



# Christ Church Looks Back

by Joseph A. Tomberlin

While the Vestry of Christ Church dealt with the details of borrowing \$15,000.00 to pay for building the parish hall, the group had to continue to focus also on the construction of the church and the "parish house." For instance, in the Vestry's meeting on January 2, 1949, Noah Fry presented a bid from Steward Melton and Company, of Jacksonville, for the placement of tile flooring in "the church proper complete, for \$732." Vestrymen approved that bid but did not act on an offer that Mr. Fry brought forward from Stone and Company.

Stone proposed to provide carpet, 27-inches wide, to cover the chancel floor and to serve as the aisle runner for approximately \$750.00. Vestry deferred action and asked for additional information about the bid. The point of concern was the suggested use of 27-inch carpet, given that the aisle runner would be 54 inches wide. Sewing two pieces together to achieve the proper width might lead to excessive wear at the seam owing to the volume of foot traffic on the runner.

The same meeting also featured a report by the Vicar, Fr. White, on the kitchen to be located in the southeast corner of the "parish house" that would connect the church with the parish hall or "assembly hall," as it was being called at the time. White's remarks emphasized the necessity for "prompt action" by the Ladies Auxiliary to purchase kitchen equipment because of the probability of the parish hall's being ready ahead

of schedule and, therefore, "the advisability of having the kitchen ready for use at an early moment." The carpet issue came up again at a called meeting of the Vestry on January 9, 1949. Discussion again centered on the width of the aisle runner and the desirability of using 54-inch wide carpet instead of piecing together 27-inch carpet to create the runner. Thus, a decision on carpeting was delayed once more.

The same called meeting also took up the matter of borrowing the money to pay for the parish hall that Tinker Concrete was already in the process of constructing. As noted in the June 2012 history article, Bishop Barnwell had recommended that Christ Church incorporate the Vestry. Upon completion of the procedure, Barnwell would transmit to the new corporation the title to Christ Church property, which could then be used as security for a loan. The problem at the moment was that, though the Vestry had submitted to the Georgia Secretary of State an application for incorporation, the Charter of Incorporation had not yet arrived in Valdosta. Vestrymen were reluctant to take any further action toward obtaining a loan. As the Minutes of the session put the situation, "as soon as the incorporated Vestry was a legal entity, proper evidences of indebtedness would be forwarded [to Bishop Barnwell]."

The Charter of Incorporation arrived from Georgia Secretary of State Ben Fortson in the following day's mail, that is, on January 10, 1949. Thereupon, Vestry held another called meeting on the same date. This gathering considered the

by-laws of "The Vestry of Christ Protestant Episcopal Church of Valdosta, Georgia, Inc." that had been drafted by Valdosta attorney B. Lamar Tillman, brother of Senior Warden Jerome Tillman. Mr. Tillman's draft had circulated among the vestrymen for some time and had aroused only one point of contention, which was the definition of a quorum for corporation meetings. Now, with a single revision that identified a quorum as "a majority of the Directors, or five of the members, duly convened. . .," Vestry unanimously voted approval. With charter in hand and by-laws agreed to, vestrymen also endorsed a resolution authorizing the President and the Secretary of the corporation, [Jerome Tillman and Robert G. Macks the Senior Warden and the Clerk], to "execute a note" in the amount of \$15,000.00 to Bishop Barnwell to pay for completion of the church plant. They were to request that Barnwell provide a note to them "in the form desired by him."

Mr. Macks, who usually was extremely prompt in writing letters dealing with Vestry business, did not inform the Bishop of the latest developments until January 19, 1949. He duly reported that the Vestry had empowered Tillman and Macks, as President and Secretary of the corporation, to sign a note for \$15,000.00 to "the Bishop of South [sic] Georgia for the funds required . . . for the proposed church building [i.e., the parish hall]." He also asked that the Bishop "prepare and forward for execution [the] note set up in the form desired by him."