

Christ Church Looks Back

by Joseph A. Tomberlin



Vestry Clerk Robert G. Macks, on April 14, 1952, wrote to Richard P. Kent, Jr., Secretary of

the American Church Building Fund Commission: "After some delays it is a pleasure to finally forward to you [the] loan application for Christ Episcopal Church of Valdosta." Macks expressed his "sincere hope" that the A.C.B.F.C. would "look favorably" at the submission and asked to be contacted should "any further data" be necessary.

Kent acknowledged receipt of the request for a \$21,500 loan on April 18, 1952, but with his letter returned the application, pointing out that the Church Fund's policy precluded lending "the entire cost of a project." Consequently, Christ Church must revise its request to reflect "the amount to be raised by the congregation and from any sources . . . over and above the proposed loan," and Bishop Middleton S. Barnwell must approve the submission and sign it. Kent warned, moreover, that he already had several completed applications and that he would have no money for new loans until February or March of 1953. He also tactfully raised "the question of the proposed loan seeming to be so large in relation to the membership" and asked for an explanation.

On April 24, 1952, Mr. Macks wrote to Bishop Barnwell that the Church Fund "had suggested that we

make one or two changes" in the loan application, and he asked that "in addition to the letter of recommendation you so kindly forwarded last December, you endorse the application." He urged the Bishop to "handle this for us and forward the application along with my letter enclosed to Mr. Kent in New York."

The same day Macks wrote to Kent to confirm that Christ Church had trimmed the desired loan total from \$21,500 to \$16,000, "showing \$5,500 to be raised by us." He declared, "With our small group this is just about everything that we can promise." Macks also called Kent's attention to Christ Church's recent progress, noting, for example, that in 1949 the church's debt amounted to \$16,000, which, as of April 1952, had decreased to \$4,000. He claimed that the debt "reduction has been accomplished with a membership . . . of 105 communicants." Now, Macks asserted, membership was 130 communicants, and Christ Church was reaching out to a growing college community and to the recently reactivated Moody Air Force Base.

Two months later, on June 24, 1952, Mr. Kent notified Macks that the Loan Committee of the A.C.B.F.C., having reviewed Christ Church's application, had approved it with two major conditions. First, the Church Fund was not obligated to close the loan until the money was available "and all legal and other requirements shall have been met to its

satisfaction." Second, establishing even an "estimated closing date" for the loan was contingent upon the fulfillment of the first condition. As an aside, Kent mentioned that the earliest probable date for the A.C.B.F.C. to have "the funds . . . for the loan desired by Christ Church, Valdosta, was April 30, 1953."

At that point all seemed to be going well for Christ Church, but in the months ahead the situation became very complicated, so stay tuned for more in the December issue of *The Vineyard*.