



Christ Church Looks Back

by Joseph A. Tomberlin

In the Vestry meeting of April 26, 1946, a major concern was to sell the church on East Central Avenue in preparation for constructing a new one on North Patterson Street. Vestry rejected a \$4,500.00 offer from a Mr. Puett because the price was not worth considering. Vestrymen, however, did approve a motion to sell "the complete church property" to the Valdosta Christian Scientists for \$12,500.00 "provided we share the use of the church as is for two years or until we can build our proposed new building."

Bishop Middleton S. Barnwell in June 1946 approved by letter the plan to sell the church on East Central to the Christian Scientists for \$12,500.00. He also recommended swapping the Christ Church "Rectory" at 115 West North Street for a house on East College Street directly behind the lot at the corner of North Patterson Street and East College where the new Christ Church would be erected. In keeping with the Bishop's suggestion, Vestry, on June 24, 1946, passed a motion to offer the owner of the East College Street house, a Captain Burrows, \$2,500.00 (and as much as \$3,000.00) "difference in exchange of property on North Street for the property in question. This money is to be paid by the congregation within two years."

The action on June 24, 1946, did not end the matter. In the Vestry meeting of September 1, 1946, the issue of trading the "Rectory" for a house of East College arose again. Vestrymen apparently discussed the question at *The Vineyard*, p. 10, September 2011

some length. Jamie Carroll offered to "investigate" the question of repairs possibly needed by both the "Rectory" and the proposed new rectory. The resolution, on a Jerome Tillman-Joseph Morrison motion, was to "forego further repairs to the present Rectory until decision has been made to keep [or sell] the present property." By the next meeting, less than two weeks later, the situation seemed to have changed for the worse. Senior Warden Abram T. Coppage reported to Vestry on September 13, 1946, that the Christian Scientists no longer appeared to have any interest in acquiring Christ Church on East Central Avenue.

Mr. Coppage, however, stated that "he thought he might receive a similar offer [to purchase old Christ Church] from Dr. C.O. Templeton. . . . He also said that "Dr. Templeton would probably want possession immediately after purchase." Further conversation led to a firm judgment that \$12,000 to \$13,000 was a fair asking price for the Christ Church property on East Central "without the pews or organ being sold." Further, the Vicar, Fr. White, pointed out that a temporary meeting place for the congregation of Christ Church "would have to be found suitable to the entire membership of the . . . church." He suggested that Georgia State Womans College, directly across North Patterson Street from the location of the new church, would be suitable, "subject to Bishop Barnwell's concurrence." A Horace Caldwell-Jamie Carroll motion to sell the East Central property at a minimum price of \$12,000.00 won

approval, but any action toward making the sale was tabled "until further data can be obtained."

Christ Church then held a congregational assembly on October 6, 1946. Vestrymen reported that the sale of the old Christ Church to Dr. C.O. Templeton had not been completed. If the sale were accomplished, Christ Church would make temporary use of an auditorium at Georgia State Womans College until completion of the new church and without any charge by the State of Georgia. Following that report, the meeting dealt with various aspects of raising money to pay for the new church. After the meeting, the fog of history descended upon Christ Church's work to construct and to pay for the present church on North Patterson Street. Parish records now contain no Vestry Minutes, no correspondence, no sources of any kind for the nearly eighteen-month period from October 6, 1946, until March 29, 1948.

Despite the lack of records, some facts are available about the time of silence from 1946 to 1948. Christ Church sold the old church to the Christian Scientists, not to Dr. C.O. Templeton, and for \$12,500.00. The Diocese of Georgia offered Christ Church \$25,000.00 toward the construction of the new church, provided that Christ Church could match the amount. The old church on East Central was deconsecrated in 1947, and an eminent Savannah architect, John Courtenay LeBey, designed the new Christ Church. More about Mr. LeBey and Christ Church on Patterson Street in the October 2011 *Vineyard*.