# History of the Church of the Epiphany

# By Mrs. Howard B. Field

# In Commemoration of the Hundredth Anniversary

# 1863-1963

History is defined as—“The branch of knowledge that records and explains past events as steps in human progress. These steps are usually noted as facts, though fantasy or legend may appear to render the history more readable.”

I will represent the facts pertinent to all records obtainable, though there are many years when few or no accounts are to be found during the early years of the church.

In the “History of Durham” written by my grandfather, Professor William Chauncey Fowler, we find, and I quote, “A parish in communion with the Protestant Episcopal Church appears to have been organized in Durham as early as 1802.” It was never, however, placed under charge of a resident rector for permanent existence. It must have been a member of the Diocese since it was represented by a lay delegate at five of the conventions, namely 1804, 1805, 1809, and 1819. In 1818 it is noted that it formed with Middletown and Berlin, one cure then vacant. In that same year, there is a mention of a minister in charge. Then, and I quote, “Rev. Daniel Burhaus, Rector in Durham, reports thirty five families, nine baptisms, and two deaths.”

Now, what of Fantasy? This is defined as “Pictures created in the mind relative to certain facts.” We know that these chosen few, inspired with longing to worship God in the faith in which they had been nurtured, the Protestant Episcopal Church, banded together in their several homes on Sundays. We can hear them chanting, “O come let us sing unto the Lord, Let us heartily rejoice in the strength of our salvation,” or praising God and singing “All hail the power if Jesus’ name, Let the angels prostrate fall.” And in supplication, “Heal me O my Saviour Heal.” Again, “My soul be on Thy guard.” And “There is a green hill far away, without a city wall, where the dear Lord was crucified who dies to save us all.” All of these hymns were written in the early 1700’s and expressed religious early fervor to each of these worshippers. These chosen few were the pioneers to whom we owe a debt of gratitude, for without their spiritual desires and earnest efforts, we in this Church might never have been.

After 1819 there are few occasions with reference to these services. But these do record them as being held in the homes and speak of them as “The Missionary Society for Christian knowledge reports services in Durham and collections for the Society.”

Like many early beginnings there was a struggle in keeping alive all efforts to establish a permanent Church. However, the intermittent records are proof of a persistent endeavor. Finally, on December 5, 1848, it is recorded, “A Mission in the employ of the Society for promoting Christian Knowledge and in accordance with the desire expressed by the Right Rev. Bishop of the Diocese, a series of services in Durham, were held each Wednesday evening, beginning December 5, 1848.” In addition, alternate services were held Sunday evenings on return from Union services in Killingworth. The Rev. Patrick Sill, grandfather of Father Frederick Sill, who founded Kent School, became minister in charge. These services were held at the Academy on the Green. Here I wish to interpose a bit of early Connecticut history. Education and religion went hand in hand. When a Church was erected, a school was built nearby. Religion was taught in the school with a study of the Bible. Schools were conducted in the homes of the minister called, “Selected Schools.” These were chiefly concerned with preparing young men for college, particularly for the ministry. The use of the Academy for any religious purpose followed custom of the day.

Though it is recorded there were only fifteen in attendance at the first service, Rev. Sill reported thirty families, eleven baptisms, and two deaths in 1851. Here are the names of those families:

George Lyman Jesse Atwell

Asher Gillum Charles Robinson

James Robinson Lemuel Camp

Abel Lyman Thomas Lyman

Richard McGarvy Stephen Robinson

Ebenezer Robinson John Loveland

John Camp Luke Camp

Ezra Loveland Asa Chamberlain  
Issac Loveland Curtis Parsons

Richard Robinson Richard Loveland

Manoah Camp Ichabod Scranton

Daniel Hitchcox Elizur Hall

James Tibbals Nathan Parsons

Titus Loveland Marcus Parsons

James Hinman George Galphin

After Rev. Sill ceased his ministry here in 1851, the Bishop arranged with the students at Berkeley Divinity School, which had been recently founded in Middletown, to conduct services in Durham. Eight years later in 1859, two students, Mr. Cummings and Mr. Brathwait, discovered that the services were not being held with any degree of regularity. They, therefore, took it upon themselves to correct the deficiency and services began each Sunday afternoon in the building known as the South End School. This building was many years later converted into a home and is now occupied by Mrs. James Cannon. Mr. Cummings and Mr. Seymore conducted these services and I wish to state, that from that time to date, there has been no interruption of services under the rites of the Protestant Episcopal Church in Durham.

These meetings were later transferred to the Academy on Main Street, in the northern part of town, known as the Pythian Hall., In the fall of 1861, due to the refusal of the trustees of the Academy to allow any services to be held there, two other students came to the rescue. Andrew Morse of Wallingford and Frank Goodwin of Hartford, set out to raise funds for building a Church on the present site. At great personal sacrifice they canvassed not only this community but Middletown, Meriden, Hartford, Wallingford, Norwich, Guilford, and many other places.

By late winter or early spring over a thousand dollars had been secured, so the land on which the Church stands with the same frontage, was purchased in May 1862 and ground broken on June of that year. The corner stone was laid on June 28 the same year. A contract was signed for the erection of the Church July 15. The amount at his time was $1450.00, but eventually the amount raised was $2403.56, which paid for the completed Church with furnishings, etc. To collect such an amount in so short a time a hundred years ago displays a saintly dedication to God’s purposes by these men.

During the month of August, while the Church was in the building process, Mr. Morse, who had endeared himself to all by his untiring devotion, passed away. A memorial window, as a tribute of love and gratitude to his memory, was installed above the altar. This window is now on the north side of the Church to the right of the organ. The work of erecting the Church now fell upon the shoulders of Mr. Goodwin, who ably carried on, and the Church was consecrated January 29, 1863, by Bishop Williams, who was made Rector in charge.

Would that we had a photograph of the early Church! However, by citing some of the early alterations, you may be able to create its appearance in our mind. First, the Church was raised a foot and a half and a new foundation laid in 1877. In the fall of the same year, the tower was constructed, as a gift of Mrs. Samuel Russell, great aunt of Mr. Richard L. Dezang. The bell, a gift of Mrs. Martha Rogers, was installed and rung for the first time on Christmas eve in 1877. The window at the rear of the Church, called the “Children’s Window” (since all the funds were given by the children of the Church), was installed for Epiphany Day. Tuesday January, 1880. At the present main entrance there was a porch. This was moved to the south rear corner to become the present Sacristy. It was completed, furnished and occupied in 1882. The windows on both the north and south sides of the Church were originally plain cathedral panes. Beginning in 1877, the members began presenting memorial windows. But all three were completed in 1889. These remaining three are to the memory of Mr. and Mrs. Alfred Jackson given by their children in 1909; to the memory of S. Ward Loper, given by his daughters in 1910; and to the memory of Mrs. Lillie Davis in 1913.

The original interior architecture was never changed, but was enlarged somewhat when the present Chancel and Recesschancel were added. Also, the Trancept was constructed for the new organ, which was purchased in 1892 for the sum of $1500 and considered the finest of its kind for that period. The Ladies Society collected this sum with the help of three members of the Vestry. The pulpit was a gift from Mrs. Joseph Alsop of Middletown, the top of which had been used by a Church there, so the base was added. It was preached from for the first time by Dr. Binney, Professor of Theology at Berkeley Divinity School in Middletown.

In the fall of 1876 additional land had been given by Miss Mary Jewel Camp for the purpose of building horse sheds. Nine were completed that year. The rest of the present acreage was brought by the parish hoping to erect a rectory with a garden.

When Bishop Williams became Rector in charge after the Consecration, he looked upon Epiphany as his favorite “God Child.” He not only came for Confirmation and special services but would often surprise members by coming in place of the lay reader. Perhaps he was checking on the attendance. During this early period he initiated the Christmas Eve Carol Service which became a tradition not only to our members but to the community, as the townspeople considered it a privilege to join in the praise and worship at this holy time. My earliest recollections in connection with the Church are these services. The Church was decorated with garlands of green and wreaths as it is today. The beautiful glass chandelier over the Chancel glowed in candlelight like the star of old guiding all to the holy bed. The service held was Evening Prayer with the singing of many carols and the sermon by the Bishop. I can see him towering above us in the pulpit relating graphically the story of the Nativity and exhorting us in ringing tones to come, “as the wise men and shepherds of old to the manger, bringing the gift of ourselves in faith and love to the Christ Child.”

The students continued as lay readers and a list of their names and dates of service is on record. Many of these became prominent as priests or in higher office in the Episcopal Church in the United States and in foreign lands, We were most fortunate in having these dedicated and religious servants in God working for us and with us promoting the Life of His Kingdom. Then, too, several ministers who were professors of theology at Berkeley Divinity School came to administer communion or other rites of the Church only permitted by an ordained clergyman. Two of these who administered faithfully were Dr. Binney and Dr. Coit, frequently as a student was ordained he would be assigned here until he was permanently located elsewhere.

Frank Goodwin, heretofore mentioned, came in June, 1863 and was with us a year. The Rev. R.A. Simpson ordained in 1865, was here from June, 1867 to June 1869. Then there were eight different students serving for a period of less than six months. The Rev. Frederick Gardiner, being duly ordained at Holy Trinity in Middletown started here in June 1869 and was in charge for nearly six years.

One of our greatest benefactors, Mr. Richard L. Dezang was appointed lay reader June, 1864,remaining until February 15th, 1862. Though no longer lay reader, his interest in the growth and welfare never waned to the time of his death. A few of you may remember him – a greathearted, gallant gentleman. All the early alterations were made during his regime, and it was due entirely to his influence that most of the gifts were presented. It is recorded, and I quote, “The Recess Chancel, Chancel Window, New Rail with Brass Standards, were the gift of Mr. Richard L. Dezang, as a memorial of the blessings and guidance given him during his eight years of administration of the affairs of the Church.” His final and perhaps his greatest achievement was the erection of the first parish house. It was completed in 1905. I quote, “June 20th, 1905, the parish house of the Church of the Epiphany was solemnly blessed by the Rt. Rev. Chauncey Bunce Brewster, D.D., Bishop of the Diocese. The presentation was made by Richard L. Dezang, the chief donor, and accepted by the Rector of the Parish, the Rev. Joseph Hooper, Addresses were made by the Bishop, the Archdeacon the Rev. Oliver H. Raftery of Portland, and the secretary to the Archdeanery, the Rev. George B. Gilbert of Christ Church, South Farms.” The main room was called the “Bishop Williams Room.” Here were held meetings of the vestry, Women’s Auxiliary, suppers, etc. The Bishop Williams Club which Rev. Hooper started for the young people of the town held all their social activities here,

William C. Richardson, ordained by Bishop Williams at Holy Trinity, Middletown, June 1st, 1888, was placed immediately in charge here. He was the first clergyman regularly settled in Durham for our Church. He occupied the house of Mrs. Helen Norton on Mill Hill where his wife and three small daughters joined him. When a young lad he was run over by a team of horses, and lost a leg. He wore a false limb but in spite of his handicap he became an accomplished organist. After the accident he became a special protégé of Bishop Williams who educated him for the Ministry. During his ministry here, alterations and improvements continued and he was instrumental in obtaining gifts for appointments for the Church services.

A new furnace was installed chiefly through the assistance of Mr. S. Ward Loper, superintendent and senior warden for many years. The new Chancel, Retable, Altar Cross and Vases, Font and Cover, Hymn Tablet, Altar, Pulpit and Lectern Hangings and a set of Communion Linens and Chest of Drawers for the above articles were furnished by the Ladies Aid Society. After this supervision of four years he left in 1892.

Alfred Brittain was ordained Deacon at the Church of the Holy Trinity, Middletown, June 8th, 1892 and took charge of this parish on Trinity Sunday of that year. He supervised the building of the Recess Chanel and Transcept for the new organ. These additions were made possible through the efforts of Mr. S, Ward Loper and Mr. Richard L. Dezang. They were not entirely completed when Rev. Brittain left June 1st, 1893. He later returned when he married to Miss Lulu Tibbals. They were frequent visitors for many years. Both were laid to rest in the Durham Cemetery.

The Rev. Joseph Hooper was elected Rector of this parish and settled upon his duties July 31st, 1893. His former Rectorship was St. Mark’s, Mystic, Rhode Island. Rev. Hooper, an authority on church history, was the grandson of the well known Dr. Berrian of Old Trinity Church, New York City. He, with his wife and daughter Josephine, lived first in the house next to that which is now the Grange Hall. Later the family purchased the house north of this Church, now the home of Miss Sullivan. Here, he and his family lived for many years while he faithfully carried on his ministry as well as being actively concerned with the life of the community. There were five district schools when he became head of the Board of Education. Realizing the inadequacy of the schools’ facilities for the needs of that day in advancing education, he was instrumental in arousing the town toward the necessity of consolidation. This has since been enlarged and is now for junior and high school pupils only. He was one of the directors of the Public Library when it was first started in 1894 and continued his interest years after the present building was dedicated in 1902. He advised for years on the selection of books chosen to stimulate the youth with the desire of reading in the greater fields of education.

In the days of his early ministry here the mode of travelling was “horse and buggy.” But he was not blessed with any conveyance. He walked miles over the hills and country roads calling not only on his parishioners, but all in the vicinity in friendly visits. He was truly a community Pastor. When a family suffered affliction he was the first at their door offering comfort and help he might give.

Under the supervision of the Rev. Hooper the Fiftieth anniversary of the Laying of the Corner Stone was arranged. An all day celebration was held June 28th, 1912. Holy Communion was celebrated at 11:00 a.m. Addresses were given by the Rev. Oliver H. Raftery, Archdeacon of the Diocese and the Rev. E. Campion Acheson, Rector of Holy Trinity, Middletown. A luncheon was held at 1:00 p.m. followed by an afternoon service in the Church. Addresses were presented by the Rt. Rev. Chauncy Bunce Brewster, D.D., Bishop of the Diocese, the very Rev. Samuel Hart, D.D. Dean of Berkeley Divinity School, the Rev. Storrs O. Seymore, Lay reader 1860-1861, the Rev. James Goodwin, Minister in Charge 1863-1864 and Richard L Dezang, Lay reader 1874-1882. All of this was a memorable occasion in the history of the Church.

In 1916 he suffered a stroke which left him physically unable to administer to the Church Services. He sent his resignation June 1st, 1916, after twenty three years of devoted ministry and was then made Rector Emeritus. He lived 11 years, passing away July 6th, 1928. The funeral service, conducted by the Rt. Rev. Bishop Atcheson, D.D., Bishop of the Diocese, assisted by prominent clergy of Connecticut, New York, and elsewhere with the parishioners and townspeople. It was a tribute to his memory.

Following is the resolution of the Vestry upon his death: “Whereas the Rev. Joseph Hooper, Rector of the Church of the Epiphany for twenty-three years and Rector Emeritus for eleven years, has been taken from our midst by an act of God, and whereas Rev. Hooper has ministered to this Church and all parishioners so faithfully, willingly and untiringly, and so intelligently entered the civic affairs of the community, be it resolved that we the parishioners and associates of the Church of the Epiphany, in meeting convened, desiring to express our love and appreciation of the life and work of our good minister who left us, do solemnly declare and pronounce to his family, to the Church and to the community that we have lost a character of the highest degree and that memories of him will ever be with us.”

Various clergy supplied here from 1916 until 1918 when the Rev. Percy M. Binnington, Rector of Christ Church, South Farms, came for the afternoon services at 3:00. These continued for about 2 years. The members of the Church, preferring morning services, appealed to Rev. Binnington to see if this could be arranged. He felt his main duty was to Christ Church, so he resigned. To take his place the Bishop appointed the Rev. William Collard Woods who came in 1920 staying 4 years, when other duties called him elsewhere.

The Rev. George B. Gilbert, author of “Forty Years a country Preacher”, was elected Rector in 1924 continuing through 1940. His work was a remarkable example of social service in conjunction with Emmanuel Church in Killingworth. All the youth in the vicinity were his particular interest when he gathered them from all parts bringing them to church. His son, Shelly, an accomplished organist, with his mother’s help formed a large choir and the Church rang with praise. After sixteen years of dedicated service he sent up his resignation which took effect January 1st, 1941. On his resignation the following resolution was adopted: “The Vestry, meeting this day, do appreciate the long and faithful services of the Rev. George Gilbert and in behalf of the members of the Church it is hoped that he will have great way into the future.” At this meeting a letter from Bishop Budlong proposed the Vestry request him to appoint the Rev. Clyde D. Wilson, Rector of Holy Trinity, Priest in charge of this Church, with the understanding that he appoint an assistant to do the major part of the work in Durham. This was voted upon at the annual meeting January 21st, 1941 and accepted.

When Rev. Wilson took up his duties he realized there was a great need for repairs to the Church, particularly regarding the properties within the Church. He called an all day meeting with him of the ladies of the Church to take an inventory of the necessary needs to carry on services.

February 20th, 1941. Twenty five members chiefly from the Women’s Auxiliary met in the parish house and went vigorously to work, At the noon luncheon a discussion was held on how best to acquire the needs. There was no Altar Guild and no funds. There was a great need of the new Altar hangings and Communion linens. Rev. Wilson was of great help with ideas on how to meet the situation. A committee was appointed by the President of the Women’s Auxiliary, consisting of Mrs. William B. Murray as chairman and Mrs. Charles Loveland, Mrs. George Fredette, Miss Marcia Lattime and Mrs. Helen Eick. I feel sure that Rev. Wilson passed on word to the powers that be of our dire need for the Diocese furnished material for Communion linens and white altar hangings.

On March 20th, 1941, Miss Helen Stevens of the Department of Religious Education of the Diocese met with the group to direct the work of making the above appointments. Miss Lattime, under her supervision, made the complete set of Communion linens. The white Altar hangings also were furnished so all were in readiness for Easter service.

Since this information is taken from “A History of the Altar Guild,” written by Miss Marcia Lattime, I will continue with exerts bringing it up to date. The committee was the nucleus of the Altar Guild which Rev. Carl Webb organized in 1947. He then appointed Mrs. George Fredette directress and Miss Marcia Lattime as her assistant, the former to serve for one year when the assistant would be in charge for the same period. The Rev. Webb trained the members in all their duties and continued its work in all its phases as well as fund raising for whatever need. Several members worked individually. Mrs. Fredette made and sold articles using the money to purchase the Communion Wine, Altar Bread and candles.

In 1955, Rev. Frye organized the Guild as it is today. He appointed Miss Dorothy Barnes directress who continued and is still serving in this capacity. The clergy appoints the one to this office and the Guild elects iht president secretary and treasurer. The entire membership is now eleven regular and two honorary members. As new members entered, the Rev. and Mrs. Frye continued to train them for the Altar Guild service. In 1956, as a fund raising project a fashion show was held which netted $160.00. Under the supervision of Mrs. Frye, clam chowder is made twice during Lent, the sale of which brings in a substantial sum. Thus you see the Altar Guild carries on faithfully as each member acts as a steward of the sacred properties of our Church. The annual meeting of the Altar Guild occurs in January when the ceremony of the burning of the Christmas greens is held. A supper comes first, furnished by the Altar Guild members, after which the Rev. Lincoln Frye conducts the rites, a most impressive ceremony, with each member responding.

During the first year of Rev. Wilson’s charge the Church bylaws were revised, the every member canvass initiated and conducted by a committee of members under his supervision or by the minister in charge. The chief improvements were made the minister in charge. The chief improvements were the repairing and tuning of the organ and the installation of the new furnace, the labor and much of the material being furnished by Mr. Jacob Schilling. Alterations and improvements were made in the kitchen, the work being done by Church members and the Vestry. We should pay tribute in gratitude to Rev. Wilson, not only for his personal efforts in restoring the Church and it’s properties to material worth, but for his inspiration in the religious growth and development of the members in furthering their dedication to our Lord Jesus Christ in the “Church which is the blessed company of all faithful people.”

Troublous times followed, These were the “War Years.” The uncertainty and anxiety affected the life of the Church. It meant constant change to those who took charge. In five months we had six different clergy. In June 1941, the Rev. Loring L. Emery, Curate at Holy Trinity, Middletown, was appointed Vicar of this Church. He entered his duties on Trinity Sunday, 1941. Through his interest and efforts, the Church was stabilized and more restoration was accomplished. Both the interior and exterior of the Church and parish house were painted. The funds for this were furnished by the Women’s Auxiliary and three members of the Vestry. One of the main fund raising events was an all day auction and dinner at the Town Hall supervised by Mrs. Jacob Schilling assisted by members of the Auxiliary, which netted more than $350.00

Not all of the work was in fund raising, however. Before the crisis of Pearl Harbor, Rev. Emery inaugurated a Service of Intercession twice monthly for the families and friends of men in the armed service. As time passed and more men left to give their all for our country in the far flung battle fronts, on the high seas, in the air, guarding our coastlines or training in our camps, these simple Services of Intercession filled a real need, giving strength and courage to those who could only wait. This Church together with the United Church set a wonderful example for cooperation and unity when each Sunday evening a hymn sing was held, alternating in each Church a month at a time. They were conducted jointly by the Rev. Emery and Rev. Albert Bailer, Pastor of the United Church. Each service was dedicated to a Durham man serving his country and a recording of part of the hymn sing was sent overseas to the men. Letters in appreciation were received which told that these records symbolized for them, Mother and Dad, home itself, the girl friend, the village street and the Church with its lifelong association, These were but a few of the contributions of the Church to the religious life and growth of the community so ably carried in by Rev. Emery.

Rev. Harry Heermans came in 1943 serving nine months when he left to become a Chaplain in the armed forces. One of his many fulfillments was his personal efficiency in conducting the “Every Member Canvas.”

1944 and 1945, the Rev. William Van Wyke supported the religious and material growth of the Church. Resigning to take charge of Lime Rock Church in Salisbury, Conn., the Rev. Frederick J. Compson was then appointed continuing faithfully in all Church efforts until September, 1946.

At a special meeting of the Vestry held July 19thm 1946, Bishop Budlong recommended the Rev. Carl J. Webb be called to take over. After Rev. Compson’s departure he assumed his duties that autumn. He instituted the rotating membership of the Vestry and also the legal membership of the parish. He reorganized the Sunday School with more teachers for its religious development and growth. The youth of the Church was his particular forte in giving them opportunity to serve the Church and began training the first acolytes with a Crucifer for the first time. As I mentioned previously he started the Altar Guild, advised and assisted in the work of all branches of the Church for advancement. He preached for the last time July 31st, 1949, when he took over a parish in Pennsylvania.

Through August of that summer, services were conducted by Rev. Emery as well as Rev. Raymond Lang who came permanently September 4th, 1949. He initiated two of the Vestrymen as lay readers to assist him woth the services, Mr. Leyland Seeton and Mr. Edward Nelson, the latter also as an acolyte. His work continued until December 8th, 1952, when he preached his last sermon.

I am sure you will agree with me that our Church and every member were particularly blessed when the Rev. Lincoln E. Frye came as a resident to Durham and later decided t o accept the appointment as our Vicar, ?January 4th, 1953. Since then he has been our inspiration in leading all toward their faith and worship of our Master. His burdens have increased yearly but he never fails in personal contribution in administration of our benefit. As I mentioned before he reorganized the Altar Guild, Then he started training the acolytes to forma functional group. Donald Clark became the first Acolyte Master and is still serving. Kurt Schwarzkopf was the first president and Rusty Hunter is the president now. Kurt Schwarzkopf is the Crucifer. The four preceding him have been Brigham Field, Cortland Field, Allen Saltus and Norman Fisher. There are ten members besides the Crucifer all of whom under the guidance of the Rev. Frye, were all faithful servers.

We are also blessed to have Rev. Frye’s good wife as our Organist and Choir Director, who gives so much of herself in other departments of Church work in efficient service.

Our first vested choir was under Rev. Gilbert’s ministry and continued until Mrs. Frye promoted the present group with officers for a more capable unit. The choir not only benefits us with its singing, but joins with other choirs at the Cathedral in Hartford, at St. John the Devine in New York City and with the town choirs at Baccalaureate for the High School. It pledges fifty dollars yearly to the Church budget though the amount often exceeds this sum. The money raised by card parties, suppers and other projects, Mrs. Frye also trained a junior choir which joins the senior choir each Sunday. The present officers are: President, Linda Sachenbacher; Secretary and Treasurer, Suzanne Bristol.

Following are the names of the faithful organists and choir directors over the early years, the first four of whom gave their services:

Mrs. William Alling Shelly Gilbert

Mrs. Ernest Robinson Miss Ida Maynard of Middletown

Mrs. Joseph Hooper Miss Harriet Stevens

During the summer of 1907, Mr. Wentworth, a student at Wesleyan came as organist and choir director. He desired the use of an organ and for that privilege he gave his services. Sunday afternoons, once or twice a month, he arranged religious concerts consisting of solos, duets, trios and quartets from the famous oratorios with organ recitals, Miss Hilda Alling, Miss Jeanette Schmidt, Mrs. John Meikl, Mr. Frederick Page, the bass singer in the Methodist Church choir and myself took part. The townspeople seemed to enjoy these presentations as every seat in the Church was occupied. Thus our Church brought a religious and cultural atmosphere to the community in music.

A group of the youth of the Church met with Rev. Frye, January 6th, 1957, to establish a Young Peoples Fellowship. Rev. Frye discussed with them the meaning on Y.P.F., which is to guide and train young people as future church leaders and to give them an opportunity as part of the Church family. He stressed that the three important subjects in their weekly meeting should be, 1. Worship Program, 2. Study Program, 3. Service Program. The officers at that time were: President Karen Otte; Vice President, Ernest Sleath; Secretary, Cheryl Otte; Treasurer, Peggy Scheafer with two advisors, ?Miss Dorothy Barnes and Mr. Larry Pratt. I wish time permitted to detail the any activities of this vital and growing band of faithful contributors of our Church in material endeavor as well as religious service. Each year various projects are carried on to meet their pledge of $100 to the Church budget, the missions, some of which have been or are: The Church Army, Korea, Puerto Rico and others. They attend three Archdeaconry meetings each year and in 1960 won the Archdeaconry Banner which is given to the Y.P.F. with the greatest number in attendance. In 1961 they received the Bishop’s Cup as the most outstanding Y.P.F. in the Diocese. In 1962 they tied with West Haven Y.P.F. for the Bishop’s Cup, but already having one magnanimously presented it to West Haven, The officers now are: Kurt Schwarzkopf; Vice President, Linda Sachenbacher; Recording Secretary, Carolyn Molzahn; Corresponding Secretary, Christopher Johnson; and Treasurer, Gregory Wellington.

When Rev. Frye came in 1953m the family membership was 91. Today these number 141. Baptized members ten years ago numbered 269, now 393. The church School consisted of 47 including teachers, now there are 134 including twelve teachers and three superintendents. With the growth in membership, and the Church School in particular, adequate room became a dire need. The children were crowded in the Bishop William’s Room, the Kitchen and basement which is not conducive to good religious training. A drive for pledges to build a new parish hall was started and the ground broken on July 17th, 1960. The building was completed and dedicated March 7th, 1961. When you see this fine room, Vicar’s office adequate kitchen and 10 Church School rooms you will agree we have come far. None of this could have been accomplished without the enthusiasm and great potential of our Vicar.

It has often been said, “The women are the backbone of the Church.” On January 30th, 1879, the Ladies Aid Society of the Church of the Epiphany was founded. 22 names are on the original list of members and two honorary members. We are happy to have with us one of those first members, Mrs. Mary Jackson Stone.

The Ladies Guild met twice monthly in various homes for what might be called a “sewing bee”. All sorts of fancy work was well as practical needs was carried on. This group became well known for their quilts made in original designs, lined with cotton batting for warmth, as it was a far cry from today’s electric blanket. They made, tacked and quilted these to fill orders in the community or elsewhere. Each one represented a tremendous amount of work and rarely brought more than three dollars, but since the materials were chiefly donated and they were made in such great numbers, substantial sums were raised. The organization held a yearly bazaar, or a fair as it was then called, and usually the quilts were sold at auction at the conclusion of the fair, which netted large sums and created an atmosphere of amusement.

The Ladies Aid bought the carpets and kneeling benches for the Church, paid for the coal, and in 1881 paid for painting the Church at the cost of $121.98 for both material and labor. Besides helping with the Church requirements they gave support to missions with articles of clothing and quilts. One year, I noted twelve dresses and two quilts were sent.

Sometime after 1880 this group became known as the Ladies Guild. The membership increased and the activities grew into greater Christian service among the needy and sick enlarging the responsibilities of the Church. Through greater effort and wider fields of endeavor their capacity for income expanded as they continued as the Guild until 1929. They then became the Dorcas Society until 1932 when Mrs. Starr, Organizing Director of the Middlesex Archdeanery Branch of the Women’s Auxiliary came to the Society to tell them why and how they should be members of the Auxiliary. So on December 6th, 1933, their first meeting was held in the home of Mrs. Oliver Bristol. Now it is known as the Episcopal Church Women and each member is continuing with the same dedication of purpose in the living Christian progress of our Church.

Here I wish to recognize the Vestry of the Church of which there are complete records of these hundred years, proving the members unstinted efforts in time, contributions and wise council in their administration of the Church affairs. The members names are legion. I will list a few, The first Senior Warden was Samuel A. Hubbard, who served 10 years; S. Ward Loper, who served 22 years; Dr. Ernest A. Markham; Elijiah Brainerd’ Gilbert Tribbals; Arnold Umba’ William Gastler; and August A. Otte, who as a member, Treasurer, Junior Warden and Senior Warden served over 50 years. He died at the age of 95 and was actively concerned with the Vestry within a few years of his death.

In 1941, 3 ladies were added as members, Mrs. Mary Stone, Mrs. Paul Peck Wilcox and myself, serving on a rotating basis as now many ladies have served and continue to support the work of the Vestry.

In 1916, Mr. Leonard B. Markham became a member when his father Dr. Markham was Senior Warden. In 1919 he became Clerk continuing as such until his death in 1955. He was a faithful and beneficent Church member.

Mr. Paul Peck Wilcox was a member, Junior Warden and Senior Warden for many years. His generous contributions to the various needs of the Church are deeply appreciated.

Our present Senior Warden, a member of long standing has contributed more than I cantell in all of the work of the Vestry for twenty yaears as Treasurer made him a most valuable member. As he has served as Junior and now Senior Warden we bring our appreciation and hope he may give us his continued effort in years to come.

The present officers are: Senior Warden, Oliver Bristol; Junior Warden, Leland Seeton; Clerk, Mrs. Owen R. Flynn; Treasurer, Charles M. Scranton; Assistant Treasurer, Donald S. Breen; each and all carrying on for the Church and its progress.

I have given all the facts iin the construction of the Church and the dedicated clergy and all who made it possible, But what is the true meaning of this Church? When you think of it do you picture it only as the House of God, where we gather together to worship Him, coming for renewed hope and comfort in seeking His blessings? Indeed, it is all of this with its religious dignity and beauty of appointments each with the meaning of Christ’s life on earth. But the true meaningis rather its members who gave and still give in saintly devotion. I have the privilege of quoting froma sermon preached by Father Frye on All Saints Day in 1955. I quote, “All Saints Day affords us the opportunity to honor a group not canonized by the historic Church. For according to the definition, a Saint is also a person who has been grafted by baptism into the Body of Christ the Church, and therefore is in the process of becoming holy.” We have a hymn written by Mrs. Lesbis Scott, which all of us have learned to love with a new ‘slant’ on the word Saint. One verse reads as follows”

“They lived not only in ages past, there are hundreds of thousands still

The world is bright with the joyous Saints who love to do Jesus’ will

You can meet them in school. Or in lanes or at sea, in Church or in trains, or in shops or at tea

For the Saints of God are just folks like me, and I mean to be one too.”

So our parish has its quota of Saints. Many of them have gone to their reward. But the good work which Christ has begun in them is ours to carry on in His name in this Church.