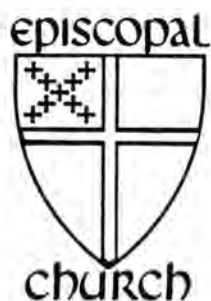


***CHRIST CHURCH
PITTSFORD***

A Brief History
of
CHRIST CHURCH
Pittsford, New York

1846 - 1983





FOREWORD

“What’s past is prologue,” Shakespeare once said, but it is crucial that we fully understand our history as we plan for our future. The events and, more important, the people who have brought Christ Church to this moment in our history are acknowledged here, and it is appropriate that we honor them by this recounting. In doing so, we recognize all of our past as a glorious prologue to what God has in store for His people in this place in the years ahead. So this day, when we successfully complete an epoch in the history of Christ Church by “burning the mortgage” on the most recent addition to our physical plant, is also the beginning of the new history God has given all of us to write. May He bless us in that endeavor.

A handwritten signature in black ink, reading "D. Scott Carpenter". The signature is written in a cursive style with a large, sweeping flourish at the end.

Rector of Christ Church



Sometime during the summer of 1817, the Rev. H.U. Onderdonk, Rector of St. John's Church in Canandaigua, and later to become Bishop of Pennsylvania, preached in the village of Pittsford at the request of several families. This was the first Episcopal service in the town. Mr. Onderdonk traveled the old Indian Trail leading from the foot of Canandaigua Lake up over the site of the Seneca Village on Boughton Hill in Victor, down through Bushnell's Basin and on to Pittsford. In September of the following year, Bishop John Henry Hobart, third Bishop of New York, followed the same trail and conducted services in Pittsford's 1794 schoolhouse, on the site of the 1850's Mile Post Schoolhouse.

For almost two decades, Pittsford had been a thriving community, and held the distinction of having the first library, the first school, the first lawyer, and the first physician in the entire county. Settled in 1789, Pittsford was the center of a town called Northfield which included most of what is now Monroe County east of the Genesee River. Population grew in the 1790's with settlers from the east and the first of a number of immigrant groups from England. The name of the town and its size successively changed; Northfield to Boyle in 1808, Boyle to Smallwood in 1813, Smallwood to Pittsford in 1814. The center of this community which originally developed at the intersection known as "The Mile Post" (the area around the Pioneer Burying Ground) gradually gravitated northward and was finally determined by the announcement of the location of the Erie Canal.

Preparations for the canal lent vitality to the village. The opening made Pittsford an important produce shipping port and brought heavy migration from the New England states. Fine Federal style homes and buildings constructed at that time, such as the Phoenix Hotel, indicated prosperity. Notables visited: DeWitt Clinton made Pittsford his headquarters for much of his canal exploration work; and in 1825, Lafayette, aging hero of the Revolution, left the canal at Pittsford to be taken by carriage to Canandaigua.



The Rev. Henry Lockwood
First Rector of Christ Church

Although on several occasions during this period the Rev. William H. Eigenbrodt, Rector of St. Paul's Church, Rochester, conducted services, it was not until January 7, 1844, that the Rev. Henry Lockwood of Honeoye Falls began regular services. Mr. Lockwood, born in 1807, was educated and ordained at the General Seminary in New York, and had served the church as a missionary in Macao, Canton and Singapore amidst the extremely hazardous conditions of the times. He eventually was to give 30 years of service to Christ Church during three separate periods.

The first services were held once a month, then every three weeks, and later on alternate Sundays. The stone schoolhouse (located on Church Street, now the Masonic Temple) afforded the first place of meeting. Toward the early part of 1845 the upper story of a brick building on North Main Street, formerly used as a blacksmith shop and located on the present site of the Village Offices, was converted into a place of worship.

In February, 1846, larger quarters were provided by the purchase of the brick building (now known as Hicks & McCarthy) on South Main Street at the head of Church Street. A chancel and vestry were added and pews sufficient to accommodate about one hundred persons were installed. The first service in this building was held on Sunday, September 6, 1846. With the consent of the Rt. Rev. William H. DeLancey, Bishop of the Diocese of Western New York, of which Rochester was then a part, the Rev. Mr. Lockwood with the men of the congregation organized the parish on November 2, 1846, under the corporate name of "Christ Church Pittsford in the County of Monroe". The old church building was consecrated on December 1, 1846, by Bishop DeLancey. Additions to the church included a new organ in 1849 and a stained glass altar window costing \$25.50, the receipt for which is dated December 30, 1850. Between 1849 and 1853 weekly offerings ranged from 30¢ to \$5.50, and were most commonly directed to "Diocesan Missions" or used toward the purchase of a parish library or books as gifts for the church school children.

Many of the younger men of the parish left Pittsford for duty with the Union Army during the Civil War years. This group included the Rev. John A. Bowman who, after 17 months here, resigned as rector to become a chaplain in the 13th Regiment, New York Volunteers. At this time there were 58 communicants and 142 persons in all connected with the parish.



Christ Church as originally constructed in 1868-69

Following the war, and during the Rev. Mr. Lockwood's third term as rector, the main portion of the present church edifice was constructed. Vestry minutes record that in October of 1867, the northeast corner of South Main and Locust Streets was purchased and that building contracts were given to Mr. Hiram Kingsbury of Honeoye. There is no mention of an architect. However, it seems reasonable to attribute the building to the noted Rochester architect, Andrew J. Warner. A drawing of a building identical to Christ Church is among his papers at the Rochester Historical Society, and the style, certain details and use of red Medina stone all suggest his work. The cornerstone was laid on June 19, 1868; the first service in the new church was held in February, 1869; and the completed building, having cost \$7,500, was consecrated by Bishop Arthur Coxe on May 20, 1869.

In the ensuing years enhancements were made, many in the form of memorials: richly-crafted memorial windows replaced some of the original glass ones; a beautifully carved altar was presented by the church ladies; a pipe organ was installed in 1879; and the church bell, which weighs 3540 lbs., and clock, which strikes the hour, were added to the tower in 1887.

In the summer of 1888, extensive repairs and improvements were made to the church, including the substitution of a wood shingle roof for the slate roof, which had proven to be too heavy (the tower roof remains intact). All timbers were strengthened, the interior was remodeled and the plaster ceiling was replaced by a wood ceiling. Soon afterwards, memorials of a marble font and brass cross and vases were added to the church's appointments.



An Easter Day in Christ Church,
sometime before 1897



Parish House added in 1897 and removed in 1968
to allow for the extension of the nave

In March, 1897, the vestry purchased the disbanded St. John's Church on Rochester's East Avenue for \$100. It was razed and portions were moved in horse-drawn hay racks to Pittsford. The board and batten structures were added to the rear of Christ Church, and became its Parish House.

A surpliced choir was introduced in 1899. In 1902, a communicant donated land adjacent to the Parish House for a rectory, which was built shortly thereafter. Electric lighting replaced kerosene lamps in 1906. Christ Church established a mission known as St. Peter's in Bushnell's Basin at this time, during the rectorate of the Rev. Stephen H. Alling (1908-1913).

In the 1920's the church showed notable growth in subscribers, by now 141, as well as income. It was during this period that the right to vote was extended to the women of the parish (1924) and the General Endowment Fund was established. During the early 1930 depression years, the church suffered both financially and in numbers of communicants. In 1938 St. Peter's Mission, after a rather rocky road, was sold to the First Independent Congregational Church of Bushnell's Basin.



Christ Church and Parish House about 1910



The Rev. Ernest F. Scott
Rector, 1938-1969; Rector Emeritus, 1970-1971

However, as the depression was ending and the community of Pittsford began to burgeon, Christ Church moved steadily forward. In September, 1938, the Rev. Ernest F. Scott, assistant at St. Paul's, came as deacon to serve the approximately 140 communicants at Christ Church. Here he was ordained three months later on St. Andrews Day and became rector. A multitude of events and changes occurred in the parish during the following three decades of his rectorate...many of which reflected the events and changes in the whole community.

Forty-nine parish men and women were in the various branches of service during World War II; two gave their lives. War bonds were purchased for and in the name of the church by members and friends. Special prayer and thanksgiving services were held.

The Centennial of Christ Church was celebrated in November, 1946, with a week of special events, including a Festival Eucharist with Bishop Bartel Reinheimer, celebrant. A history of the first hundred years of Christ Church was printed and distributed. Additions to the church at about this time included a new organ, and new cathedral lights, both memorial gifts.



Christ Church in the Year of its Centennial, 1946

Also in 1946, plans were made for the ultimate construction of a new Parish House sorely needed by the expanding church school. Property adjacent to the church on South Main Street was purchased. The house there was used for some church school classes until 1949 when it was demolished to make room for the new building. The cornerstone of what was to have been a first unit to be supplemented later was laid in December, 1949.



1949-1950 Addition to Christ Church nearing completion

This new building, which was completed in 1950, provided large kitchen and dining areas on the basement level, and offices and a large multi-purpose hall with folding partitions on the upper level. The indebtedness on the new Parish House having been paid completely, it was dedicated to the Glory of God and for the Christian purposes for which it was erected on September 26, 1954, Bishop Dudley S. Stark officiating.

Continued rapid growth of the area made apparent the need for further expansion, and studies were made in the late 1950's. Architects' drawings commissioned in the early 1960's were postponed, however, because of plans for nearby Episcopal missions.

In 1964, Christ Church listed 675 communicants and 1,100 baptized members. Finally, in 1967, revised building plans were accepted. The 1897 Parish House was razed, and the nave was extended into that area to increase the seating capacity from 180 to about 350, and to enlarge the choir and sanctuary. The 1949 addition was extended toward Main Street and linked in front to the main body of the church by a hallway enclosing a courtyard. Every effort was made to preserve the same general appearance of the old church; board and batten style of the old parish house was duplicated on the nave extension and, by a fortunate circumstance, demolition of the old Sibley Library building on the University of Rochester's Prince Street campus provided Medina sandstone for facing to match the walls of the 1868 building. The memorial altar windows were retained.



1968-1969 Addition to Christ Church under construction

During construction, services were held in the large hall of the 1949 addition into which the old pews, the altar and other appointments had been moved to create a temporary chapel. On Sunday, February 2nd, 1969, on the Feast of the Purification, the first service in the enlarged church took place, and, on May 18, 1969, Christ Church celebrated the completion of its second building program within 20 years with a formal service of Re-Opening in the presence of Bishop George W. Barrett. A week later, the Rev. Ernest Scott announced his resignation, retiring at the end of the year after 31 years of faithful ministry at Christ Church.



The Rev. Edward E. Elliott, III
Rector, 1970-1981

The Rev. Edward E. Elliott, III, began his ministry here on Palm Sunday, March 22, 1970 - a rectorate which would continue through the decade. During this time, several of the facilities were updated and some were altered to address the needs of the continually growing congregation. Remodeling of the rectory was completed in 1971, its appearance most notably changed by the removal of the front porch. In 1972, a portion of the large hall in the 1949 addition was partitioned off and appropriately furnished for use as a chapel where children ages 3 yrs - third grade hold worship services each Sunday. A generous bequest made possible the redesigning of the remaining portion of the large upper hall into individual classrooms. This project was completed in early 1978. In 1979, one of these rooms was set aside to accommodate the Memorial Library, a growing resource center for adults and children. The kitchen was the object of considerable modernization in 1980. Since 1973, the Memorial Garden has been made available for the interment of ashes of cremation.

Two needlework projects, efforts of the women of the church, added meaning and beauty to the sanctuary and nave. Thirty feet of needlepoint cushions were made for the altar rail. Each of nine cushions was done as a memorial and all were dedicated in November, 1975. A hand-appliqued banner depicting the history of the Protestant Episcopal Church in the United States was installed and dedicated on July 4, 1976 as part of Christ Church's celebration of the nation's bi-centennial year.

Following Fr. Elliott's untimely death in September, 1981, the Very Rev. Almus M. Thorp, Sr., guided the parish as interim rector, aided by the Rev. Thomas L. Hanson. The Rev. G. Garrett Carpenter accepted the vestry's call in July, 1982, and began his ministry at Christ Church on October 1, of that year. The parish, by this time, had grown to about 375 pledging families.



The happy occasion for this recording and updating of the history of Christ Church is the retirement of the mortgage on the 1968 additions to the building.

Now, with the leadership and guidance of Fr. Carpenter and the help of an assistant to the rector, who will join us this summer, the parish looks forward to continued growth in the heritage of our past and new adventures as a part of Christ's church in Pittsford. We joyfully anticipate exciting new chapters in this history which can proudly be recorded on the occasion of the parish's 150th anniversary in 1996.

Christ Church Pittsford
May 15, 1983

RECTORS OF CHRIST CHURCH

- The Rev. Henry Lockwood, 1844-1849; 1853-1860; 1862-1878;
Rector Emeritus, 1878-1883
- The Rev. W. S. Childs, 1849-1850
- The Rev. Willis H. Barris, 1850-1851
- The Rev. Joshua Smith, 1851
- The Rev. E. B. Tuttle, 1851-1853
- The Rev. John A. Bowman, 1860-1861
- The Rev. Albert Woods, 1878-1880
- The Rev. W. D. Shearman, 1880-1884
- The Rev. I. J. Foster, 1884-1886
- The Rev. G. T. LeBoutillier, 1886-1890
- The Rev. E. H. Edson, 1890-1894
- The Rev. H. L. Wood, 1894-1898
- The Rev. Lewis Gouveneur Morris, 1898-1900
- The Rev. F. LaGrange Smith, 1900-1905
- The Rev. Henry Stevens Gatley, 1905-1907; 1934-1938
- The Rev. Stephen H. Alling, 1908-1913
- The Rev. H. B. Thomas, 1914-1915
- The Rev. G. DeWitt Dowling, D.D. 1915-1918
- The Rev. Van Rensselaer Gibson, 1918-1920
- The Rev. William L. Davis, 1920-1929
- The Rev. Alanson C. Davis, 1929-1931
- The Rev. H. J. C. Chambers, 1931-1934
- The Rev. Ernest F. Scott, 1938-1969
Rector Emeritus, 1970-1971
- The Rev. Edward E. Elliott, III, 1970-1981
- The Very Rev. Almus M. Thorp, Interim Rector, 1981-1982
- The Rev. G. Garrett Carpenter, 1982-

*This history was written by Mary Knickerbocker Menzie and edited by Jennifer Bradford Clark, using original parish records and the Centennial parish history prepared in 1946.

