

*FROM THE ANNALS OF ST. DAVID'S, MANAYUNK*

**IN THE BEGINNING:**

**Charles V. Hagner – Prime Mover, First Historian**

by James Proud, Vicar of St. David's, Manayunk

The founding of St. David's Church springs from the American manufactories that grew at Manayunk (then called Flat Rock) on the Schuylkill River after a dam, canal, and locks were built there in 1818. The construction was promoted by the Schuylkill Navigation Company, a private corporate enterprise chartered by the Pennsylvania legislature on March 8, 1815 for the purpose of making the great river navigable above Philadelphia as far as Pottsville, a distance by water of almost 100 miles. That ambitious and successful enterprise was part of a grand national plan to ensure that the United States of America, newly freed from the political domination of Great Britain, would never again be an economic appendage of Britain, nor of any other foreign power.

Before, during, and after the Revolutionary War leading Philadelphians, such as Tench Coxe (1755-1824), were advocating and planning America's commercial and financial independence from Britain. In his time Coxe was the leading economist of the City and by the end of his life was acknowledged to be the father of the American cotton industry, being one of the first to urge that the South cultivate cotton for supplying an all-American domestic economic base. Philadelphia listened to its native son and became an important center for American cotton manufactories.

One of those manufactories was owned by the father of Charles V. Hagner (1796-1878) and it was located at the Falls of Schuylkill (now East Falls). In 1856, twenty-five years after the founding of St. David's parish and in the last year of the rectorship of Benjamin Wistar Morris, Hagner was invited to lecture at the Schoolroom of St. David's. He spoke at two sessions and reflected on his life in the area. Later "at the repeated request of many persons" his two lectures were published privately as The Early History of Falls of Schuylkill, Manayunk: Records of Men and Customs.

In commenting on the late 1700s, Hagner wrote:

[T]here was much patriotic feeling prevailing on the subject of domestic manufactures, and a universal desire that we should become independent of other nations, especially in the event of war, and to avoid the difficulties our country had labored under in the Revolutionary War. Thomas Jefferson, afterwards President of the United States, was a personal friend of my father, and knowing he had mills at the Falls, early indoctrinated him with the manufacturing fever, and he procured—how or where I never knew—some, what would now be considered very antiquated machinery, for spinning cotton.

Hagner began his history with childhood memories of the Falls of Schuylkill which, he recounted, had first been known as Fort St. David's (sometimes Fort of St. David's). The Fort had been a fishing company, or club, "originally established by a number of prominent and wealthy gentlemen of Philadelphia, among whom were many Welshmen, who gave the Society its name, St. David being their patron saint. It was organized and governed in the manner of a garrison or fortification. . . For beautiful scenery, romantic beauty, and fine fishing, there was no place in the vicinity of Philadelphia could in the least compare with 'Fort St. David's,' or, as it is now called, the 'Falls of Schuylkill'". It appears the Society even thought of itself as "his majesty's colony of Fort St. David's". As most of its members were ardent patriots during the American Revolution, the place was abandoned when they went off to battle. While it was in disuse the British occupied the City and destroyed the clubhouse, considering that its members had often "hatched treason within it".

After finishing his education at the University of Pennsylvania Hagner worked in his father's mill at the Falls of Schuylkill and in 1817 became its manager. Then in 1820 he became the second purchaser of water-power rights, or "mill seats", at Flat Rock where he then made his home. He was living there in 1824 when the residents of Flat Rock renamed their community Manayunk (an Indian name for the river) after considering and rejecting alternatives such as Udoravia and Bridge Water. With

entrepreneurial spirit Hagner finished his mill and began making oil and grinding drugs, later adding a fulling mill and a number of power looms for weaving satinets, a cotton and wool fabric used for outer garments. “These were the first power-looms ever used in Pennsylvania for weaving woolen goods.”

In November 1831 Hagner personally made a census, “very closely and correctly”, of Manayunk. There was only one prior census and it had been taken in March 1827 by the pastor of the German Reformed Church. Between those dates, and because of the sale of water-power, the population “from the Domino road to Sherr’s lane inclusive” had increased from 317 to 541 dwellings, and from 2070 to 3175 inhabitants.

About the time Hagner took the census there came to his door the Reverend Robert Davis, formerly the rector of an Episcopal Church in Reading but invalided into early retirement. After introducing himself, Mr. Davis said his purpose was to organize an Episcopal congregation. Hagner doubted the success of such a project, saying he knew of only one Episcopal household other than his own in Manayunk. When Mr. Davis—known among the clergy as “Eusebius” Davis because of his published scholarship on the early church fathers—produced a memorandum book with names he had collected of almost 300 local residents who were raised as Episcopalians, Hagner asked him to return the following week. In the meantime Hagner called on a number of those named in Mr. Davis’ book and found they were indeed Episcopalians. When Eusebius Davis called again the two men agreed forthwith to proceed with the organization of a parish.

They published the following notice signed by “Citizen” and dated November 26, 1831:

The inhabitants of Manayunk and its vicinity friendly to the establishment of a congregation of the Protestant Episcopal Church in this place are requested to meet at the Academy in this Village on Saturday the 3<sup>rd</sup> day of December next at 6 oclock P.M. for the purpose of organizing a congregation.

The meeting was held. The Church minute book records that Mr. Davis “(present by request) was called to the chair but declined and was excused”; Mr. Hagner then was called to the chair; and those in attendance, after offering “their names for record”, then proceeded to organize an Episcopal congregation to be known as St. David’s Church, to elect twelve vestrymen (the first named being Charles V. Hagner) to serve until the following Easter Monday, and to obtain from Mr. Davis an appropriate form of constitution for inspection and revision at an adjourned meeting.

At the adjourned meeting held on December 10, with Mr. Hagner presiding and Mr. Davis reading the prayers, the Vestry chose for its constitution that of St. Stephen’s Church, Philadelphia, appropriately revised, rather than the form approved by the Diocesan Standing Committee. Thus it was that the Constitution for “The Rector, Church wardens, and Vestrymen of St. David’s Church”, consisting of a Preamble and nine articles, was formally adopted and the parish began its corporate existence that day. On May 1, 1835 the first church building was consecrated on the Dupont Street site where the present house of worship stands.

Charles V. Hagner was returned to the Vestry at each annual Easter Monday election through 1839. Sometime after that last election, his local factories having burned down the year before, his involvement in the affairs of both St. David’s and Manayunk came to an end. He concluded his history thus:

In the year 1839 I sold my mill and dwelling . . . left Manayunk, and dissolved my connection with it, and although I have ever felt much interest in it, I know very little about it from that period.

He had yet one more major contribution to make to St. David’s, the church of which he was the prime mover, and to Manayunk, the community which he helped make the Manchester of America--he wrote the first important history of their respective beginnings.

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Author's note: I am grateful to Sylvia (Mrs. Nicholas) Myers for introducing me to Hagner's The Early History of Falls of Schuylkill, Manayunk [1856: photocopied typescript in holdings of Roxborough Manayunk Wissahickon Historical Society at Philadelphia Free Library, Roxborough Branch]. All of the quotes herein, other than those from the St. David's Vestry Minute Book containing the record of the organizational meeting of the parish, are from Hagner. Among other works, I have referred to Dictionary of American Biography, eds. A. Johnson & D. Malone (1930 ed. Vol 4, pp488-489); J.S.Miles & W.H.Cooper, A Historical Sketch of Roxborough, Manayunk, Wissahickon [1940: Philadelphia, Geo. Fein & Co.]; and N.Myers, Manayunk: Philadelphia's New Hope [privately published].

## ***FROM THE ANNALS OF ST. DAVID'S, MANAYUNK***

### **ENDOWED WITH VESTRY LEADERSHIP: I. Tobias Wagner [Vestrymember 1831-1865]**

by James Proud, Vicar of St. David's, Manayunk

At the December 3, 1831 meeting that decided to organize an Episcopal parish church in Manayunk and name it St. David's, two brothers were elected to the first year's Vestry. They were Tobias Wagner [1793-1868] and Samuel Wagner [1792-1879]. In March of that year the Wagner brothers had retired from their successful Philadelphia business partnership known as T. & S. Wagner, merchants and auctioneers. Neither of them yet being 40 years old, and each having done well in financial ventures, they were free to commit energies and gifts to doing good works through the religious and other philanthropic causes they supported. Beginning on December 3<sup>rd</sup>, Tobias and Samuel involved themselves in helping St. David's to grow. Tobias was annually re-elected to the Vestry until 1865. Samuel served until 1861, the year after he had helped establish, with two of his sons-in-law, St. Timothy's Church, Roxborough. Tobias and Samuel brought to their commitment to St. David's resources both earned and inherited.

Their earned resources were acquired during prosperous mercantile careers, careers that exemplified the necessity of good training and placement, experience and luck, for young men seeking success in the early years of the new nation. Although the brothers started in business along separate paths, they ended as partners in the firm that they founded in 1821.

Tobias was born in Philadelphia in November 1793. After a local education, in 1810 he was apprenticed to a Center City merchant. He succeeded so well that upon reaching his majority in 1815 the master and the apprentice became partners. Three years later Tobias entered into another mercantile partnership and three years after that he and Samuel joined as partners in the final undertaking of their business careers. At some time, either before or after their retirement in 1831, the brothers

owned a mill at the lower end of the Manayunk Canal which had previously belonged to a partnership among whose principals was a son of Robert Morris, the financier of the American Revolution.

Samuel, also born in Philadelphia, was nearly two years older than Tobias. After his early classical education at the academy operated by one of the assistant clergymen at Christ Church and old St. Peter's, at age sixteen Samuel was indentured to Stephen Girard [1750-1831], the French-born American merchant, banker, and philanthropist. Samuel began service in Girard's counting house and then sailed as agent, or "supercargo", buying and selling goods on trading voyages aboard Girard's ships. For twenty months he sailed on the Voltaire to the East Indies, China, Amsterdam, and Hamburg before returning to New York. Then for twenty-two months he sailed on the Rosseau. Girard evidenced his trust in Samuel by naming him, in 1826, one of the trustees to administer the Girard Bank upon the founder's death and to control it until liquidation. Girard died December 26, 1831, shortly after St. David's was organized. Samuel's early retirement became charged with major responsibilities.

In addition to their earned prosperity, the Wagner brothers were possessed of two inherited family resources—wealth, and an interest in church and theological matters. The wealth was created by their father, John, a first generation German-American born in 1748 at Reading, Pennsylvania. John's fortune was made in Philadelphia as an importer of woolen goods. In addition to having a residence in Philadelphia, he purchased a countryseat on Wissahickon Creek bordering School House Lane above Gypsy Lane. He named it Roxborough Cottage. Purchased the year after Tobias' birth, this home served the Wagner family for many generations.

The Wagner family of Philadelphia has been traced as far back as early 16<sup>th</sup> century Bavaria to the first recorded ancestor. His Christian name was Tobias. His grandson, another Tobias [1598-1680], so distinguished himself in theological studies and personal piety that from 1662 until his death he served as Chancellor and Dean of Tubingen University, then a preeminent school of orthodox Lutheran theology. Three generations of Lutheran pastors descended from Chancellor Wagner. The pastor in the third generation, yet another Tobias [d 1764], felt called to be a missionary to

American congregations. He began in Maine in 1742 and shortly later took up service in Pennsylvania where he served fourteen congregations over the years. While in Pennsylvania he was befriended by Henry Melchior Muhlenberg, the patriarch of the Lutheran Church in America. Wagner even officiated at Muhlenberg's marriage. But their relationship became troubled, Wagner's irascible nature and ambitions soon overcame him, and in 1759 he returned to Germany. He went home only with his wife and youngest daughter; his other children, including John, then eleven years old, were left behind.

When Tobias began his service on the Vestry of St. David's--service which during his lifetime was to span the ministries of eleven priests: three missionaries who led the parish before the consecration of the first church building, and eight Rectors who led thereafter—he committed both his time and his wealth. He was the first treasurer of the church as well as its first Church Warden. Most notably he was a generous benefactor, "contributing largely to the fund for building" the first church [in C. V. Hagner's words]. The Vestry Minutes for later years record several occasions when Tobias made contributions to reduce the debt of the parish.

His good works for the church extended beyond St. David's. In the Diocese of Pennsylvania he was a delegate to Diocesan Convention beginning in 1834. In the Episcopal Church of Pennsylvania he was one of the active managers of the Corporation for the Relief of Widows and Children of Clergymen, and was also a member of the Society of the Protestant Episcopal Church for the Advancement of Christianity in Pennsylvania. To the latter he gave a legacy that is still used to support missionary work in the Diocese of Pennsylvania.

His public service and generosity extended beyond the church to community institutions promoting the general welfare. He was a manager of the Philadelphia Savings Fund Society; he held directorships with both the Franklin Fire Insurance Co. and the Academy of the Fine Arts; he was a trustee of the University of Pennsylvania; and he was a member of the American Philosophical Society.

At St. David's his presence, and the benefits of his generosity, survive to this day. After his death on February 19, 1868 the Vestry adopted resolutions of condolence in which it observed that during all the years of his Vestry membership he "gave liberally of his means, and spared no efforts in his desire to establish permanently St. David's Parish, and even in his last illness thought of our affairs, and contributed to the late improvements of the Church." Five years later, his widow (who was the daughter of Samuel Rhoads, a member of Philadelphia's Quaker mercantile aristocracy and a friend of Benjamin Franklin) wanted a window memorializing her husband placed in the church. In acceding to her wishes, and deciding to put the window in "a suitable place in the chancel", the Vestry evidenced its action of April 21, 1873 as follows:

Whereas, the Vestry of St. David's Church, has learned indirectly that it would be agreeable to Mrs. Tobias Wagner to place in St. David's Church a memorial window to her late husband Mr. Tobias Wagner and  
Whereas Mr. Tobias Wagner was one of the first Vestrymen of this Church, its first Warden, Chairman of the committee to arrange for laying the cornerstone, as also to arrange for its consecration; and gave the leading subscription for its erection. . .and upon resigning his position as Warden made a free will offering. . .which he had advanced for its aid, and  
Whereas, he remained a Vestryman more than thirty years and these acts but represent his continual aid and intimate connection with all the interests of the Church from its foundation . . .

Mrs. Wagner contributed to the cost of the window. By December 1874 two memorial windows, one to Tobias Wagner, the other to Alfred Crease, had been completed by Messrs. I. & G. H. Gibson and installed in the church. When that building was destroyed by fire the day before Christmas Eve Day 1879, the two memorial windows were salvaged and re-installed in the present church building. Thus the Tobias Wagner window, an element of the first church building, continues to memorialize this major founder and benefactor of the parish.

And his far-sighted generosity still graces St. David's. In 2001 the Trustees of the Society of the Protestant Episcopal Church for the

Advancement of Christianity in Pennsylvania made a grant from the Tobias Wagner Legacy Fund for re-roofing the church. To this day, so many years after its founding, St. David's continues to be enriched by the gifts and memory of Tobias Wagner.

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Author's note: Other than the Vestry Minute Books, important references are to be found in Colonial Families of Philadelphia ed. J.W.Jordan [1911:Lewis Publishing Co., New York, Chicago]; F. W. Leach, Old Philadelphia Families [unpublished scrapbook in holdings of Germantown Historical Society]; T.E.Schmauk, A History of the Lutheran Church in Pennsylvania [1903:General Council Publication House, Philadelphia].

*FROM THE ANNALS OF ST. DAVID'S, MANAYUNK*

**BENJAMIN WISTAR MORRIS:  
V Rector of the Parish; XC Bishop of the Episcopal Church**

by James Proud, Vicar of St. David's, Manayunk

Twice in the history of St. David's, the honor of being elected a Bishop in the Church of God was given to a person previously active in the life of the congregation. This is the local record of the first person so honored.

When, on May 11, 1850, the Vestry accepted the resignation of the incumbent Rector, M. C. Lightner, it simultaneously commenced the search for his successor. From the beginning Benjamin Wistar Morris was named a leading candidate. The Vestry, in minimizing the time the congregation would be without clergy leadership, called Morris as the next Rector of St. David's on the Fourth of July. He accepted the call with the following letter copied into the Vestry minutes of September 4:

Germantown, Aug 16, 1850

Gentlemen: In answer to your favor inviting me to take charge of the parish of St. David's, Manayunk, I reply that after mature consideration and consultation with the Bishop I have concluded to accept the invitation, promising, God willing, to enter upon the duties on the fifteenth of September, 1850.

When he began his duties at St. David's Morris was 31 years old. He had been born in Wellsboro, Pennsylvania in 1819; had graduated from The General Theological Seminary of the Episcopal Church in New York City in 1846; and his experience between Seminary and St. David's had been gained entirely at St. Matthew's Church, Sunbury, Pennsylvania. The most significant event during his service at St. David's, according to the Vestry minutes, was the introduction of gas lighting into the original church building. From our farther view, his rectorship of six years three and a half months was remarkable for being the longest term of service of

any clergyman from the founding of the parish in 1831 until the coming of F. H. Bushnell as the VIII Rector in 1866.

Mr. Morris ended his rectorship at St. David's with this warm letter of resignation:

Manayunk, Nov 8, 1856

To the Vestry of St. David's Church: Gentlemen: Most of you are not unaware perhaps that sometime since I was called upon to consider the question of changing my pastoral relation. The proposition was one that I could not entertain without painful anticipations; and yet one to which I felt bound to give the fullest consideration. After such full and mature consideration, though with very great reluctance, I have concluded to, and do hereby, resign to you the Rectorship of St. David's Church, on the first day of January 1857. In informing you of this proposed change, I must add that it has not been of my own seeking, and that I go from you, not from a desire of change, but on account of the peculiar and pressing nature of the duties to which I am called. More pleasant relations I do not expect to find, this side of the grave, than those that have existed between us for the past six years. And for the uniform kindness and undeserved regard, which this people have shown to me, I am deeply grateful. The present condition of the parish I consider entirely promising. There are no elements of discord or difficulty, so far as I know, to impede its growth and prosperity. And any faithful practical clergyman can take charge of it, with everything to encourage him. . . I can never cease to feel the warmest interest in the welfare of St. David's, and shall look back upon the time spent in your service, as among the happiest years of my life.

The meaning of the first sentence of this letter may have been plain to the members of the Vestry then, but it requires explanation now. In the second year of his rectorship at St. David's, Morris had married Hannah Rodney, a daughter of the Reverend John Rodney, Rector of St. Luke's, Germantown. The "pastoral relation" calling Morris away from St. David's was the position of assistant to his father-in-law at St. Luke's. A notable example of his pastoral work there occurred in 1863 when, in consequence of the dire human suffering on the battlefield at Gettysburg, the Field Hospital Association of Germantown collected eleven boxes of bedding, clothing, food, and medicines for the relief of the sick and wounded, and Morris escorted these materials to Gettysburg to see to their distribution through the appropriate authorities.

In October 1867 he was called to the rectorship of St. Peter's, Philadelphia. Rather than lose his services at St. Luke's, Mr. Rodney resigned his position as Rector and secured the election of Morris as his successor. However, his service as Rector of St. Luke's was brief because at the General Convention of the Episcopal Church meeting in New York City in October 1868, Morris was elected the Missionary Bishop of Oregon and Washington Territories. He was consecrated on December 3, 1868 at St. Luke's, the 90<sup>th</sup> bishop in the American succession since Samuel Seabury.

The consecration of Bishop Morris was honored by St. David's with a gift, as noted in the Vestry minutes of December 21, 1868:

A vote of thanks was tendered to Mr. Orlando Crease for his generous gift of a New Communion Service of Silver to the Church when on motion it was resolved that this Vestry do present to Bishop Morris the service heretofore in use at this Church for his Diocese of Oregon and Washington Territories as a memento and reminder of his services as Rector in this Parish for many years of his early life.

The April 19, 1869 minutes copied Bishop Morris' gracious acceptance of the gift:

Oregon & Washington Mission:  
Germantown April 13<sup>th</sup> 1869  
Rev & Dear Brother [i.e. the Rector, F. H. Bushnell]  
Please convey to the Vestry of St. David's the expression of my sincere thanks for the donation of the Communion Service to Oregon. From its association with my own people (once) it comes to me with double interest. I hope before long to place it in some "St. David's Church" on the far Pacific coast as a memorial of the interest of your congregation in the missionary work of that distant field.

In June 1869 Morris reached Portland, Oregon, traveling by the Atlantic and Pacific Oceans, crossing overland between them at the Isthmus of Panama. Journeying with the Bishop and his wife were his sister Rachel and his wife's three sisters Mary, Lydia, and Clementine Rodney. Upon arrival he found a missionary diocese "with twelve churches free from debt, fifteen priests and seven deacons." In addition to building many new churches, Morris saw to the establishment of a school

for boys, another for girls, and a hospital. [Rachel, Mary, Lydia, and Clementine had made the trip for the express purpose of establishing the girls' school, St. Helen's Hall, of which Mary was the principal for twenty-seven years.] From 1869 onward Morris served as Missionary Bishop of Oregon and Washington Territories. When their jurisdictions were separated in 1880 he continued as Missionary Bishop in Oregon until 1899 when Oregon became a diocese and he its first diocesan bishop. He actively exercised the office of Bishop until his death on April 7, 1906. Then in his 86th year of life, he was the oldest serving bishop in the American church.

The transmission by Bishop Morris of the silver communion service, which the Manayunk Vestry noted was "heretofore in use at this Church" and which Morris acknowledged he received with the intention of placing "in some 'St. David's Church' on the far Pacific coast", could not be completed until the 1871 consecration in Portland, Oregon of a new St. David's Episcopal Church. It was the first parish so-named in the Missionary Oregon and Washington Territories. It is a safe speculation that the choice of patronal name was influenced by the Bishop's desire to find a home for the gift from Manayunk. Those vessels are still in use at St. David's, Portland today. Had they not been given, undoubtedly they would have been lost--as presumably were the New Communion Service vessels given by Orlando Crease to St. David's, Manayunk in December 1868--in the fire the day before Christmas Eve Day 1879 which destroyed the church building and left it a "mass of ruen".

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Author's note: The genesis of this chronicle came during a rafting trip in the Black Canyon of the Colorado River just below Hoover Dam on June 24, 2004. My fellow passengers were mostly clergy and we were taking a break from the National Network of Episcopal Clergy Associations meeting in convention in Las Vegas that week. Next to me in the snub bow, where we were being soaked with many cold water deluges, was John Nesbitt, Rector of St. David's, Portland. After we introduced ourselves, he asked what Philadelphia-area St. David's Church would have given communion silver to his church at its founding. That query set in motion the recovery of the mutual association of our parishes with both David of Wales and Benjamin Wistar Morris.

In addition to the St. David's Vestry Minute Books, I have referred to:  
Hocker, E.W., Germantown: 1683-1933 [1933: Germantown; published by author; held

at Free Library of Philadelphia, NW Regional Branch]  
Moon, R.C., The Morris Family of Philadelphia: Descendants of Anthony Morris  
b 1654-1721 d: Supp Vol V [1909: Philadelphia; no publisher; in holdings at  
Germantown Historical Society]  
Stout, S.R., St. Helen's Hall: The First Century 1869-1969 [1969: Portland, OR; no publisher; in  
holdings at Germantown Historical Society]  
Yerkes, R.K., The History of St. Luke's Church, Germantown 1912 [1912: Philadelphia;  
no publisher; in holdings at Germantown Historical Society]

*FROM THE ANNALS OF ST. DAVID'S, MANAYUNK*

**MOTHER OF CHURCHES**

by James Proud, Vicar of St. David's, Manayunk

Beginning in the 1850s St. David's was in the midst of dynamic changes sweeping over the city, the country, and both the local and national Episcopal Church. In Philadelphia, the 1854 Act of Consolidation enlarged the city, its size originally being about two square miles, by annexing twenty-eight adjoining municipalities. Thereby the Borough of Manayunk and the Township of Roxborough were brought into the new City of Philadelphia and made parts of the 21<sup>st</sup> Ward. In the United States, as the country pursued its 'manifest destiny' toward the Pacific Ocean, competing social and economic interests after 1850 strained the union nearly to the point of breaking, a crisis not resolved until the devastating war fought from 1861 to 1865 and costing the nation its peoples' blood. The Episcopal Diocese of Pennsylvania, which from its creation in 1787 had jurisdiction over all congregations in the state and was shepherded by the Bishop in Philadelphia, by 1866 had formed the separate Diocese of Pittsburgh which then elected its own Bishop to meet the pastoral needs of Episcopalians in western Pennsylvania. And by 1854 the work of the Episcopal Church in the United States reached the territories of Oregon and Washington where B. Wistar Morris, the fifth Rector of St. David's, would begin his 38 years of service as missionary, and later diocesan, bishop in 1868.

St. David's during this era of dynamic change in the city and the church was promoting the formation of new local congregations. The Vestry and members of the parish became engaged, both directly and indirectly, in the support of outlying Sunday Schools that led to the formation of new churches.

**St. Alban's, Roxborough**

The first such engagement appears in the Vestry minutes for February 16, 1860. Copied into that record is a letter from Mr. Fred Fairthorne reporting



that a Sunday School and afternoon service have been established in Roxborough under your Rector's [J. W. Claxton] supervision. So marked success has attended the undertaking that many of those connected with it desire to see the mission placed upon a permanent basis. They wish to do nothing however without the concurrence of St. David's parish.

Mr. Fairthorne hoped that the work would proceed entirely under the direction of Mr. Claxton who would need an assistant to fulfill the increased pastoral responsibilities. Fairthorne offered to guarantee the assistant's salary. He wrote:

our wish was and is that this mission service may remain at least for the present under the Rectorship of your Minister – it is located in his parish boundaries – members of St. David's are active in its operations – we should be most reluctant to sever such connection, while we hope to gather in many neighboring residents who have not hitherto understood or appreciated the Episcopal Church.

The Vestry agreed to supervise the new mission.

On May 10, 1860 Fairthorne reported such encouraging prospects in the mission and Sunday School that he thought construction of a chapel was advisable and for that purpose offered some of his own property together with a contribution of money and a pledge to solicit subscriptions. He proposed giving a deed for the land to St. David's that would be held in trust until a new church should be legally organized and admitted into union with the diocesan convention. The Vestry approved these arrangements and appointed two of its members, including Alfred Crease, to proceed with Fairthorne in his endeavors. At its September 12<sup>th</sup> meeting the Vestry accepted the deed of trust.

The St. David's Vestry minutes for July 9, 1862 contain the text of the letter from the Vestry of St. Alban's Church, Roxborough, giving notice that the congregation had been both legally organized and admitted into union with the diocesan convention. Thereupon St. David's delivered back to Mr. Fairthorne, this time as Warden of St. Alban's, the deed in trust he had previously given to St. David's. Alfred Crease having died, his brother Charles, formerly of St. David's, was now serving on the St. Alban's Vestry.

### **St. Timothy's, Roxborough**

Also in 1860, shortly after the mission that became St. Alban's began services under the care of Mr. Claxton, Mr. Claxton conducted the first Sunday afternoon service for the parish that became St. Timothy's, Roxborough. As with St. Alban's, St. Timothy's was the outgrowth of a Sunday School. On May 31, 1860 Articles of Association for the organization of this second new parish in Roxborough were signed by twelve founders. The principals were J. Vaughan Merrick and D. Rodney King, both sons-in-law of Samuel Wagner, himself a principal founder of St. David's and until 1861 still a member of its Vestry. Notwithstanding, Mr. Wagner also was one of the signers of the St. Timothy's Articles of Association. The depth of feeling about this apparent overlapping --if not conflict--of interests does not appear in the St. David's record until 1874 and then it was occasioned by St. David's final mission-building endeavor.

### **St. Stephen's, Wissahickon**

On September 4, 1871 the Vestry unanimously adopted a "Preamble and Resolutions" accepting Seville Schofield's offer of four lots at the northeast corner of Tower [Terrace] and Hermit Streets below Shurs Lane for the "purpose of building thereon a house of worship, and for such other purposes as may advance the interests of our holy religion." The Vestry undertook to erect a suitable building on the site within two years, a commitment it could not keep. In April 1874 it was reported that new stained glass windows having been installed in St. David's, the old windows were to be put at the service of the Committee on the Mission in Lower Manayunk for use in the proposed new building. On June 1st the committee reported "the cellar is dug out, much stone is got and laying on the premises. . . but the further prosecution of building will be deferred until times are better and will warrant us in going on", a reference to the nation's economic depression after the Panic of 1873.

There was another impediment to proceeding with the Mission in Lower Manayunk. The Vestry of St. Timothy's had protested to the Vestry of St. David's on May 18, 1874 that the proposed Mission was in the lower part of St. Timothy's bounds near the homes of fifty of its parishioners as well as its workingmen's clubrooms where regular monthly services were held. Samuel Wagner's son, Samuel, Jr., who was an attorney, chaired the St. Timothy's Vestry committee on parish mission work charged to settle the matter. Mr. Bushnell, the Rector of St. David's, declined to present the St. Timothy's communication to his Vestry, whereupon Wagner, Jr. wrote advising he had referred the matter to the Bishop and Standing Committee of the Diocese.

The Standing Committee considered the dispute on June 25<sup>th</sup> and heard the younger Wagner argue St. Timothy's claim that "being the first to occupy Wissahickon" meant its "possession was to cover all the lower part of Manayunk". And while St. Timothy's had "no desire or intention of building a church or chapel" there, it wanted to "make those places a nursery" from which to receive support. Mr. Bushnell responded at length, explaining St. David's purpose beginning in 1871 to establish the Lower Manayunk Mission in an area of the consolidated City which "from its peculiar situation under precipitous hills, it has not been, and cannot be united with any other district; it is a narrow strip of land, shut in by the hills on one side and the Schuylkill River on the other . . . It is separated from Roxborough. . . situated upon the top of the hills, by as distinct boundaries as when they were separate towns." He concluded with these words:

When St. Timothy's Church was established, it was opposed by St. David's because of the injustice it would be to its prosperity. It has taken away nearly all the communicants connected with St. David's Church living upon the hills, and now this plan in fact whatever the intention is an effort to take hold of another part of this parish, and so confine us still more in our field, while if we may suggest such a duty, it is the part of St. Timothy's Church to labor in the present time to secure the people who are now gathering on these unoccupied acres upon the hills and will in ten years be numbered by thousands.

The Standing Committee advised the Bishop "to sanction the erection of the Chapel in question", and the Bishop concurred, writing Mr. Bushnell on June 26<sup>th</sup> that St. David's might proceed with the work it had commenced. By December 8<sup>th</sup>

the Vestry learned the building was up with roof rafters in place and it was intended to "slate the roof before quitting the work for the winter". Two years later, on December 11, 1876, the Committee on the Lower Mission reported to the Vestry the "work was done". When in October 1886 the Mission asked to be separated from St. David's to become an independent parish the Vestry agreed. By December 6<sup>th</sup> it was recorded that a service of separation had been held, "the chapel is free from all debt and there is a proposition to call it St. Stephen's Church."

***FROM THE ANNALS OF ST. DAVID'S, MANAYUNK***

**FIRE AND PHOENIX:**

***James Stafford, Parish Architect***

by James Proud, Vicar of St. David's, Manayunk

In early 1876, as construction of St. David's Mission in Lower Manayunk neared completion, the Vestry decided to take action on the building needs of its home congregation. The minutes for April 24 that year record the "Committee on Sunday School Building reported progress and stated that work towards the same would be commenced on the morrow Tuesday and prosecuted without delay." On June 17 the building cornerstone was laid by the Bishop of Pennsylvania, the Rt. Rev. W. B. Stevens, assisted by the Rector. After those "imposing ceremonies" at the construction site, the gathering entered the Church where "the Bishop addressed the children in his well known mood and interesting manner. He told them of their duty to God and their parents, and also of how much the church will depend on them in a few years to come." The new Sunday School building was completed in March 1877.

The Vestry's next care was to renovate and enlarge the original church building. It had been in continual use following its consecration on May 1, 1835. Twenty-two years later the congregation's growth required construction of an extension, work that was undertaken and completed notwithstanding "the almost total prostration of every branch of industry" due to "the present widespread depression" in the land. By December 1877 there was again need for making further improvements to the building and adding pews to accommodate the ever-growing congregation. In April 1879 the Vestry appointed three of its own members to be a Committee on New Church Building. The members were James Stafford, James Shaw, and Orlando Crease, but it was Stafford more than any other individual who guided, from inception to conclusion, the eventual work. It is both lucky and fortunate that the sole surviving records of the work are contained in the Vestry Minutes, and that Stafford,

their author as Secretary of the Vestry, was gifted with both literary style and distinguished penmanship.

James Stafford was first elected to the St. David's Vestry on April 22, 1867 and two days later was called to be its Secretary. He was the owner and superintendent of Star Mills, a manufacturer of mixed cotton and woolen yarn, carpet yarn, blankets, and jeans. In 1883 Star Mills employed 30 men, 30 boys, and 35 girls. Its main mill was a three story stone structure, contiguous to which were eight other structures, including the picker house, boiler and engine house, and machine shop. This complex, built in 1872, 1873, and 1883, was probably designed by and constructed under the supervision of Stafford himself. It was situated just above St. David's Church on the east side of Church Street [now Krams Avenue] below Wood [now Silverwood] Street.

The New Church Building Committee reported on October 6, 1879 that it was "ready to receive anything in its line of duty." The following December 22 it reported "no new ideas but. . .ready to learn any information bearing on its duties." Its duties were tragically revealed the next day when at 4:30 P.M. "our church edifice was discovered to be on fire". By "6 P.M. the roof had fallen in, and the building was a mass of ruen." Stafford kept a detailed Fire Record thereafter, recording that the "Sunday School room was fitted up for service and on Christmas Day at 10:30 we held our usual services, had a very large congregation, and took up a large collection for the disabled clergy."

A special meeting of the Vestry was held Saturday evening, December 27, at which it was decided to hold all services in the new Sunday School Building; to make final settlement with the two insurance companies (both of which had already conducted surveys of the loss); to tear down the church walls, cleaning and storing any materials that could be utilized; and to build a new church that would cover "all our available ground. . .as soon as sufficient funds are obtained that warrant the same, continuing the work gradually, but not hurriedly." Finally, it was resolved to call a congregational meeting for "Wednesday night next, after service" [being New Year's Eve], to interest "all our congregation in the good work of rebuilding."

The Vestry moved forward at a series of special meetings in early 1880. Stafford's minutes for January 12 record that all insurance claims had been settled for \$4,661. On February 14 four proposed ground plans for a new building were considered. Two of them placed the main entrance and chancel together at the Centre [Dupont] Street end of the building, while the other plans located the chancel at the opposite Church Street [Krams Avenue] end. Stafford drew one of the latter plans and in it he placed rooms for the organ pipes and for the vestry at the chancel end, and the tower with two additional entrances and vestibule at the main entrance end. His plan was adopted on February 14, but on March 4 that decision was reconsidered and referred back to the building committee, and "all labour at the ruens. . .suspended until further orders." Finally, on April 5 the Stafford ground plan was unanimously adopted, "together with the general features of the superstructure which [were] very fully discussed." It was also ordered that payment for work and materials was to be made as had been done with the Sunday School Building. The next entry Stafford made in the Minute Book was as follows:

Manayunk Thursday April 22<sup>nd</sup> 1880

The actual building of new church edifice was begun this day and, the first stone was well laid, and properly set in the southern corner of the south-west transept, by the Rector and James Stafford [at] 1:40 P.M.

That entry also listed the Vestry building committee members as well as the contractors. In it Stafford referred to himself as "Architect, so-called". The building contractor was Edward Struce. Stafford and Struce had been, respectively, the architect and builder of the new Sunday School Building.

The work progressed quickly. The cornerstone was laid on May 15 and Stafford itemized in the Vestry Minute Book the more than 29 documents put inside the leaden box placed within the stone. Included "with sundry other documents which may be of interest to the generations of the future, probably hundreds of years hence", was the eleventh annual report made by Benjamin Wistar Morris, onetime Rector of St. David's, as Bishop of the Oregon and Washington Territories of the Episcopal Church in America.

On August 10, 1881 Stafford red-inked this entry in the Minute Book:

Greetings: Be it known to all whom it may concern that, at the hour of 4:30 P.M. of this day; we succeeded in erecting permanently in its position the grand ornate gilt cross on top of spire of tower of our new church. . .The Tower and Spire as now erected of Birdsboro Brown sand stone are 146[8] feet to foot of cross. . .We are proud of our noble result, and congratulate our congregation on having such a magnificent structure.

Two years and two days after the original church building was destroyed by fire, the new structure was consecrated by the diocesan bishop, William Bacon Stevens.

### **BE IT KNOWN, that on this Twenty sixth day of December in the year of our Lord, one thousand,**

eight hundred and eighty one, with the rites and solemnities prescribed, I have duly consecrated and set apart [St. David's Church, Manayunk]; separating it to Almighty God, for reading and preaching His Holy Word, for celebrating His Holy Sacraments, for offering to His Glorious Majesty the sacrifices of Prayer and Thanksgiving, and for the performance of all other Holy Offices, through Jesus Christ our Lord.

In asking Bishop Stevens to consecrate the new church building, the Vestry had satisfied itself that there were no outstanding bills for work or materials, nor were there any liens against the property. Stafford had indeed brought the work to a successful conclusion and he duly noted the unanimous "vote of thanks of more than the ordinary kind" his Vestry colleagues extended to him.

Stafford's service to St. David's did not end well. At the appointed Easter Monday annual election of twelve Vestry members held on March 26, 1883 he failed to be re-elected to the Vestry where he had served every year since 1867. He had contributed countless hours as its Secretary. He had been vigilant in planning and overseeing the Sunday School and Church construction projects. But in 1883 he had the third lowest vote in a slate of twenty candidates for twelve places on the Vestry. He protested the election and wrote in the Minutes that it was "VOID". But in the

end he lost, and a Vestry committee had to retrieve the “books, papers, &c” of the Church in his possession. His sole memorial in the church is the Moses window in the nave.

For reasons not recorded, on January 9, 1894, the Vestry, acting as owners of the church edifice, Sunday School building, rectory, cemetery, and the St. Stephen’s Mission in Lower Manayunk, declaring it “desirable that the said premises shall be protected for the future, for the use of the congregations worshipping therein”, resolved to convey all such real estate to the Trustees of the Episcopal Diocese of Pennsylvania, “upon Trust for the use of the congregations or members. . .of St. David’s and St. Stephen”. The deed of conveyance was executed the following February 13.

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Author’s Note: Hexamer’s Insurance Maps, Plans 798-799 and 1751-1752, in the holdings of the Free Library of Philadelphia at Logan Square, provide illustrations and details regarding Stafford’s Star Mills.

*FROM THE ANNALS OF ST. DAVID’S, MANAYUNK*

**ENDOWED WITH VESTRY LEADERSHIP:  
II. Orlando Crease [Vestrymember 1855-1913]**

by James Proud, Vicar of St. David’s, Manayunk

During America’s Gilded Age, that period after the Civil War when the nation was bursting with economic vigor and expanding industrially—and when Manayunk achieved its ambition of becoming the “Manchester of America”, the world capital of cotton cloth manufacturing--St. David’s enjoyed a status in the diocese and wider church commensurate with the prominence and influence of its lay leaders. Many of these leaders were industrialists, some being Manayunk mill owners. In his time the foremost lay leader at St. David’s was Orlando Crease [1823-1913] whose service and material gifts to the parish have never been equaled.

From 1854 until his death in 1913 Crease represented the parish in the annual conventions of the Diocese of Pennsylvania. From 1855 until his death he served on the St. David’s Vestry. From 1866 until his death each of the five Rectors who served the parish during that period appointed him the Rector’s Warden. These responsible offices spanned 60, 59, and 48 years, respectively. In addition, he was the superintendent of St. David’s large and thriving Sunday School; and he presided over three remarkable parish building projects in the 1870s—and to this day the resulting church building and parish house are still in use. He served on the Diocesan Standing Committee and was a Trustee of the Diocese of Pennsylvania. He was also a Vice President of the Bishop White Prayer Book Society. His funeral in St. David’s Church and his burial in the cemetery on August 1, 1913, were attended by the Diocesan Bishop, Philip Rhinelander, who came from his summer home in Massachusetts to preside; by the Rectors of St. David’s, of St. Peter’s-Germantown, of St. Stephen’s-Wissahickon, and of Good Samaritan-Paoli; by the Curate of St. Timothy’s-Roxborough; and by a Canon of the Cathedral of the Incarnation, Garden City, Long Island. The memorials given both by and for this man are everywhere present about the premises of St. David’s and his influence in this house of worship can still be seen and felt.

The span and nature of Orlando Crease's exemplary service to St. David's well demonstrate how Episcopal parish churches were governed in that era. Then as now effective management of the temporal affairs of the congregation resided in the Vestry which as a body was composed of, and formally described in the corporate name as, "The Rector, Church Wardens, and Vestrymen of St. David's Church". The respective powers and responsibilities of the members of the Vestry descended in the order they were listed in the corporate name. The Rector presided over Vestry meetings as the chief executive officer of the church corporation. There were two Wardens and they served as the senior lay officers of the congregation. [1] The Rector's Warden was annually appointed by the Rector (or if the rectorship was vacant then he was elected for the period of the vacancy by the Vestry). In the Rector's absence, or if the office was vacant, the Rector's Warden presided at Vestry meetings. [2] The Accounting Warden was annually elected by the new Vestry at its organizational meeting and his responsibilities were those of a treasurer. The other Vestry members voted as a corporate body on the business matters of the corporation and otherwise participated in the work of "standing committees as will best serve the interest of the corporation." St. David's at its founding fixed the constitutional number of Vestry members, excluding the Rector, at twelve, each member to be elected annually for a one year term of office. Beyond this bare description of corporate structure, however, there are vast dissimilarities in parish governance between Crease's day and now. To illustrate, consider these three major differences:

- Voting and Vestry membership - Men Only: To be a voter at the annual parish election, and to be eligible as a candidate for a Vestry seat, the stated prerequisites were to have been a member of the church for at least one year, and to have paid one year's pew rent immediately before the election. Further, it was understood that only men could vote for, or qualify as, members of the Vestry. The corporate name referred to "Vestrymen". To re-enforce the point, although no woman had ever been a member of the Vestry, sometime after the church was founded the By-Laws were revised to specify that only "male"

members of the church were entitled either to vote at Vestry elections or to serve on the Vestry.

- Financing the Parish - Pew Rents: The major source for funding the maintenance and other costs of the church building, parish house, rectory, burial ground, and all other structures, as well as for paying salaries and the expenses of "the education of the youth, and the support of the poor of the congregation" [Constitution Article 3<sup>rd</sup>] was by renting reserved pew seats to members of the congregation for an annual term. The seats were priced according to their location. The painted numbers at the end of the benches, still to be seen, in their day served as important indicators of one's position in the congregation and the community. Wealth mattered not only for social standing but also for a man's ability, if elected to the Vestry, to reach into his own pocket and contribute, with his Vestry colleagues, the funds necessary to make up the shortfall between the expenses and the income of the parish. In a national society where there were no income taxes, private philanthropy was essential and expected. For a man to be elected to the Vestry implied he accepted, and could afford, personal financial responsibility in supporting his church.
- Electing a Rector - Vestry Control: The Vestry elected the Rector and while the By-Laws carefully prescribed the process, first, of nominating the candidate, then of giving notice of the meeting to elect and of fixing the quorum and voting requirements, the election itself was an internal Vestry matter. The Bishop of the diocese was to be informed when the election was made and accepted, and he needed only to be satisfied with the qualifications of the minister. Today, in contrast, the canons of both the national church and the diocese provide for the diocesan bishop's extensive oversight and managing guidance in filling vacant parish rectorships.

Orlando Crease was born in London, England on December 21, 1823. His father, Alfred, was a chemicals manufacturer who came to Philadelphia in 1830 with his wife, three sons, and two daughters. The family settled in Roxborough where Alfred took up farming. Two more sons were born here, one of whom died in infancy. After Alfred's death in 1835 Orlando left school to take responsibility for the farm. Eventually he became apprenticed to an upholsterer with whom he remained until 1846 when he began working for a manufacturing firm operating the Glen Echo Carpet Mills at Wayne Junction, Philadelphia, then the largest carpet producer in the state. In 1855 Crease became a partner of the firm which during and immediately after the Civil War converted its production to army blankets. In 1866 the firm was renamed McCallum, Crease & Sloan and Orlando remained active in the business until his retirement in 1884. Thereafter, until his death of heat prostration on July 30, 1913 at his home on Wayne Avenue in Germantown, his major public concern seems to have been for St. David's.

This successful man of business held leadership responsibility at St. David's for more years than anyone else in the history of the parish, either clergy or lay. But his achievement is memorable not only for its duration but for the quality and range of his service to the church. The entry for him in the Biographical Encyclopedia of Pennsylvania (published in 1874) reveals that in addition to all his other contributions to parish life he led the choir and donated the church organ. And this: "His interest in biblical study led him to spend six months in the Holy Land, in 1871" in company with three clergymen, one of whom, J. Claxton, had been the sixth Rector of St. David's, "and he often surprised his companions with the accuracy of his topographical knowledge of the sacred places."

At his death the Vestry included these words in the Crease memorial minute:

For fifty years and more, as Rector's Warden and as superintendent of the Sunday-school, Mr. Crease lavished upon St. David's Parish the whole-hearted devotion of an intensely devoted and loyal nature. In the service of the Church in this parish, in the maintenance and furtherance of its spiritual and temporal welfare, he was indefatigable. To the end of his long and useful life the parish of his love was constantly in his thoughts, and in his prayers. . . The especial marking of the man was prone submission to the heavenly will. Truly we may say that in Orlando Crease it was granted us to see not only the power, but also the beauty and attractiveness of the Christian character.

Today we remember Orlando Crease in the beauty of those monuments built into the fabric of St. David's which were given by him and in his memory. In the sanctuary are the great Ascension window that he gave in honor of his mother as well as the altar, reredos, and wood panels given after his death in thanksgiving for his services to the parish. On the rear wall is the window he gave memorializing his father, a window that survived the destruction of, and connects the present structure with, the original church building. And in the cemetery are the grave markers and final resting places of Orlando and his wife Mary, whom he married at St. David's in 1860, as well as of both his parents, his four brothers, and his two sisters. Having so ably guided St. David's in life, his earthly home remains here in "the parish of his love".

*FROM THE ANNALS OF ST. DAVID'S, MANAYUNK*

**SHEPHERD IN A TIME OF PANIC, DEPRESSION, AND WAR:  
John Ogle Warfield - XIV Rector of the Parish**

by James Proud, Vicar of St. David's, Manayunk

The same economic forces that brought industry and entrepreneurial wealth to Manayunk in the early 1800s inevitably led in the following decades to recurrent cycles of prosperity and recession. As with Joseph's interpretation of Pharaoh's dream that seven lean years would follow seven fat years, Americans experienced material growth and abundance in their rich years, and suffered want and despair during their times of economic recession, depression, and panic. The people of St. David's lived through such hard hits as the Panic of 1837 and the Panic of 1873, a panic which became a depression troubling the rest of that decade. Yet the parish rose to the challenge during the 1870s and built, without incurring any debt, the Sunday School building, the Wissahickon mission, and the present church structure.

The greatest test was the Panic of 1929. It began with the stock market crash in Wall Street and reverberated world-wide, delivering a near-fatal blow to Manayunk. Local historian Nick Myers has written of it as follows:

As the '20s passed by and the '30s moved in, the crash of the stock market left Manayunkers stunned. Mills and factories were closed, and unemployment rose rapidly. The "growth" experienced in the previous years came to a screeching halt. It took just one "Black Monday" to crush the people of this country; one day of gloom to wipe out all the prosperous years of yesterday. In desperation, many of the "Yunkers" out of employment took their families and moved out, hoping to find work in another place. . . .Businesses continued to fold due to the economic situation and others . . . because of labor problems. Most were never to open their doors again. . . . The "killer" was the closing of the Manayunk Branch of the Philadelphia National Bank. Gone were the life savings of the residents.<sup>1</sup>

It has been observed that at the beginning of the 1920s Manayunk was already reaching the limits of its growth as land for factory expansion and for workers' housing was in short supply. Even before the crash some employers had gone to the

American South to build modern plants and to find cheaper labor.<sup>2</sup> For those textile employers that remained and survived the Great Depression, the Second World War brought a final period of prosperity "when government contracts again lit the mills far into the night."<sup>3</sup> The prosperity ended soon after the Allied victories in Europe and in Japan.

From 1923 to 1943—years that spanned most of the Roaring '20s, the stock market crash, the Great Depression, and the beginning of the Second World War, as well as the centenary of St. David's—the parish was guided by the steady hand of the Reverend John Ogle Warfield. His stewardship of the parish from 4 February 1923 to 1 November 1943 reached over 20 years and 9 months; it was the longest term of service of any Rector in the history of the congregation to date. His was the vital enduring tenure of a faithful shepherd guiding St. David's through those years of testing and trial.

John Ogle Warfield was born in Frederick County, Maryland. The Warfields were among the earliest settlers in the Maryland colony, and one of them, Richard, was reputed to be a member of the first Vestry of St. Anne's Parish, Annapolis, founded in 1692. There is still a memory at St. David's of Dr. Warfield's friendship with his cousin Wallis Warfield Simpson, later the Duchess of Windsor.

Dr. Warfield graduated from Johns Hopkins University in Baltimore with a Bachelor of Arts degree in 1893. In 1896, after graduating from Episcopal Theological School, Cambridge, MA, he was ordained a deacon in the Episcopal Church and took up his first charge at the Church of Our Saviour, DuBois, PA. Ordained a priest in 1897, his next service was as rector of St. Michael's Parish in the Diocese of Easton (MD). He transferred to the Diocese of Pennsylvania in 1901 and began his ministry in the five parishes of Philadelphia where he served until his retirement from St. David's in 1943. In 1901 he was the assisting priest at St. James Church, 22<sup>nd</sup> & Walnut Streets, Philadelphia; from 1901 to 1914 he was the assisting priest at St. Paul's Church, Chestnut Hill, during which time he earned a Master of Arts degree from the University of Pennsylvania; in 1915 he was the curate at St. Peter's Church, Germantown; and from 1916 to 1923 he was minister in charge of



Holy Trinity Memorial Chapel of Holy Trinity Church, Rittenhouse Square. By the time he came to St. David's in 1923 he was well educated and richly experienced as a priest of the Episcopal Church. Recognition of his distinguished career even before the St. David's years came from St. John's College in Annapolis which had awarded him the honorary degree of Doctor of Divinity in 1922.

Living in the St. David's Rectory behind the church on Krams Avenue were Dr. Warfield and his wife Louyse Duvall Spragins, whom he had married in 1898. Their six children, who were in and out of the Rectory during the St. David's years, were sons John Ogle, Jr., Edwin Spragins, and Cecilius Edwin, and daughters Louyse Spragins, Elizabeth Hamilton, and Stith Bolling.

The Vestry minutes for Dr. Warfield's years reveal his steady guidance of the parish. His attendance at meetings of the Vestry was unflinching. He concerned himself with the Every Member Canvass that was held each year in place of the old parish financing system of pew rents for assigned seats. He was engaged in the work of the Sunday School. Constantly before the Vestry were problems regarding: the maintenance of the fabric of the church, parish house, and rectory; the choir and organist; the cemetery; and the investments and financial condition of the parish.

Money was ever an issue. At their meeting of 12 September 1927 the Accounting Warden "in a lengthy talk brought to the attention of the Vestry the very poor condition of the Church funds". In fact, the General Account totalled \$1,059.68, and of that amount \$1,050.00 was the endowment. Again in 1929 heightened concern was voiced and expenses were cut. Notwithstanding the grim circumstances, during December 1931 the parish was able to celebrate with joy the first century of its existence. Six months later, in June 1932, when the General Account total (including the Endowment) had fallen to \$329.49, the salaries of rector, sexton, and organist were cut ten percent. By September 1936 the General Account balance stood at \$63.39. In the language of those difficult days, the economy and business of the country—and the lives of individuals and families—lay prostrate. When the wartime economy began to take hold and financial recovery came to Manayunk, a heavy price

was exacted as the community sent away many of its loved ones to serve the nation. The 1942 yearbook for St. David's has a page inscribed at the top:

Your prayers are asked for those who have gone to serve  
our flag and country by land and sea and air.

Following that inscription are the names of twenty-eight men of the parish, among them Dr. Warfield's youngest son, Cecilius.

While St. David's eventually recovered from those dark days, the long term consequences of the 1929 Panic, the 1930s depression, and the war years are best reflected in the statistical evidence showing the decline in numbers of communicants in the congregation and of teachers and students in the Sunday School. Such statistics for individual parishes were reported annually and then published in the Journal of the Diocesan Convention for the next year. The following table covers the forty year period beginning ten years before Dr. Warfield came to St. David's and ending ten years after his retirement; it includes the years of his arrival, the mid point of his tenure, and his last year.

<u>Year</u>	<u>Communicants in Congregation</u>	<u>Sunday School Teachers/Students</u>
1913	496 [reported as "total membership"]	32/409
1923	458	22/208
1933	479	27/201
1943	447	20/95
1953	406	12/104

While from 1913 to 1953 St. David's declined by 18% in its communicant strength, the decline by 75% of its Sunday School students was a grievous blow to the long-term well-being of the parish. The entire community which was once 'the Manchester of America', has spent the last fifty years trying to recover a secure base from which to rebuild.

Dr. Warfield stayed his difficult course until 13 September 1943 when he wrote the Vestry expressing his wish to retire on 1 November. He cited his “recent change of health”. The Vestry accepted his decision with “deep and sincere regret” and elected him “Rector Emeritus”. He died on 16 March 1950. His funeral was held at St. David’s on the 18<sup>th</sup> and his remains were interred immediately afterwards at St. Thomas, Whitemarsh.

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Notes

<sup>1</sup> Nick Myers, Philadelphia’s Hope – Manayunk [1988: photocopied typescript in holdings of Roxborough Manayunk Wissahickon Historical Society at Philadelphia Free Library, Roxborough Branch], p 17.

<sup>2</sup> John Wasilchick, Manayunk, An Urban Community Studies in Social Organization: Final Technical Report for the National Science Foundation [1975: photocopied typescript in holdings of Roxborough Manayunk Wissahickon Historical Society at Philadelphia Free Library, Roxborough Branch], p 13.

<sup>3</sup> Philip Scranton, “An Immigrant Family & Industrial Enterprise: Seville Schofield & the Philadelphia Textile Manufacture, 1845-1900”, The Pennsylvania Magazine of History and Biography, July 1982, p 391.

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*FROM THE ANNALS OF ST. DAVID’S, MANAYUNK*

**WALTER C. RIGHTER:  
Son of the Parish; Bishop of the Episcopal Church**

by James Proud, Vicar of St. David’s, Manayunk

On the day of the summer solstice in 1694 a community of forty Pietists, as reformed Lutherans were then known, arrived in Philadelphia from Germany.<sup>1</sup> They were devout and celibate men, well educated in mathematics, astronomy, astrology, philosophy, theosophy, chemistry, alchemy, and related subjects. They had come for the millennium which many expected to arrive several months later, the era ushering in one thousand years of Christ’s holiness triumphant over a defeated Satan, as described in chapter 20 of the book of Revelation. The community’s ultimate destination was the valley of the Wissahickon, a wilderness believed to fulfill the biblical prophecy [at Rev 12:14,16] regarding the heavenly woman representing, first, Israel, and, then, the church, who fled from the serpent into the wilderness for nourishment. The band of Pietists was led by Johannes Kelpius, successor to the founder who had died shortly before the group departed from Europe. They named themselves “The Contented of the God-loving Soul”, but their neighbors and others variously called them “the Hermits of the Ridge”, “the Monks of the Wissahickon”, “the Chapter of Perfection”, “the Society of the Woman in the Wilderness” and “the Mystic Brotherhood of the Wissahickon”.

The community, adhering to its Rosicrucian belief in the perfection of a fixed membership of forty, was sustained under Kelpius’ leadership. For their communal purposes they built the Tabernacle above the Wissahickon on Hermit Lane just off Hermit Street [both being later names]. For their individual needs each member was allowed time for meditation and prayer, study and research. As vacancies occurred in their number, suitable replacements were admitted into the order. One of these was Peter Richter [later anglicized to Righter] who had arrived from Germany by 1700 and served as the community apothecary, holding the secret of the remedy known as “Gold Tincture” or “Elixir Dulcis”. Desiring to marry, Righter left the order after

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several years and settled in the neighborhood. After Kelpius' untimely death in 1708 at the age of 38 years, the brotherhood began its decline and eventually disbanded, its vision of millennial contentment at an end. By 1725 Peter Righter had purchased at sheriff's sale 80 acres of the land once belonging to Kelpius' pietistic community, the hermit monks of which Righter had once been a member. Just as the hermits are still remembered by place names in the area, so, too, Righter Street, Righters Ferry Road, and Righters Mill Road mark lands once held by Righter and his descendants on both sides of the Schuylkill River, extending as far upriver from Wissahickon as Conshohocken.

The Righters have long been known at St. David's. The first descendant of Peter in our records was Jacob whose marriage took place in the church in 1837, and whose children were baptized there in following years. The most recent official entry was made for Walter C. Righter when his membership was transferred to St. Stephen's Church, Sewickley, Pennsylvania, in 1944. What follows is his story, told in his own words.

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"My first experience with the Episcopal Church occurred when I was ten years old. My paternal grandfather, Walter Righter, died. I had been attending Sunday School on Sunday afternoon at Leverington Presbyterian Church in Roxborough. I fussed about it greatly. It took all of Sunday afternoon and I knew no one. My mother was a member there, and I had been baptized there. She was known by and knew a lot of people, but I did not. My father stayed home, babysitting with my younger brother. I complained about that too!

"When my grandfather, for whom I was named, died, the vestry at St David's Episcopal Church, Manayunk, had a vacant spot. The church could seat hundreds of people. Sunday morning attendance was more like 75 persons. By some process that I never knew about, my father was asked to serve the remainder of my grandfather's term on the vestry. He was deeply honored and agreed to do so. The year was 1934, in the depth of the depression. The rector was the Rev. Dr. J. Ogle Warfield, faithful pastor to my grandmother and my aunt.

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"My mother was both wise and thoughtful. She decided that she and I should go to St David's with my father so we would be worshipping God together. I was delighted. It meant my Sunday afternoons would be free! My brother, who was just three years old, was too young.

"The church building was awesome. I remember a discussion at the supper table about dust on carved wood surfaces. Experts had advised the vestry about the carved wooden eagle which held the Bible, from which lessons were read each Sunday. A certain amount of dust accumulation was something which produced gentle shadows and made the carving of such things as feathers stand out more clearly. It should be dusted lightly, and not too thoroughly! There were further discussions about music, and choirs, and money and budgets, and gathering food for needy families, and delivering it to them in ways that would be helpful and not demeaning. As an eleven or twelve year old I felt a clear part of a worshiping community and a caring community. And I began to get to know the people there. And they were beginning to know me as well. As time went on, my brother Richard was baptized and I became acquainted with the area of the church where that took place and the idea involved.

"Dr. Warfield let my mother and me know that Bishop Taitt would be coming for a visitation. He suggested that we should think about confirmation. We decided that was something we should do. My father was completely supportive. The day of confirmation arrived and the Bishop arrived by street car, carrying his vestments up the hill from the Main St. area of Manayunk. In one of the confirmation classes Dr. Warfield told us that the Bishop was sometimes so tired when he got home from his day and evening tasks that he said his prayers on the street car on his way home so he could fall into bed right away. I was very young but this bishop person sounded like a real human being to me! Later in life I was to have a personal understanding of what that was like when I became the Bishop of Iowa. To make it more real my grandmother and aunt gave me a small pocket prayer book and hymnal, bound in leather and printed on India paper. It is still useful to me, even though we have had

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two new hymnals and one new version of the prayer book since that time. It was beyond my comprehension at the age of ten, that I would play significant roles in the development of the next (1979) Book of Common Prayer and of the next (1982) Hymnal.

“I carry that gift prayer book in the car with me all the time. I used it for taking Holy Communion to the ill and disabled in my parish when I was the rector of a parish church. I had seen Dr. Warfield do that with my grandmother and my aunt each month. He provided me, early on, with a good role model. In my years as a parish priest in New England I consistently had 35 persons I did that with each month. At those times I would often remember Dr. Warfield’s presence in our house. My aunt was confined to a wheel chair. My grandmother was approaching senility. His presence was a breath of fresh air for each of those persons. I hoped my presence would be for others what his was for those two people. Like him, I spent some time simply visiting with the persons, chatting about their concerns and sharing some of mine, laughing a little about life, creating an atmosphere that was a mini-church before receiving communion together. Through that Prayer Book I was reminded regularly of my confirmation and of my association with St David’s.

“Dr. Warfield’s visits created a futuristic stir as well as a warm human one. My grandmother had never been baptized. When my aunt suggested it was time to do so, my grandmother decided she would not like to do it. Dr. Warfield, when asked by my aunt whether her mother could still receive communion during his monthly visits, said “Of course!” He would never turn anyone away from communion. Today, as we argue the question I recall that situation with gratitude. The pastoral sense of St. David’s rector would be much in tune with the new millennium and its arguments.

“The church bazaar was a phenomenon in itself. My aunt, who was arthritic, kept her hands busy as they changed shape, by dressing small dolls in dollar bills. The dolls were chanced off and the drawing for the winner was done at the church bazaar. As an attendant at the bazaar one year I took a chance on a live chicken and won it. I thought of it as a unique kind of pet! My parents, however, thought of it as

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something they must dispose of. In doing that they told me I could buy a puppy! I had parlayed a ten cent chance on a chicken, into a new dog for our family!

“Going to church on Sunday morning was an experience that differed greatly from going to Sunday School on Sunday afternoon. Sunday School was held on Sunday morning at St. David’s. My father’s cousin, John Dennis, was superintendent. I liked the idea of being in church with my parents. As my brother grew old enough to be in church he liked to stay in church and listen to the organ – even at the age of six or seven years. So neither of us took part in the classes. In our own very different ways we participated in worship with our parents.

“By the time I was in my teen years the men who took the collection on Sunday morning had drafted me to join them. Usually there were three who were present and did that task – but I became a fourth. As we walked down the aisle toward the altar with the alms basins, after receiving the offering, there were some tiles in the floor of the center aisle that clicky-clacked the same way each Sunday. It was not a bothersome noise, but a kind of friendly recognition of the presence of human beings. I also had a side benefit in going to church on Sunday mornings in my early teens. My father had taught me to drive a car before I was sixteen years of age – the legal age for applying for a learner’s permit. To get from where we lived on Harmon Road to St. David’s Church on Sunday morning, we could travel on roads where there was hardly any traffic. So I got to practice my driving each Sunday with my father sitting up front with me, long before I had a legal permit to do so.

“It was during our time at St. David’s that fund raising through an Every Member Canvass was begun. I rode in the back seat, with my father driving and a Mr. Ashcroft sitting up front with him. While they strategised over making calls I read a book. At the end of a Saturday afternoon of making calls together they agreed that the idea was a good one and would strengthen the church. The depression had created a financial crisis everywhere. For the church to continue, more and more people needed to be enlisted in financially supporting her. I remember one Sunday when the building was quite cold, because the furnace had quit. Mr. Harry Kent,

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property chair, had to appeal for assistance for paying for the furnace person who came to get the furnace started. He promised it would definitely not happen again.

“In 1940 our regular association with St. David’s ended because my father, Richard Righter, was transferred from the Philadelphia office of Carnegie-Illinois Steel to the headquarters office in Pittsburgh. My mother, brother and I moved with him to a new home, new schools, a new church, and very different experiences. We left a community in which our family had roots beginning with the year 1700, to move to a community none of us knew. In my particular case, my life in the church began in a very real way as a lay person at St. David’s. I am grateful for the many persons who helped me see the pastoral and redemptive life as it was lived there, and especially to the rector I knew as Dr. Warfield.”

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After graduating from Sewickley High School young Walter enlisted in the U. S. Army and served with the infantry in the European campaign through the end of World War II. Honorably discharged in November 1945 he then earned degrees from the University of Pittsburgh and the Berkeley Divinity School in New Haven. He was ordained a deacon and then a priest in the Episcopal Church by the Bishop of Pittsburgh in 1951 and thereafter was the vicar of congregations in that diocese until elected rector of the Church of the Good Shepherd, Nashua, NH. Following 17 years of service there, in 1972 he was consecrated a Bishop of the Episcopal Church [the 671<sup>st</sup> in the American Succession] and installed as the 7<sup>th</sup> Bishop of Iowa. He retired in 1989 but continued his ministry as an Assisting Bishop, in the Diocese of Newark, and later in the Diocese of Massachusetts. He has written the above memoir for St. David’s 175<sup>th</sup> anniversary, separately expressing his hopes that St. David’s may “be for others in the future what she was for me in the past and for so many others as well.”

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*FROM THE ANNALS OF ST. DAVID’S, MANAYUNK*

**THE ART OF SURVIVING ‘INTERESTING TIMES’:  
St. David’s from 1945 to 1995**

by James Proud, Vicar of St. David’s, Manayunk

The fifty years following the Second World War were, for St. David’s, a time of struggle during which the industrial base of the local community collapsed, social change swept over the city and region, and the Episcopal Church in the United States adopted a new *persona*. There were few maps for guidance across any part of this *terra incognita*. Although the strength of the parish was sorely tested, St. David’s managed to survive, albeit in a weakened condition, having endured by means of resourceful adaptation and God’s grace. These ‘interesting times’ fell into three distinctive periods.

The End of the Old Order: 1944-1961. The clergy leadership during this period<sup>1</sup> continued the chain of its predecessors, unbroken from the consecration of the first church building in 1835: each priest serving the congregation was the full-time Rector presiding over the common life of the parish. Further, each was male and had been elected by the Vestry, acting with the Bishop’s advice. None of the three Rectors serving St. David’s between 1944 and 1961 ended his career in the parish, each in time being called away to serve elsewhere. The first of them, being disturbed by some “unjust criticism” in the congregation, resigned after two and a half years in office, the third briefest rectorship in the life of the parish.

By 1952 the changes were beginning. In that year the congregation at its annual meeting voted in favor of selling the rectory, the Rector’s residence behind the Church building at 154 Krams Avenue. For years it had been an “unsatisfactory” place to live, one of the Rectors even describing it as “atrocious”. Much concern was voiced whether to find a new rectory near St. David’s or to relocate in another neighborhood. In late 1954 the property at 481 Flamingo Street, Roxborough, was chosen.

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For many years the parish investments had been in residential houses earning rental income and in real property mortgages yielding interest income. In December 1953 the parish entered into a trust agreement with the Church Foundation of the Diocese for the management and custodianship of St. David's endowment, thus effectively ordering a professional and balanced investment strategy and freeing the Vestry from active real estate management. In February 1961 the Vestry proceeded with plans to demolish the three family residence next to the church building at 152 Dupont Street in order to create a parking lot. That residence had been an investment gift to the parish from Orlando Crease and was briefly considered as the site for a new rectory before the Flamingo Street decision was made.

The most significant change came, at long last, when the 1960 annual meeting of the congregation elected Mary Marshall as the first woman ever to be a member of the Vestry of St. David's. Less revolutionary, and almost as significant for the future, in that same year the Diocesan Convention began mandating annual minimum clergy salaries for parishes maintaining independent status; non-complying congregations were to become missions under the control and direction of the Bishop.

Searching for Stability: 1961-1989. The clergy leadership during this period<sup>2</sup> broke the chain of its predecessors. On May 1, 1961, for the first time in 126 years, St. David's found itself without either a full-time Rector or the prospect of having one in the foreseeable future. Acting upon a suggestion of the Bishop, St. David's partnered with St. Stephen's, Wissahickon, and shared the priestly and pastoral services of their Rector, an arrangement which lasted until June 1963 when he resigned his position at St. Stephen's and accepted the offer to be full-time at St. David's. He was instituted as the Rector of St. David's on January 12, 1964 and served the parish another six years.

St. Stephen's did not fare as well. In January 1968 the St. David's Vestry was informed that "Saint Stephen's Church of Wissahickon was no longer functioning as a Church of the Diocese" and that the Rector had offered them "a very cordial

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welcome to worship. . . as a complete merger." The same year brought another closure when St. Andrew's, the neighboring mission in Belmont Hills, held its last service on "Christmas Night", thus fulfilling its impending fate which had been noted several times in St. David's Vestry minutes, beginning in February 1966. The threat of closure came home when, in January 1971, St. David's congregation in its annual meeting openly discussed its concerns that the Bishop might end the life of the parish.

The threat concerning St. David's was manifested in the growing problems between the congregation and its clergy. In 1968 some unspecified "controversial situation" arose in the parish and the Bishop intervened to hear complaints against the Rector. (The grievance remained so long in the institutional memory that not until the minutes of October 29, 1981 was an entry made which, for the first time, described the refusal of that same Rector to "cope" with the emotionally disturbed children he had brought into the Sunday School from the Northern Home for Children. Because of his refusal, the program was closed.) The introduction of trial liturgies preliminary to the issuance of a revised Book of Common Prayer, as well as the use of a free-standing altar, increased the unrest in this house of God. Even more serious were the next Rector's involvement in social protests and civil rights activities in and beyond the neighborhood. His 1971 failure to participate in the Pledge of Allegiance to the Flag at Roxborough High School prompted a special meeting of the Vestry followed by another with the Bishop, resulting in the ongoing intervention of a third-party arbitrator at Vestry meetings. This same Rector was also faulted for his sermons, hymn choices, over-use of incense and under-use of chimes. His effectiveness was doomed when he disclosed in early 1972 that four years earlier he had been involved in a protest in Detroit which led to his "test case in a trial of the demonstrations". By September 1972 all trust between Rector and Vestry was exhausted and when the Vestry voted no confidence in the Rector he resigned. After his departure the parish was served by eleven supply priests. When in September 1973 an on-going pastoral ministry was restored, it was, as the Vestry desired, with "a part-time priest. . . [o]ne who has a job." The succession of full-time Rectors was at an end.

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The new order began on a troubling note. As recorded in the Vestry minutes of September 10, 1973: "We have been having a lot of aggravation during our church services. We may have to look into the possibility of having the auxiliary police on hand." The new part-time priest saw the need for this church of "dwindling numbers" and "without direction" to reach into the neighborhood. He prepared a study entitled "Neighborhood Youth Problem" in which he noted throughout the area the "strong disenchantment with any church" by the young. He suggested the parish might identify and arrest, then "prosecute anyone found on Church grounds or caught defacing Church property." Eventually this was done, but not before the Church was burglarized during Advent, 1974. More vandalism followed. Concerns were expressed about women being on the Vestry as well as serving at the altar. At the time a woman aspirant in the congregation was seeking holy orders. Another contentious issue was the matter of infrequent attenders and non-supporters of the congregation requesting the services of the Church for baptisms and burials. The terms "excommunication" and "deadwood" entered the Vestry minutes.

The congregation survived these troubled years. Early in 1976 the Vestry decided to make the part-time priest the full-time Rector, in which office he served until August 1982. Just months before his departure the Vestry and Rector had discussed how the parish would survive the decline in income from its failing bingo operation. The options they saw were to become a mission or aided parish of the Diocese, or else close. However, a new part-time Rector was in place by early September and the parish continued a steady course, none of the dire options being invoked. The only thing closed, after seven years of operation, was bingo. And soon the parish would have the experience of women in holy orders when the part-time Rector further reduced his parish commitments to open the door so that a woman deacon could exercise pastoral ministry.

Finding A Way Forward: 1990-1995. With the resignation of the last part-time Rector at the end of 1989, a new pattern of clergy leadership emerged: a succession of part-time priests-in-charge<sup>3</sup>, one of whom had been the woman deacon providing pastoral ministry under the final Rector. And while anxieties about, and even rumors

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of, closure swirled around, the faithful members and loyal supporters of the parish continued as steadfast in the face of all adversity as had their patron saint, David of Wales, who, in the 6<sup>th</sup> century, with a handful of believers, helped keep Christianity alive in Britain during his troubled times.

**A GIFT OF BEAUTY:  
The Church Renovations of 2000-2004**

by James Proud, Vicar of St. David's, Manayunk

The architectural design of St. David's church, built in 1880-1881, has always been aesthetically distinguished, but by the late 1990s the building showed the shabbiness of its long use. Even more than the enhancement of its appearance, it needed major repairs and improvements. While the probable cost of meeting all the needs was well beyond the financial resources of the congregation, it was apparent that the physical maintenance and upkeep of the structure had already been deferred for too long and preservation of the building itself might be at risk. The future was not hopeful.

The first sign of hope appeared in an unsolicited bid from a roofer who offered to tear off the asphalt shingles, many of them curled or broken, and replace them with new shingles guaranteed to last 40 years. Dick was a churchman, the member of another Episcopal parish, and his work adorned the Church of the Saviour [now the Philadelphia Cathedral] in West Philadelphia. That his son was a student in the 3<sup>rd</sup> grade class taught by my wife in a Quaker school in Germantown was also reassuring. Although other bids were then sought, none was made. When the Diocese of Pennsylvania through the generosity of the Bishop offered to pay the reasonable bid amount, a contract was signed and the work was begun on June 1, 2000. Given the roof's steep pitch, it seemed appropriate that the day was the Feast of the Ascension. The work was completed eleven months later, Dick having labored, sometimes alone, sometimes with one or two helpers, in the manner of a medieval craftsman. The congregation paid for the unforeseen cost overruns that were related to packing concrete into parapet cavities, replacing damaged roof boards, and installing counter flashing. Financial assistance for the project also came from the fund established by Tobias Wagner, a founding vestry member of the parish that is now administered by the Society of the Protestant Episcopal Church for the Advancement of Christianity in Pennsylvania.

The next sign of hope came in a telephone call during that empty time which falls every year between Good Friday and Easter. The date was April 14, 2001. The caller, who would not identify himself, asked if St. David's would accept the donation of new painting supplies to sell at its bazaar on April 21st. The donations, as it turned out, were numerous and of high quality. In his second call, the anonymous donor asked whether we would object if, on April 28, he painted the iron fence running along the Dupont Street frontage of the church. When the stranger began painting on the 28<sup>th</sup>, a parishioner living nearby introduced himself and began working with him. Thus began their collaboration which is now entering its sixth year. So firm were the stranger's desire for anonymity and the parishioner's discretion that the one remained nameless and both became known collectively in the congregation as "our angels". Not until the following February, while the Bishop was making an official parish visit and inviting worshippers who had arrived ahead of time to introduce themselves and join the round table pre-service discussion with the Vestry, did we learn the stranger's name. Although not then a member of St. David's, or even an Episcopalian, the anonymous "angel", having come to experience the people of our congregation and their form of worship, had by his early arrival and at the Bishop's harmless request, been asked to reveal his name. And so he did.

Since its beginning on April 28, 2001, the collaboration of the "angels" in beautifying this house of God through their offering of time and talent as well as treasure-- for they have even provided the materials and supplies at their own expense --has continued to this day. Out of respect for their wishes to maintain a fig-leaf of anonymity, in this account of their generous deeds they remain nameless. But as often as the story has been told, the invariable response is that it should be shared. Hence this record.

By late 2004 the "angels" could count sixty-five projects that they had completed. Their outside work included painting the fences on Dupont Street and Krams Avenue, the three doors on the Sunday School building, and the five doors (including two replacements that had to be hung and primed) on the church building.



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Cement work was undertaken to restore all the walkways within the fences and the public sidewalks outside. Lines were repainted in the parking lot. New lighting was installed both in the parking lot and at the front entrance of the church. And there was more, including the resetting of fallen tombstones in the cemetery.

Up in the great tower, new louvers were installed. Each was cut using a template made from the least deteriorated of the old tin louvers, then painted, and then put in place. Also in the tower, the bell room was repaired and re-cemented; effective measures were taken to rid the structure of its resident pigeons and their debris; and the lighting was improved.

Their major work was the renovation of the church interior. The “angels” painted the nave walls and stenciled them above the wainscoting and around the windows. The windows themselves were repaired and the trim painted. The wainscoting was painted in a new, lighter color thereby brightening the whole worship space. The sanctuary was made brighter with new gold paint on the façade of the organ pipes and on the front columns of the arch and by refreshing the lettering on the organ case. New door saddles, sweeps, and kickplates were installed. Zoned heating and new lighting were put in. The ventilation window opening into the tower on the back wall was furnished with a Celtic cross and illuminated.

The greatest artistic triumph of the “angels”, however, was the transformation of the space in each of the transepts. On the right [East] side, under the stained-glass portrayal of St. Peter standing alongside a lake, the baptismal font, formerly hidden in gloom, was made the central focus by the effective use of lighting, some polychrome painting, wall artwork, and the removal of all furniture not relevant to the new “St. Peter’s Baptistry”. On the left [West] side, under the stained-glass portrayal of St. Paul, where old file cabinets and yard machinery had once been stored, a chapel was created. Here the “angels” relocated a small altar, provided seating for small services, and atop the altar placed a stained-glass panel memorializing the victims of the horrific tragedy of 9/11. The panel was made by the once-anonymous “angel” with

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stained glass pieces found on the church premises. Thus there came into being the “St. Paul’s Chapel”.

In his Episcopal visitations made on February 3, 2002, July 13, 2003, and November 7, 2004, the diocesan bishop, the Rt. Rev. Charles E. Bennison, Jr., offered the following prayer in dedication of all the improvements made subsequent to his prior visit:

Almighty God, all our times are your seasons, and all our occasions are marked by your Unfailing grace: we here dedicate to your singular glory and triune majesty all the recent improvements to the fabric of this house of worship and its grounds, and all the adornments newly enriching the beauty of this place.

Accept and bless all that has been done here, and grant that in these earthly things we may Behold a likeness of the order and beauty of things heavenly; through Jesus Christ our Lord who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, ever one God, world without end. Amen

While the “angels” have continued their work on the fabric of the church since November 2004, the end is not yet in sight. There is much more they, and the congregation, hope to see accomplished, including the fulfillment of two major challenges: the first, to have temporary scaffolding placed around the tower to enable both the repointing of all its stonework and the repairing of its four clock faces, and then to illuminate the restored structure with a wash of light coming up from the ground; and the second, to stabilize the next-door Parish House and renovate it for use by both the congregation and the larger community.

Through their commitment, skill, and energy, the “angels” have demonstrated an abiding faith in the truth of Jesus’ words that “with God all things are possible”. As experienced at St. David’s, seemingly hopeless problems can be occasions for testing faith and discovering grace. *Ad majorem gloria Dei.*