The Trinity Legacy

A History of Trinity Episcopal Church, Solebury

by Mollie Pickering Hallowell

Solebury, Bucks County, Pennsylvania
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Table of Contents

Page

Preface 5

Chapter I 1860 – 1945 7
Early Days
The New Century
Women of Trinity
Community Groups

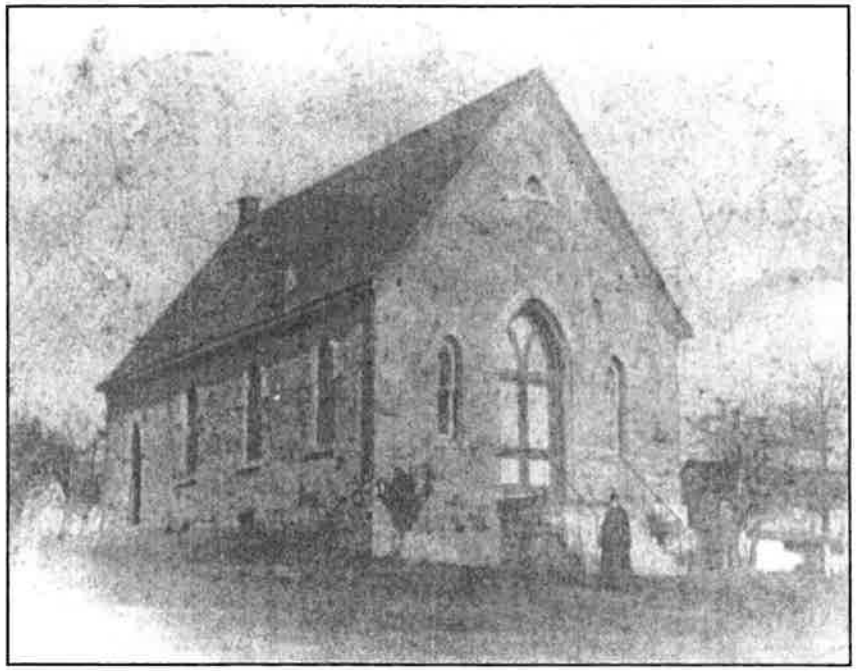
Chapter II 1945 – 1992 13
Walter Malone
An Official Parish at Last
J. Crofton Thompson
The Early 1960s
John M. Smart
William H. Wood

Chapter III 1992 – 2000 23
David R. Anderson
Growth and an Assistant Rector
Fire and the Phoenix
Rebuilding
Changes for the Day School
From Loss to Recovery

Chapter IV Trinity's Ministries 35
Worshipping at Trinity
Youth Ministries and Education
Music for All
Fund Raising and Other Fun
Reaching Out
Flourishing Fellowship
Good and Faithful Servants

Chapter V Our Legacy 45

Appendix Listings of Clergy and Others 49



Trinity Church, 1916

Preface

The year 2000 arrived with great fanfare throughout the world, and in a certain parish in Bucks County it ushered in a brand new era of hope and anticipation. This parish, Trinity Episcopal Church of Solebury, began as a small group of country folk more than 125 years ago, built a chapel, grew slowly in early times, gathered momentum in the latter part of the 20th century, and then suffered the loss of its buildings through a devastating fire. Now the parish begins the new millennium by "going home" to its new facilities, carrying with it an increased membership, an ever-deepening spiritual awareness, dozens of active programs and a legacy of loving concern for one another and for the community. What better time to look back at Trinity's history and follow the growth of that wonderful legacy?

In 1976, Charlotte Orr Gantz wrote a delightful history of Trinity's first hundred years, a treasury of events since the building of the chapel in 1876. But the story of how Trinity has grown since Charlotte completed her little book—not only in size of the congregation but in the blossoming of many parish ministries—is fascinating, too. The past twenty-five years have brought many changes while Trinity's special spirit has remained ever strong, guided by dedicated rectors and nurtured by a new generation of faithful lay leaders. For this story, we draw on Charlotte Gantz's *The First Hundred Years* and then proceed to more recent happenings that

have led to the loving and active parish of today. Now, with the Trinity Family numbering almost 650 and headed by an inspiring clergy team, Trinity faces the challenges of the new century with full hearts and reverent thanksgiving.

Much has changed. Thirty years ago, the Accounting Warden handled all the bookkeeping and without the calculators and computers we have today. The church office was in two rooms next to the classrooms, one of which later became the Day School director's office and the other a playroom. Until the 1990s, Trinity had just one clergy person, and the lone secretary was only part-time. The newsletter was a mimeographed double-sided page. The Women's Auxiliary, begun in 1921, dwindled and then disbanded in the mid-'60s because so many of its members had entered the job market. Even the Christmas Bazaar was put on hold for a few years, though it was soon revived.

Potluck suppers were very popular in the '70s and '80s, but by the '90s there were just too many people to fit comfortably in the Parish Hall. Earlier, everyone knew everyone else and, just as now, Trinity's family spirit was strong and warm and caring. It was in this spirit and with God's guiding love that we grew to the bustling, overflowing church of 1998. Then came the fire. Everything was different—and yet the wonderful family spirit remained. We never stopped functioning as an active church, never missed a service or dropped an important activity. Nothing was easy: we worshipped in a school gymnasium, held committee meetings in parishioners' homes and borrowed community halls for big events. But with enduring faith and fine leadership, we have come through those two challenging years stronger than ever.

Looking back on the many changes Trinity has seen, we can marvel at the ways in which we have followed those who went before us. It is this legacy, this desire for a closeness to God and a willingness to help one another, that gives Trinity its special flavor and binds us together as a loving Christian community. As we move ahead into the 21st century, this little book may help remind us of where we have been.



Chapter I

1860 – 1945

The Early Days

Bucks County was settled in 1682 by the followers of William Penn, an English Quaker. Quaker settlers soon spread to the Buckingham area and to Solebury, which became a separate township in 1702. During the early 1700s, the upper part of the county was settled mainly by Germans, most of whom were Mennonites and Lutherans. The Episcopal Church as we know it was established after the Revolutionary War (about 1785 by Samuel Seabury and William White), but Episcopal churches were slow to appear in rural Bucks County, especially in the central and northern parts. Today they stretch in a belt across Central Bucks: Hilltown, Doylestown, Wrightstown, Buckingham, Solebury and St. Philips. To this day, the only Episcopal church in Upper Bucks is in Quakertown.

Most of the early settlers in Solebury Township were members of the Society of Friends (Quakers) who attended meeting at Buckingham and Fallsington until they built their own meetinghouse about 1810. This was the township's first place of worship. In the next township, Episcopalians established Buckingham Trinity Church in 1837 (the church was built three years later), and the few Episcopal families in Solebury traveled by horse

and wagon the several miles necessary to attend services there.

But Lizzie and Mary Jones, good Episcopalians who lived with their uncle William Biles at Circleview Farm on Old York Road, were concerned for the nearby children and began holding Sunday School at the Biles farm. William himself, a farmer and loyal member of Buckingham Trinity, did not join with the children's parents when they gathered to worship in private homes and then began holding services in the little stone schoolhouse at the crossroads (Sugan and Old York Roads); he remained a staunch member of Buckingham.

In those early days, Solebury village was known as Centre Hill and Buckingham as Centerville. In 1860, the Rev. William Griest, rector at Centreville, incorporated the schoolhouse group as Trinity Solebury Chapel, a mission of the older Buckingham church. According to old accounts, services were attended by 50-60 persons. The stained glass window now on the north wall of the chancel in the chapel was given in Mr. Griest's memory. He was followed by the Rev. J.T. Carpenter, another Buckingham rector, and the group became large enough to consider construction of their own building. Ground was broken for our chapel in 1876 and completed two years later for a cost of about $1000. It is the year 1876 that we count as our anniversary date.

The original little brown stone building was without parish hall, classrooms, kitchen, basement or rectory. Even smaller than today, the chapel extended only to the beginning of the present chancel, and the altar and pulpit stood in front of the present brass rail. Said to seat a hundred persons, the pews were backless schoolroom benches, and it was probably some while before a piano appeared. But imagine the joy and satisfaction of the folks who finally had their own church!

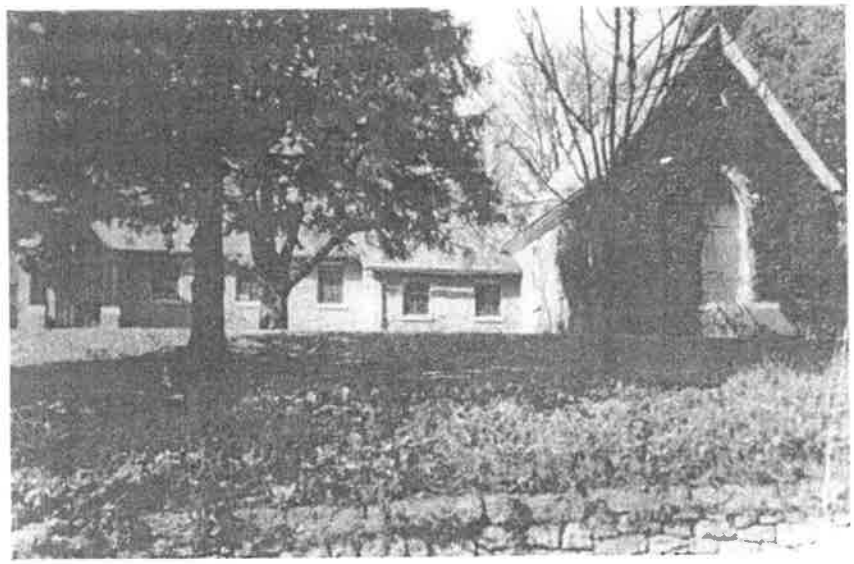
With Mr. Carpenter regularly holding afternoon services, the peak of those early years was reached about 1880. When he moved away, attendance declined and continued at a low level for the next twenty years. Services were irregular, led by itinerant missionaries from Buckingham or seminary students from Philadelphia Divinity School who came by train to New Hope and rode to Centre Hill on horseback. Although Sunday School continued, only occasionally was a priest available for Holy Communion and other sacraments.

The New Century

About 1900, a new rector at Buckingham helped revive interest at our Trinity. Horse sheds were built as a way of encouraging attendance, and the old benches were replaced by gated booths handed on by Buckingham (similar to those still in use at Christ Church in Philadelphia). These were used until 1951 when they were replaced by modern wooden pews with kneelers (twelve on each side and an aisle up the center)

During the early years of the new century, ministers sometimes came from Country Center Mission in Newtown; and in 1911, when the Mission was given a car, regular services at Solebury once again became possible. Although not officially recognized as such by the Diocese, Trinity considered itself a parish and elected a vestry.

In 1921, the Diocese purchased the little schoolhouse on River Road which became St. Philip's Chapel. It was chiefly attended by the girls of Holmquist School (later, the co-ed Solebury School). Thus another Episcopal community had need for the attention of a priest.



Trinity Church and new parish hall, 1934

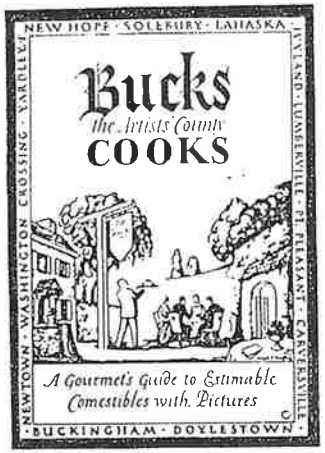
Women of Trinity

In 1921, neighborhood women formed the Trinity Sewing Circle, including not only Episcopalians but also Quakers and other local farm wives. The following year, the group was renamed the Ladies' Guild and began raising money by putting on suppers in the Community Hall just down the road from the chapel. Presently they were able to purchase an organ for Trinity, and in 1932 with help from the Diocese, the Guild provided much of the funds to build the parish hall and a small kitchen. About that time, the Rev. George Boyd was making weekly trips from Philadelphia and devoting much energy to Trinity, often staying overnight with parishioners. For a while the congregation flourished, but when Mr. Boyd left, attendance again declined.

Fund-raising was abruptly curtailed in 1942 when the creamed chicken served at a community supper caused food-poisoning, and it was agreed that other methods for raising money must be found. Sewing, bake sales and rummage sales at Rices' took over, and these eventually led to the first of Trinity's Christmas bazaars (about 1945 or '46).

Following World War II, Trinity's circumstances began to improve. New people were moving into the community, and membership grew. Services were led by the Rev. Waldo D. Parker, rector at St. James in Langhorne, who paid alternating visits to Buckingham, St. Philip's and Solebury. There was electricity in the church now, and the Ladies Guild, renamed the Women's Auxiliary and now entirely Episcopal, was soon able to purchase an electric organ.

In 1950 the Women's Auxiliary made a long-lasting contribution by sponsoring the first volume of the *Bucks Cooks* cookbook. Hand-lettered and illustrated with original work by local artists, it was a resounding success, promoted in both Philadelphia and New York. The funds raised went toward a church driveway, refurbishing the kitchen, carpets in the church and helped to pay for the expanded chancel and the basement.



The Women's Auxiliary (now called Women of Trinity) continued into the 1960s, but participation languished as more and more women became employed outside their homes. When the Vestry was faced with a



Trinity's annual cookie-bake in the "old" kitchen, 1997. Barbara Matybell, Barbara Woodcock, Doug McArthur, Elaine Berry, Libbe Mason, Laura Sine, Kim Calabrese (David Anderson standing by stove)

bank loan in 1963, it was agreed that the group's treasury, their financial affairs and commitments be turned over to the Vestry. Emily Redman, last Auxiliary president, recalls sadly the decision in 1966 to disband altogether. This organization had played a vital role in Trinity's first hundred years, and since its demise, Trinity's women have continued their leadership roles, never ceasing to give generously of their energy and talents.

Community Groups

When the new parish hall was completed in 1933, Farmers' Club, an active rural community organization to which several Trinity members belonged, began holding its meetings there. This became the group's meeting place for the next 45 years, but in the late '70s, with the church budget tight and the extremely high cost of heating the building, the Vestry felt compelled to raise the rent. Much to everyone's regret, Farmers' Club moved to Thompson Memorial Church.

Over the years, other groups were encouraged to meet at Trinity, including a Boy Scout troop, Alcoholics Anonymous and, occasionally, rehearsals for the theater productions of Phillips Mill.



Rear view of Trinity Church, about 1940. Note the peak on the Parish Hall roof.

Chapter II

1948 – 1992

Walter Malone

The Rev. Walter K. Malone was installed as Trinity's first full-time vicar in 1948 (his appointment included both Trinity and St. Philip's). The following year, with aid from the Diocese, the rectory was built for him and his family (wife and three daughters). According to an article in the *Bucks County Traveler* of April 1953, he found our chapel "discouragingly dilapidated" and started a campaign to renovate, redecorate and enlarge the building. To acquire new furnishings, he visited older and larger churches in the area and brought back any ecclesiastical pieces offered. He had a new altar, which the Malones wished to present as a memorial to his uncle, Frank N. Bebree, built to his own design and then carved its decorations himself.

Walter Malone grew up in Philadelphia and originally worked as a journeyman printer. At age twenty-one, he went back and completed high school and studied to become a minister. After serving four years at St. Luke's in Frankford, he came to Solebury at the age of thirty. Within five years of his arrival, Trinity's congregation grew from forty to 114, and for the first time, Trinity was able to assume full fiscal responsibility for major improvements such as addition of the chancel.



Trinity Church, 1948, before extension of the chancel. Note "booth" pews.

An Official Parish at Last

As membership grew, the budget increased six times over (1948-1954). In 1954 Trinity Church, now able to support itself, was accepted by the Diocese as a full-fledged parish. Feeling his job was accomplished, Mr. Malone resigned, and the Rev. J. Crofton Thompson was chosen to take his place. But tragedy struck first: Mr. Thompson's wife and unborn child were killed in an automobile accident shortly before he was due to arrive. As the congregation rallied to try to make up for the family he had lost, Trinity's family spirit, already well-rooted, took on even greater meaning...the traditional caring warmth we cherish still. (Note: Walter Malone died in 1991.)

J. Crofton Thompson



Mr. Thompson assumed his duties as rector in December 1954. He inaugurated a new Sunday service at 9:30 (between the 8:00 and 11:00 a.m. services already established), and the parish continued to grow. It soon became obvious that the church needed a larger kitchen, an office for the rector and more Sunday School classrooms. Another building campaign was begun, and in 1958 a "flat roof" addition was completed, including a common room, several classrooms and better kitchen facilities. This addition cost $50,000 and was covered by pledges plus a swing-loan of $20,000 until the pledges came in.

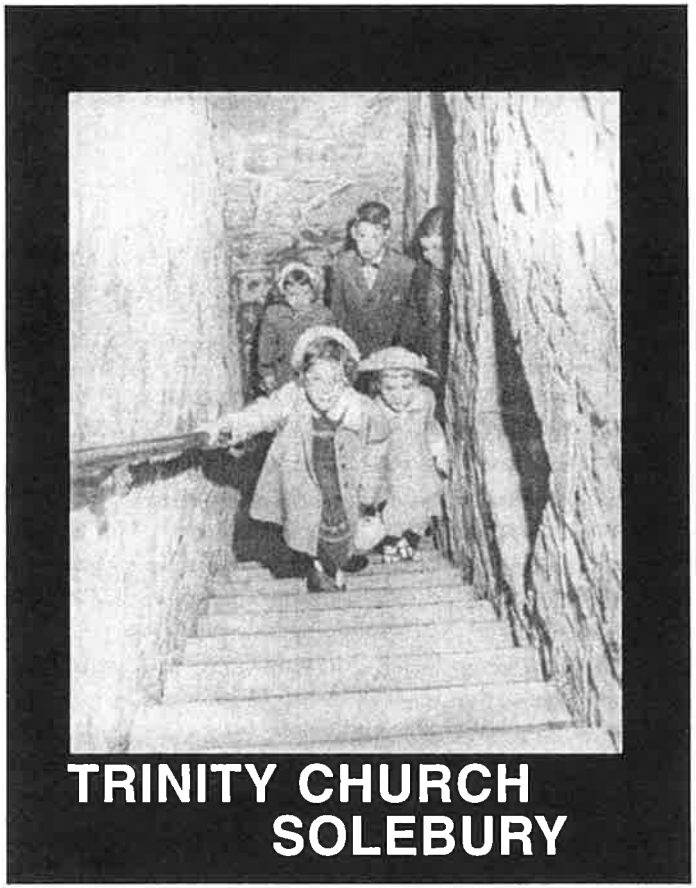
In 1959 Mr. Thompson encouraged Jean Parker to start a nursery school for the young children in the community, and thus Trinity Day School came into being. The cemetery was established in 1963 when Mrs. Edward Riley donated four acres of land adjacent to the church, and Jack Richardson provided partial funding in memory of his wife Marian. For many years, the cemetery lots were available to both Trinity families and the general community, but due to recent space limitations, it is now restricted to parishioners' families.



1964 - The Rev. Crofton Thompson cutting a cake to celebrate his 10th anniversary at Trinity. L to R: Stanley Parker, John Hawthorne, the Rev. Walter Malone, Doug McArthur, Joseph McArthur, Mr. Thompson

Trinity had had a Vestry for many years, but only with the achievement of parish status did it become official. Until 1965 it was composed of nine men, but that year Janet Gold was appointed to fill a vacancy. Hope Sellers was appointed the following year, and in 1969 Mollie Hallowell was the first woman to be elected to Vestry. The first woman to serve as Rector's Warden was Kitty Petrie in 1976.

Mr. Thompson was the first Dean of the Bucks County Deanery and was popular as a leader of youth retreats. Noted for his strong opinions, he was especially loved because "nothing that involved the church was too small for his attention" (Charlotte Gantz).



Cover of brochure introducing the 1958 building campaign — resulting in the enlarged chapel and "flat roof" addition of classrooms. Pictured are children returning from classes in the basement.



Daniel Garber's painting "Green Mansions" once hung in the Common Room.

The Early 1960s

In 1960, Mrs. Mary Garber, parishioner and wife of the well-known New Hope artist, presented Trinity with a beautiful Daniel Garber oil painting, "Green Mansions." For many years the painting hung in the Common Room (later called the library), but eventually the high insurance risk led to a decision to sell. Auctioned by Sotheby's in 1989, the proceeds from its sale ($130,000) became the basis for the Trinity Episcopal Church Memorial Fund. Another gift, a handsome grandfather's clock given by John and Marion Moreton, also graced the Common Room and was there at the time of the fire in 1998 (see photo, page 41); unfortunately it was lost in the blaze.

The early '60s with its issues of desegregation in this country and racial unrest beyond drew concerned response from the Trinity Family. The Vestry led the way in sponsoring two young people from Kenya who arrived to attend New Hope/Solebury High School and stayed on through college. Lodging was provided by Phil and Hope Sellers and William and Minette Taylor. Trinity underwrote a trip the Sellers' son Steve made to Guatemala to help build a chapel in Porto Barrias and also underwrote Pam Parker's dangerous summer as a Freedom Rider in Mississippi. (Pam was the daughter of Stanley and Jean Parker.) Parishioner Tanis Page left her comfortable country home to live and work for a year in one of the poorest sections of Philadelphia. Trinity's "outreach" was truly blossoming.

John M. Smart

In 1967, to the dismay of the parish, Mr. Thompson died suddenly of a heart attack. The Vestry, led by Carl Ackerman, guided the parish through a year of supply priests, and in the spring of 1968, the Rev. John M. Smart became Trinity's new rector, initiating another ten years of growth and change. Services were reduced to two, at 8:00 and 10:00 a.m., with the Rev. Matthew Imrie, a retired Army chaplain, frequently assisting at the early service. In 1970, the interior of the sanctuary was renovated, including free-standing placement of the altar, rearrangement of the choir stalls, a new organ, and new frontal and needlepoint kneeling cushions (handiwork of the parish women). (The altar was formerly against the front wall and the choir seated along the side-walls.)

Mr. Smart and his wife Marie were "city folks" but adapted happily to rural Solebury and filled the rectory with lively children (Jean and John Jr.). Another new face appeared in 1974 when Ron Kershner became Organist and Musical Director. He stayed with us for twenty years and led Trinity's choir to become one of the most moving ministries of the church.

But loving hearts don't always agree, and after animated discussion, the 1973 annual parish meeting turned down an opportunity to purchase the adjacent Wiley property...where the new church now stands. "Can't afford the interest!" many declared. Blessedly, one loyal parish family saw further into the future: with Vestry approval, Ian and Betty Fergusson bought the property and gave it to Trinity on a 20-year no-interest mortgage. No need to point out how cramped we would be today if they had not had such vision.



The Rev. Jack Smart and Marie

Mr. Smart addressed another controversial issue when the question arose of ministry to New Hope's gay population. Under his leadership, Vestry approved their request for use of the church for Sunday evening services. (Three families left Trinity, of whom two later returned.) Eventually the nucleus of the gay group merged quietly with the congregation at regular worship services.

The year 1976 marked the 100th anniversary of Trinity's chapel. Not only did Charlotte Gantz's *The First Hundred Years* appear, but Ron Kershner directed the choir in the first of a series of fine annual concerts. Additionally, long-standing loans from Solebury Bank were finally cleared, and Trinity faced its second century on firm financial footing.

William H. Wood III



The Wood family, 1987: Cary, Kristine, Bill, & Alice in front

When Mr. Smart moved on in 1977 to Holy Trinity on Rittenhouse Square in Philadelphia, Stanley Parker led the Vestry through another interim period. Trinity again depended on supply priests (a different one each Sunday) until the Rev. William H. Wood III was installed as rector the following spring. He and his wife Kristine arrived with only a dog but they, too, presently added two children, Cary and Alice, to the rectory household.

Originally from Virginia, Mr. Wood's soft Southern manner and dazzling sermons continued attracting new parishioners. As the 1980s began, the congregation swelled until the aisle at the second service was choked with extra chairs. It was during this fast-growing period that the size of the Vestry was increased to twelve (and by this time, women were well represented, too). The small house on the Wiley property was converted into offices and dubbed "The Mansion"; a second volume of *Bucks Cooks* recipes were collated and published in 1983; and new chairs, given as memorials, were purchased for the choir.

Mr. Wood led the local New Hope/Solebury clergy in promoting ministry for HIV/AIDS victims as this dread illness became prevalent. Additionally, he developed close ties with the Princeton Theological Seminary

and arranged for students to come to Trinity on Sundays, both to assist and to learn: each school year one or two young men and women were welcomed by the parish, offered their help in return for hands-on experience, and were entertained in parishioners' homes for Sunday dinner. Mr. Wood inaugurated the use of lay-readers (now called Lectors) at worship services, and a touch of humor was sometimes added on Sunday mornings when the Woods' young red-headed Alice and their dog Snoopy would caper down the aisle.

Outreach beyond the community again aroused support when Vietnamese refugees began pouring into the United States. In 1980 Trinity agreed to sponsor a family, and two brothers and their sister became our responsibility. Ages ranging from 16 to 22, Nghu, Duc and Mia Tran were provided an apartment in New Hope and housekeeping supplies along with the loving attention of several parish families. Anne and Chuck Bamford, Pat and Terry Mort, and Suzanne and Bromley Lowe were among those most involved. The Trans later moved to California, but Duc continues to remain in touch.

By the mid '80s greater seating capacity in the church was desperately needed, and many parishioners also urged the addition of a narthex, a larger kitchen and better bathroom facilities. Possible physical expansion of the church had been considered in the 1970s and was again given serious study in the winter of 1987/88. Preliminary plans were drawn up by Lynn Taylor, a Doylestown architect, but cautious voices were strong and action was postponed once more. Instead, services were rescheduled at 8:45 and 10:30 a.m. in order to encourage more attendance at the early service. Meanwhile, $37,000 was borrowed from Trinity's own restricted funds to build an addition to the rectory and another $30,000 for renovating the basement classrooms.

Trinity's outlook in 1990 was for a pleasant escalation toward the new century, with a gradual increase in the size of the congregation and possible physical expansion toward the middle of the decade. All appeared serene, but in the summer of 1991, Mr. Wood accepted a call to St. Christopher's Church in Gladwyne, and the parish once again faced the lengthy search process. This time an interim rector was installed—the Rev. Barbara A. Kelley—and Rector's Warden Cliff Nesbit appointed Helen Montgomery to head the Search Committee. Church activities continued as usual, and in December the first Christmas House Tour, replacing the traditional Christmas bazaar, was enthusiastically received.



Kitchen Cleanup, 1984. (L to R)Karen Woodfield, Mason Brower, Martha Huestis, Kathy McLean, D.A.Goldsborough, Charles Ingerman, Helen Prescott



The Rev. Barbara A. Kelly, serving as Trinity's interim priest, leads the Arbor Day service in 1992.



1994 Pentecost Sunday in front of Parish Hall



The Anderson family, 1993; Maggie, Pam, David and Sharon

Chapter III

1992 – 2000

David R. Anderson

In June of 1992, the Rev. David R. Anderson was unanimously selected as Trinity's new rector, and the Anderson family settled in the rectory in time to begin the fall season. The parish was delighted with David, his charming wife Pam and daughters Maggie and Sharon, ages nine and seven. It was soon apparent that one of David's strongest talents lay in attracting young families, and both church and classrooms became even more overcrowded.

Three Sunday services (8:00, 9:15 and 11:15) were reintroduced for the first time since Crofton Thompson had been rector. The Vestry went to work on a new *Mission Statement* that would set goals for all Trinity's ministries and activities. Lloyd Denton, seminarian from Princeton, began forming a youth group, a need felt strongly by the parish. This culminated in the spring of 1995 when the Trinity Youth Group spent a week in Washington D.C. doing outreach work in some of the poorest neighborhoods.

Growth and an Assistant Rector

Once the *Mission Statement* was in place, a diligent Planning Committee began to consider ways and means for Trinity to accommodate its growth. Led by Helen Montgomery, the committee conducted studies and parish meetings to make sure all aspects of our active church life were considered. While it was obvious more space was needed, the first priority was determined to be assistance for the rector. So it was that in July 1995, the Rev. John Capellaro became Trinity's first assistant rector. With him came his wife Bernadette and teenage sons Dan and Luke.

Under John Capellaro's enthusiastic leadership and vibrant guitar, the Trinity Youth Group flourished. Drawing young people from the whole community, membership soon reached 40 and continued to grow. In 1996, the first "Mission Philadelphia" was launched, financed mainly by the first Lobsterfest, an outdoor feast of seafood and other goodies. During "Mission Philadelphia," Youth Group members and their sponsors spend a week working in the inner-city at youth centers and shelters. Both this and the Lobsterfest are now annual events, and the Lobsterfest has become recognized as a real community happening.

In 1996 work began on a Master Plan to prepare for Trinity's next ten to fifteen years. Assisted by outside consultation and with more studies, a lengthy case statement and other detailed reports, the Plan was adopted in January 1997, and plans began for a campaign to raise money for constructing a new sanctuary and renovating and expanding our existing buildings. On April 27, 1997 a memorable kick-off celebration opened the campaign to *Welcome All People* at the Eagle Fire Hall with Frank Brower as Master of Ceremonies. A feature of this event was presentation of a video, *Trinity Church –Welcome All People,* highlighting past history, current activities and goals of the campaign. Produced by David Anderson and Bill Stefanowicz with the help of others along the way, it remains a wonderful memento in Trinity's archives.

In the summer of 1997, the Anderson family moved into their own home, leaving the rectory to be renovated into much needed administrative office space. The 1997-98 church year proceeded with gusto, and the *Welcome All People* campaign reached its goal of $1.6 million. The only clouds were the sudden departure of Music Director Kay Standifer in April and the anticipated loss of the Capellaros when John would move on to his own parish at the end of the school year. Then calamity struck.



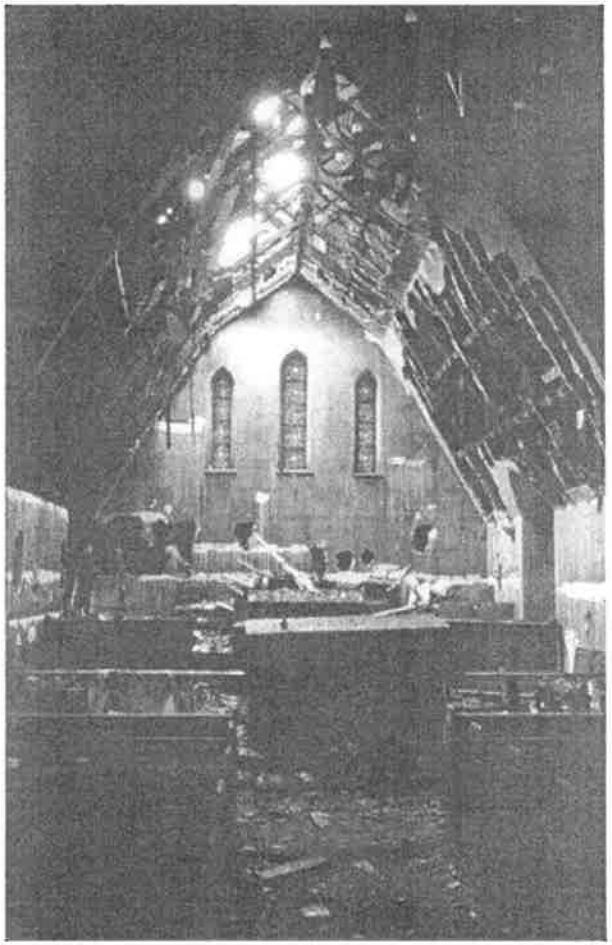
Trinity Youth Group on retreat, 1997



A full house; 9:15 a.m. service, 1997

Fire and the Phoenix

On the night of Sunday, May 10, 1998, Trinity Church burned down. Discovered about 11:30 p.m., the fire consumed the parish hall, kitchen, library and classrooms and began eating a section of the chapel roof. With broken hearts, parishioners viewed the remains on a rainy Monday morning. "Why?" they asked, but no one knew the answer. The Fire Marshal determined the fire to be a case of arson, but to this date no culprit has been found.



For the Inquirer/ Bill Cain

The fire severly damaged the chancel of the church — but the stained glass windows survived.

A wonderfully supportive fellowship sprang from the community. The Youth Group met by the ruins that same Monday evening, giving comfort to each other as well as to many adults. The following night, some 500 people attended a worship service in the Eagle Fire Hall—parishioners, family, friends, fire-fighters, neighbors, and clergy from many other churches. A *Phoenix Fund* was established to receive the generous inflow of cash contributions. Sunday morning services were organized in the gymnasium of the New Hope/Solebury Elementary School across the road from the church, and Solebury Friends Meeting offered their annex building to the Day School, whose classes reopened there a week after the fire.



Parish Hall following the May 1998 fire
(photo by John Wright)



David Anderson interviewed by Action News the day after the fire



John Capellaro and David Anderson with handmade patchwork stoles, following the May 1998 fire

Much had been lost in the fire: hymnals, musical scores, choir robes, vestments, altar cloths, all the Day School's equipment and supplies, kitchen equipment, the library of books, a handsome grandfather's clock, plaques and pictures (including a painting of the young Christ teaching in the Temple by Mick Maurer, a Peacemeal friend). But the Communion silver was saved, and the records and equipment in the Mansion were untouched.

Work had already begun on renovating the rectory, and now great effort went into quickly completing the conversion to office space. While the Mansion had not burned, there was simply not room to handle all the activity that followed the fire. Thanks to Bill Stefanowicz and his Property Committee as well as to several outside contractors, church operations were moved to the new Rectory Offices in mid-June. Meanwhile parishioners were unanimous in their determination to carry on Trinity's many programs. A highly successful Lobsterfest preceded the already planned youth work-week at "Mission Philadelphia." The *Tidings* newsletter and other communications continued to reach parishioners, Church School finished the year in the elementary school classrooms, and Peacemeal, Trinity's outreach to HIV/AIDS families, found a new home for its monthly gatherings at the Carversville Christian Church.

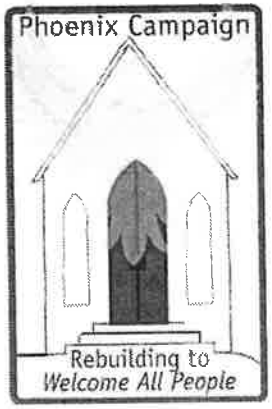
But other distressing things were in store for that summer. With regret we parted with John Capellaro and his family when they left in June for John's new church in Norfolk, VA. The deaths of two active parishioners also left gaping holes: Gordon Day and Mason Brower. The daily need for decisions and planning placed a tremendous load on David Anderson, Senior Warden Peg Clark, the Vestry and many others. In August, however, the arrival of Tim Harrell as Trinity's new Organist/Choirmaster was truly a gift from God when one was sorely needed. Tim had been organist at the Cathedral in Trenton, and even a choir without robes or musical scores (all consumed in the fire) failed to daunt this very talented young man.

Well before John Capellaro's departure, the search was underway for a successor, but it was not until January 1999 that we welcomed the Rev. Susan Butler as new Assistant Rector. With her warm personality, she quickly achieved a significant role in the spiritual leadership of the Trinity family. Director of Youth and Children's Ministries was established as a separate position, and an enthusiastic parishioner, Kyle Evans, took over this full-time assignment.



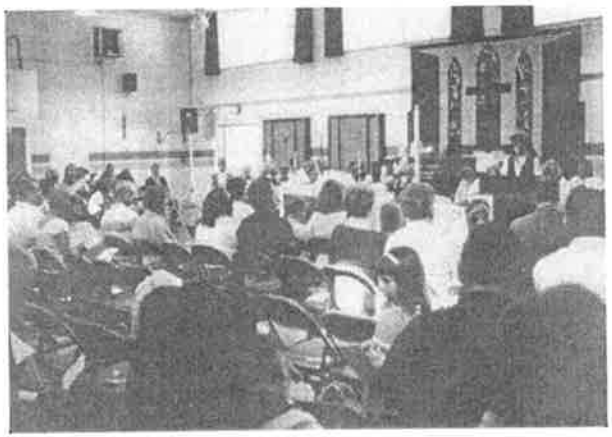
Assistant Rector Susan Butler in new church, July 2000

The mythical Phoenix bird, which is said to have risen with the freshness of youth from its own ashes, became a logo not only for the generous contributions that poured in following the fire (more than $160,000) but also for the rebuilding fund campaign. In April 1999, a celebration of the new campaign, *The Phoenix Campaign—Rebuilding to Welcome All People,* was held on the cleared foundations of the old parish hall, and announcement was made that the new hall would be named "McArthur Hall" in honor of long-time Treasurer Doug McArthur and his family. Presented to parishioners was a booklet *Tragedy and Triumph* with stories and photographs of the fire and of how Trinity rebounded. As eight-year old Misha Dukas said, "Mommy, the church didn't burn, only the building did."



Rebuilding

In the months following the fire, a great many people became involved in nurturing the plans for rebuilding, steadfastly working through the complexities of insurance claims, campaign fund-raising, township regulations, licenses and permits. To name only a few of the many volunteers: Peg Clark, who took on her role of Senior Warden only days before the fire; Eric Evans, who headed the Building Committee and was presently joined by Roger Stikeleather; David Stewart, whose task was assembling insurance claims; Betty Stagg and Carl Holstrom, chairing the rebuilding capital campaign; and Anita Howard, who faithfully tabulated the incoming cash and pledge support. Each of these insist they succeeded only through the help of countless others, and it is true that much was accomplished through team effort. Trinity is greatly blessed with an exceptional number of willing volunteers and, as David Anderson has since noted, over and over again parishioners came to him not only with ideas but with the energy to put them to work.



For more than two years, Sunday worship was held in the New Hope Solebury Elementary School gymnasium

(photo by John Wright)

Michael Farewell of the architectural firm Ford, Farewell, Mills & Glatch worked unstintingly with Vestry and the Building Committee to develop plans for rebuilding, estimated to cost $4.5 million (actual:$4,850,000). The Building Committee and others spent many hours with township supervisors in order to acquire the necessary permits and licenses. The requirement for a much larger parking area was one of the final issues settled, and on June 24, 1999 the building permit was signed and received in the Church Office—more than a year after the fire. During the summer of '99 much preliminary work was accomplished: new drainage fields, septic system, parking lots and, finally, the pouring of footings for the foundation of the new sanctuary.



Ground-breaking for the new church — June 20, 1999

E. Allen Reeves, Inc., the on-site construction managers, were soon hard at work, and during the fall and early winter, walls began to rise. Shortly after the New Year, roof trusses sprouted over the new buildings, and whispers of completion by late May thrilled parishioners. They continued to watch each step with prayerful concern even as they enthusiastically pursued the many ministries and activities that make up Trinity's mission, and as spring drew near, excitement mounted.

Changes for the Day School

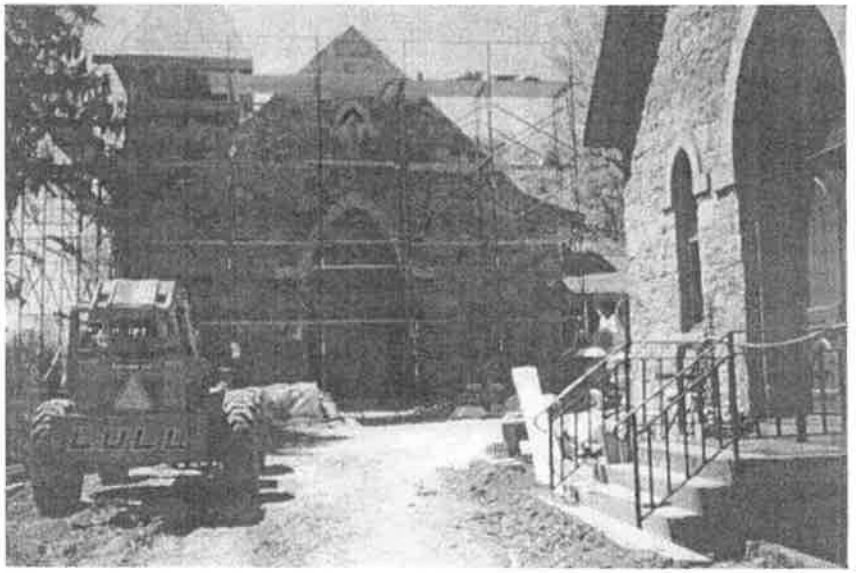
All those involved with Trinity Day School showed remarkable perseverance following the fire. Led by Director Prue Day, the school moved into Solebury Meeting's annex building for the 1998-99 year and then to the Central Bucks Christian Church. Enrollment declined as these moves were made, but it is anticipated that, once back at Trinity, the new classrooms will fill quickly (75 already signed up by mid-summer). A major change occurred with the arrival of the year 2000: Prue Day retired after 26 faithful years as director. Cindy Bove, also a Trinity parishioner, assumed the position.

From Loss to Recovery

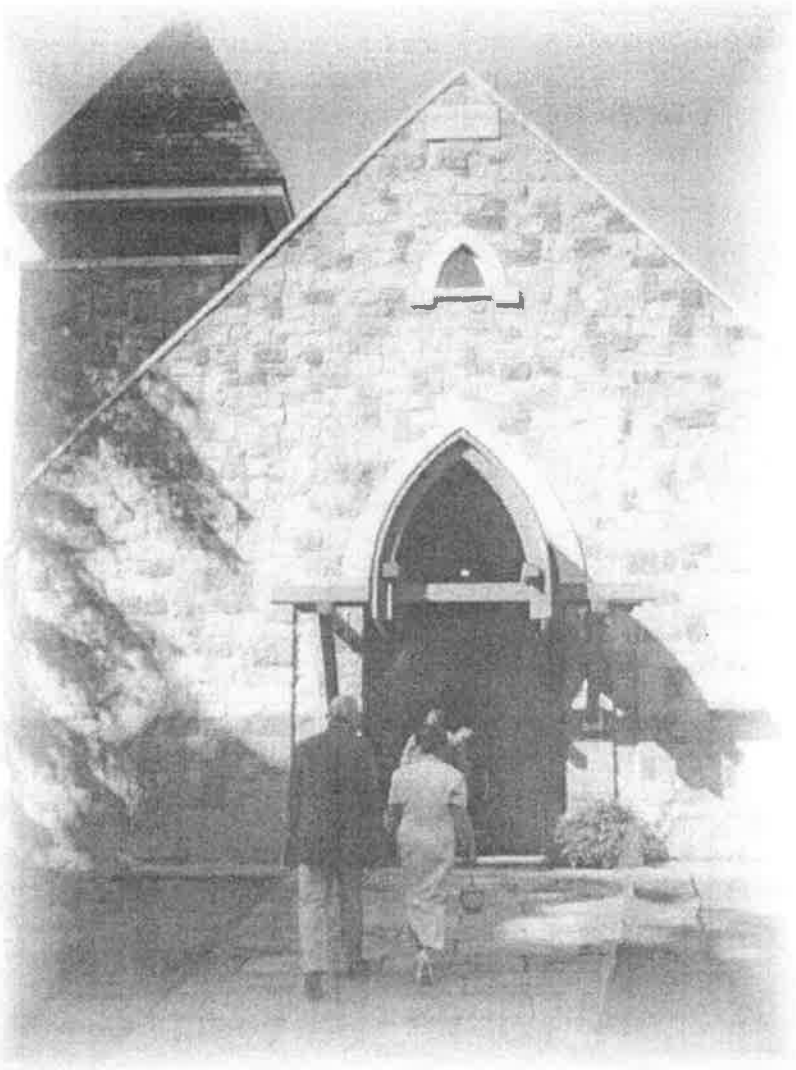
Twenty-five months after the fire, the Trinity Family "came home" on June 11, 2000, when worship services were held for the first time in the new sanctuary. An amazing 480 persons attended the three services that Sunday, and the large new McArthur Hall rang with happy chatter during Coffee Hour. The original chapel, still being refurbished, would soon open its doors as well, ready for small services and gatherings, but on that jubilant June day, the shadows cast by the fire melted away as hearts overflowed with thanksgiving for the strength and courage granted by the Heavenly Father who makes all things possible. Much had been lost in the 1998 flames, but an incredible amount had been gained through loving commitment, hard work, new friends, dedicated volunteers, growth in parish membership and a firm determination to make new ideas and expanded horizons work. The many ministries already underway are described in Chapter IV.



Frameword for the new church, November 1999



The new church nears completion, April 2000



Parishioners arriving for the first services in the new church, June 11, 2000

Chapter IV

Trinity's Ministries

Worshipping at Trinity

The love of God...the teachings of Jesus Christ...the beautiful sacraments...these have always been the foundation of Trinity's ministries. The warm and loving welcome for all who come to worship, sing in the choir, attend Church School or participate in the Youth Group is founded on the deep convictions in the hearts of the parishioners. From that first small group of local Episcopalians who gathered together in 1860 and in 1876 began building the little chapel, a legacy of loving God and caring for one another has flowed from one generation to the next. More than fortunate in the long line of dedicated priests who have guided Trinity through the years, we are blessed now by the inspiring team of David Anderson and Susan Butler.

It is a premise of our convictions that the ministries and activities described in the following pages all begin by joining together in the sanctuary to worship. The welcoming red doors (and during the two recent years, the doors to the elementary school gym) have drawn parishioners, families and newcomers to the worship, meditation and prayer so essential to a Christ-led life. Be it in the school gymnasium, our small chapel or the new

larger church, the soul of Trinity lies in its worship services. Hours and arrangements may change over the years, but it is here we open ourselves to the Word of the Lord.

Youth Ministries and Education

The future lies in the youth of today. Thus, under the leadership of the Rev. John Smart and parishioner Terry Drorbaugh, a youth group was formed in the '70s and remained active until its members matured and the Drorbaughs moved away. For a long while, there seemed too few young people to continue, but in 1993, Lloyd Denton and his wife Shannon Cate came from the Princeton Theological Seminary to work with Trinity's youth. Shannon became Church School coordinator while Lloyd, along with parishioner Dick Wallace, began an active extra-curricular program for high school and junior high young people. This culminated in June 1995 with a Youth Outreach Week in Washington DC and was the beginning of the present enthusiastic Youth Group.

Assistant Rector John Capellaro took over the Youth Group in the fall of '95 and, with a dedicated crew of adult sponsors, built a uniquely strong program for 40-50 young people. In addition to twice-yearly retreats and a variety of recreational activities, in May '97 the group inaugurated as its chief money-raiser an annual Lobsterfest in which the whole parish now participates and the entire community attends. That same spring, the Youth Group undertook "Mission Philadelphia," a week of inner-city outreach work and fun; this has become a remarkably successful annual event. And in spite of the fire and John Capellaro's departure in 1998, the Youth Group continues as one of Trinity's strongest ministries, now led by Kyle Evans as Director of Youth and Children's Ministries.



John Capellaro (center) with some of Youth Group and sponsors, 1994



Trinity Youth Group's band, playing in the elementary school gym, 1999 (Youth sponsor Mike Lozinski in center)

Like all Sunday schools, Trinity's Church School has seen both highs and lows. It flourished in the 1950s, not only crowding the parish hall, stage, kitchen and basement but even the furnace room! This led to the building of the "flat-roof" building and real classrooms. Presently there came a lull in the number of parish youngsters and then an inspiring increase in the 1990s. Much credit goes to Johnna Frederickson (also from Princeton Seminary) who served two years as Coordinator and, after the fire, to parishioner Kim Laughlin, who organized an active Church School in the elementary school classrooms. As we welcomed the year 2000, enrolment was over 100, with 27 full- and part-time teachers.

Trinity Day School began in 1959 when Jean Parker and the Rev. Crofton Thompson recognized a need for organized care for pre-school children in the community and put the newly-built classrooms to weekday use. Jean was director for 15 years, followed in 1974 by Prue Day. The Day School flourished, reaching a high of 60 children in 1998 and many times leading their parents to becoming active in the church. Surely there was no group within Trinity more eager to return to its own facilities in the new building! In the fall of 2000, Cindy Bove, now the Day School Director, and the dedicated teachers look forward to pursuing this ministry in six bright new classrooms.

Music for All

One of Trinity's most beloved ministries is its music. Be it organ, choir, ensemble, contemporary youth group or simply joining together in hymn-singing, nearly all parishioners find inspiration in our music.

The first choir director of whom there is record was Marie Paxson, who led the choir from the early '20s until 1954. An electric organ was purchased in 1946, and among the several organists over the years was parishioner Bob Goldsborough.



Ron Kershner, Musical Director and organist, 1974-1994

Ron Kershner, talented Doylestown musician, came on board in 1974 and inspired us for the next twenty years. He soon earned the title of Musical Director, and with his professional background, his devoted coaching and direction, he created much of the music ministry we now treasure. It was Ron who introduced the Lessons and Carols service each December and began the spring concerts which attract the enthusiastic attendance of both parishioners and community.



The Senior Choir, 1997

When Ron retired in 1994, Glenda Cosenza served as Music Director for two years, followed in 1996 by Kay Standifer. The music program became even more diversified with not only senior and junior choirs but also a Cherubs Choir, Chamber Singers and an All-Parish Festival Choir. Beginning when Ron was with us, Lisa Landley, a life-long parishioner, assisted in several capacities and is now Assistant Choirmaster.

Following Kay Standifer's departure and the fateful fire, Trinity was blessed by the arrival of Tim Harrell as Organist/Choirmaster. Beginning in August 1998 and undismayed at playing on a moveable electric organ in a school gymnasium, Tim has brought great depth to our music ministry. Additionally, once a month Mike Lozinski leads the Youth Group band and the congregation in contemporary music.



Kay Standifer and Cherub Choir, 1997



Tim Harrell, Organist/ Choirmaster, playing in the elementary school gym, 1999

Fund Raising and Other Fun

Since the days of community suppers, Trinity has found many different ways to raise money. The more persistent of these is the annual Cookie Bake, a tradition that began with the first Christmas bazaar in 1946. Always held on the first Saturday of December, the bazaar itself, after a three-year intermission in the 1960s, has gone through a number of variations and is now a highly successful and popular House Tour and Christmas Shop. On the other hand, Cookie Bake, a group undertaking in early November, has never faltered. For many years a two-week long project and now accomplished in six days and evenings, it produces 15,000 to 20,000 decorated cookies to be sold to the public at the Christmas Shop. The December 1997 issue of the magazine *Saveur* published a delightful article about Trinity's cookie-baking, handsomely illustrated with colored photographs.

During the '70s and '80s, Trinity staged an annual auction as well as a series of progressive dinners. These were "fun" if not always financially successful. There was also a yearly clothing sale and a rummage sale called "Grandma's Attic." Only the Clothing Sale has survived the current emphasis on service projects and on faithful pledging by parishioners. All-out parish effort goes into the House Tour and Christmas Shop in December and the Youth Group's Lobsterfest in the spring.



"Men's Lib" table at Christmas Bazaar, 1990; Bill Subers, Jim Gold, George Plough & Waldo Parker



Preparing greens for the Christmas Shop 1991 in the Common Room; Kay Haverfield, Pat Eyeington, Helen Prescott, Marilou Stewart, Estelle Thomas, Gail Nagele-Hopkins, Mason Brower.

Inaugurated by Helen Montgomery, the first House Tour took place in 1991. Each year, five interesting houses are decorated and opened to the public. Surprisingly, they are not usually homes of Trinity parishioners but of friends and neighbors who graciously accept only Christmas decorating in return for their generosity. Some 800 House Tour tickets are generally sold out in advance of the date. The Christmas Shop (formerly the Bazaar) features not only Trinity's famous cookies but also a beautiful selection of Christmas greens; jams, jellies and wood-working by the men of the parish; and a limited number of crafts. At one time, a full luncheon was served but was discontinued due to lack of space; however, noontime soup and afternoon tea were welcome additions in 1998 and '99 when the event was centered at Phillips Mill and then in the Audubon Barn. But no matter where it is headquartered, the combined House Tour and Christmas Shop continue to be an exciting and successful event, raising more than $30,000 in each of the past two years (1998 and 1999). And not only are a staggering number of work-hours required both beforehand and on the day itself, but the preparation and organization provide a unique opportunity for leadership and fellowship among parishioners.

Reaching Out

To a large number of the Trinity family, following Jesus means Christian service to others, especially those less fortunate than themselves. For many years, this outreach was mainly through monetary donations to a lengthy list of local, regional and international organizations. More recently, however, contributions have been directed toward service agencies in our own area and through the Presiding Bishop's Fund to reach more distant needs. Special collections are received directly from the congregation for disasters such as Hurricane Hugo in 1989, the church burnings in the South and the 1999 tornados in Oklahoma City.

Emphasis is now placed on Service/Outreach with organized hands-on service opportunities. A notable example is Peacemeal, begun in 1995 by Emily Wolf to provide a monthly evening of dinner and entertainment for individuals and families living with HIV/AIDS from all parts of Bucks County. Since 1994, an annual workday has offered parishioners an opportunity to help with painting and spring clean-up in such places as shelters for the homeless. A group works with Habitat for Humanity in building houses while another prepares frozen meals for shut-ins throughout the county (Aid for Friends). Closer to home, Trinity Friends stand ready to assist our own parishioners when emergencies arise. Packaged foods and household supplies are collected weekly for the Lambertville Food Pantry. Members of the Youth Group take an active part in many of the Service ministries, and Church School classes also undertake Service projects.

Flourishing Fellowship

Each of Trinity's programs and activities is thoughtfully measured against its Mission Statement, which sets high Christian goals for all participants. Moreover, Trinity could well be termed a melting pot: of old and new members alike, many come from backgrounds other than Episcopalian. So how do we learn to pray and work and love each other in a cohesive church community?

The parish now numbers 650, its traditional friendliness and loving warmth among the major reasons newcomers give for choosing Trinity as their church; others mention the active Church School and the energetic clergy. Two years of services in the school gymnasium did not slow the arrival of new members and, especially, children flocking to Church School. With grateful thanks, we have watched the Trinity Spirit continue to flourish beyond all expectations.

New friendships blossom in the many parish committees and group activities as well as after Sunday's 8:00 service and at Coffee Hour between the 9:15 and 11:15 services.

On the serious side, 18 men and women serve as lectors at worship services and 19 others take turns at the Welcome Table during Coffee Hour. The Altar Guild, led for many years by Helen Prescott, has built strong ties, while the Service Committee draws together several smaller groups. During the winter of 1998, a DOCC (Disciples of Christ in Community) brought 21 parishioners together in a very special way.



Coffee Hour in the Parish Hall, 1997

But in a parish as large as Trinity's and with people attending three different services, communication becomes a challenge. This has been met in several ways. Since 1994, a Parish Directory has been published each fall, containing not only parishioners' names and addresses but also a full description of Trinity's various ministries and committees and of church activities planned for the coming year. A monthly newsletter *Trinity Tidings* announces coming events and reports on significant happenings. In 1998 a new photo directory helped parishioners put names and faces together (previous photo directories were published in 1980, 1986 and 1991). Following the fire, a regular report from Senior Warden Peg Clark appeared as *Trinity Carries On*. The weekly Sunday bulletin also carries notices and announcements.

Good and Faithful Servants

Intrinsic to all the ministries described above is the faithful leadership provided by parishioners. Granted that through the years Trinity has been guided by exceptionally fine clergy, nonetheless the success of many of its programs, projects and activities has been the result of loyal and enthusiastic parish leaders. An outstanding example in recent years is Peacemeal, which has been recognized with a plaque from the Family Services Association of Bucks County. The Christmas bazaar was always a "grass-roots" project, and the transformation into the present annual House Tour was and is entirely carried out by lay leadership. Lobsterfest is likewise planned and conducted by energetic parishioners. During the 1967-68 and 1976-77 intervals between rectors, Vestry leadership kept the church operating in its usual pattern (an interim rector was appointed during the 1991-92 period).

After the fire in 1998, Vestry members and many other parishioners took on intensive roles. During that spring and early summer, we had no Music Director, the Assistant Rector moved to his own parish, there was no Youth Director, and we were faced with the staggering task of finding locations in which to continue church activities. Much as David Anderson himself accomplished (and this was a overwhelming amount!), he is the first to say Trinity could never have carried on without the parish leadership that sprang from all sides. He very graciously terms Trinity's lay leadership as the most exceptional he has ever known.



Vestry/Staff Retreat, May 1993. David Anderson, Anne Rivinus and Doug McArthur on floor in front. Seated: Phyllis Mathieu, Mollie Hallowell, Libbe Mason, Sharon Wood, David Shenkle, Bonnie Wilbur, Laura Huestis, Peggy Strohl, Bill Wolf, Allen Black, Prue Day.

Chapter V

Our Legacy

In describing Trinity's past and exploring its continued growth and enthusiasm, we have tried to follow the legacy bequeathed, year by year, to each new generation of parishioners: the faithful commitment to Christian worship, the urge to reach out to others, the talent of feeding family and friends, the facing of difficult times and glad ones. But Trinity's story would be incomplete without mentioning a few special people who have played essential roles over the years. For instance, how could any church operate without a secretary? In the past fifty years, these have included:

Dottie Sugden, who worked under Crofton Thompson; *Betty Shuman*, who was here with Jack Smart; and *Julie Clark*, who brightened Bill Wood's early years. Each was employed part-time as was *Anne Rivinus* when she took over in 1983. As the workload increased, however, Anne's position became full-time, and in 1997 she was finally recognized as Parish Administrator. Administrate she does, keeping the parish wheels turning and overseeing today's complex and fast-paced array of church activities. She is ably assisted by part-time secretary *Cathy Stephens* as well as a number of volunteers, especially *Carol Kinnier* who spends many days in the office.

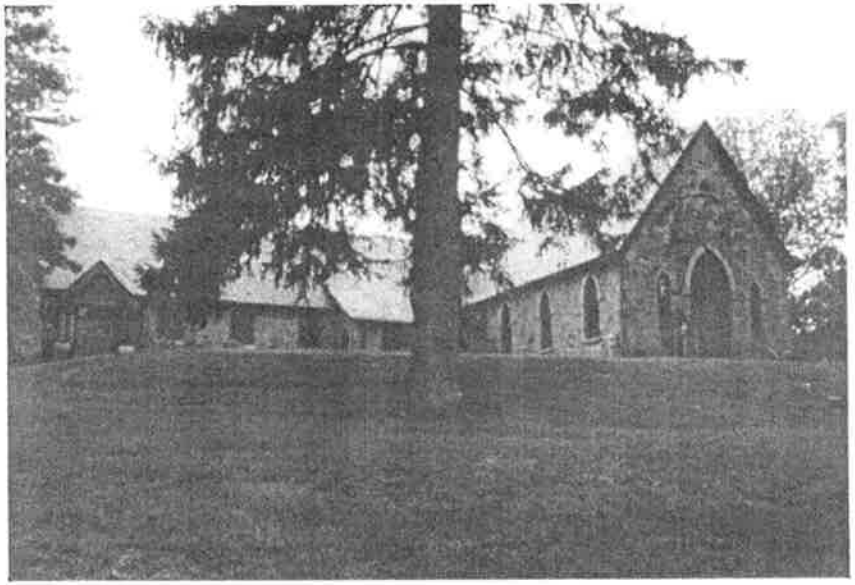
Another essential person is Trinity's Treasurer. For many years, Genevieve Hawkins served as treasurer, followed by Milton Benson. After Milton's death in 1980, Doug McArthur took on the job, and he has been our faithful banker, financial advisor and consultant ever since. Doug, who first came as a summer visitor in 1947 even before his parents, Joseph and Ruby McArthur, moved to Solebury, might well be called "Mr. Trinity." The new parish hall, McArthur Hall, is named in honor of him and his family.



Anne Rivinus, Parish Administrator (1996)



Doug McArthur, Accounting Warden and then Trinity's treasurer for the past 20 years



Trinity Church, 1996

Trinity will celebrate its 125th anniversary in the year 2001 (counting from the building of the chapel in 1876). By that time, we will be accustomed to Sunday services in the spacious new church and smaller services and gatherings in the little chapel. The opportunities provided by the enlarged parish hall (McArthur Hall) for fellowship and social events seem limited only by our creativity, and assuming the continued strength of participation in the Youth Group and Church School, Trinity's future looks very bright indeed.

We treasure Trinity's legacy. With God's inspiring love, outstanding clergy and the leadership of many, many dedicated parishioners over the years, there is so much for which we are thankful. Keeping Trinity's Mission Statement ever before us—*Worship God in Christ, Welcome all people, Rejoice in fellowship, Grow in knowledge, Give of ourselves, Care for one another, and Proclaim the good news of God in Christ*—we enter the 21st century with great hopes and prayerful aspirations for our church, our community and our world. In God we put our trust. *Amen.*



Staff Retreat, November 1999: (L to R) Cathy Stevens, Tim Harrell, David Anderson, Anne Rivinus, Cliff Nesbit (Moderator), Susan Butler and Cindy Bove.



Basketful of kids reach for balloon ride at the kick-off of "Welcome All People" Campaign, April 1997

Appendix

Listings of special interest

Trinity's Clergy

Walter K. Malone, vicar 1948-1954
J. Crofton Thompson 1954-1967
John A. Smart 1968-1977
William H. Wood III 1978-1991
Barbara A. Kelley, interim 1991-1992
David R. Anderson 1992 to present
John J. Capellaro, assistant 1995-1998
Susan Butler, assistant 1999 to present

Rector's Wardens/Senior Wardens in the Past 25 Years

(Title changed to "Senior" in 1996)

1976	Kitty Petrie	1988	John Egner
1977	Stanley Parker	1989	Betty Stagg
1978	Michael Macauley	1990	Doug McArthur
1979	Frank Brower	1991	Cliff Nesbit
1980	Ashby Saunders	1992	Cliff Nesbit
1981	Terry Mort	1993	Allen Black
1982	John Egner	1994	Bonnie Wilbur
1983	Dick Carrick	1995	Betty Stagg
1984	Jim Lockhart	1996	Roger Stikeleather
1985	Jim Lockhart	1997	Roger Stikeleather
1986	Mollie Hallowell	1998	Peg Clark
1987	Dick Carrick	1999	Peg Clark
		2000	Carl Holstrom

Organists and Music Directors

1923-1954	Marie Paxson
1954-1974	Bob Goldsborough, plus a number of paid professional organists including David Anker
1974-1994	Ron Kershner, first fulltime paid professional
1994-1996	Glenda Cosenza
1996-1998	Kay Standifer
1998-present	Tim Harrell
1993-present	Assistant: Lisa Landley

Vestry Clerks

(Appointed, not elected, the clerk faithfully takes minutes at all Vestry meetings)

1968-1969	Emily Redman
1969-1971	Barbara Reichart
1971-1973	Hope Sellers
1973-1983	Mollie Hallowell
1983-1985	Dorothy Shaw
1985-1986	Kathy McLean
1986-1990	Kathleen Saunders
1990-1993	Andie Schwerdtfeger
1994-present	Karen Dewar

Long-Time Trinity Parshioners

Many faces have come and gone over the years, but more than 70 have been with us for a very long time. Indeed, a few first came as far back as the 1940s and '50s, and others attended Church School in their youth. Based on a 1972 membership list, the following were coming to Trinity then or earlier and are still (or again) on our current parish rolls. (Sincere apologies to anyone we have omitted.)

Rick Ackerman
Edward & Evelyn Aldin
Diane Ash
William & Florence Banning
Paul & Dorothea Beiger
Paul Beiger Jr.
Elaine Berry
Dorothy Bidelman
Frank Brower
Dorothy Brown
Margery Bush
Vivian Chapin
Elaine Crooks
Richard Darnell
Prue Day
Alan Dewar
John & Debra Egner
Gary & Phyllis Euler
Maurice Eyeington
Elisabeth Fergusson
Walter & Martha Gamble
Robert Goldsborough
Woody III & Ginger Griffiths
Mollie Hallowell
Anita Howard
Barbara Ingerman
Ron & Jackie Kavas
Lisa Landley
Carl Lindsay
Reid Malcolm
Russ Martini
Doug McArthur
Jon & Wendy McCook
Robert Melby
Marion Moreton
Joan Newman
Kitty Petrie
George & Louann Plough
Emily Redman
Vicki Roland
Frances Salberta
Richard & Tess Sands
Ashby & Ginny Saunders
Geraldine Shaw
Paul & Barbara Slack
Betty Short
Frank Shuman
Harry & Laura Sine
Grace Stevenson
David & Marilou Stewart
Mary Tomlinson
Dorothy Welsh
Annie Whiteman
LeRoy & Edith Wilkins
Barbara Woodcock
Wendy Woodcock

About the author:

Mollie Pickering Hallowell is editor of the monthly newsletter *Trinity Tidings* and has been a member of the Trinity Family since 1964. She is a native of Bucks County and has been writing off and on all her life. Under the pen-name Mary Tyson Pickering, she has published fiction for young people as well as several histories of her own family.