

A Brief History

St. Bartholomew's Church, Ho-Ho-Kus, NJ

Written by Daniel W. Kreller, September 2004

The Vestry adopted the Mission Statement of St. Bartholomew's Church in 1992 under the leadership of the then Wardens, Tom Motamed and Scott Wolff. In Some respects it also accurately describes the history of this parish. This year we observe the 100th anniversary of founding of a Mission Association that was the precursor to this Parish. But just as the birth of a child is preceded by conception and 9 months of gestation in the womb, so the Mission Association was preceded by years of prior informal labors. Chief among these were the works of Amanda Hawes and Hope Winans. Sometime around 1900 Amada Hawes began a sewing class in her home at 222 Franklin Turnpike for the young girls of the mill worker's families that lived in town and combined it with rudimentary schooling and moral and religious instruction. Prior to that Hope Winans collected clothing and food for the same families. She was a nurse and had concern for the health and welfare of the children of these families in particular. Eventually she enlarged her work to include a Sunday school, which in those days typically met on Sunday afternoons. She enlisted the aid of Florence Victor to play the piano and since both were Episcopalian they conducted services from the 1892 Prayer Book. The small hall they used for these services was probably the original local public school on Franklin Turnpike. This same hall was later used as the Borough Hall and only relatively recently was demolished and replaced by a new building on Orville Court, a street named after Florence's father.

All three of these women were members of Christ Church in Ridgewood. Christ Church had been founded in 1864 during the midst of the Civil War. One of its founding members was Elijah Rosencrantz, Jr. Elijah had inherited the Hermitage from his father and in the 1840's enlarged it and remodeled it in the Gothic Revival style. It is not known why Elijah left the Old Paramus Church to help found an Episcopal church in Ridgewood. It is known he disagreed with the politics of the minister at the Old Paramus Church who supported Lincoln and the Union's war against the Southern states. The Rosencrantz family had connections in the south through business and marriage and it does not appear they felt universal abolition of slavery was justified especially at the price of a civil war. Elijah had married Cornelia Dayton in 1851 and she was the granddaughter of Captain Samuel Dayton. He was involved in the cotton business as was the Rosencrantz family. He had summered in Ho-Ho-Kus in the 1840's and then decided to move to Ridgewood after the railroad was built in 1848. The railroad not only stimulated commerce it also enticed people to flee the congestion of the city for open space and cleaner air of the country. The Daytons were Episcopalian and John was also one of the founding members of Christ Church. Whether Elijah changed denominations for politics or for love, he was confirmed in the first confirmation class at Christ Church in 1867 along with his two sons William and John. It was this same John who in 1892 built the house in which we are holding this dinner. William inherited the Hermitage next door and was noted for forming a golf club in Ho-Ho-Kus that later became the Ridgewood Country Club. The confirmation of their wives, Lavinia and Bessie in March of 1897 are the earliest recorded in our parish registers. The Rev. Edward Cleveland, who had

become the Rector of Christ Church in 1895, was the presenter for these confirmations and Bishop Coleman of Delaware presided. These confirmations plus some early records of marriages, baptisms, and burials indicate that pastoral offices were conducted from time to time in Ho-Ho-Kus prior to the formation of the Mission. Christ Church had been active in establishing mission congregations in the communities surrounding Ridgewood. These included missions in Allendale, Wortendyke (Midland Park), and Glen Rock. The Rev. Cleveland sought to establish a mission in Ho-Ho-Kus as well. So it appears by 1899 he partnered with Hope Winans and added to her Sunday school regular, though not weekly, services. So in the labors of these people, lay and clergy together, the work of gathering into fellowship those who were not yet in the church, of instructing the young in the faith and practice, and of witnessing to the Gospel and proclaiming the Kingdom in this place had begun years before a mission Association had formed or a Mission Statement was promulgated.

Then, on the night of February 20, 1904 the Rev. Cleveland met with Hope Winans, Amanda Hawes, Martha Hawes, Mrs. Horace Enos, Mrs. J.D. Staples, Mrs. Van Sant, David Cox, and Fred Woodruff to formalize the relationship between Christ Church and the work in Ho-Ho-Kus. They met in the Tolles house, a famous Dutch homestead that used to stand on Franklin Turnpike just above the present post office. It was at that time the home of Arthur Patton who had recently married Lucy Hawes. At this meeting the Mission Association was born. Dr. Horace Enos, after whom Enos Place is named, was chosen as the president of the Association. It was agreed that the clergy of Christ Church would conduct morning services on the third Sunday of the month as well as afternoon services on the second and fourth Sundays. Paid lay readers were also used to conduct services in addition to or in the absence of the Christ Church clergy. Several years before Amanda Hawes' had found larger quarters for her Sunday school in the former Valley Schoolhouse on Hollywood Avenue. It had been built in 1871 by a group of local residents to house a private school for their children. Elijah Rosencrantz, Jr. invested in this school as did Joe Jefferson, a prominent actor, and Orville Victor, a prominent author and publisher. That school ceased to function sometime prior to 1900 and the building may have been used briefly as the clubhouse for the golf founded by William Rosencrantz in 1893. By 1901 the golf association had abandoned the Ho-Ho-Kus first for a course along Maple Avenue in Ridgewood and then in 1929 for a site in Paramus, the present Ridgewood Country Club. Orville Victor purchased the Valley Schoolhouse in 1901 at a tax sale for a term of 30 years. Thus, when Amanda Hawes sought a larger space for her Sunday school she no doubt asked the woman who played the piano for the school, none other than Florence Victor, to persuade her father Orville to grant them the use of the Valley Schoolhouse. He consented. With formation of the Mission Association the Valley Schoolhouse was purchased for \$300 from Orville Victor and it became St. Bartholomew's Church, Ho-Ho-Kus, a mission of Christ Church, Ridgewood.

Things went along happily for the next 10 years. But on the afternoon of April 19, 1914 the Rev. Philip Pearson, then the Rector of Christ Church, came for the regularly scheduled service and made a surprise announcement. Due to financial constraints, Christ Church could no longer pay a Curate and consequently could not cover the services at St. Bartholomew's. His plan was to provide lay readers for the services. Instead the members of St. Bartholomew's petitioned the Bishop to become a full-fledged Parish. A canvass of the membership secured 48 pledges totaling \$1178.40 to underwrite the expenses and with this show of support Bishop Lines granted permission for the Mission to become a Parish. The newly formed vestry set about to secure a Rector and upon the recommendation of the Reverend Pearson they called the

Reverend Robert J. Thompson of Dover, New Jersey. He would serve for the next 15 years until his death in 1929. The first pressing issue he addressed with the Vestry was for a more suitable site for the Church. The title to the Valley Schoolhouse had been transferred from Christ Church to St. Bartholomew's for the sum of one dollar. However, this title was not entirely clear since Orville Victor's claim was for 30 years and the original title listed 13 directors of the Educational Association some of whom had died and others could not be located. The Vestry thought it best to relocate and with that in mind in 1918 purchased a lot on Franklin Turnpike. A new Rectory was built on the site but the church itself was never built. Instead a church was built in Upper Ridgewood. The reason for this was simple. It was customary in those days to have defined geographical Parish boundaries. In an agreement with Christ Church Upper Ridgewood had been included in the parochial boundaries of St. Bartholomew's. But as Upper Ridgewood developed there was increasing support for a separate work there. Due to a lack of facilities in Ho-Ho-Kus, Sunday school and Guild meetings were already being carried on in the homes of parishioners in Upper Ridgewood. In 1922 Albert Leonard, a Warden of St. Bartholomew's, offered to give a tract of land on Fairmont Road and a sum of money to build a chapel in Upper Ridgewood in memory of his wife Elizabeth. The chapel was dedicated in June of 1923. The Rev. Thompson conducted services in both places with the assistance of lay readers. By 1927 the congregation of St. Elizabeth's felt they could stand on their own and in that year they became a separate Parish. The vestry of St. Bartholomew's sold the property to the corporation of St. Elizabeth's for one dollar and transferred the remaining \$5,000 indebtedness to it. At the time St. Elizabeth's listed 170 members and St. Bartholomew's 154. But St. Elizabeth's was stronger financially and the value of its plant and property greater. The Rev. Robert Thompson chose to remain the Rector of St. Bartholomew's and The Rev. Charles Armstrong was called to be the first Rector of St. Elizabeth's.

After the death of the Rev. Robert Thompson and separation of St. Elizabeth's, it is more than fair to say St. Bartholomew's struggled to survive. The Rev. Albert Chillison was called as the next Rector and served until February of 1937. During his 7 years of service he also served as the Vicar of St. John's Church in Ramsey, then a mission of the Diocese. St. Bartholomew's could not afford the sole services of a Rector. Nevertheless much was accomplished. In April of 1931 the newly constructed Parish Hall on Sheridan Avenue was dedicated. Estelle Howland had donated the property in 1927 with the stipulation that a new church should be built on the site by 1931. Later she agreed that the Parish Hall would meet her intentions since it would greatly facilitate social gatherings. But the Great Depression had its grip on the Country in those years St. Bartholomew's finances were adversely affected. In April of 1937 Charles Millet, in the absence of a Rector, presided over a Vestry meeting at which the Franklin Turnpike property including the Rectory was turned over to the bank for the sum of one dollar in exchange for the release from the Church's \$10,000 debt. But by June the Vestry had called the Rev. Alfred Voegeli to become the next Rector. He agreed to do so as long as he could retain his current position as Vicar of St. Andrew's, Harrington Park. He served slightly over one year and then became the Dean of the Cathedral at Ancon in the Canal Zone and later was Consecrated Missionary Bishop of Haiti and the Dominican Republic. For the next 9 months the Parish was served by neighboring Rectors and supply priests until the arrival of The Reverend Robert Sudlow in July of 1939. He also served as the Vicar of Church of the Epiphany in Allendale until 1942. But by 1942 the financial strength of the Parish had improved to the point that it could support the Rector and build a new Rectory on Hollywood Place. The country was at war but it had come out of the Depression and with the opening of the George Washington Bridge there was

a new influx of residents in town. At least 9 men from the Parish had gone off to war and in May of 1945 The Reverend Robert Sudlow departed to enter the U. S. Army Chaplain's Corps. The Rev. Wallace Pennepacker was elected the next Rector in the fall of 1945 and he accomplished something that had been discussed and planned for years. The old Valley Schoolhouse on Hollywood Avenue that was still being used as the Church was loaded on a flatbed truck in the spring of 1948, moved to the Sheridan Avenue property, and attached to the existing Parish Hall. A small entrance foyer and a small sanctuary were added to the building at that time.

A young couple that had just moved into Waldwick came to shop at the hardware store in Ho-Ho-Kus the day the Church was moved and they decided there and then to become members. That young couple was Angus and Thail Simpson and they very much reflected the changes that were then taking place. Angus had recently been discharged from military service and like so many returning soldiers he and Thail sought out affordable housing in the newly developing suburbs like Waldwick. Around the same time, a young clergyman who had grown up in Paterson and served as a Curate at St. Paul's Church was also drawn to the burgeoning suburbs. His name was the Reverend Charles Judson Child, Jr. and in 1951 he became the Rector of St. Bartholomew's. With the influx of young couples that typically had more children than couples in the next generation the baby boom was on. All suburban churches benefited and St. Bartholomew's was no exception. At times over 300 children were enrolled in the Sunday school and 40 children sang in the youth choir. When Judson's father, the Rev. Charles Child, Sr., retired from his position at Trinity Church, Paterson he even helped out for a time at St. Bartholomew's. Then there were services at 8 A. M. and 11 A. M. as well as two services at 9:15 A. M., one in the Church and one in the Parish Hall. Overcrowding was a chronic complaint and plans were drawn up for a bigger Church. These were never realized but two additions of classrooms were added on to the Parish Hall and the old Church was enlarged and renovated. Under the direction of another young parishioner and architect, George Clark, the ceiling of the old schoolhouse was opened up to expose the beams, a new chancel and sanctuary with beams to match the old were added, a pipe organ was installed, and the unique etched glass windows were inserted in the south wall of the nave, the chancel, and the sanctuary. All this was accomplished by 1960 and at last the congregation had a very lovely and serviceable building for all of its functions. More changes were on the horizon, however. In 1961 the men's club sponsored a discussion entitled, "Is Our Church Living Up To Modern Times?" The modern issues at that time were the role of women in the church and racism. With respect to the role of women the congregation took a step into the future by electing Mae Cordes to the Vestry in 1962, the first woman to serve in that capacity. In 1968 they formed a Christian Concerns Committee to respond to the social ills then affecting this country and the world. George and Helen Clark were instrumental in forming this committee and it was widely supported in the Parish raising \$30,000 over a six year period of time. The funds were distributed locally, nationally, and internationally. It was at this time St. Bartholomew's began a relationship with the North-side Forces in Paterson that continues to this day. Members contributed their time and skill as well as money to the various projects. Carl Bergmann relates he laid floor tile for the medical clinic that North-side Forces established. The Rev. Judson Child, Jr. resigned his position in 1967 to become the Canon Pastor at St. Phillip's Cathedral in Atlanta, Georgia. He went on to become the Suffragan Bishop then Diocesan Bishop in the Diocese of Atlanta. He also served as the Chancellor of the University of the South, his Alma Matter, and was a key member of the committee that produced the 1982 Hymnal. All in all he had a distinguished career and then departed this life earlier this year.

The Rev. Hayward Levy, Jr. became the next Rector of St. Bartholomew's in 1967. When he left to assume a position in Madison, New Jersey in 1977 he summed up his tenure this way. "The ten years we have shared together spanned what many describe as the most troubled and threatening period in the history of the Episcopal Church. The Church's "boom" years in the 1950's and early to mid 1960's ended with a suddenness that mystified and demoralized countless congregations nation wide. Many barely survived; many died. St. Bartholomew's is alive and busy doing the work of Christ." Was this mere hyperbole? Perhaps not when one considers that by 1977 church attendance was one-half of what it had been at the peak and Sunday School attendance was one-third. Great shifts were taking place in the culture generally and these were impacting the Church. Nationwide church attendance as a whole remained steady but there was a great reshuffling of where people attended. Mainline Protestant Churches, like the Episcopal Church, suffered steep declines. Evangelical and Charismatic Churches increased in numbers dramatically. Perhaps no single factor can account for this but certainly the questioning of authority was a contributing factor. It did seem like every authority was being put to the test and religious and Biblical authority were no exception. What had seemed before like changeless verities were now regarded by many as "truths" from the past that could no longer sustain us or guide us into the future. Consequently, many stopped attending Church and others set off on their own spiritual quest, exploring other religions or developing their own spirituality. One began to hear people say, "I am spiritual but not religious." Whether it was motivated by a desire to stay current or some deeper need to express more truth, many Churches introduced significant changes. Rome had given great impetus to this by holding the Convocation that came to be known as Vatican II in 1962. The liturgical revisions made at that convocation stimulated the revision of our own liturgy culminating in the 1979 Prayer Book that replaced the 1928 Prayer Book. One can hardly fault those who thought this revisor was only an attempt to keep up with the times when emphasis was put upon the use of contemporary language at that time and upon inclusive language and even politically correct language for the suggested revision of the 1979 Prayer Book now. But that would not be the whole truth. In truth the revision also reflects a return to the most ancient practices of Christians. The first Christians did not gather for worship without breaking bread. And so the Eucharist was restored to its rightful place as a weekly celebration at the principal Sunday service. The first Christians regarded Baptism as the entry into the church and did not separate this rite from Confirmation. Though the 1979 Prayer Book did succeed in re-uniting these two rites it did give greater weight to Baptism as the entrance to the life of the Church with the consequence that all baptized persons, including children, could receive communion whether or not they had been confirmed. Fortunately the Rev. Hayward Levy, Jr. did not have to go through the turmoil alone. Lay leaders such as Bob Stone, Hugh MacDonald, Bill Smethurst, and Toby Winiarski and others like them ably assisted him.

The winds of change were still blowing when the Rev. Ed Martin succeeded the Rev. Hayward Lev, Jr. The Rev. Ed Martin had been especially impacted by what was called the charismatic renewal of the church. Charismatic renewal could hardly be called a new thing when the Church itself dates its birth to a charismatic renewal that took place among the Jewish disciples of Jesus on the day of Pentecost 1971 years ago. That day the Spirit came upon them with the sound of a mighty wind and with flames of fire. But the wind and flame of the Spirit does seem to have ebbed and flowed through the long years of the church. And if one was used to the experience of church when the Spirit was not flowing it could seem new, strange, threatening, and even dangerous. The Spirit

began to flow again around 1900. People in Mainline Churches were beginning to experience again the charisms of the Spirit. Often the response in their own denominations was rejection. Consequently new denominations formed that were labeled Pentecostal, a reference to Pentecost and the outpouring of the Spirit. These churches grew dramatically. To illustrate, in 1900 there were around 30.5 million Anglicans in the world and less than one million Pentecostals. Last year there were 76.6 million Anglicans and 558 million Pentecostals. But by the 1960's the experience of the Holy Spirit that typified the Pentecostals had crossed over into the Mainline churches as well. Indeed Pope John XXIII had convened Vatican II with and direct appeal for the Pentecostal experience He declared, "We need to open a window and let in the Holy Spirit." When the Pentecostal experience crossed over into the Catholic and Protestant churches it was relabeled charismatic renewal. What typified the renewal were the manifestations of the gifts of the Spirit, such as healing, as well as a focus upon praise and worship. An enormous amount of new music for worship was and still is being produced by musicians in the renewal. During his 5 year tenure the Rev. Ed Martin introduced the charismatic renewal to St. Bartholomew's. He added prayers for healing with the laying on of hands at the Thursday Eucharist. He introduced some of the new songs and hymns that were the product of the renewal. Some members took offense but others were receptive. It was, after all, nothing new but another aspect, a renewal, of the faith once delivered to the saints. And though St. Bartholomew's never became what might be termed a charismatic church it was and still is impacted by the charismatic renewal. The Christian Church as a whole has been greatly impacted by the renewal in the last 100 years. One hundred years ago not even 1% of Christians worldwide would have been identified as charismatic but today over 25% of all Christians, most in the Pentecostal churches but some in all other denominations, are so identified. One could well argue that the charismatic renewal is the most significant thing to have happened to the Christian Church over that time.

After the Rev. Donor Macneice finished his service as Priest-in-Charge, I, the Rev. Daniel W. Kreller, became the 9th Rector of St. Bartholomew's in March of 1984. In the early years of my tenure we had occasion to celebrate the 75th Anniversary of achieving parish status. This occurred in 1989. I then undertook to update the history of the parish for these celebrations. I read the prior histories and studied the all of the Vestry minutes since 1904. From that exercise I gleaned a sense of this Parish that has guided me in my labors here. Apart from several decades of glory, St. Bartholomew's has always been a small often struggling congregation that nevertheless has kept the faith and has been generous and hospitable to those in need. It has had a concern for the youth and their future in the church. When I accepted the call to become the Rector, Bishop Spong expressed some doubt to me about the future of St. Bartholomew's. But when I studied the history of the congregation I realized that same doubt had been expressed numerous times in the past and yet the doors to St. Bartholomew's had not shut. This gave me courage to believe God does have plans for our future. One way I felt we could prepare for that future was to renovate and repair the physical plant. Starting in 1989 with funds raised at the time of the 75th Anniversary and with subsequent donations and memorial gifts we did modernize and beautify the buildings. The building was made handicapped accessible; the heating system was replaced and the church was air conditioned; a memorial Garden was constructed in the front of the church; the bathrooms and kitchen were renovated; the roof was replaced; the classrooms were renovated; stained glass windows were added behind the altar along with walnut woodwork, a new tabernacle and sanctuary light in the sanctuary; a new sound system was installed; the foyer was made into a chapel; a new cross was placed on the roof of

the church; and the offices were renovated. In 1997 the property next door to the Church came on the market. For 50 years the Vestry had been hoping to acquire this property and at last we were able to do so. The rectory at 210 Sheridan Ave. was sold and the house on the new property at 56 Sheridan Ave. was totally renovated to become the new rectory. The large lot, nearly an acre, doubled the size of the Church property. This allowed for the construction of a new Memorial Garden in a park-like setting, after the property was extensively landscaped. One has to credit George Clark who designed and consulted on most of these projects as well as Allen DeNier who supervised and managed their construction. In studying the history of the Parish I was also struck by the concern for outreach that had been expressed in each generation. The present generation was no exception. When we received a bequest of ten thousand dollars from the estate of Lilian Lammens in 1984, Roger Prior, the treasurer at the time, suggested we set up an endowment fund for outreach. The Vestry agreed for it had long been felt that as much as we were doing, we could do more. Much of the outreach work that we did do in subsequent years was spearheaded by Marjorie Taylor, whose name for many of us has become synonymous with outreach. To works that were already doing with North-side Forces in Paterson and Holley House in Hackensack were added outreach to the migrant workers in the Warwick, New York area and the Ramapo Mountain people in Mahwah. We were among the first to sign on with the Inter-religious Fellowship in Bergen County to serve as an overflow homeless shelter. We opened our doors to A. A. who now hold meetings at noon and at 6 P. M. Monday through Friday and to Al Anon who meet on Wednesday. A small Korean congregation meets in the Church on Sunday afternoons. We have paid for the air flights of 9 Russian Jews who emigrated to Israel through a program sponsored by the International Fellowship of Christians and Jews. When our son, Devin, was born in 1985 I offered a sum of money as a thank offering and invited others to contribute. I was then serving as the coordinator in our area for refugee resettlement for the Presiding Bishop's Fund. I stipulated that the money would be spent for that purpose. The congregation responded with sufficient generosity that we were able to resettle three families of political refugees from Nicaragua, Czechoslovakia, and Rumania. Devin was the first child born in the parish in some time. When we arrived in 1984 there was an active senior youth group but hardly any young children. But that would soon change. We had our second child, Rachel in 1987, and our own family reflected the shifting demographics. People who had raised their children in Ho-Ho-Kus and the surrounding communities were moving on and younger couples eager to raise their own families were replacing them. So the faces in the congregation began to change and we were fortunate to have many younger people come into the congregation who desired to raise up their children in faith. Several who carry on the spirit of Amanda Hawes and have made significant contributions to the Sunday School were raised in the Parish and returned, Peggy Kievit and Courtney Taylor. Others were newcomers like Allison Gnerre and Ellie Linder. And in this anniversary year we were able to celebrate the ordination of one of our own members when Bill Fuess graduated from General Seminary in May and was made a Deacon in June. So, all in all I am heartened by what we have accomplished together over these years. To my mind we are keeping faith with those that have gone before us and acting faithfully for those who come after us. We are doing this in the midst of great turmoil and change. What the Rev. Hayward Levy said about his time could be said about ours as well, if not more so. The world seems to be descending into greater chaos. The questioning of authority has not abated, it has accelerated. People continue to leave the Church and go off on their own spiritual quests. Our denomination, like most others, is deeply divided on current issues, especially the issue of the ordination of active homosexuals and gay marriage. It is not uncommon to hear doubts expressed as to

whether the Episcopal Church will even survive in its present form. I haven't been given prophetic insight to predict what will be. But in looking back over our 100 years I do see that much of the time what was expected and predicted did not occur and what did happen no one expected or predicted. Why wouldn't the same be true for us in our time? God is ever young and full of surprises.