

Christ Church Looks Back

by Joseph A. Tomberlin

As noted in the November history article, Christ Church's Vestry learned during the meeting of May 30, 1948, that only \$7,500.00 could be borrowed to aid in the building of the new church. The money borrowed, combined with other funds already available, would have to cover all costs. Vestrymen also heard via a letter from Bishop Barnwell that they should obtain "additional bids" for the forthcoming construction job.

Jamie Carroll reported having had several conversations with A. G. Franklin, apparently a local contractor who "had not submitted one of the original bids," but believed a bid "could be submitted in the neighborhood of \$55,000.00." Carroll also stated that he had located "a supply of cypress lumber to meet our requirements, which could be obtained at a very low figure." The Vestry decided at that point to take no action on the current low bid of \$69,000.00 from the J.N. Bray Company "until Mr. Franklin should be able to submit his bid, which will be considered at a meeting on Sunday morning, the 6th of June [1948]." Vestry also agreed on efforts "to secure some additional bids from other contractors." In addition, Senior Warden Jerome Tillman promised to contact John C. LeBey, the Savannah architect who designed the new church, to "determine whether the people supplying the mill work for the new church under construction in Savannah [St. Matthew's] might not be able to handle that end of the business for us."

In the meantime, the mechanics of transferring the \$25,000.00 pledged by Bishop Barnwell toward construction of the new Christ Church were being worked out. In a letter to Robert G. Macks on May 31, 1948, Barnwell noted that neither Macks's letter of May 17th nor recent Vestry Minutes provided any information about the bank account in which diocesan funds were to be deposited. Thus, he asked that Macks inform him of the Valdosta bank and "the exact name of the account for the building fund" so that he would know how to make out the checks for Christ Church. Barnwell said that the first check, for \$13,000.00, "as we are paying \$2,000.00 to Mr. LeBey, local architect," would arrive after July 1, 1948. The second check, for \$10,000.00, would arrive after the first of August. The Bishop pointed out to Mr. Macks that "you will pay the Valdosta architect for supervision and Mr. LeBey tells me that his agreement with him was that he should receive 1½% of the contract price."

Responding to the Bishop on June 2, 1948, Macks declared that the bank's name and the specific account for building funds had not yet been fixed because "temporarily they are at the First National Bank of Valdosta and the Vestry feels it will be much to the Church's benefit to transfer these funds to the Citizens & Southern National Bank." The plan was "to deposit checks received from you to the account of 'Episcopal Church Building Fund,' in the Citizens & Southern National Bank." The other money held in a savings account at First National Bank also would be

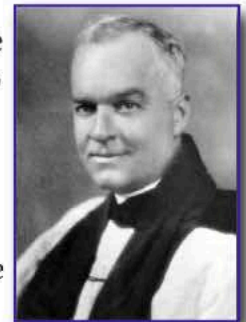
transferred to Citizens & Southern National Bank and placed in the same "Episcopal Church Building Fund." As Macks said to Barnwell, "You may be very certain we shall be most happy to receive the checks from you at your convenience."

During the Vestry's session on June 6, 1948, Jamie Carroll reported that he had "nothing encouraging in the way of news from A.G. Franklin."

Franklin's assessment was that the plans for the new Christ Church were "very strict with no possibility of reduction in the mill work cost." Consequently, he concluded that "the bid of J.N. Bray Company was about as cheap as can be expected." Moreover, "no possibility [existed] of having the company supplying the mill work" for St. Matthew's Church in Savannah "to supply what is required by us. They are just not interested."

Senior Warden Jerome Tillman described the frustration of his failed effort to obtain "a lower bid on mill work" from the Brady Company in Thomasville. The problem, he asserted, was "the prevailing high prices of good grade pine and cypress." Tillman also declared that he had found it "impossible to secure other bids . . . [because of] lack of interest in the contract. . . ."

This story will continue from this point in the January 2012 issue of *The Vineyard*. Stay tuned.



Middleton S. Barnwell
Bishop of Georgia
1936-1954