



A History: 1987 - 2025

The Anglican Church
of
Saint George the Martyr

By Robert D. Glick

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A HISTORY OF SAINT GEORGE THE MARTYR ANGLICAN CHURCH

THE EMBRYO

It is a reasonable expectation that, given a fertilized embryo of a duck and enough time and care, one will eventually encounter a duck and not a platypus. Such are the ways of Nature and Nature's God. The embryo, however, that developed into The Anglican Church of Saint George the Martyr did not follow the normal laws of nature. Though it did start its life under the genus: "church," it was categorized as a different species – namely "Presbyterian." And it passed through two other denominational affiliations before finding its final identity in the Anglican Province of America.

In late 1987, three families felt a call to start a mission work for a new Evangelical Presbyterian Church in the Greenville area. The EPC is a denomination that broke away from the more liberal Presbyterian Church (USA) only a few years earlier, in 1981. The group met on December 6th and prayerfully planned to establish a congregation that would meet at the Eastside YMCA in Taylors, SC, though in fact, they ended up meeting in an area dance studio for some years. Through various means, they announced to the public an initial informational meeting set for January 11 at 7:30 pm. These three families were the Rev. and Mrs. Rick Doughty, Mr. and Mrs. Jim Hines, and Mr. and Mrs. Glen Killinger.

Minutes from an April 11, 1988 meeting of the newly formed Church Session (Vestry) indicated a membership of 17 adults and 7 children. As can be imagined, membership growth was high among the goals of this small group. Denominational authorities encouraged the group not to lose hope and to "continue on," though at that time they were still too small to even be considered an official mission congregation of the denomination. Church documents include an officially sealed Certificate of Incorporation dated October 26, 1989, and an SS-4 Application for Employer Identification Number, dated November 2, 1989.

Their worship services were what one would normally expect in the EPC at that time: an opening time of sung praise choruses and hymns accompanied by an electronic piano, this opening being interspersed with prayers and announcements, followed by a rather lengthy sermon and a brief closing.

Session Minutes over the next year, however, indicate a certain restlessness with worship style. New hymnals were purchased, altar paraments installed, and a more fixed liturgy established, but there was still considerable interest in praise choruses and other elements of charismatic worship such as greater spontaneity and the exercise of "gifts of utterance." (Speaking in Tongues?)

But even at this early stage there was a greater restlessness stirring. Rev. Doughty, still leading this small congregation, felt the Evangelical Presbyterian Church was not strict enough in its application of Calvinist principles. He felt drawn to another newly forming denomination, The Association of Covenant Reformed Churches. And indeed, on September 24, 1989 Glen Killinger, recording secretary, states that 20 members of the congregation adopted the bi-laws of the CRC. On October 26, the church was formally

incorporated into this new denomination, taking the name Christ Covenant Reformed Church. Though they continued meeting at the dance studio, church mail continued to be addressed to Rev. Doughty's home in Easley, SC. Records indicate that there was a decidedly "charismatic" flavor to their worship style, which is certainly not the norm for strictly Reformed churches, but was a defining characteristic (along with strict Calvinism) of this new denomination.

Not much is known from our records about Pastor Doughty's background. He is from Birmingham, Alabama, graduated from Wheaton College in Illinois, and did seminary training at both Columbia Presbyterian Seminary in Decatur, Georgia and International Seminary in Columbia, SC. As of this writing, he is 82 years old and lives with his wife, Anne, in Charlotte, NC. This information was gleaned from his Facebook page. The writer chose not to contact him directly as messages on that page indicated that his health was not good at that time.

CHRIST COVENANT REFORMED CHURCH

October of 1990 not only saw the congregation change denominations, but also marked the beginning of a new meeting place – the Eastside YMCA in Taylors. By this time, the congregation had three children's Sunday school classes as well as an adult class. Interestingly, in spite of continued interest in worship in a charismatic, spontaneous style, there were also discussions about adopting a prayer book, "with all the services (including the officiant's part) written out" (in the bulletin?). The church was now using an organ in worship, as well.



Eastside YMCA, Taylors, SC

According to church records, the following four years were a time of continued limited growth and development. A building fund which had been established years earlier had reached some \$6,000 when a single donation by Dewey Parks increased it by \$20,000. It seems the Parks were given an old airplane which they sold, giving the profits to the church. There was talk of opening a pre-school in co-operation with Dominion Ministries located in Virginia.

While people seemed comfortable with the on-going worship style, there were still discussions about the level of charismatic emphasis. In general, there seems to have been a gradual evolution toward more formal worship and a restlessness about their place in the Covenant Reformed Church. (For a list of active members as of July, 1992, see Appendix 1)

CHRIST COVENANT REFORMED EPISCOPAL CHURCH

By the Spring of 1994, Pastor Doughty had been in discussion with Bishop Royal Grote of the Reformed Episcopal Church. This is a denomination first organized in 1873 in a schism with the Protestant Episcopal Church. The controversy concerned a group of priests and laity who favored a freer Evangelical approach to worship as opposed to a general movement in the Episcopal Church embracing elements of England's Oxford Movement, also called Tractarianism.

In the April 28, 1994 Deacon's Meeting minutes we find Pastor Doughty's reasons for considering another denominational move:

1. Pastors need pastors
2. Without responsible care and oversight from a strong denomination, their congregation will probably not survive a pastoral change, or the transition into the next generation. While our current denomination is a caring body, its structure does not provide intense personal oversight of local churches in crisis.
3. We are already acting in worship and world view more like Episcopalians than Reformed. Our liturgy and theology would fit well with the REC to the best of our knowledge.

The Deacons agreed to meet with Bishop Grote at his convenience to ask questions and further explore the possibility of membership. This meeting was held on May 21, 1994, and was quite positively received. Following a three-week period of study and prayer, a parish meeting was held on June 19 at which the congregation voted unanimously to transfer their affiliation to the Reformed Episcopal Church. At this time there were 22 members on the church roll. The Rev. Richard Doughty was received into the ministry of the REC on October 9.

SHOW ME THE WAY TO GO HOME

From the earliest meetings of this congregation, humble as it was, the purchase of a property site was an ongoing consideration. A Property/Building Fund balance of \$1005 was included as early as the Session annual report of 1988.

By 1996/7, the Property Committee's research, headed by Glenn Killinger, resulted in a list of six available, affordable properties. Two in particular seemed most promising: one located at the intersection of Poplar Drive at Pleasant Drive, just north of what was then the Greenville-Spartanburg Jetport. The other site was on Batesville Road at Godfrey Road – our present site. The saga of these procedures is convoluted to say the least, and must have been an extended source of both excitement and disheartening frustration to all concerned.

It appears that the Batesville Road site was the preferred choice as the size of the lot was generous and it was situated directly along a major roadway. The asking price was, accordingly, rather steep. As best as this author can understand the data, the church, acting in faith, carried out the zoning request and other government requirements and was in fact ready to close the sale on that property. However, the actual signing of the contract was severely complicated due to fraudulent promises made to several churches by an outside party. With great disappointment, the property search continued.

Not to be defeated, the committee began procedures to purchase the site on Poplar Drive. Once again, after successfully completing all the protracted legalities, progress was again frustrated as the closing date was delayed a number of times - this last time due to problems the seller encountered in securing a clear title. Finally, in August of 1998, the church asked for a return of their financial deposit, cancelling the entire procedure.

While minutes for the August 26, 1998 session meeting sadly report that "no other property has been decided upon as yet," there must have been some quick decisions made, for records indicate that by June 6, 1999, there was a site development study prepared for a building at 427 Batesville Road! By October 1999, Glenn Killinger, still resolutely heading the Property/Building Committee, requested a "firm quote from Maston Homes for the building project, with a listing of requirements and a floor plan sketch." A few weeks later Maston Homes responded with a quote of \$197,520 (\$60 a square foot under roof). Then, finally, on November 21 the now forty-member congregation approved a resolution requesting the Vestry to make arrangements for the construction of a building of worship, the cost not to exceed \$260,000. Christ Covenant Reformed Episcopal Church had found its way home!

NEW LEADERSHIP

Heading back some years, you will recall that on April 30, 1995, the congregation of Christ Covenant Reformed Church became a congregation of the Reformed Episcopal Church. Five months later, September 24, 1995, the Rev. Rick Doughty, newly ordained into the REC, accepted a call to become the new Rector of Christ Covenant, REC, in Sevierville, Tennessee. Thus ended the eight-year pastorate of the man who led a group

of three families through all the growing pains of a struggling embryonic fellowship, not even large enough to be considered a "Mission Church." Seeking God's wisdom as he led his little flock through three separate Christian denominations in search of a spiritual home, through God's strength he persevered to form a viable congregation able to purchase a permanent home for itself. To this long-forgotten man and his wife, Anne, we of St. George the Martyr Anglican Church owe our very existence. Without him and his congregation, who knows where or what we would be?



The Reverend Richard E. Doughty

In addition, grateful recognition is also due to Glenn Killinger and his wife Bobbi. Glenn's name has appeared frequently throughout this account indicating the incredible level of labor he invested in this church from its very beginning. Bobbi's name has not appeared, but let it be known that her tireless work as pianist/organist and in countless other ways played a major role in sustaining this ministry for years.



Glen and Bobbi Kinninger (Jon, Katie, Ben) (2010)



Congregation of Christ Covenant Church, Reformed Episcopal - 2000

Records are missing for the interim period between the departure of Rick Doughty and Easter Sunday, 1997 when **Rev. Fr. Johann van der Bijl, III conducted his first service** for Christ Covenant (REP), still meeting at the Eastside YMCA in Taylors. On November 29, 1997 he was formally installed as the Rector of Christ Covenant Reformed Episcopal Church, the service of installation being held at San Souci Baptist Church, Greenville, SC. And it is from that point we continue our story.

Father Johann was born in Windhoek, Namibia, September 5th, 1961, and was raised on a working animal farm near the Botswana border. His work in the ministry began in the mission field where he spent six years teaching English, geography, and religion while participating in field and medical work. While working with the Dutch Reformed Mission, he ministered to many area clans and tribes.

His first seminary degree was earned from George Whitefield College in Kalk Bay, South Africa. He was ordained a presbyter in 1993 with his first parish ministry at St. Timothy's Church of England in Swakopmund, Namibia.

In 1996 his entire family moved to the United States so he could pursue a Masters Degree in Christian Education at Columbia International University. His credit hours were eventually transferred to the extension division of Cummins Memorial Theological Seminary (REC) in Summerville, SC, where he earned the Master of Divinity degree in 2003. As stated above, his ministry in Simpsonville began on Easter Sunday, 1997. It appears he began his ministry in Simpsonville on the strength of his ordination as presbyter in Namibia while working to attain full credentials with the Reformed Episcopal Church here in South Carolina.

A PERMENANT HOME – 427 BATESVILLE ROAD, SIMPSONVILLE SC

May 3, 2000 was a truly memorable day as members of Christ Covenant Church, Reformed Episcopal, held a service of Groundbreaking on their new property, 427 Batesville Road, Simpsonville, SC. The Right Reverend James C. West, Jr., Bishop of the Diocese of the Southeast presided, along with the Reverend Canon Dr. J. Ronald Moock, Jr., and the Reverend Father Johann W. van der Bijl.



Groundbreaking Ceremony



From left to center: Bishop West, Fr. van der Bijl, Canon Mooock



From the left: Bishop West, Canon Mooock, Fr. van der Bijl, Glenn Killinger, Tim Mauk

An article announcing the ground-breaking was featured in the June 2000 issue of *RE-Vision* – the quarterly newsletter of the REC Diocese of the Southeast. The article stated, in part:

Christ Covenant Church is an integrated church with approximately 41 members whose outreach is through “hospitality evangelism.” Rev. Van der Bijl eloquently stated his vision “is to have more than just black and white members...wouldn't it be grand if we could have all different kinds of nationalities to show the world that in Christ there is no division.” ...Christ Covenant still has needs that others may be able to help with. “We still don't have an altar table, a pulpit, a lectern, or a baptismal font.”

Construction work continued apace. By the end of May, the concrete slab was completed. Used pews for the sanctuary were obtained free of charge from a new Reformed Episcopal Church in Beaufort, who had obtained more than they needed from a church up north. On a very hot day in July, Tim Mauk, among others, rented a U-Haul truck to gather them.

Also, by July, Vestry Minutes reported that “work was in progress on the roofing, electrical system, HVAC, and windows.” Problems developed with an area residential sub-division over obtaining a sewer permit which problem was eventually solved by the church installing a septic tank.



L to R: Elise Mauk, Ragan Hewitt, Ashton Mauk, Bill Morris



L to R: Andy Mauk, Ashly Hewitt, Laura Hewitt, Josh Killinger

Within six months of ground-breaking, the building was completed and on October 29, 2000, Reformation Sunday, Bishop West traveled to Simpsonville once again to officiate at the Cornerstone Ceremony - the official opening of Christ Covenant Church.



Constructing the slab



Completed building in 2004 with parking area still unpaved



Bishop West installs the “cornerstone.”



Sanctuary – early 2002

A four-day “seminar” was planned for the official opening of the facility:

Sunday October 29:	Worship with Bishop West officiating followed by a buffet luncheon for 125 people at the Bent Creek Clubhouse
Monday Eve:	A Seminar (topic not indicated in minutes)
Tuesday Evening:	Glenn Kilinger spoke on <i>Music and the Liturgy</i>
Wednesday Evening:	Potluck dinner followed by a worship service at which Father Johann spoke on the Eucharist Service

THE PIPE ORGAN

In July of 2001, the Vestry approved the establishment of an organ fund to replace the “tired old hand-me-down electronic organ:” actually a borrowed forty-year-old Conn electronic organ. Though a designated organ fund by that time had only accrued \$2,500, Glenn Killinger informed the Vestry that the least expensive electronic church organs would cost about \$14,000. However, some heaven-blest aggressive research must have paid off for in August of 2002 a \$500 deposit check was sent to a disbanded Catholic church in Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania to purchase a used six-rank Estey pipe organ. Church members hired a U-Haul truck to transport the dis-assembled organ parts. The work of installation seems to have been done mostly by Glenn Killinger and his crew including: Ashley Hewitt, Nick Cantu, Steve Whitaker, Tim Mauk, Jon Killinger and... “nearly everyone in the congregation.” September Vestry minutes include an apology for the “mess with the pipe organ,” and October minutes report that Glenn Killinger “is working on the organ.” The completed instrument was dedicated on November 25 with Bishop West in attendance. However, Vestry reports indicate that “workdays” on the organ continued into 2003 to complete finishing the organ’s exterior. Within a month after this installation, a woman artist beautifully painted the façade pipes and by 2006, the impressive Victorian styled stenciling was added.





CONGREGATIONAL LIFE IN THE REFORMED EPISCOPAL CHURCH

As the church entered the Twenty First Century, the life of the congregation had achieved a fairly settled rhythm. Monthly Vestry meetings followed a formal outline revealing the congregation's concerns and mission. Worship life was governed by the 1928 Book of Common Prayer and the limited resources of this still small congregation. It appears that both Bobbi and Glenn Killinger served as musical keyboardists and music leaders in general. The earlier electronic piano gave way to the Conn electronic organ which in time gave way to the Wicks Pipe Organ.

Work continued on various **building and grounds projects** in the new facility including indoor and outdoor lighting fixtures, landscaping, the addition of "some kind of cross for the front wall of the sanctuary," and construction of an outside children's playground.

Finances, on the whole were stable, with occasional minor crises regarding mortgage payments. While the minutes outline always included a line item for benevolence, there was generally no report. Church indebtedness in December 2003 was \$194,317 with active membership around 30. Also included were line items for Youth and Acolytes. There were trips, game nights, and fundraisers for youth over the years, though no indication of missions, service projects, or regular meetings.

A **Women's Auxiliary** had been active from almost the beginning of the congregation's life. A major project was support of the Greenville area's Ronald McDonald House, a community service providing temporary housing and support for families with hospitalized children. Auxiliary work also included providing adornments and equipment for the new building, keeping the nursery staffed, supporting families in a time of loss, preparation of the altar area for communion, and keeping the kitchen stocked. The kitchen at this time was the current Sacristy, the first room on the right as you enter the church. This humble facility consisted of nothing more than a refrigerator and a microwave oven. In June of 2001, a Women's Missionary Society was also begun.

There was an active **Sunday School** program with one adult class and both Kindergarten and Elementary classes. It was reported that though the children's curriculum was "adequate," it was difficult to find something appropriate to "our tradition and conservatism." It should also be noted that the Education Committee had for some time been purchasing books for the church library – a true gift into the future.

At the September 2002 Vestry meeting, Fr. Johann announced tentative plans to leave the parish sometime the following year to further his studies at Cranmer Theological House, Houston, TX. Intense conversations with Fr. Johann ensued and initial steps were taken with the REC about securing his replacement. After exploring various aspects of his calling in the following months, however, he found his call to Christ Covenant Church reconfirmed and, accordingly, the pastoral search was cancelled.

In October, 2002, the Reverend Deacon David Coady met informally with Christ Covenant Vestry to explore if he and his small congregation might make use of the sanctuary for their worship services while the host church had its Sunday School classes. Rev. Coady expressed his hope to eventually join the Reformed Episcopal Church. Permission was granted. Negotiations between the two congregations and the REC progressed over the following months and an agreement was made in December that the young All Saints congregation would become members of Christ Covenant, REC. By February, however, Rev. Coady had moved back to Delaware where he would be leading another REC congregation.

Communicant church membership had its ups and downs: 53 in the year 1997; 19 in 1999; 43 in 2002 but by 2004, the number had risen to 70. Christ Covenant Reformed Episcopal Church, however, was still considered a "mission congregation."

None-the-less, this congregation pressed on with good faith and positive zeal. In January of 2004 the gravel parking lot was finally permanently paved. Vestry minutes indicate that by April, the church was officially removed from the "Mission Congregation" status.

PROPERTY EXPANSION

In September of 2004, the tract of land directly abutting the south side of St. George's site became available for purchase. Vestry minutes are vague about how the parish came to own this parcel of land. However, some of our long-standing members recall that Bill Caine, an area lawyer and parish member, bought the land for \$40,700 and then promptly deeded it to the church free of cost. Bill's incredible generosity doubled the size of the church's property from one acre to two. The wisdom of acquiring this land is two-fold, at least. First, it paved the way for any future building expansion; second, it prevented anyone else from securing the property to build businesses or other enterprises one would not want right next to a church. Bill also underwrote the expense of installing the church's steeple which was erected in March of 2004. As one examines the history of St. George Church, it becomes increasingly clear that such devotion and generosity is far from uncommon.

BUILDING PHASE TWO

The congregation had long since exhibited a healthy, even aggressive bent toward expansion. There had been discussions about starting a parochial school, supporting home-school co-ops, missions projects, and opening their doors to other church and community organizations. And always there was discussion about what the next big building project might look like. The existing building, our present sanctuary and hallway offices, was rapidly reaching its capacity. Vestry treasurer reports indicated a generally healthy financial status, but could the small congregation really take on such a huge additional debt so soon? Their present building was, after all, just barely five years old. As is so often the case in such decisions, the congregation was not all of one mind.

Through 2004 and into 2005 committees were formed, various building sizes, shapes, and functions were discussed at length, and architects and contractors were consulted. How big a building could be considered? Building codes placed a limit of 6,000 square feet, beyond which a more expensive list of government codes and requirements would be activated. As the year progressed, plans solidified. Top priority was a Parish Hall and new kitchen along with additional storage and educational space. Finally, in November of 2004, the Expansion Program Committee presented its proposed "Master Plan" for review and approval by the congregation. The plan received the congregation's approval on December 5.

On April 17, 2005 a special congregational meeting was called for the purpose of voting on the question: "Shall this parish incur indebtedness secured by the real property to a total amount not to exceed \$490,000 for the purpose of constructing Phase 2?" Motion passed. Five days later, even though details were still developing, the church set April 22, 2005 for the groundbreaking celebration. By May of 2005, Durham-Greene, Inc. had been chosen as the contractor, though drawings were still being revised into August.

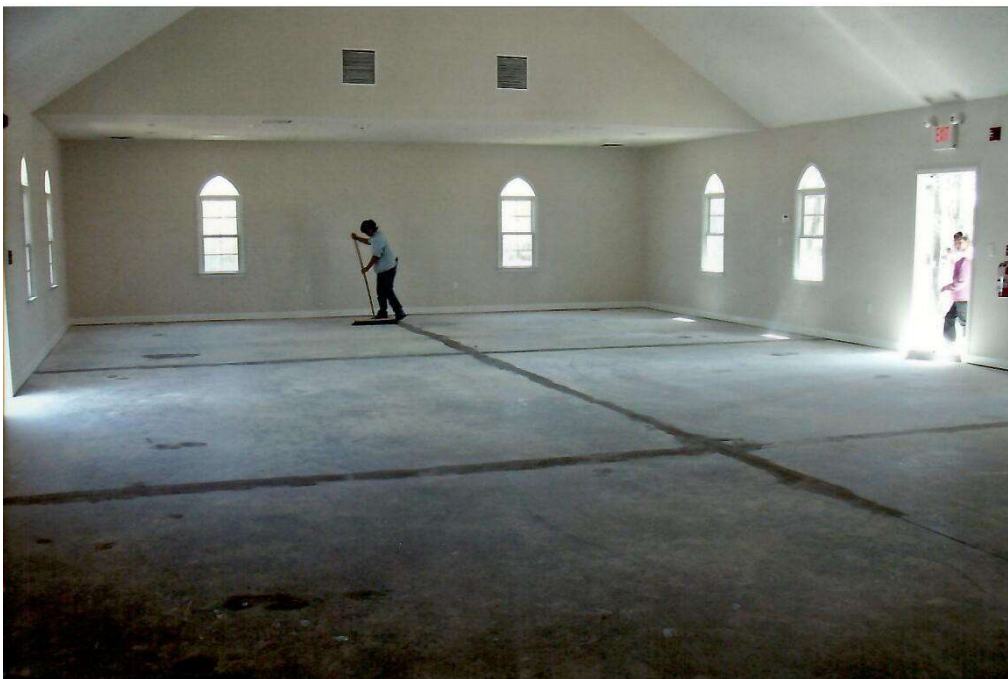


Groundbreaking Ceremony for Phase II – April 22, 2005

By October, grading of the site was completed and the concrete slab poured in November.



Phase 2 underway – late 2005

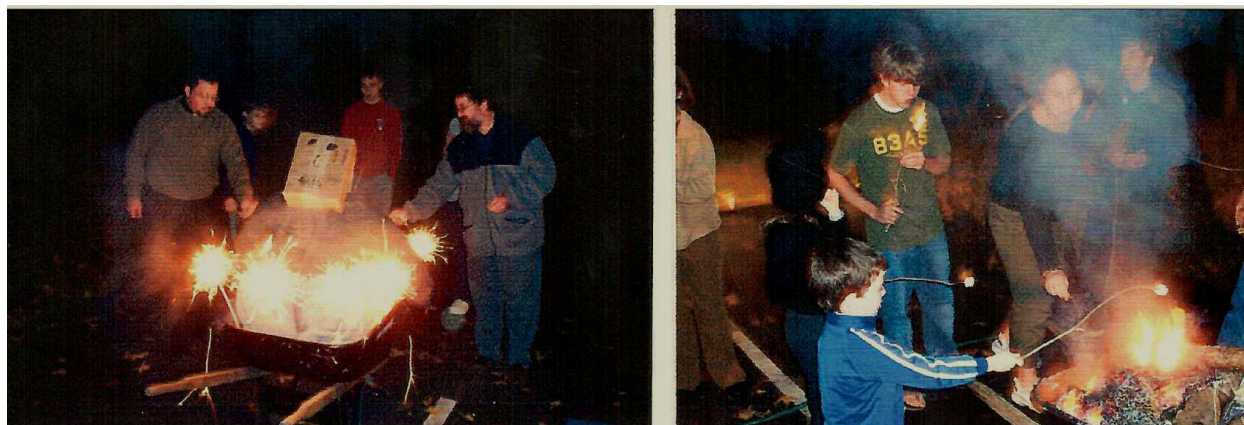


Phase 2 underroof – early 2006

In April 2006 kitchen equipment was installed. Judy Ellis recalls the remarkable way the new kitchen was equipped: “The bank that held our mortgage offered us at no cost all the commercial kitchen equipment from a defunct restaurant in downtown Greenville! All the church had to do was carry it out of the building. The congregation rose to the challenge and thus obtained all the appliances, plus prep and serving items, plus tables and chairs necessary for the Easter Sunday brunch.” By the 13th a final Certificate of Occupancy was granted for full use. Three days later, Easter Sunday, that new kitchen equipment was broken-in at the festive brunch - the first event held in this new facility.

CONGREGATIONAL ACTIVITIES

While all these major projects were proceeding, the everyday life of the parish went on apace. The parish had a long-standing tradition of celebrating the British holiday known as “**Guy Fawkes Day**” every November 5. Guy Fawkes was part of a Catholic underground conspiracy committed to blowing up the Protestant English Parliament in 1605 – the famous Gunpowder Plot. The plot was discovered just in time and Guy and other insurrectionists were duly executed. England has continued celebrating the futile event to this day.



Guy Fawkes Celebration, November 5, 2004

A **Women’s Bible Study** was begun in June of 2004, led by Judy Ellis, another tradition carrying on to this day.

That September, Fr. Van der Bijl produced a publication titled, “**The Sword of St. George**” the issues of which were published at various times through the year, varying also in size and content. Some issues were two pages, others, 15. Below we see the very first issue. It is interesting in itself as a historical document, but also interesting to note Fr. Johann’s appraisal of the parish as of September 2004.

September Events

Sun	Mon	Tues	Wed	Thurs	Fri	Sat
			1	2	3	4
5 Catechism 4:30	6 Labor Day	7	8	9 B & G Commit 7pm	10	11 Women's Outing 10am
12 Catechism 4:30	13	14	15 Ember Day	16 Synod	17 Ember Day Synod	18 Ember Day Synod
19 Catechism 4:30 choir 4:30	20	21 Noon Mass	22	23 Vestry 7pm	24	25 Matins 9:30
26 Catechism 4:30 choir 4:30	27	28	29 St. Micha el 7pm Mass	30		

8pm Litany

From the Rector's Study

This has been a blessed summer for us all. Not only has our Lord blessed us as a community with an unusually wet and cool summer, but He has also blessed us as a church. Since January this year, our numbers have steadily increased from 30 communicant members to 57, bringing our total number of family units up to 27.

We have also closed on a much needed piece of property right next door, bringing our total land size to just over 3 acres. Many thanks to all those who made this purchase possible in sacrificial giving, faithful tithing and doing all that needed to be done. The Finance and Building and Grounds Committees have done an outstanding job. Thank you one and all.

We have also had the privilege of raising up from within our own ranks a very capable young man as Deacon. Ashley Colin Hewitt will be ordained, God willing, at the 32nd Synod of the Diocese of the South East on September 16th, 2004. He has served us faithfully as postulant in the past and we look forward to him serving in our midst as Deacon. Please keep him in your prayers as he seeks to juggle his time between a full time job, his duties as husband and father, his duties as Deacon here at St. George the Martyr and his duties at St. Andrews, a new APA mission in Greenwood. Also prayerfully consider giving him a hand with the various activities he is engaged in, such as developing the youth program, teaching catechism classes, visiting the sick and the shut-ins and his outstanding work on the outreach committee. My thanks must also go to our very able and willing Vestry and our generous and involved parishioners without whom none of this would have happened. Our highly esteemed treasurer has continued to invest our tithes and offerings wisely and our Lord has blessed us for it. Lord willing, this parish should be debt free within 5 years.

Saint George's Parish Newsletter September 2004



The Anglican Church of Saint George the Martyr
427 Batesville Road
Simpsonville SC 29681
Father Johann Vanderbijl, Rector
www.stgeorge-re.org

Sunday

8:15 Morning Prayer, 9:15 Sunday School,
10:30 Eucharist, 6:00 Evening Prayer
Monday Women's Bible Study 10am
Wednesday 7pm Bible Study

However, with blessing comes responsibility and my most urgent request to you all is for your constant prayers for myself, my family, the Vestry and our various committee members as we seek to move forward according our Lord's direction. Also, prayerfully consider using your God-given talents by getting involved yourself. If you see a need, prayerfully consider being the answer to it! I am grateful to our Lord for granting us so many blessings. We have seen growth in more ways than one. May we continue to see evidence of our Lord fulfilling His promise to build His Church as we fulfil our part as the Body of Christ.

Your loving and devoted Shepherd

Father Vanderbijl

Senior Warden's Report...

It has been a great ride. Thanks all for your support and the efforts you have made to take good care of our Rector. I will no longer be able to serve as Senior Warden after my ordination so I ask that you please show my replacement the same love and compassion that you have shown me. Oh yes... one last thing. Our Rector is OFF on Monday's and Saturday's. Calls to his house for anything other than an emergency will result in immediate tar and feathering. Calls after 6pm during the work week should likewise only be made in extreme cases. Any calls after 9pm are punishable by death. God Bless!
Ashley

The name was changed to the “Newsletter” through much of 2012, but then changed back to “The Sword of St. George.” Many of these documents are readily available in the Reference Section of the church library.

In October, the **Women of the Church** traveled to Look Up Lodge for a retreat titled, “Discovering Your Spiritual Gifts: A Personal Method” led by Dr. Donna Peterson from Trinity Evangelical Divinity School.



Look Up Lodge Retreat; Leader Dr. Donna Peterson, seated 5th from left

The Women’s Auxiliary produced their own cookbook in December, “Dragon Delicacies: A Taste of St. George.” April of 2005 saw the addition of a wooden cross designed and created by Arch Wilder installed on the eastern exterior of the building. It remained in place until 2017 when the new Rose Window was installed.

A NEW IDENTITY - A NEW NAME

On September 25, 2003, the Vestry voted to pursue a change of name for the parish from Christ Covenant Reformed Episcopal Church to The Anglican Church of St. George the Martyr, Reformed Episcopal. They called a parish meeting for October 12 to propose a congregational ratification of the plan. The name change was approved. Two weeks later, Bishop West and the Standing Committee gave their denominational approval for the change. After a few months of Greenville County red tape, on April 20, 2004, the new name was officially approved by all concerned parties. Interesting to

note, this was the first time the words "Christ Covenant" were dropped from the parish's official name.

What was behind this radical action? An article copied from a November 2003 version of the parish's webpage states the following:

You may have noticed that our parish has recently acquired a new name. Some have asked why we chose St. George the Martyr rather than any of the other saints. In determining what we would like to identify ourselves with, we used certain criteria:

- 1) The name had to clearly indicate that we were Anglican;
- 2) The name had to indicate that we stood for the faith once delivered;
- 3) The name had to indicate that we would be willing to defend that faith;
- 4) The name had to indicate that we would be willing to proclaim that faith.

As one of the earliest saints in the Anglican Church, St. George fit all these criteria. The ancient British Church honored him as a martyr long before the Norman invasion and he was later proclaimed the patron saint of England during the time of Richard I, the Lionheart.... In light of recent events in the Anglican world, the choice of this name may yet prove to be prophetic.

Father Johann added in a 2026 email with Lowell Hughes:

The name was changed because we kept attracting "Covenant Reformed" folks...there was a long debate about the new name though...if I remember correctly we chose St George because of his strong connection with England and the Anglican Church, but added "the Martyr" because there already was an orthodox church named St. George in Greenville.

A FOURTH NEW DENOMINATIONAL IDENTITY

At the beginning of this history, back in 1988, a tiny group of Christians felt the call to establish a congregation in the Greenville area allied with the newly-formed Evangelical Presbyterian Church. Just a little over a year later, this group transferred their affiliation to another newly-formed denomination: The Association of Covenant Reformed Churches. Then, five years later, in 1994, this same congregation made the radical shift to transfer their affiliation to the Reformed Episcopal Church. Now, twelve years later, in late 2005, a final adjustment in identity occurred as the parish transferred their affiliation from the Reformed Episcopal Church to the Anglican Province of America.

According to the December 2005 Vestry minutes:

Father Johann reported back as the Vestry asked him to look into a jurisdictional change because of Ecclesiastical and administrative difficulties.... Father Johann endeavored, with candor and tact, to explain this quite positively to Bishop West and Doctor Mook. This was not very well received. Bishop West is opposed to a jurisdictional transfer to the APA. Father Johann was asked to come back to the

Vestry requesting that we not get a jurisdictional transfer. After telling Bishop West that he would do whatever the parish agrees to, after much prayer and soul searching, and in view of what transpired at the meeting, Father Johann now feels that he has to leave the jurisdiction of the REC. After polling each member of the Vestry, it was the unanimous opinion that we request jurisdictional transfer from the REC to the APA. The actual dialogue of each member who was polled follows below: [For the purposes of this historical account, the Vestry members' names are not included]:

"Is very much in favor of a jurisdictional transfer to the APA, knows of many failures of the REC administration."

"Is concerned and suggests we have an informal town meeting to talk it over with the congregants. This meeting would be informational with no vote taken."

"We should go over to the APA. Never felt that we had a bishop."

"Based on what we know, just as an observation, the events we are invited to there seem to be so culturally different from our frame of reference. Their concept of missions is totally different from ours. We would have more fellowship with people from around here. It is a logical match that we have fellowship."

"APA is the right way to go. Can see some pitfalls in making this move. What will the reaction of the congregation be? Father Johann mentioned that we are looking at the year 2011 for the possible merger because disputes between the REC and APA have muddied the waters. We have not gotten anything out of Summerville..."

"Is in accord with everything that was said here. Has always been in the Episcopal church with an open door to the bishop."

"Is in agreement with moving our jurisdiction over to the APA. REC administration is lacking. We never receive important mailings in a timely fashion."

"Is in favor of moving to the APA based on what was heard tonight. The REC are not players in our pool. It seems that we are not high on the REC priority list. Father Johann and this parish need supervision."

"Frustrated that there is a lack of guidance from the administration and is discouraged by no support from the diocese. Supports moving to the APA. Had been noticing the cultural differences."

By early February of 2006, Vestry had made the decision to transfer affiliation to the Anglican Province of America (APA). A congregational meeting was called to inform the congregation and create the required opportunity for questions and concerns to be addressed. On the day of the meeting, to everyone's surprise, Reformed Episcopal Church Canon Moock showed up at the meeting from Summerville, SC and sat right up front. Paul Green recalls how his presence pretty much intimidated the entire gathering and there were no questions asked, even when questions were asked for. Finally, on

the spur of the moment, Paul found himself standing and addressing the members and the Canon, stating that while it was good for the Canon to be there so he could hear what people were thinking, yet his presence was intimidating the group into silence. He stated that he trusted the wisdom of the Vestry and if their decision was to switch denominations, he had full confidence in their decision. Paul relates that when he returned to his seat, the entire gathering erupted into vigorous and extended applause. Thus, Canon Mook learned that his pleadings for the congregation to remain in the REC had not achieved his purpose.

On February 19, 2006, at a second congregational meeting, the parish voted overwhelmingly to be transferred from the REC to the APA, and on May 26, the parish and Rector were officially transferred by the Standing Committee of the Reformed Episcopal Church, Diocese of the Southeast, to the Anglican Province of America, Diocese of the Southeast.



9/17/06 -The Most Reverend Walter H. Grundorf, Presiding Bishop, APA

2007-2011 CHURCH LIFE

A very important if not very glamorous project was finally completed in August of 2007. After months of painstaking, tedious work, a committee headed by Tom Mosely produced a **Policy and Operational Procedures Manual**, commonly referred to as the “POP Manual.” This was necessary not just so the parish could handle its business decently and in order, but also to assure our procedures were in alignment with our new denomination – the APA. And, of course, revisions were necessary from time to time, especially in 2010-2012.

While the First **Annual Missions Conference** was deemed a success, the second event, organized by Judy Ellis and the Foreign Missions Team in October 2007, grew into a much more elaborate affair. With keynote speaker Rev. Dr. Les Fairfield, Professor Emeritus of Church History at Trinity School for Ministry, and a host of missionary presenters and exhibitors, focus was placed on the theme: “Anglican Missions in the “New” Communion – Where to Now?” This second conference had an outreach far exceeding the first one. October 2008 saw the presentation of the **Third Annual Missions Conference**: “The Silent Invasion – Islam.” Speaker was Fr. Chad Jones, of St. Barnabas Anglican Church (APA) in Dunwoody, GA. Also featured was Dr. Emir Caner, a Muslim convert to Christianity sponsored by our foreign missions team. There were six Missions Conferences in all.



October 2009 Missions Conference – “CAST-AWAYS? - INDIA”

Another huge event culminated on November 1, 2007. For years **Mrs. Deborah Dove Kidd**, having heard a call to become an Anglican Deaconess, had been laboring

through a rigorous educational process to achieve her acceptance into that Order. Her success was celebrated in worship at St. George the Martyr with our new APA bishop, the Most Reverend Walter H. Grundorf, DD. Debbie was, at least at that time, the only official deaconess in the APA. Debbie went into retirement in Charlotte, NC around 2020. It must also be gratefully noted that she wrote a detailed outline of the major events in the life of this parish from 1997 through 2019 – a resource which has been invaluable to the author of this history.

Deaconess Kidd soon thereafter began a **second Women's Bible Study** meeting on Mondays, later moving to Wednesdays. It was observed by some who were interviewed for this history that people did not realize all she was contributing to the parish until she left in retirement. She served as administrative assistant, used her professional skills as a librarian to establish the parish's excellent library, and advised the Vestry. Part of her diaconal training process involved her study of the nouthetic counseling method, which she employed in offering private counseling services to the parish.



Women's Evening Bible Study with
Deaconess Debbie Kidd front and center



Father Johann with his painting of St. George

From June 2008 through May 2014, a parish **Art Council** was established to provide opportunities for local artists to exhibit their work in the Parish Hall. Father Johann was keen on this project as it was directly related to his "desire to bring together his ministry as a priest and his talent as an artist." His doctoral work was on this very topic. Special lighting was installed in the parish hall to make it a fitting venue for artistic displays. These exhibits were quite successful, bringing more outsiders into the church than any other project had done. Father Johann became quite active in various aspects of the greater arts community for some time.

Church has heart for art

Simpsonville
rector starts
public gallery

By Ron Barnett

STAFF WRITER

rbarnett@greenvillenews.com

When he was growing up on a farm in the African nation of Namibia, Johann Vanderbijl felt that he was a misfit.

He and his father never saw eye to eye. When he won a scholarship to go to a prestigious music school, his father refused to let him go.

"He and I just could not relate," Vanderbijl said. "He was a man of the earth and here I am. I wrote poetry. I like singing, I like artwork."

Now, as he approaches his 47th birthday, the "American African Wart-hog," as he styles himself, is repressing his artistic impulse no longer.

As rector of the Anglican Church of St. George the Martyr in Simpsonville, Vanderbijl is bringing the arts right into the church.



GWINN DAVIS / Staff

Johann Vanderbijl, rector of St. George the Martyr Anglican in Simpsonville, and Joan Wheatley position artwork for the church's upcoming art show.

He has organized an art gallery in the fellowship hall that will host its first show this weekend.

"This is the first of many that we're going to have," he said.

The idea is not to showcase his own works — he won't even have any of his art in the first show. It's about creating a place for artists on the other side of the county from Greenville's West End art district.

"I just thought it would be logical thing to do, start a gallery there, meet the need," he said.

Although all the art must be "appropriate" for hanging in a church, it's not limited to Christian art, or necessarily spiritual in theme, Vanderbijl said.

He's already started a fellowship for artists in the

community that has more than 50 members.

At a missions conference in October, the church may show photos taken from the rooftops of Jerusalem.

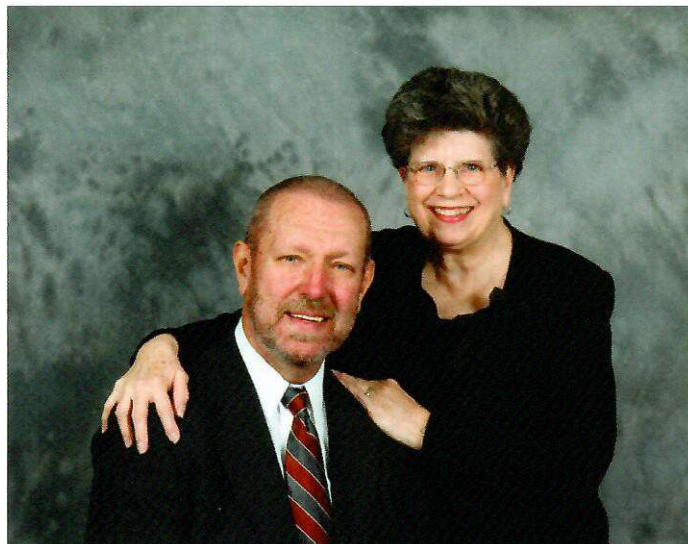
And in November, the church plans to display photos taken by homeless people around Greenville who have been given disposable cameras by United Ministries to document their lives.

The first show will include works of sculptor Doug Young, who created the statue of Shoeless Joe Jackson on South Main Street. Friday evening's show will include a wine and cheese reception, with sparkling water, iced tea and soft drinks as well.

There is no admission charge.

The church is at 427 Batesville Road. For more information, call 281-0015.

In another area of the arts, on August 3, Bill Schneider began as the **new parish choir director and his wife, Lois, as the new organist**. They replaced Glenn Killinger who had served faithfully and enthusiastically in that capacity for eighteen years. Through the Schneider's influence, an anonymous group of church members purchased a used Lester grand piano for the parish hall and two dedicatory recitals were played on December 1 and 2. Area piano technician Alon Ratoush was instrumental in finding and preparing the piano for the church's use.



Bill and Lois Schneider in 2010

Mention should also be made of the on-going work of the Community Outreach Team. Their worthy projects included: Precious Preemie Blankets, the Food Bank, Walk for the Homeless, Star Gazing, Thanksgiving for needy families, collecting school supplies, and Toys for Tots.

After a long period of construction delays, the **wall partition** was finally completed in the parish hall in June of 2008.

In August 2010 Bill and Joan Wheatley organized a St. George Saturday **Farmers Market** that apparently was quite a success.

2010 saw the parish's first parish **pictorial directory** including color pictures, contact information, and a listing of members' birthdays and anniversaries. This directory is still available in the church library Reference Section.

For some time hard work on plans, preparations, and government permissions for a parish **Memorial Garden** was proceeding and finally on June 9, Bishop Brewer arrived to bless the newly completed project. We today continue to benefit from the beauty of this garden midway between our sanctuary and parish hall.

This same June also saw the first parish sponsored **Vacation Bible School**. There had been some concern expressed both for more opportunities for the few children who were part of the parish as well as those in the surrounding neighborhoods. As a result of this effort, five parishioners have joined the Community Outreach Team with a concern

to attract more neighborhood younger families to the church. Since many of the area's larger churches were already running annual VBS programs, there was some uncertainty as to whether yet another one could compete. So this first attempt was considered a success with 19 children attending in all and 13 regular attendees.

Below is a poster indicating all the various ministries currently underway in the parish as displayed at the **2011 Ministry Fair** sponsored by the Community Outreach Team. And, in fact, the Community Outreach display won the "Best Display" trophy that year.



A SEASON OF TROUBLED WATERS

On May 27, 2011 Dss. (Deaconess) Debbie Kidd forwarded the following letter from the Rector's Warden to the congregation:

Dear Church Family,

I am sure many of you are confused and concerned about Fr. Johann. I am sending this email/letter at the request of the Vestry to explain what has occurred over the last few days.

Fr. Johann is suffering from what could be called "burn out" (emotionally and physically). His doctors told him that his condition was such that he would have to go immediately into a care facility for complete rest, or at least withdraw from active ministry for a period of time. It was a decision that had to be made at the moment...his doctors were that concerned. The combination of physical changes to his body (pacemaker, thyroid dysfunction, etc.) and the stress of ministry have resulted in his complete emotional and physical exhaustion.

.... The Vestry decided to give Johann a leave of absence for the summer months as a time of rest and recovery. (It should be noted that Johann served St. George for 14 years without a sabbatical rest.)

The rest of the letter informed the parish of the details being enacted in light of this emergency. Starting in June the worship schedule was reduced to one Sunday service at 9:30 AM. A monthly schedule of services was instituted as follows:

Week One: Sung Eucharist
 Week Two: Morning Prayer and Eucharist
 Week Three: Morning Prayer
 Week Four: Spoken Eucharist with hymns

Sunday School was discontinued both because of the new leadership situation and due to confusion about whether to have Sunday School before or after the worship service.

Needless to say, the Bishop's Office was notified immediately and significant guidance and assistance was duly provided. With the invaluable assistance from the diocese, a flurry of adjustments and substitutions naturally ensued so that parish life could continue as normally as possible.

By August Fr. Johann felt he was ready to "tip his toe in the water by taking part in the service." He also called for a congregational meeting so that he might "explain how the present condition came to be. There is no reason why I should not be able to function quite normally in the future as long as I remain on my medications and remain faithful to my very organized life-style changes."

A mere three months later, further upheaval was introduced at a special called Vestry meeting on Sunday, November 13, 2011. Senior Warden Larry Worley made a presentation to change the affiliation of the parish from the Anglican Church in America (APA) to the Anglican Church in North America (ACNA) which had recently created a new Diocese of the Carolinas. Negotiations had already begun with the parish's and

ACNA's leadership. The feeling (among some) was that the APA was dying. Vestry was requested to consider this and be prepared to vote at its regular meeting the following week. Discussion followed that the Vestry did not have the authority to make such a change; it must be approved by 2/3 of the congregation. Therefore, the regularly scheduled Annual Parish Meeting was postponed to December 4.

According to Vestry minutes, some key concerns were raised:

- The APA did not consider the ACNA to be orthodox - primarily over issues of women's ordination and the 1979 Prayer Book;
- Fr. Johann, therefore, would be deposed by the APA Bishop if he proceeded to change;
- Fr. Johann, accordingly, felt he had no other option than to affiliate with the ACNA.

Over the next two weeks emergency congregational meetings were hurriedly arranged both with the Most Rev. Walter H. Grundorf, Presiding Bishop (APA) as well as with Fr. Steve Wood, Vicar General (ACNA).

Then, on December 4, the Annual Parish Meeting was held, conducted by Larry Worley, Senior Warden, in the absence of Fr. Van der Bijl, who had by now changed his denominational affiliation from the APA to ACNA, and was accordingly deposed by the APA. The vote was taken and the proposal to change denominations was rejected, having failed to achieve the 2/3 requirement.

The next regular meeting of the Vestry occurred just four days later. As might sadly be expected, there were numerous positions needing to be filled due to the resignation by those unhappy with the election results. The January 2012 Vestry minutes reported that a total of ten families (roughly 30% of the entire congregation) had withdrawn from St. George Parish. Mary Marchant was elected Interim Senior Warden and wisely guided the Vestry through a host of new appointments. It is to the credit of the remaining Vestry members and a good number of lay volunteers that all the new vacancies were filled. Vestry appointed a New Rector Search Committee consisting of Bill Schneider, Kevin Loveridge, Judy Ellis, and Mary Marchant.

A Reconciliation Weekend was scheduled for January 14 and 15, 2012 at the church. Fr. Gene Mallard from Georgia, who frequently served as supply priest during this upheaval, was invited to facilitate. Vestry member Kevin Loveridge reported that the event was well attended and thoroughly enjoyed (!). Fr. Mallard felt it was more of a "forgiveness session than reconciliation." Great reviews were received from members of the congregation. All were encouraged to continue reaching out to those who were still hurting, praying for help in the healing process. Unfortunately, none of the members who had left the church chose to be a part of this weekend event.

Father Johann made it known that he intended to start a new congregation in Greenville and invited any and all to join him at this new church and in fact there were those from St. George's who did choose to follow him. However this new mission church effort rapidly proved to be unsuccessful and Fr. Johann left the country for Ethiopia and joined SAMS (Society of Anglican Senders and Missionaries).

A NEW BEGINNING

Though it must have felt like a long interim between priests, the New Rector Search Committee narrowed down their choice for a replacement in a mere two months – a process that takes many congregations up to two years to achieve. On March 6, 2012, the Vestry unanimously agreed to present Fr. Paul Rivard's name to Bishop Grundorf as the new Rector of the parish. Fr. Rivard had already officiated twice as a guest during the interim period. Three months later, on June 3, Fr. Rivard conducted his first service as the new Rector of St. George Church. His official institution occurred on November 11 with Bishop Walter H. Grundorf presiding, assisted by Fr. William Martin of All Saints Church, Mills River, NC and Father Peter Geromel of the Diocese of the Holy Cross.

Fr. Paul Rivard was born in Saskatchewan, Canada and came to the United States to study at Toccoa Falls College, Toccoa Falls, Georgia, in the mid 1990's. While there he met his wife, Sarah. After earning his Bachelor of Arts degree, he later received both the Master of Divinity and Master of Theology degrees at Erskine Theological Seminary, Due West, South Carolina. He was ordained to the priesthood in July of 2010 and served as Curate of St. Barnabas Anglican Church in Dunwoody, Georgia.

Under this dynamic new leadership, the remnants of The Anglican Church of St. George the Martyr began the work of healing and continued their ongoing work of ministry. As can be imagined, the loss of so many members resulted in a radically reduced financial bottom line. 2012 was a year of reduced spending, creative planning how to regain equilibrium, and faith-filled determination. The Vestry chose to maintain its 2012 budget in spite of shortfalls, but the adopted budget for 2013, reduced by \$40,000 over the previous year, reveals the belt-tightening that was clearly required. But as always, God's grace prevailed and signs of recovery began to appear.

Below we see a 2012 photo of our new young pastor blessing the work of the Prayer Shawl Ministry – a new project of the Outreach Committee.



NORMAL CHURCH LIFE RESUMES

The October **2013 Missions Conference**, "Reaching Nations with Open Doors of Biblical Hospitality," continued the focus on ministry to international students. The keynote speaker was the Rev. Al Lacour, National Coordinator for Reformed University Fellowship International.



Accordingly, the next year the Community Outreach Team and the Foreign Missions Team jointly sponsored the First Annual **International Students Thanksgiving Dinner** in the Parish Hall. This was a project in conjunction with the Cross-Cultural Network of Joshua's Way, a Greenville area ministry to international students at a number of area universities. This became an annual project of the church until around 2020 when Joshua's Way moved their headquarters out of the immediate area.

It was around this time that the church's newsletter re-adopted the name of "The Sword of Saint George." Father Paul in the opening article dated Summer 2014 gives a sense of where the parish was at in his estimation and the challenge he placed before the congregation.

It was at roughly this time that a **Men's Bible Study** was established. This study has been taught at various times by Josh Kimbrell, Gene Rivard, and Bob Glick.

The Sword of Saint George

Our Parish Family Newsletter

Issue No 6 - Summer 2014

Letter From the Rector

It is time for Saint George to take a closer look at what is to come in the next few years.

Page 1

We're Talkin' Tolkien

After a successful summer course on C.S. Lewis last year, we turn this summer to the classic tale of J.R.R. Tolkien, The Hobbit.

Page 2

The Parish Wish List

These are a few items that the parish is in need of that individuals might consider donating or volunteering for.

Page 2

Wedding Bells

Saint George was honored to see Caroline Harrell and Christopher Wenner wed in our chapel on May 17.

Page 3

Antal Vicxian - Aspirant

Antal Vicxian is beginning his aspirancy this summer, discerning a call to the priesthood.

Page 3

Ladies Night Out

The Women's Auxiliary takes a new tack with enthusiasm for Ladies Night Out. All ladies are welcome.

Page 3

Looking into the Future

A Letter from the Rector

In the last few years of parish life at Saint George there has been a good deal of change. Most of you have been through those recent changes and are witnesses to it but perhaps there has been more change than you know. I found a telephone directory for the church from the year 2006 and calculated that between 70 and 80 per cent of the folks on that list no longer attend here and have been replaced with an equal number of new members.

It is astounding to consider that since St. George began in the mid-nineties, the name of the church has changed, the building has changed, the priest has changed, the jurisdiction has changed, and most of the membership has changed. Saint George is nearing 20 years old but in many ways this is a new parish!

The question comes to mind, "Who are we?" Perhaps we can approach this question by answering, "Where have we been?" and then, "Where are we going?" Now, in a time of crisis, the first question "Where have we been?" can inspire longing to return to some other time when things seemed more familiar.

The second question, "Where are we going?" can inspire fear and trembling! A time of crisis can have us longing for the past, fearing for the future, and unsettled in the present day. When we come to a time of peace however, that second question of "Where are we going?" can and should be intentionally answered, fear and trembling being replaced with vision and enthusiastic hope. The first question "Where have we been?" can and should be answered with appreciation and healthy nostalgia for the years of work and progress where countless hands helped lift us to where we are today.

For many reasons past and present our church is a healthy church in a peaceful time. I believe that it is now, with faithful hope, that we should be intentional about considering our future. Now is the time for us to look to ask God to clarify in our hearts and minds a vision for the life of The Anglican Church of Saint George the Martyr.

As a parish in the Anglican Province of America there are core theological

and sacramental facets of our church that will not change. Aside from our parish's history in particular, this theological answer is the core of our response to the

question "Who are we?" (A helpful brochure on the basics of the APA can be found on the Diocesan Website under Resources-Parish Life-What is the Anglican Province of America?)

But what will be the particulars of our parish's future? This is what we turn our attention to-

wards in this new season of the life of our church family. As I gather my thoughts for our future and begin to turn our attention towards a strategic plan for the next few years, I ask that you would join me in praying that God would make clear to us where our energies should be poured. As we have just passed the 2 year anniversary of my Rectorship at this parish, I ask you to pray that we would tune our ears to hear His voice and train our eyes to see what He is doing amongst us. It is my prayer that we abide in Him as branches abide in a vine so that the legacy of our parish may be one of spiritual fruitfulness!

In Christ,

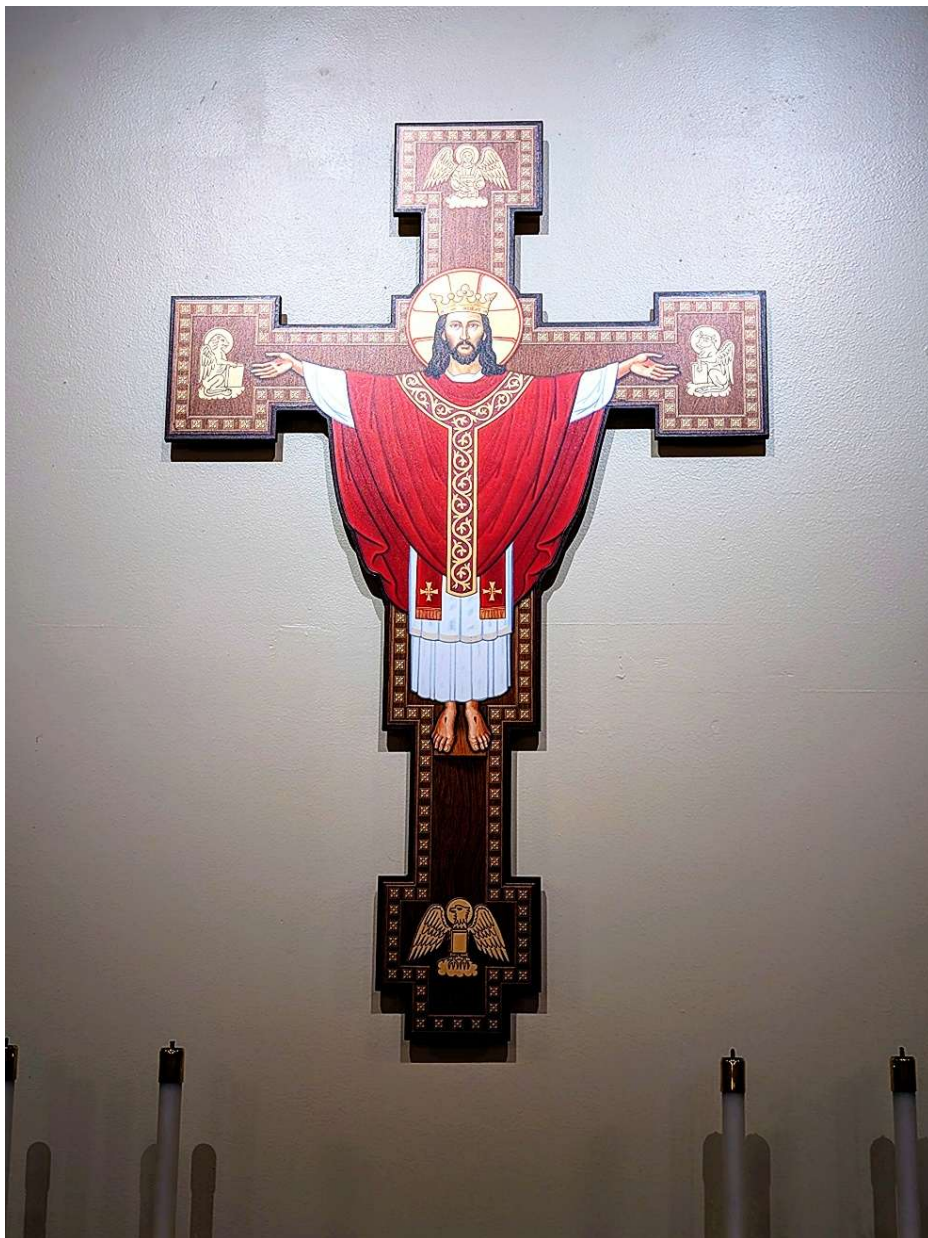
Fr. Paul Rivard +



CHRISTUS REX (Christ the King) CROSS UNVEILED

Vestry minutes for the December 2015 meeting included the following information about the meaning of the new emblem for the sanctuary:

At Epiphany (January 6, 2006), the Celtic cross, which has hung over St. George's altar for many years, will be replaced with the new cross. Upon the cross appears Jesus Christ surrounded by images representing the four Gospels. This image will help us to understand the truth that behind every sacrament or ministry of the parish priest is the work of the Great High Priest. Most importantly, the image on the *Christus Rex* is a teaching tool. At times when there is no scheduled service, no Scripture readings, sermons or sacraments, the cross in our sanctuary can preach the gospel of Jesus Christ to all who enter.



THE NEW ORGAN AND CHANCEL DESIGN

As previously recorded, in 2002 the church, tiring of their quite outdated Conn electronic organ, became aware of and purchased a used pipe organ from a closing Catholic church in Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania. That organ, too, was already quite old and was composed of parts from a number of other pipe organs as well. Members of the church retrieved all the pipes, wires, ductwork, and many other elements of the instrument, trucked it back to South Carolina, and mostly by themselves reconstructed it on site. This was no small accomplishment. A pipe organ is a truly complex mechanism requiring considerable skills in wood, metal, and leatherwork, not to mention an understanding of numerous areas of electronics. That they succeeded to get the organ working and maintained over fifteen years is truly commendable!

Nonetheless, Vestry records reveal that the instrument was quite regularly in need of repair both mechanically and structurally. It was, in fact, in danger of at least partial collapse! This was particularly perilous as the organ was installed directly above the altar! (See previous photos). By early 2017, problems had become so severe that changes had to be made. Permanent repairs would run tens of thousands of dollars and when accomplished, the organ would still be too small and of limited integrity. A new pipe organ would cost hundreds of thousands of dollars.

The Organ Committee, headed by Robert Ambrose, consulted Case Brothers Music House of Spartanburg, SC to explore the possibility of purchasing a new Allen Digital Organ. The committee became convinced that an Allen Digital (non-pipe) organ was the best answer to their situation. Accordingly, in July of 2017 the church purchased a modest two-manual (keyboard) and pedal organ for \$61,300. This was, in the writer's opinion, a very wise decision and prudent investment. The church would now have a state-of-the-art instrument from a highly regarded builder. And though it was small as organs go, it was still many times more versatile and durable than what it replaced. The instrument would serve the parish well into the future.

The disappearance of the old organ with its stately and colorful display pipes brought tears to the eyes of some and the removal of the pipes along with the structural elements of the instrument left quite a vacant altar area. Vestry therefore developed a detailed plan to re-design the entire altar area.

Father Paul assigned the following Vestry members to investigate the reconstruction process:

1. Flooring and electronic outlets – Bill Hamlett
2. Credence Table on Epistle Side – Carl Countryman and Fr. Steve
3. Sanctuary Redesign – Fr. Paul
4. Bishop Chair and two chairs on Gospel Side – Fr. Steve
5. Stained Glass Rose Window – Fr. Paul
6. Reredos, Raising the altar, Flower Stands – Fr. Paul and Carl Countryman
7. Altar Railing – Fr. Steve, Fr. Paul, Carl Countryman

By December of 2017, all aspects of the project had reached completion. The photo below shows the changes made at that time.



On October 16, 2019 two icons were also added to the front of the church - one depicting the Annunciation and the other depicting the Ascension. Father Paul sent a letter to the parish in which he explained:

“In the Fall of 2019, there will be a couple of new icons added to the sanctuary of The Anglican Church of St. George the Martyr. On the outside of the left organ speaker tower there will be placed an icon of the Annunciation and an icon of the Ascension will be placed in the same position on the outside of the right speaker tower..... The significance of the two icons will enhance the theological message of the sanctuary area significantly. From the pews in the nave, church goers will see the incarnate ministry of Christ pictures from left to right as if reading from beginning to end.

At left, the moment of the angel Gabriel’s Annunciation to Saint Mary depicts the moment of her acquiescence of the will of God and the conception of Christ in her womb.

At center, the Holy Spirit descends upon Christ at the river Jordan as the baptismal waters of our stained glass window seem to pour out into the nave. The Christus Rex depicts Christ as incarnate, crucified, risen, triumphant, and our Great High Priest just as below him the altar bids Christians to come and participate in the sacrament of his body and blood.

At right, the Ascension of Christ will depict the final moments of his bodily ministry amongst us as he ascended to blaze a path for those who dwell in Him to one day ascend and be with him wherever he is.

It is my hope that these new icons will draw our attention more and more to the centrality of Christ in our worship and in our lives. Please feel free to ask me any questions that you may have about this addition.



The Annunciation



The Ascension

PHYSICAL EXPANSION AND SPIRITUAL GROWTH

In later 2018 the **one-acre parcel of land** between the church and the Pelham Batesville Fire Department became available for purchase from the Fire Department. After considerable study and negotiations, St. George Church finally purchased the lot on January 8, 2019. This now increased the size of the church's property to a full three acres.

The ongoing lay ministry of parishioner **Joshua Kimbril** became much more deeply embedded as he responded positively to God's call to the ordained ministry. His request to become a Postulant for Holy Orders was approved by the Vestry in November and was affirmed officially by the Bishop in February. At significant sacrifice to himself and his family, he persevered through the lengthy and intense training process during which he served as a Curate at St. George Church.

Beginning in February of 2020, Father Paul announced to Vestry his intention to guide the church in considering its **Vision for the Future** as it continued to grow. Of most immediate concern was the growing need for additional parking places. This, along with more long-range considerations about building construction, led to consultations with various professional land planners/engineers. Progress in this area, as in all other areas, was radically curtailed due to the world-wide onset of Covid-19.

COVID-19 AT SAINT GEORGE CHURCH

The profound issues surrounding the COVID pandemic played havoc with St. George's church life, as it did everywhere else in the world. Revealing the early optimism as to the length of this epidemic, the Diocese of the Eastern United States of the Anglican Province in America sent official notice in March 2020 closing all in person ministry for a period of two weeks. If only that would have sufficed! In its April meeting, Vestry moved "to reopen St. George services at 8:30 and 11:00 on May 10 under the appropriate protocols put in place to make the opening as safe as can be." Further, Sunday School, choir, the nursery, and coffee hour were all discontinued until further notice. These grueling circumstances did act as a catalyst in the church's development of internet on-line worship service options. As the weeks and months dragged on, St. George joined everyone else in practicing safe distancing at the few events that were maintained, and very slowly, as the pandemic eased, step by step the church groped its way toward normalcy. Volunteer activities were re-activated after eight months.

As can be imagined, Covid interfered with Vestry's ambitious planning for the future. While considerable negotiations were ongoing with various land planning companies regarding parking facilities, it was decided it might be better to wait until the time they were ready for additional building construction.

PERSONNEL CHANGES

In the midst of all this upheaval, significant changes were occurring with church personnel. In February 2020, **deaconess Debbie Kidd announced that she would be**

moving to Rock Hill, NC. Her absence would be severely felt and it would take time and planning to fill all the gaps her departure would surely cause.

Further, Lois Schneider, our faithful **choir director/organist** for twelve years announced her retirement as of December 31, 2020. To replace an organist for a traditional Anglican worship service is no small matter. Organists are an increasingly rare breed in modern culture and the musical complexities of an Anglican service tend to significantly reduce the pool of qualified replacements. But here one sees again the truth of the old adage, "When God shuts a door, he always opens a window." And indeed, as Lois walked out the door, Robert Glick climbed in that opened window.

Bob Glick had been a professional musician all his life, serving in public schools, churches, and higher education. He had just retired from a thirty year teaching career at Erskine College and Theological Seminary, Due West, SC and an equal time as Organist at First Presbyterian Church in Greenwood, SC. He returned to Greenville where he had earlier lived and served as Minister of Music at First Presbyterian Church. He had, in fact, already started attending Wednesday Eucharists at St. George as he considered where he might attend in retirement. The timing was too perfect to be coincidental; when Fr. Paul approached him about the need for a new organist, he considered this God's calling to take up the challenge. He played his first service at St. George Church on the second Sunday in January, 2021.



Robert Glick at St. George's Allen Organ

Around this time church member Joshua Kimbril began to take action on his growing sense of call to the priesthood. As he proceeded through this rigorous process, he was of great help to Father Paul in areas of administration and other ministerial functions. He was ordained to the Diaconate on Saturday, September 18, 2021. In May of 2022, he successfully achieved all aspects of preparation and was ordained to the Priesthood. During his diaconate he was frequently called to substitute leadership at the Anglican

Church of Saint Matthew in Weaverville, North Carolina, and it was to that church he was called as Priest immediately following his ordination. His absence was deeply felt by the people of St. George, not least Father Paul!



Ordination of Father William Joshua Kimbril; Father Stokes Jerome Smith, Jr. (right)

ST. GEORGE CHURCH SLOWLY RECOVERS FROM COVID-19

As in many organizations, the pandemic created a need for new creative uses of internet resources. St. George explored various ways to record and broadcast its events. Facebook and YouTube were utilized, but neither of these companies were comfortable hosting religious events. Father Paul finally registered as a podcast host on the church's webpage and used this as a way of posting sermons and Sunday School lessons.

The Foreign Missions Team, working through the Voice of the Martyrs relief program adopted two pastors: Pastor **Jagadish**, a front-line worker in Bangladesh and Pastor **Nestor** working in Mindane, Philippines. For their own protection in these dangerous mission fields, we were not given much other information about them, but their names are included as part of the weekly pastoral prayers during worship to this day.

By March of 2021, Covid recovery was such that Vestry was ready to re-energize the church's **Growth Plan**. While it would be a while before tangible fruits would emerge from this emphasis, much was considered – new building projects, administrative assistance, additional pastoral help in some capacity were all under consideration.

A new format for the long tradition of the Sword of St. George was introduced. This newsletter, "**The Shield**," was published digitally every Tuesday, covering the top events of the past and coming weeks, important Saint's days, and other pertinent information.

By September, **church attendance** was almost back to pre-pandemic levels. As the weeks went by, there was a gradual return of hymns, use of the chalice in the Eucharist, sung liturgy, and return of the choir.

In September the **Dean of the APA Deanery of Appalachia** became ill and Father Paul Rivard was chosen by the bishop as his replacement. While an honor, this appointment would certainly further increase the workload for our lone priest of this growing parish. By this time parish membership was about 135 persons. The Dean is to act as an intermediary between the bishop and the seven parishes of the Deanery, promoting unity and community among the parishes and missions.

It should be noted that the St. George parish has been blest in that among its membership are three retired ordained Anglican Priests: Fr. Steve Sommerrock, Fr. Stokes Smith, and Fr. Richard Bugi-Sutter. Their contributions to the life of the parish and their welcome assistance to Fr. Paul Rivard is highly valued. Sadly, Father Stokes Smith passed from the Church Militant to the Church Triumphant on August 27, 2024, after an extended illness.

SAFETY AND SECURITY ISSUES

As early as 2000 questions began to be raised regarding the safety and security of church property and personnel. Vestry, taking this matter seriously, decided to invite Paul Green to look into this matter. Paul was the obvious choice as he was a respected officer in the Greer Police Department and a faithful church member as well. Paul accepted the assignment and wasted no time in using his expertise to tackle the various related aspects. He informed Vestry that it would take four or five years to fully address all the issues and cost a significant amount of money to reach full compliance. With the full support of Vestry and Fr. Paul, he set to work. Progress was gradual, with most of the progress occurring from 2020 to 2025.

The first task was to find qualified parishioners who could be readily called upon should a member have a medical emergency while at the church. Paul states he hoped to find perhaps one or two qualified people. To his surprise and joy, in very little time eight members offered to be of assistance! Further, donations of wheelchairs, oxygen tanks, walkers, and first aid equipment soon began to arrive.

Observing the inadequacy of the church's fire alarm system, Paul recommended not only new state-of-the-art equipment, but a more local company to monitor the calls. Next, Policeman Paul, only too aware that the world was becoming a more dangerous place, recommended a new set of security cameras. Vestry, trusting Paul's knowledge, again concurred. To date the church's interior and exterior are covered by seven different cameras. Not only has this kept our people comfortable, but on a number of occasions, our ushers, using these monitors, were able to keep certain people from entering whose intentions were suspect.

People have strong and differing feelings regarding these issues. Paul Green has earned our deep thanks for his years of professional oversight and gentle spirit as he patiently explains the necessity of taking these safety steps to questioning parishioners.

EXULTATE! CONCERT SERIES

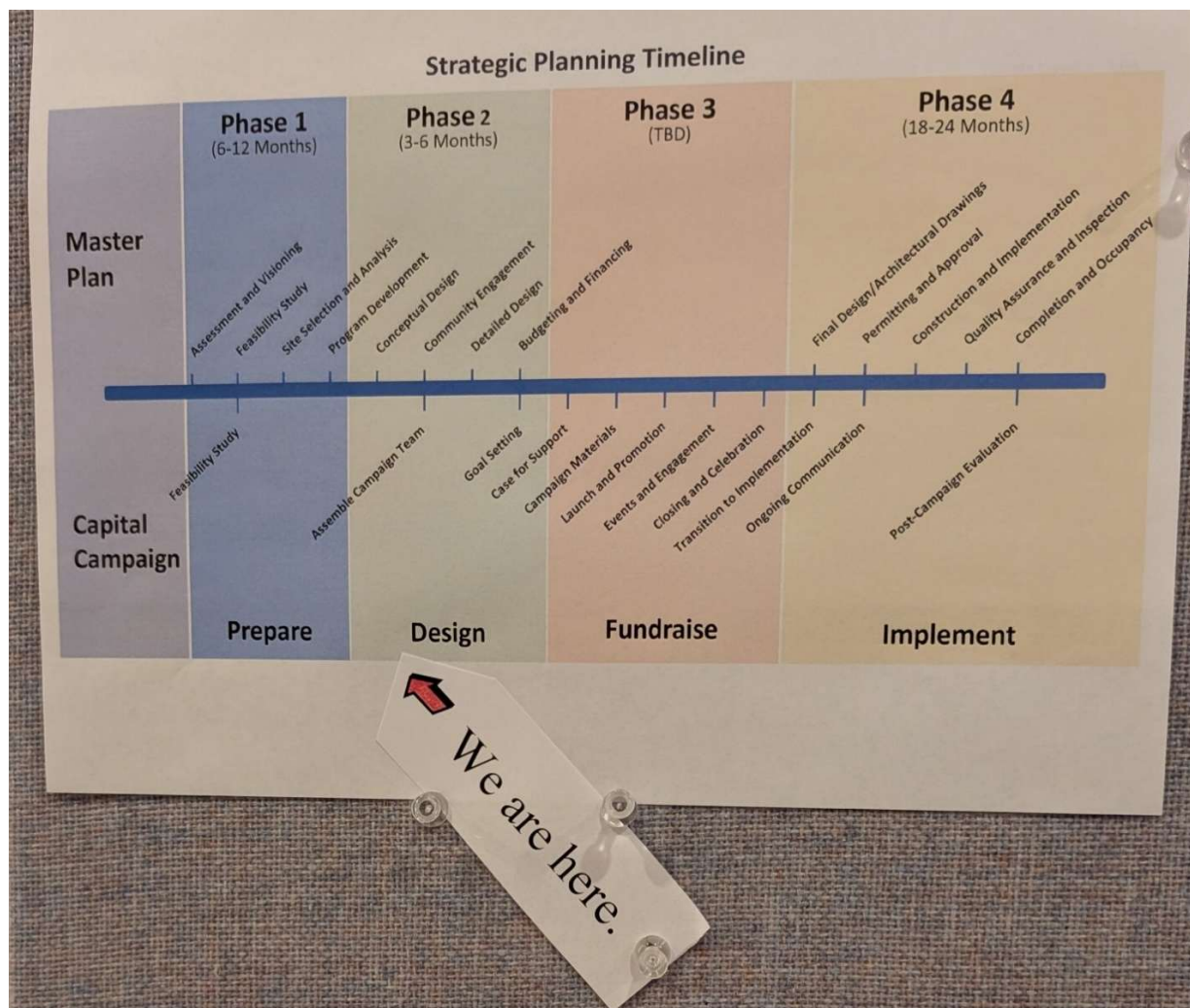
About the middle of 2021 Father Paul mentioned to new organist Bob Glick that though the church had bought a new organ in 2017, then organist Lois Schneider was not inclined to play a dedicatory recital in celebration of the new instrument. Father Paul had some interest in starting a concert series sponsored by the church as a form of community outreach. Bob, a retired college organ professor, agreed to take up the challenge to play a belated dedicatory recital on Sunday, November 28, 2021. At that event a large crowd gathered to hear the full resources of this fine instrument. A visual dimension was added with a camera and closed-circuit TV screen so everyone could see the complex interworking of two manuals (keyboards), pedals, and stop changes.

There was interest in building on the success of this event by initiating a full series of two or three concerts annually. In the summer of 2022 Father Paul appointed a concert committee comprised of Bob Glick, Gene Rivard, Sarah Spigner, and Bryan Kirby to perpetuate this series. The committee chose the name Exultate! (meaning “jubilation”). Over the years the Exultate! Concert Series has featured organists, harpists, guitarists, singers, pianists, and woodwind ensembles.

THE CHURCH STRATEGIC PLANNING TEAM

As part of the church’s on-going Plans for the Future, a Church Strategic Planning Team chaired by Chris Bourne was established to explore various options for accommodating growth. After much work, the team made a preliminary presentation to the parish on Wednesday, December 20, 2023. The meeting provided an important first open discussion about the potential of expanding the church’s facilities, and a chance to envision together how God might be leading into the future. The well-prepared presentation opened the door for a successful time of thinking and dreaming together. The committee continued working behind the scenes carefully exploring the feasibility of this major project and developing an orderly prudent way forward. That way cleared considerably when the parish achieved a major milestone in 2024 by making final payments on both its mortgages, making the church debt free.

In January of 2026 the team displayed a multi-page progress report on the hallway bulletin board indicating that the parish was now in Phase 2 of a four-phase Strategic Plan. Elements of Phase 2 can be seen in the chart below. This was also the time when serious decisions were being made about choosing the right architect, should the project continue to advance. Rapidly increasing attendance was often exceeding the seating capacity of the sanctuary at the late service. The happy problem needed to be addressed.



By its March 15 meeting, the Vestry felt well enough informed to confirm the Strategic Planning Team's recommendation by approving the hiring of LS3P Associates LTD architectural firm to develop a design for a new worship space – a quite significant action!

Then, on Sunday March 22, the parish instituted an experimental new Sunday schedule of events in an attempt to encourage more equal attendance at each worship service. Sunday School was moved to 9 AM. The 8:30 worship service, which had not included music, now began at 9:45 and included elements of sung liturgy and the use of the organ. The late service remained basically unchanged but now began at 11:15.

NOT A CONCLUSION

While this takes us up to very recent times, it is hardly a conclusion. Our God is in no way finished with His work in and through The Anglican Church of St. George the Martyr. Stay tuned and be involved!

AUTHOR'S AFTERWORD

*The lot is fallen unto me in a fair ground;
Yea, I have a goodly heritage.*
Psalm 16:7 (BCP)

The research and writing of this History have been both a great joy and a fascination for me. My academic career has honed my writing skills as I wrote a number of articles on the Church's music and a book on how the human brain affects our responses to corporate worship. Writing has always been one of my most enjoyable pastimes. Further, I have always found history to be an absorbing study. Had I not been called to a lifetime of musical and theological pursuits, I probably would have ended up being a history teacher.

So, when I became aware that the parish had no detailed historical documents other than Vestry minutes and Deaconess Debby Kidd's historical outline of a section of the parish's history, I immediately experienced a strong desire to take on this project. With the encouragement of Fr. Paul Rivard and others, I set out on this mission.

The most essential research required a careful study of the Vestry minutes. This involved not just the minutes of our Anglican years, but going back to our earliest documents dating from 1987, when our congregation's founders first organized as part of the Evangelical Presbyterian Church. Over the next few months I carefully reviewed 39 years of parish minutes and other documents.

As might be expected, I have gained a rather thorough knowledge of the major (and minor) events of parish history. But in so doing I gained something far more valuable. I was privileged to observe the attitudes, commitments, values, and behaviors of serious followers of Jesus Christ over a period of four decades. We are the inheritors of a profoundly Christian legacy – as Psalm 16 states, “We have a goodly heritage.”

In preparation for this writing, I interviewed several current members of this parish. I ended these interviews with the question, “What has impressed you most about this congregation over the years?” Their responses – without exception – were identical: they chose to attend and continue attending St. George Church because of: the caring people they found here - their sincere concern for each other, their brotherhood, their welcoming of new members. On a personal level, I heartily concur.

The other factors that have drawn and retained people at this parish are the Eucharistic Liturgy and firm commitment to the “Faith once delivered.” What has been true for me has been true for so many of us – if your soul thirsts for a place to worship that combines high liturgy and a firm grounding in the historic Apostolic Faith, there are not many options currently available in the Greenville area. Broad worship trends in America continue to be less conservative and less formal. Our parish's recent spurt of growth speaks volumes in this regard. We have a unique and essential place in the greater Greenville area.

This is a digital document. That means it can very easily be corrected and expanded. I welcome anyone who has a clearer memory of some of these historical accounts to

inform me so we can make this as accurate an account as possible. We are still a young parish. As the years and decades go by, perhaps some currently younger or future parishioners will feel the call to expand this account for the benefit of still more future parishioners of a then much larger but still faithful Anglican Church of St. George the Martyr.

Soli Deo Gloria,

Robert P. Glick

February, 2026

APPENDIX 1 – Membership of Christ Covenant Reformed Church as of July 1992

Kathy Andrews

Curt and Aggie Merchant

Michael and Paula Chase

Mac and Anna Parks

James and Julie Conlon

Wayne Rhodes

Rick and Anne Doughty

Bob Dykes

Sarah B. Doughty

Scotti Pollock

Glenn and Bobbi Killinger

(Three names illegible)