



Christ Church Looks Back

by Joseph A. Tomberlin

Beginning in 1945 the people of Christ Church made a series of significant decisions about the Sunday School program. On October 9, 1945, Vestry discussed the lack of Sunday School rooms and heard suggestions for such solutions as using tents or constructing "cinder-block classrooms." From this debate over Sunday School space emerged the Vestry recommendation to "investigate a new site for the Church itself. . . ." The outcome was the purchase in 1946 of the lot on North Patterson Street where Christ Church presently stands. This led also to the sale of the old church on East Central Avenue and its deconsecration in 1947.

In 1953, Vestry decided to borrow \$7,000.00 from the American Church Building Fund Commission [ACBFC] to erect Sunday School rooms where the kitchen now is located at the rear of the Parish Hall. ACBFC reacted favorably to Christ Church's inquiries, so Vestry chose "to proceed at once with our plans for the Sunday School addition." Valdosta architect Joe Bright developed drawings for a 1,504 square foot Parish Hall annex containing six classrooms and a heater room. Vestry actually borrowed \$9,000.00 from ACBFC, and E.W. "Bill" Tullis, a Valdosta contractor, built the annex for which Christ Church paid \$9,168.37 in June 1954. The addition, named Barnwell Hall in honor of Bishop Middleton S. Barnwell, was used until major renovations in 1980-1981 turned it into the "new kitchen" that continues in use.

The foregoing narrative is a preface to the revival in 1958 of concern about Sunday School space. In Vestry on April 7, 1958, Roy Newham reported that "we . . . [have] 8 rooms for Sunday School and . . . [have] 11 classes. Mrs. [Emma] Wainer had her class in a station wagon recently. Our facilities are very inadequate." Blake Ellis suggested that "our best solution to this is to acquire the house in [the] rear," meaning the house at 103 East College Street owned by Mac Odom. The Minutes note that Fr. Kippenbrock and vestrymen Jamie Carroll, Marion Tucker, and Glen Robinson would approach Mr. Odom about selling his house to Christ Church. Mr. Ellis also stated that the best alternative to acquiring 103 East College was to construct an "L" shaped addition to the rear of the church. His "third choice" was an "addition in front of the Parish House even with the nave of the church which would yield 2 small and 1 large room." Also mentioned was the possibility of purchasing a vacant lot near the church, exact location unspecified.

The immediate sequel was a Tot Amon motion, seconded by Louis Kafoure, in the Vestry on May 12, 1958: "MOVED that permission of the Bishop of Georgia and the Standing Committee of the Diocese be sought for this Vestry to incur an indebtedness not to exceed fifteen thousand dollars (\$15,000.00) for the purpose of providing space for our growing Sunday School." Approved unanimously by Vestry, this request went to the Bishop and the Standing Committee in a letter signed by

George S. Twiggs, Secretary of the Vestry.

The first response came via a letter of May 27, 1958, from Bishop Albert Rhett Stuart, successor to Middleton S. Barnwell. Bishop Stuart wrote to Fr. Kippenbrock, that because Christ Church was "meeting . . . [its] indebtedness to the American Church Building Fund Commission regularly and on time and . . . [is] within reach of liquidation of this indebtedness, I hereby consent to the Vestry of Christ Church incurring . . . [an] additional indebtedness for this expansion not to exceed \$15,000.00." On May 28, 1958, a letter from Fr. F. Bland Tucker, President of the Standing Committee, followed. Fr. Tucker informed the Rector that the Standing Committee, in a meeting on May 14, 1958, at Christ Church Frederica, had approved Christ Church Valdosta's request to borrow no more than \$15,000.00 "for the purpose of providing space for the church school."

Vestry sought a range of possibilities for creating or buying additional space for the Sunday School program. In a called Vestry meeting on September 29, 1958, Jamie Carroll reported that he and Marion Tucker had met with Valdosta's zoning "committee to discuss the proposed building for Sunday School rooms." Both said that they doubted "we could get permission to erect a two story building which would have to be a minimum of 25 feet from the [property] line." But Mr. Carroll and Mr. Tucker believed there was "a reasonable chance that we may get a permit to erect a one story building 8 feet from the [property] line."

More in the April *Vineyard*.