

# Christ Church Looks Back

by Joseph A. Tomberlin



As noted in the April *Vineyard*, on November 19, 1948, Bishop Middleton Barnwell assured vestrymen that they should easily be able to borrow the money needed to complete the Parish Hall. Vicar Clifton White reported to the Vestry on December 12, 1948, that "Bishop Barnwell had in a telephone conversation with Mrs. White authorized us to go ahead with the loan," but that "no other details were available." The Vestry agreed that Senior Warden Jerome "Joe" Tillman would contact the Bishop immediately about the particulars of the proposed loan.

On the 19th, the Vestry met again to hear the results of Mr. Tillman's conversation with Bishop Barnwell. He outlined a plan to incorporate "the Vestry and its successors." Upon completion of the process the Bishop would "convey to the corporation title to the Church property, which could then be . . . [pledged] for the required loan." Mr. Tillman also read the application for incorporation drafted by his brother, Lamar Tillman, a local attorney. Before the session ended, two motions received approval. The first was to incorporate the Vestry and to ask the Bishop for written confirmation of his proposal to the Senior Warden. The second was to

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## DIOCESE OF GEORGIA PROTESTANT EPISCOPAL CHURCH

RT. REV. MIDDLETON S. BARNWELL, D.D.  
BISHOP

OFFICE OF THE BISHOP  
CHRIST CHURCH, SAVANNAH, GA.

January 4, 1949

Mr. Robert Macks, Secy.  
Christ Church  
Valdosta, Ga.

Dear Mr. Macks:

The Valdosta church property stands in the name of the Protestant Episcopal Church in the Diocese of Georgia.

The Corporation yesterday passed a Resolution authorizing me as President to sign mortgage note and deed of debt to secure mortgage for the borrowing of \$15,000.

I have been to the Citizens and Southern Bank here and they are perfectly willing to let me have the money but would rather it be handled by the Valdosta branch if they care to do so. If they do not, I can secure the money for 4 1/2% and if the Valdosta bank takes the loan they certainly ought not to charge us more than that.

I suggest that your vestry immediately take steps and become incorporated. Your officers can then sign notes to me as Bishop of the Diocese to be delivered upon receipt of the money. Whether the money comes from Valdosta or Savannah I will receive it and then turn it over to your vestry when you sign the notes to cover. If your vestry is incorporated then the officers of that Corporation can sign these notes to me without affecting their personal credit at the local bank.

With kind regards to Mrs. Macks and yourself, I remain

Yours truly,  
M.S. Barnwell

issue a work order to the contractor, Tinker Concrete, for immediate completion of the Parish Hall, on the assumption that incorporation would succeed and that "the necessary funds [would] be made available through mortgage."

The following day Clerk of the Vestry Robert G. Macks informed the Bishop by letter of the actions of the 19th. He wrote, "the proposal for incorporation of the Vestry of Christ Episcopal Church of Valdosta, with its attendant right to mortgage church property after conveyance by you, was passed unanimously." He also stated that he was relaying the Vestry's request for the Bishop's confirmation that once the Vestry was incorporated, the Church property would be "used as security for the necessary mortgage." Bishop Barnwell's response was his letter of January 4, 1949, that is reproduced with this article.

The story continues in the June issue of *The Vineyard*.