their separate treasury was no longer justified, and in '63 they formally agreed to combine their financial affairs with those of the vestry. That same year the bazaar was given up in accordance with the wishes of our rector (reflecting the old feeling against buying and selling in the temple). The cookie sale, however, was continued.

10

THE LOSS OF THE BAZAAR caused great sadness. Sewing and making other articles for it throughout the year had created a strong bond among the women. Ever since the '40s, the first Saturday in December had been marked by furious activity. The night before, cookies were packaged, booths set up and decorated in the parish hall, and that room given a festive air. On Saturday the apron of the stage was covered with plants and Christmas greens. There were booths for cookies, a "pantry shelf," aprons, "trinkets and treasures," fancywork, calendars and other paper articles and, most outstanding, one for the new Christmas ornaments: big decorated candles, gilt wreaths, balls, and a gold and cream plaster Christmas tree in a Louis XV design. Lunch and tea were also served.

All of this was gone and four years later the Women of Trinity finally disbanded. Shortly before the end, Anna Shupe led Hope Sellers and one or two others around the church pointing out what the Women's Guild had given to Trinity. There were hymnals and prayerbooks, carpeting, lights (installed when Mr. Savage was here), the dossals, paramounts, pulpit fall and altar linen. The Guild had polished the chancel rail and contributed to the building of the chancel. Mrs. Shupe recalled the days when a coal furnace provided heat for chapel and parish hall and when a service had to be cancelled or a

meeting held elsewhere because no one could pay for the scuttle full of coal needed to warm church or hall. She spoke of failures and successes, looking back over the thirty-six (it may have been forty-five) years she had been a member of Women of Trinity.

Since she died soon afterwards, we don't know exactly what she said but she might have remembered the Easter Day in '48 when Bishop Hart conducted the service in our little chapel. We had no priest at that time and the Bishop broke a tradition of 164 years by leaving Christ Church where all other bishops had celebrated Easter and coming out to one of his smaller missions to administer Communion to 47 communicants. (There were just 60 in the chapel for the service). He spent the day in Solebury trying to help us plan our future and we owe some of our later success to his concern. It was in direct contrast to that of his predecessor, Bishop Taitt, who had little interest in Bucks County missions.

Other changes marked the '60s. Harry Sine remodelled the sacristy in '63 and we organized a cemetery, then, using four acres adjoining the church property that had been deeded to us by Mr. Edward Riley. The land was graded, given a paved road and planted in memory of Marion Richardson, most of the cost being borne by Jack Richardson.

In August of '67 Trinity was shocked and saddened by the unexpected death (from a heart attack) of Crofton Thompson. It required great effort to find someone who could follow in his footsteps, although we admitted we needed a younger man with a family. After eight months of searching, during which time the rector's warden, Carl Ackerman, played a leading part in keeping the parish running; the Rev. John A. Smart was finally selected and installed in May of '68. The choice proved an excellent one.

With rising costs, we decided at this time we could not afford an organist for two services and the 11:15 service would have to be given up, the main service being moved up to 10. As with

most of our changes, this one, too, met with regret (we might even say disapproval) but there was little else we could do. The 8 o'clock service remained with the Rev. Matthew Imrie, a retired army chaplain, frequently officiating and Jack Smart acting as his assistant.

Meanwhile Trinity was responding to movements that were stirring the country: Vietnam, Civil Rights and Women's Lib. These, too, brought disagreement as they did in the nation. In '54 the original by-laws were changed at Marie Park's urging to read "lay person" instead of "man" in describing those eligible for election to the vestry. Again and again women were nominated but none were elected. Finally Janet Gold was appointed in '65, Hope Sellers in '66—both to fill vacancies. The first woman to be elected was Mollie Hallowell in '69. (Trinity Buckingham beat us by 47 years, having changed their by-laws in 1922 and in that same year elected the first vestry woman in the Diocese of Pennsylvania.) Women now serve on our vestry quite regularly and our present rector's warden is Kitty Petrie. Girls have been serving as acolytes since the winter of '74. During Jack Smart's six-month leave of absence in 1974 Hope Sellers kept things going just as Carl Ackerman had done earlier.

Not long after Jack Smart came to us, the bazaars were revived and with them the Thursday sewing group composed usually of Tanis Page, Ann Bower, Sarah Tobin, Mary Tomlinson, Laura Sine and Betty Short with others filling in from time to time. New Christmas gifts replaced the aprons and gift wreaths, and we had decoupage lamps, charming stuffed animals, felt drummerboys for the Christmas tree, and portrait dolls made by Helen McCook. We also had a whole new crew of designers, many of whom worked at home, not at the church, but if we attempted to describe them we should never be done.

Another wave of improvements came in the '70s. Now the altar was moved into the middle of the chancel, the organ was placed behind it, additional seats for the choir were provided,

and a hanging wooden cross was suspended from the ceiling. Bill McLeod did most of this rebuilding and reorganizing. A small apron was supposed to hold Walter Malone's pulpit but when the pulpit was placed on it, we found it would block the doorway (required by fire laws) and the old lectern had to be used instead. No one can tell us the original source of our present lectern. It was in the parish hall; we needed a lectern so we moved it to the chancel. The remodelling left no room for the prie-dieu. As usual the chapel was repainted and this time everyone agreed the blue in the chancel was too dark. It was replaced by ivory with John Hawthorn, Forrest Cooper and his son, George, doing most of the work. Soon afterwards we were given some beautiful chandeliers, the gift of Mary and Maurice Eyeington.

The newest addition has been cushions at the chancel rail with some very fine needlepoint made under the direction of D. A. Goldsborough from a design given to us by a non-Episcopalian, Betty Leydon Augenblick, showing we can still draw from non-church members to beautify our church. A second design from the same artist is now being turned into a frontal.

Has everyone been satisfied with these improvements? Of course not! Neither physical nor spiritual changes will content everyone. We don't expect our history will meet with complete approval either. All we can say is—it was the best we could do with what we had. Please forgive us for the omissions and inaccuracies. And let us hope that our history in the future will involve our parish as much as the past hundred years have done.