



**A History of Trinity Episcopal Church
Saco, Maine**
By Sallie Huot

AND IN THE BEGINNING

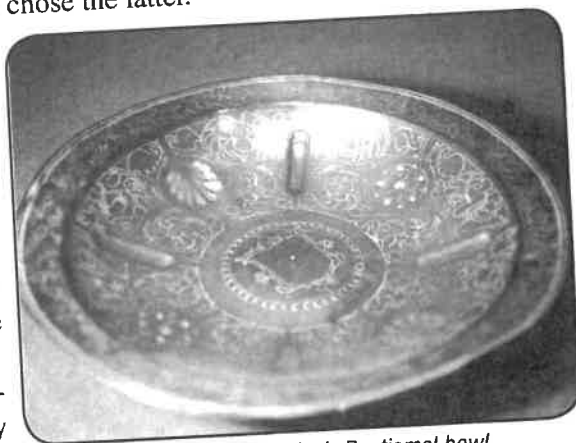
Ten years after the Pilgrims arrived at Plymouth Rock in 1620, another group of English colonists settled at Winter Harbor in the vicinity of today's Biddeford Pool. Unlike the Massachusetts Puritans, these settlers came for economic opportunities, not religious freedom, and consequently had ties to the Church of England.

The Rev. Richard Gibson was the first known clergyman in the area, hired by Winter Harbor and other, nearby settlements in 1636.ⁱ Unfortunately, this Anglican minister became entangled in Puritan politics. Authorities of Salem and Boston challenged this Anglican minister and letters between Winter Harbor and Boston illustrate the religious differences of the day. Massachusetts Governor Winthrop considered Gibson... "wholly addicted to the hierarchy and discipline of England,"ⁱⁱ while the settlers at Winter Harbor criticized the visiting Puritan ministers for attacking their "mother church."ⁱⁱⁱ Finally, the Governor of Massachusetts summoned Gibson to Boston and gave him a choice: either go to jail or return to England. He wisely chose the latter.

In 1640, the Rev. Robert Jordan succeeded Gibson. He performed baptisms and marriages from Portland Me. to Portsmouth, N.H., using his brass baptismal bowl, strapped firmly on the side of his horse. This vessel and his saddlebags are now preserved at the Maine Historical Society in Portland.

Beginning in 1653, the District of Maine was annexed by Massachusetts and the Anglicans at Winter Harbor joined in with the First and only parish.

During the American Revolution, the religious ties to England were fragile. Once peace was declared between England and the colonies, various religious societies were formed. The Anglican colonists chose to distance themselves from the Church of England and became the Protestant Episcopal Church. One of the biggest problems centered on their belief in the Apostolic Succession. Just as Jesus had laid his hands on all his apostles, so did the church believe that the apostles continued this practice by placing their hands on all future apostles, or Bishops, right down to today. This ceremony presented a difficult problem for the new Protestant Episcopal Church. How could three English Bishops be persuaded to consecrate new aspirants? (The rule of three was made to insure that at least one of the celebrants would secure an unbroken line from Jesus). It was a difficult task.



*Rev. Robert Jordan's Baptismal bowl
(Trinity Church archives)*

Since the bishops in Great Britain were hesitant to come to America, those wishing to be ordained had to go to them. The first candidate was consecrated in Scotland, while three others went to London. Finally, the young country, known as the United States of America, had the required number of Bishops to carry on the Anglican faith.

The rebirth of the Episcopal Church in New England fell upon the shoulders of Alexander Viet Griswold, consecrated Bishop of the Eastern Diocese, which included all the northeast states except Connecticut. He led the crusade, traveling via stagecoach throughout the territory, and whenever his journey and the stagecoach's route disagreed, he and his representatives would either hitch a ride or go on foot.

A CHURCH IS BORN

The year 1827 was a banner year for Saco. New streets wrapped around the business center and homes sprang up along the way. Stagecoaches traveling from Boston to Portland often made stops at the Cleaves Tavern in Pepperell Square or the York Hotel on Maine Street. Businesses, such as the Saco and Biddeford Savings Institution and the Mutual Fire Insurance Company, were incorporated. Saco quickly became a small town with big ideas, and Bishop Griswold considered the area fertile ground for his plans. At this time, Norman W. Putnam was the only known Episcopalian in Saco, so it was to this man that Bishop Griswold sent his representative, the Rev. E.M.P. Wells of Christ Church in Gardiner. Wells came on March 15, 1827, armed with instructions to seek out people with the intention of starting a new congregation. Using the First Parish Church as their meeting place, they talked with various community members during a three-day period. From this point on, things moved quickly.

On March 22, 1827, the Episcopal Society of Saco was incorporated and the Rev. E.M.P. Wells conducted the services, held in Mrs. Nye's Hall on Storer Street, rented for \$60. Land was purchased on Pleasant Street in April, a building contract was signed in May, the foundation walls were completed in June and the first service held four months later. The total cost, including furniture, was \$4,496.53.

The Rev. Benjamin C. Cutler, from Quincy, Massachusetts, also came to preach in the spring of 1827 and wrote that he "...enjoyed a peace of mind which is remembered with gratitude."^{iv} He returned to Saco from July to September and wrote that he "...labored faithfully and constantly at Trinity Church, Saco, rejoicing to proclaim the unsearchable riches of Christ."^v

Bishop Griswold consecrated Trinity Church on November 20, 1827. Along with the Unitarian Church on School Street, which was built at the same time, Trinity Church is the oldest original church building in Saco and one of the oldest in the Diocese of Maine. The State, at this time, was only seven years old.

THE CHURCH'S FIRM FOUNDATION

The early parishioners at Trinity Church were both interesting and varied. One of them, Isaac Emery, served as State Representative, Senator, Deputy Collector of Customs and Aide to Governor Parris. For eleven years, he labored faithfully

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The original
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for Trinity Church, until he moved to Boston.

Many early benefactors were active in the business community. John Calef, a tanner by trade, ran a prosperous shoe store. Amos Gordon, a Harvard graduate, became a successful lawyer. Banner Blaisdell owned a grocery store while Samuel Batchelder became a machine inventor and able agent at the newly developing York Manufacturing Company. Although he arrived in Saco after the church was constructed, he was influential in strengthening the emerging congregation. John Chadwick supported Trinity from the very beginning, and was a lifelong advocate of the parish. His closeness to Trinity went beyond his personal support. His Greek revival home actually abutted the church on Pleasant Street. He manufactured leather belting and fire engine hoses. His son, another John, eventually took over his father's business and also served on Trinity's vestry for many years.

Probably the hardest working and devoted man in the church's early history was John F. Scamman. Besides being the first senior warden in 1827, he served nine times on the vestry and several times as both junior and senior warden. John's middle name was Fairfield and his grandfather, Parson Fairfield, was the first minister hired to serve at the First Parish Church. His cousin, Governor John Fairfield, was one of several men who formed and supported the new Unitarian Church in Saco. Apparently, the members of the Fairfield family were both devout and independent thinkers when it came to religion.

Scamman had been active in politics, representing the District of Maine in the Massachusetts' House of Representatives. He had supported Maine's separation movement, and once it became a state, was elected to Maine's new House of Representatives. Although he worked tirelessly for the church, he was not confirmed until shortly before his death on May 22, 1858. Bishop Burgess came to Saco to administer the confirmation to the 72-year-old Scamman.

Today Trinity Church owes much to these early parishioners who built a strong foundation for generations to come.

COAT OF MANY COLORS



The interior of the church has changed since it was built in 1827. The original communion rail ran straight across, connecting two large pillars. Four short pews on both sides faced the chancel. The remaining sixteen pews were divided by two aisles and must have looked large and barren to the small congregation.

The original interior of Trinity Church looked much like the Proprietor's Meeting House at Scarborough Corners. (Proprietor's Meeting House archives)

A church bell was added to the tower in 1833,^{vi} and later became Saco's fire alarm. In 1860, a basement room was renovated for Sunday school and prayer meetings.

At first, two stairways led to the singers' gallery, one on each side of the main entrance. Up front sat a "three-decker" pulpit, which consisted of a communion table on the lowest level, a lectern desk above and the pulpit, where sermons were given, on the highest level.

By the mid 1840s, with the intention of making the altar the focal point, the "three-decker" pulpit was dismantled. The reading desk was placed to one side of the altar and the pulpit to the other; the chancel became wider with a curved front and a clear-glass window placed in the back of the chancel. To help with what must have been a cold church in the wintertime, a stove was placed in the center of the pews at the rear. Ten years later, the three-decker pulpit was returned and the window removed.

Another ten years brought more changes when an organ was placed in the right chancel and a vestry room to the left. Perhaps this was the time when the three-decker pulpit was permanently removed. Again, a Gothic window was created in the rear of the chancel, made of clear ground glass. During the 50th anniversary in 1877, the chancel window radiated with newly installed colored glass. Through the years, this window appeared and disappeared, as though each congregation couldn't quite make up its mind. What would they have thought if someone had told them that one day, the entire church building would be moved?

*Chancel
window
(Trin-
ity Church
Archives)*



THE MEEK SHALL INHERIT THE EARTH

From the very start, Trinity had its shaky moments, where its very existence was questioned. During the first thirty-four years, the church had at least thirty-one ministers who rotated like a revolving door. Finances then, as today, dictated success or failure of the church. The ups and downs of the parish continued, with the prosperous times clearly tied to dedicated clergy willing to stay for any

length of time. Joseph Muenschler was the first clergyman to stay longer than a year, and under his guidance the church almost cleared itself of debt with the sale of the remaining pews. Five former pew holders, who had since moved, generously donated their pews for this sale. Special mention must also be given to the Rev. William Horton, the Rev. Frederick Gardner, the Rev. George Slattery and the Rev. Samuel Cowell, all of whom kept the church afloat.

Still, there were depressed periods. Just when the church looked as if it might close, the good Lord, in His wisdom, sent the Rev. Samuel S. J. Evans. Under his care, repairs to the church and sound business practices were established. He instituted annual parish meetings, ensured that all financial matters went through the treasurer, defined the responsibilities of the vestry and wardens, and unified the congregation. When he left, six years later, the vestry was able to offer a salary of \$1000 to his successor, which, at that time, was considered a good wage.

THE SALT OF THE EARTH

The Rev. W. J. Alger came to Saco in 1867 and, finally, Trinity had a rector who was willing to stay. His twelve years represented more than twice the length of any previous clergy.

Progress came quickly. Within a year, Trinity organized Christ Church in Biddeford. Fourteen years earlier, The Rev. Samuel Cowell had tried to organize a mission parish there, after discovering a large number of English people working in the mills. Cowell rented a hall and held services for what was known as "Emmanuel Church." The Biddeford church started with fourteen members, but the interest died when Cowell left Saco.

Finally, in 1869, Emmanuel Church was resurrected as Christ Church. The history of the Saco and Biddeford parishes has been, and will continue, to intertwine.

During the late 1800s, more changes occurred at Trinity Church. The church converted its lighting to gas and a small parish house was constructed on land next to the church. It still stands on Pleasant Street, the only remaining structures that once represented the Trinity Church complex. Today it is Ahepa Hall, belonging to the Greek community.

The singers' gallery was enclosed in the late 1890s and became a small chapel/choir room. Perhaps it was at this time when the left stairway to the loft was removed. The choir wall remained until the church was moved in 1959.

In 1868, The Rev. W. J. Alger confirmed Edwin Francis Small, a young man from Biddeford who later was ordained. Not only was Small Trinity's first parishioner to enter the priesthood, but he also became Trinity's first rector after Father Alger left. On the church's communion rail is the following inscription in honor of our local priest: *Edwin F. Small 1881-1885.*

AND LET THE HEAVENS BE GLAD

In 1902, Trinity Parish was blessed with the arrival of a faithful and hardworking minister, the Rev. Richard Laphorn Sloggett. He stayed in Saco for nineteen years, which includes two separate terms, and to date is the longest serving rector in the history of the church. During this time, Trinity Church bought and

renovated a house on Beach Street to serve as the Rectory.

Originally from Prince Edward Island, he married a fellow Canadian from St. Stephen's, New Brunswick. Father Sloggett remained in Saco until 1907 when he went to St. Stephen's in Calais, Maine, which was conveniently across the border from his wife's homeland.

TRIAL BY FIRE

In 1907, The Rev. Rufus Horton Jones came to Saco. Both he and his wife were from the Portland area so in a sense, it was like coming home. Their first son was born in July and things looked optimistic for Trinity Church.

Tragedy struck on August 15, 1907 when The Rev. Jones boarded a train on route to Portland to see his newborn son and wife who were staying with her parents, probably with the intent of bringing them back to the new rectory on Beach Street. The great fire that leveled much of Old Orchard Beach was still smoldering when the young priest arrived. His trip was delayed so the train tracks could be cleared, allowing him time to wander around the town, getting a firsthand view of the mass destruction. Jones paused at the Horrigan & Abbott Drug Store, watching and talking with many people gathered around. While standing there, a soda siphon ignited and shot out of the store, decapitating a man standing next to him and seriously injuring the rector. He was rushed to Trull Hospital in Biddeford and operated on the following morning, but he died five days later. The Bishop of Maine came to Trinity Church on September 25, 1907 to baptize Jones' infant son. The processional cross and a bronze tablet can still be seen in the church in memory of the young clergyman. The tablet reads:

*To the Glory of God and in loving memory
of the Rev. Rufus Horton Jones 1877-1907.
Died August 20, 1907, from injuries received
in the Great Fire at Old Orchard August 15, 1907.
Rector of Trinity Parish, Saco, May 1, 1907 to August 20, 1907.
The strife is o're, the battle done. Alleluia!^{vii}*

A TIME TO HEAL

In 1914, the Rev. Mr. Sloggett returned to Saco for his second term - one that would last another fourteen years. He made a name for himself, not only in Saco but also around the state. He became honorary Canon of St. Luke's Cathedral in Portland and had served as deputy of the Pan Anglican Congress in 1908.

The Rev. Mr. Sloggett cared very much for the people of his parish and constantly watched over their welfare. On one occasion, he actually purchased two new Easter dresses for a couple of young girls. The late Sarah Stackpole and her sister remembered the event with pleasure because money was scarce in their family.

The Rev. Mr. Sloggett retired in 1928 but remained in Saco. His memorial granite cross is easily recognized at his grave in Laurel Hill Cemetery. The nineteen years he served as Trinity's rector provided stability to the parish.

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REJOICE AND SING UNTO THE LORD

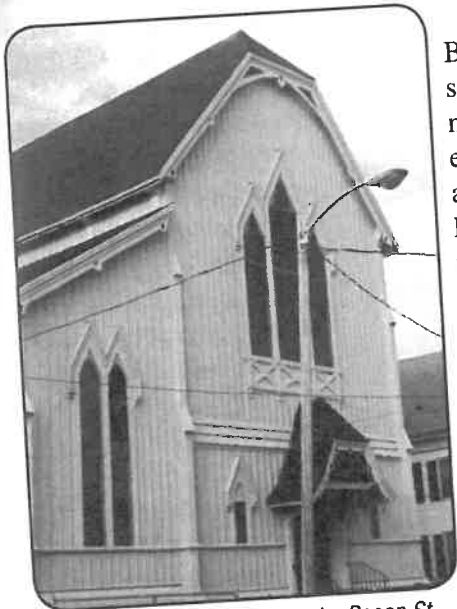
Music has always been an important part of the church service. Looking at the picture of the 1911 choir, one might be surprised to see the varied ages that made up their singing group.



First row: Margaret Boynton, Freda Dubois, Lawrence Towle, Robert Lavigne, Dorothy Wilson, Madeleine Condon. Second row: James McLead, Mar Fitton, Mar Falconer, William Falconer, Helen Francis. Third row: Ida Smith, Florence Dolby, Fred Nichols, Alice Haskell, Philip Towle, Sarah Hartford. Fourth row: Beulah Dickerson, Ilo Johnston, Yola Allen, Maude Towle, Emma Preston (Trinity Church archives)

GOOD NEWS

Between 1869 and 1934, Trinity sponsored three missions, outgrowths from its main congregation. The first was Biddeford's Christ Church, built in 1869. That area was ripe for a new church, as many English people emigrated to work in the mills. It was immediately successful and soon outgrew its church building, which was sold and converted into a synagogue. Various plans for a new church were discussed. The congregation purchased land and constructed a parish house. Services were held at Trinity during the construction.

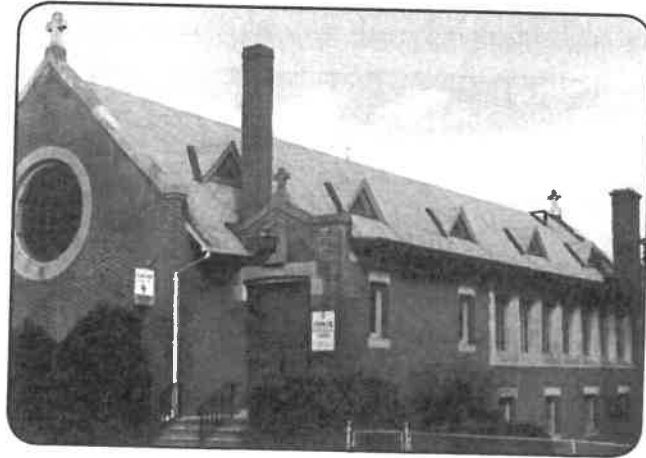


First Christ Episcopal Church, Bacon St. Biddeford ME (Trinity Church archives)

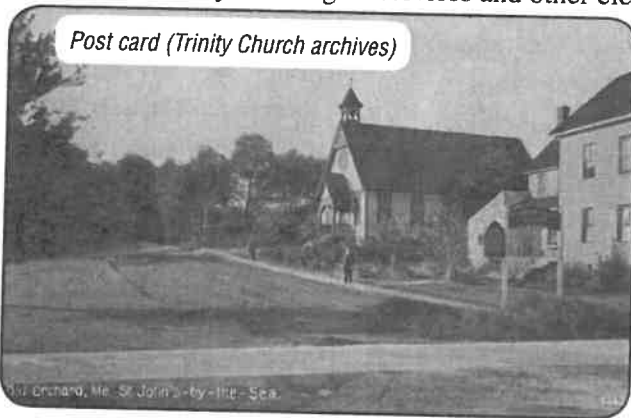
The make-up of the Biddeford congregation drastically changed after French-Canadians came to Biddeford to work in the mills. In the May 1922 issue of the Northeast Magazine, Christ Church was described as *...a working man's church and the congregation is entirely made up of such. Last year on account of high wages they were very prosperous; but this year greets them with lower wages and part time. Some are without work.*

The grand plans for Christ Church fell upon the shoulders of a dwindling congregation and the parish house became both church and parish hall.

Present day Christ Episcopal Church at 181/2 Crescent St. Biddeford ME (Trinity Church archives)



The second mission started by Trinity was St. Johns-by-the-Sea at Old Orchard Beach. At the 1881 church convention, plans for building a sixty by thirty foot building were announced. It was started for, and partially funded by, summer visitors at the resort town. The land was donated on condition that a church is built within ten years. The Rev. Edwin F. Small, Rector at Trinity Church in Saco, held the July and August services and other clergy also helped.



St. Johns By-the-Sea had its share of vandalism, probably due to the fact that it was a seasonal church. In 1881, accounts of these damages were reported in the Northeast magazine. Many windows were broken and the grass around the church burnt. Later, that same summer,

someone broke into the church and overturned the lamps and the font. In August, prayer books were piled in the robe closet floor, doused with oil and ignited. The only reason the church did not burn down (with the possible exception of divine intervention?) was because the doors were closed and the fire lacked oxygen. Still, the small chapel refused to give up. Several guests staying at the Old Orchard House bequeathed a carpet for the chancel and choir area.

For many years, the Rev. Harold A. McElwain, Rector from St. Paul's in Portland, held summer services at St. John's, and for some of the times, kept its doors open year round. It was sold in 1972 and converted into a private dwelling.

The third mission, sponsored by Trinity, was St. Stephen-the-Martyr in



St. Stephen-the-Martyr (Trinity)

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In order to keep the... Deacon Ralph W. Dow... friend of Trinity Church... daughter, Grace Dow, ... the church.

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*St. Stephen-the-Martyr - Waterboro ME
(Trinity Church archives)*

Waterboro, Maine. Dr. Victor Dowdell, Rector at Trinity, diligently established this mission church in 1939, using his personal time and money. When fourteen settees (originally used in Trinity's parish house) came up for sale, Dowdell purchased and gave them to St. Stephens. Through his hard work, donations from local businesses, individuals and other churches in the state were realized. St. Stephens is

still active, snuggled comfortably between pine trees and Little Ossipee Lake.

FINANCIAL WOES

In the 1930s, Miss Orinda O'Dall bequeathed a house abutting Trinity Church. The old rectory on Beach Street was sold and the vestry borrowed \$400 to install a furnace in the new Pleasant Street Rectory. Finances were tight, yet the parish managed to paint and repair the church.

During World War II, the church joined the country in supporting the war effort, although they had to borrow from existing funds to do so. In 1942, four \$100 G bonds were purchased from the organ fund and five \$100 D bonds were purchased from the Moody Fund. In July of the same year, \$20,000 worth of war risk insurance was placed on the church property.

Throughout the 1940s, the men's club and the women's auxiliary sponsored many fund-raising activities. Most of the time, the money went to the general expenses accounts, such as heat, maintenance and the rector's salary. In July 1942, vestry minutes relate that two vestrymen, Larry Huot and Phil Graves, said they would stake their reputation as cooks and prepare a "boiled dinner." Tickets sold for 50 cents each and \$150 was realized. This was typical of the various fundraisers offered by the hardworking parish.

In order to keep the church open in 1944 and 1945 when there was no priest, Deacon Ralph W. Dow held services. He was a native of Saco and a faithful friend of Trinity Church. He served the parish right up to his death in 1948. His daughter, Grace Dow, was a loyal communicant and is remembered by many in the church.

The cost of heating continued to be a constant problem. When a bill for two dollars was presented for a furnace pipe in 1944, discussion followed as to which fund could afford to cover it. Finally, two of the vestrymen dug into their pockets and pulled out a dollar each as a donation. When the PTA wanted to use the parish house, they were asked to help pay for the heat. One Brownie troop presented the church with a ton of coal in appreciation for the use of the hall. Eventually, outside groups were not allowed to use the parish house because the church could not afford to heat the building. The vestry continued to discuss

ways of cutting costs. They considered coke vs. coal, wood and the possibility of converting from coal to oil-burning equipment, which they eventually did. Besides the regular pledge envelope, a new one was added labeled "heating." Other maintenance costs also became a burden. The Episcopal Church Women (E.C.W.) began passing a cup around known as the "water tax cup."

As the parish reached the half-century mark of the 1900s, the church fell on harder times. Not only was the church without a priest but also money to support it declined. The vestry sent questionnaires to all parishioners, asking for ideas, opinions and suggestions. To make matters worse, the diocese withdrew its financial aid to the rector's salary until the parish was able to prove its willingness to contribute to the general expense accounts. The vestry conducted a door-to-door canvass and, once again, the E.C.W. came to the rescue with a thousand-dollar pledge.

During this time, Gerald Van Fleet, a layman from the congregation, assumed many of the responsibilities for keeping the church open by conducting Morning Prayer services. Trinity was fortunate to have him, not only as a warden and lay reader, but also for the services he later provided at the Waterboro Chapel.

Gerald Van Fleet was the manager of the Biddeford Woolworth Store, with only two years left before a substantial company retirement fund. Regardless, he chose to leave the business world and become a priest. It was a vocation he had always desired and perhaps his experiences with Trinity swayed him in his final decision. He spent two years at a seminary, under the "old man's canon"^{viii} and two years as a curate before getting his own parish. He served in Arlington and Amesbury, Massachusetts until his death. His widow, Myra, returned to Saco and remained active until her death. The Van Fleets have a special place in the history of Trinity Church.

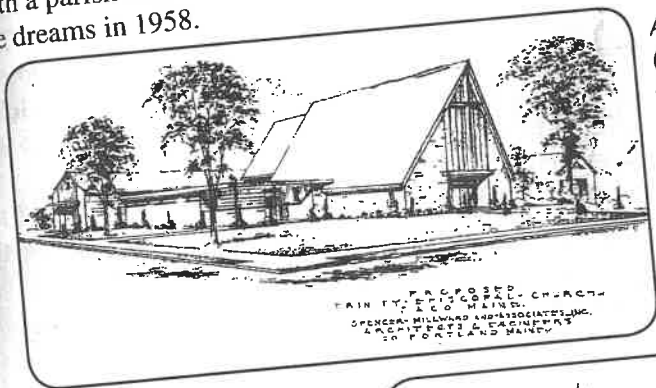
NEW WINE INTO OLD WINE SKINS

In November of 1951, the Rev. William E. Brown agreed to come to Saco and the parish made plans to get the church buildings in good order. Earlier in the year, a clergyman had been invited to come to Saco but refused because of the location of the rectory. Perhaps this is why a revitalization of the church property was undertaken with a thousand-dollar loan. An in-depth renovation project was carried on in the church, parish house and rectory. All this work was accomplished in time to celebrate the 126th anniversary of the founding of Trinity Church.

In 1956, the Rev. Gene Scaring succeeded Father William Brown. The church buildings on Pleasant Street were crowded and adequate parking a serious problem. The church itself sat practically on the sidewalk and was a nightmare for all funeral directors because of the difficulty in getting a casket up the stairs, around and through the front door, around a second turn and finally down one of the two side aisles.

For a time, the purchase of land behind the church was considered, but it never became a serious option. When an old Victorian house on Cleveland Street became available, with land stretching to Main Street, the parish buzzed with

possibilities. An open house at the Cleveland Street home found several parishioners present. The ideas were many and varied. Finally, the vestry voted to purchase the house and build a new church on the Main Street side-lawn, but only after the old buildings on Pleasant Street were sold. Until then, Father Scaringi set up his house in the Victorian home, living upstairs and turning the downstairs into a chapel. The red, Belgium velvet drapes, carried over from the church's altar, were strung across the bay window in the front parlor to create a chancel. The baptismal font found its place on the stair landing in the front hall and chairs with kneelers were placed in the double living rooms and dining room. The old parish house on Pleasant Street was sold to the Greek Orthodox Church and became Ahepa Hall. Plans were drawn for a modern stone church with a parish house connecting the church and the Victorian home. Those were the dreams in 1958.



Architectural drawings
(Episcopal diocese of
Maine Archives)

Trinity Church, 1950. The Parish house on left. The Rectory on right. (Trinity Church Archives)



CHURCH ON THE MOVE

The Lord works in mysterious ways and in 1958 the Rev. Thomas Knox, expert in church interior design, came to Saco. Even before Father Knox arrived, a few members of the church expressed their reluctance to leave their familiar, old building. When a vestryman casually stated, during a church meeting, that he would like to see the old church on the new property, the idea of moving it intensified.

From the beginning, Father Knox loved the old church and encouraged moving it to Cleveland Street. Laurence Huot headed the moving committee, William Beatty became the chairman of the property sales committee and Gerald Van Fleet chaired the architectural committee.

At 7:30 a.m. on December 4, 1959, the relocation of the church began. The professional movers cut the building into three sections, with the middle, twelve-foot wide section knocked down and reconstructed on the new site. Each of the two remaining sections weighed 40,000 pounds and was moved intact. Most of the telephone lines and electric wires had been replaced with temporary connections high enough for the church to pass under, so that Saco would have as little disruption as possible in their utility services. Workers rode on top of the buildings with poles to lift tree branches as they passed beneath them and occasionally the moving progress was halted until limbs could be sawn off. The corner at Pleasant and Main Streets proved to be the tightest squeeze and the most troublesome in manipulating the buildings into a ninety-degree turn. Holly Ward, a long time member at Trinity, recalled that the church passed between the bank and First National Store, practically by inches.

As expected, the front section of the church was moved first but it had to bypass the new lot so that the rear section could be moved onto the cement slab first. This occurred around 2:30 in the afternoon.

Meanwhile, the church women set up a table of hot coffee by the old Victorian house, to keep the workers fed and warm, not expecting the large number of people that came to watch. This necessitated several quick trips to the local grocery stores for extra supplies. It was a significant day for Saco as well as Trinity Parish.

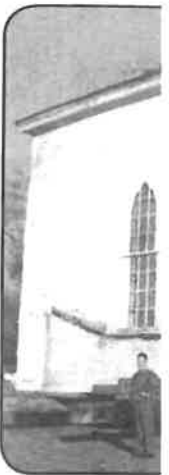
*New site of Trinity Episcopal Church.
(Maine Episcopal Diocese Archives)*



*Removing the bell tower
(Northeast Magazine
Feb 1960)*

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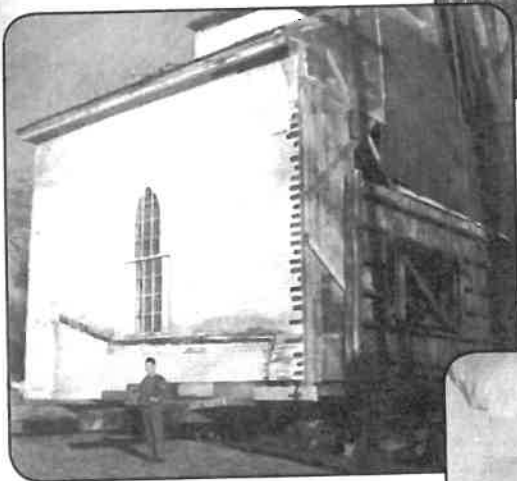
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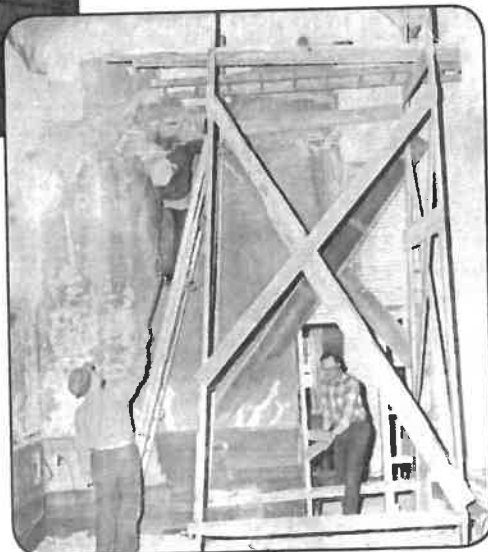
*Left to right: G
E. Graves and L*

Father Knox knew exactly what he wanted the church to look like after the restoration and although he worked well with the vestry and moving committee, he was very much in control. During the move, he asked the movers to "accidentally misplace" the Gothic window coverings of the middle section so that it would become necessary to expose the beautiful old windows to their original size and shape.

Tight squeeze between First National Stores and Saco & Biddeford Savings Bank (Trinity Church archives)



Rebuilding the church (Trinity Church Archives)



Left to right: Gilbert E. Anderson, Philip E. Graves and Laurence H. Huot



*Building the Altar platform
(Trinity Church archives)*

Left to right: Mrs. Gerald Van Fleet, Mrs. Gilbert Anderson, Mrs. Joseph E. Hill, Gerald Van Fleet and Mrs. J. W. Cummings Jr.

NEW COVENANT

Although the 1960 Easter service was held in the newly moved church, the interior was far from finished. After each Sunday service, members of the congregation covered the folding chairs with heavy plastic and proceeded with the remaining work, Monday through Friday. On Saturdays, the women uncovered the seats and thoroughly washed and cleaned the building for the next day's service. The pews would be installed later, thanks to Gil Anderson who borrowed cement nail guns from the Portland Copper Company to attach the wooden pews to the cement floor.

Once completed, the church radiated with the old and the new. Whenever possible, the original furnishings were kept, although a center aisle replaced the two side aisles. On the right side of the high altar, the Lady Chapel contained the old altar, given to Trinity by the Rt. Rev. George Burgess, Bishop of Maine in 1857. Father Knox restored and donated the cross and Christus Rex. The communion rail, thought to be the original rail, was discovered, along with the oak shelves, in the attic of the Pleasant Street Rectory. The brass Gothic brackets, upholding the rail, were replaced with the more colonial, wooden spindles that originally were part of the choir pews.

Mrs. Clarence E. Craig gave the lovely walnut high altar in memory of her husband, a longtime friend and vestryman at Trinity. The hand-carved tabernacle on top of the side altar came from Christ Church in Portsmouth, many years ago.

The beautiful English tapestry hanging over the high altar was a thank offering given by Deacon Jeffrey Ferguson for the 50th anniversary of the marriage of her parents. It is interesting to note that her great grandfather was the Rev. Frederick Gardiner, officiating minister and rector of Trinity from 1845-1847.

The white marble baptismal font in the right chancel has the following inscription: 1888-1894, IHS. The IHS stands for Jesus, Savior of men. An anonymous donor, who had sponsored a young child baptized in 1888, donated the font in memory of all the children baptized at Trinity during those years.^{ix} The lid for the

font was missing after the move of the church and Alex Stackpole, vestryman and warden at Trinity for many years, crafted a new one.

A baptismal side altar was created from an old pew turned around with a top made to fit. The brass cross, once placed on this altar, has since been removed to the Sunday school area and was thought to have come from Christ Church in Biddeford.

Father Knox had definite views that the center of worship should be the altar and encouraged the choir to move back to the original singers' gallery. The balcony wall was pushed down into the church in one piece. Joe and Jack Hill, helping as teenagers during the renovations, remember the loud crash it made as it fell down. With one giant push, the choir loft was converted to its 1827 appearance. The gallery was given a new rail and flooring, all done by volunteers. A portico was added and the Carlton Lombard family of Chelmsford, Massachusetts presented Trinity with a new steeple.

The massive project of moving and reconstructing the church was a total effort by the parish. It solidified the congregation, as it had never been united before. Father Knox left a financially poor but spiritually healthy parish in 1965.



*Church Interior, 1950's
(Courtesy of Mrs.
Robert Moody Sr.)*

*Church Interior,
1960's (Trinity
Church archives)*



LET THERE BE LIGHT

The Rev. Gerald E. Burttt came to Saco in 1965 and stayed for eleven years. Although his years represent a peaceful era with steady growth for the church, the country was going through some difficult times. This was when protestors were opposing the Vietnam War, the National Guard opened fire on Kent State University students and young men were running off to Canada to escape the draft.

Father Burttt was a bachelor and lived alone in the large, Victorian house that was Trinity's rectory. He watched as young men struggled with the issues of the days and realized that his house had more bedrooms than he could ever use. One by one, they came to his house, sharing their concerns and frustrations with the young priest. Before long, his house became theirs, but only with the stipulation that there be no drinking or drugs and that they attend church every Sunday. The first rule was obeyed with no room for negotiations, but the second rule was not always followed. Some in the parish referred to the rectory as "Father Burttt's Boys Town," as loud rock music poured out from the open windows during the summer months, particularly when the priest was off making house calls.

Soon after Father Burttt arrived, Trinity Church became the beneficiary of Claire S. Carter Deane's generous will. In February 1966, the vestry examined proposals for building a parish house, a project constantly needed yet never before seriously considered. The architectural drawings consisted of a large split-level building with a main hall to be known as the Claire S. Carter Deane Hall. A connecting building would later be built containing a ladies lounge and foyer. When Bishop Wolfe came to dedicate the hall, he urged the parish to share their new facility with the community. This has been done, including many organizations such as the Y.W.C.A., Well-baby Clinics, Boys Scouts, Girl Scouts, Alcoholics Anonymous, Overeaters Anonymous, senior citizens, Red Cross blood drives, Meals on Wheels and a day care center.

The 1827 church building continued to have its share of problems. The ceiling paint peeled and cracked, much as it had when it sat on Pleasant Street. Various paints were tried, without much success. Finally, in July 1967, a large section over the center aisle dropped, missing parishioners who had left only a couple hours before. Obviously, a more permanent solution became necessary.

All the loose sections of the ceiling were anchored and the entire ceiling covered with a fine wire mesh, which was attached with screws and bolted to timbers. Then the whole ceiling was plastered. This was thought to have solved the problem, once and for all. Alas, the ceiling had to have major reconstruction work once again in the early 1990s.

In September 1967, an uninvited guest arrived in church. A huge trailer truck on Main Street lost a wheel, which entered through the old double-doors and right down the aisle. Although all were thankful that the church was empty, the damage presented considerable problems. Four back pews needed repairs, as did a hole in the carpet. The most serious dilemma was the old doors, which were

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damaged beyond repair. State law required that new doors be equipped with a panic button and open outward. It proved to be quite expensive to keep the "old" look with the "new" state regulations.

Just as it had been on Pleasant Street, the problem of parking once more became an issue. When Main Street was converted into four lanes, Trinity's parking spaces along both sides of Main Street were eliminated.

The old Victorian rectory and its garage presented still more dilemmas. It was a large home, consisting of five bedrooms, a double living room, formal dining room, kitchen, sun parlor and a study - quite spacious for a bachelor, even with the teenage guests. The vestry considered several options, including tearing down the existing buildings and constructing a small cape on the rear lot. After much deliberation, they voted to renovate the house.

During the summer of 1971, a church-authorized loan was approved to construct a connecting building between the church and the parish house. The original plans were altered slightly to enlarge the lounge. Because the men of the parish did much of the work, there was enough money left over to redo the kitchen in the rectory.

The following year, two new programs for youth were started. Teenagers had a folk mass at 6 pm on Sundays and a successful vacation Bible school was held for two weeks in June. Children from several churches in the area attended and the classes consisted of guitar music, lessons and arts and crafts. The school grew to over a hundred students in its three short years.

In June 1972, Ellena Howard Stackpole and the Rev. Gerald Burt announced their engagement. Mrs. Stackpole was a young widow and active in the Episcopal Church all her life. She submitted her resignation as treasurer because of "conflict of interest." Bishop Wolfe married them in Saco on September 2, 1972.

After eleven years, Father Burt submitted his resignation and went to St. Peter's in Portland, where he served until his retirement in 1993.

Trinity Church has been blessed with many good friends and one of its greatest patrons was

The Rev. Robert Newton. He was ordained an Episcopal Priest in 1925. He had served at St. Paul's parish in New York City during the "Roaring Twenties" and on into the depression. Here he met his wife, Dorothy, his love and lifelong companion. After his retirement from St. George's in Sanford, he helped Father



Vacation Bible School - (Northeast Magazine - July/August, 1972)

Burt with the Sunday services and nursing home visitations. When it looked as though President Ford might ration gas during the energy crisis, the vestry voted to appoint Father Newton Assistant Priest of Trinity Church. Although this nonpaying title enabled him to receive a gasoline travel allotment, the designation was from the heart. Trinity had always considered him their confidant. He remained Trinity's assistant priest until 1980.

THE GOOD SAMARITAN

In 1976, The Rev. Robert DeWolf followed Father Burt. Economic issues continued to plague the church during the 80's but the real crunch came with the rise in oil prices. With the Iraqi invasion of Iran, oil production slowed, creating long lines at the gas stations and high heating bills for consumers. Trinity Church, built in 1827, and far from being well insulated, found it difficult to meet the inflated heating bills. Finally, after failed attempts to gather private donations, it was decided to close the church from November 1980 until the following April. Church services were held in the parish house.

The parish house, itself, required more money to heat, particularly since many outside organizations used the facility for their individual programs. Because of this, changes became necessary to conserve energy. The temperature was set at 62 degrees with instructions that any organization that raised the thermostat would pay a surcharge. Rental rates were increased and the hall was actually closed on Mondays and Tuesdays, with hopes to lower the oil bill.

Many plans floated around on how Trinity could raise money: dances, a Christmas fair, bean suppers, crabmeat roll luncheons, and a cookbook publication were discussed in detail, all with limited success.

When Bishop Wolfe came to visit Trinity in mid September, 1980, he wrote that "the visit I had there was the best yet."* He praised the youth groups and was pleased to see the many volunteer hours spent in improving the basement. The parish's plans for improve lighting in the church also received the bishop's heartfelt endorsement.

VENTURE IN MISSION

In answering Bishop Frederick Wolfe's call for "Venture in Mission," Trinity answered, "yes" in a loud and clear manner. The bishop asked the various Maine Episcopal parishes to examine and define their individual community needs. Are there people who are hungry -lonely -uneducated -abused -poor? If so, do something to help. Saco looked into the existing services available - children's services, elderly care, the American Red Cross, counseling services and Head Start. After a long and thorough survey, two vital needs were identified: week-end meals for shut-ins and day care for children.

The first mission, in 1980, was to provide weekend Meals-on-Wheels. This food service was already available during the week, but nothing existed for Saturday and Sunday. Here the parish jumped in with both feet. A committee was formed to work on this project, which included community members, many from the Council of Churches, as well as members of the parish. From Trinity Church, Bernie Carson, Barbara Couch, Sue Moore, Kathy Hill, Peggie Rosa

and Ed Bobb all volunteered their time and talents. Not only did they work out a plan to deliver a hot meal on Saturdays, but they also included a cold lunch for Sundays. The volunteers not only purchased the food but prepared the meal as well. The first meals were delivered on June 7, 1980.

Much had to be learned during this time: how to purchase enough food, how to make healthy and tasty food while keeping the cost between \$1.00 and \$1.20 per customer, how to keep the kitchen and food preparation sanitary, how to wrap one's hair in a hairnet, how to prepare food while wearing gloves, how to properly store the meals and how to organize the delivery routes for Saco, Biddeford and Old Orchard Beach. It became a learning experience and one that has continued through the years, although buying and planning meals have been taken over by a professional food business. Trinity Church still delivers hot meals to the Old Orchard Beach and Saco area every Saturday, throughout the year.

For the second mission, a committee consisting of parishioners and community leaders planned to establish a day care center at the church, until neighbors and some parishioners objected to the parish hall not being well equipped to provide adequate care for young children. When space became available at Kimball Health Center, the program opened on Sept 8, 1981, with Mrs. Kathy Hill serving as Director-Teacher. The agenda offered twelve hours of daily care, starting at six in the morning, for 25 children from ages 2 1/2 to 6, with extra room for an additional fifteen after-school students. Since a medical doctor had his office at the Kimball Health Center, emergency care was an additional plus to the families.

Unfortunately, low enrollment and the expense of the facility proved to be a stumbling block and after two years, the center was forced to move back to the church. Again, neighbors and the city zoning board deemed the area unsuitable for childcare and the Trinity Day Center was forced to close.

During Father DeWolf's term, our country experienced trying times. The Camp David meeting brought limited peace in the Middle East but three years later, Anwar Sadat was assassinated. Khomeini returned to Iran and closed doors on freedom that had been open ever so slightly. Twenty-four lost their lives in a "peaceful" march in San Salvador. The national Episcopal Church went through several years of difficulty as well, when women were allowed to become priests, much to the dismay of more conservative members. Father DeWolf defended the women's rights, publishing a letter to the editor of the Biddeford Journal after a reader questioned the female's place in the church. Although this created a split in the national church, the Diocese of Maine supported the female priests, eventually electing a woman bishop in 1998.

350th ANNIVERSARY- HALLELUJAH

Father James Davis followed the Rev. DeWolf and was given a housing allowance after the vestry voted to sell the rectory. Being a historian by nature, Father Davis immediately became interested in the fact that 1986 represented the 350th anniversary of the first Anglican service in the area, and established a committee to organize a celebration. The Rev. Thomas Knox, rector when the church was

moved in 1959, spoke at the banquet, held on September 27, 1986 at the parish house. The many parishioners and friends enjoyed Father Knox's recollection of his time at Saco.

Problems occurred between Father Davis and some parishioners, so in May of 1986, The Rev. C. Waite Maclin, representative from the Episcopal Maine Diocese, led a retreat at the University of New England. He presented a letter from the bishop, asking for a three-month agreement to give everyone time to work out his or her differences. On August 31, 1986, Father Davis submitted his resignation, which was accepted by the vestry.

THE WORD OF THE LORD

The Rev. Robert Mountford, with his wife Mim, brought to Trinity a great feeling of compassion that rapidly spread throughout the congregation. His great sense of humor stimulated and united the parish.

Father Bob initiated several Bible classes in the church. At one time, two Bible classes were held on Sunday – one between the early and the late service and another one at six in the evening. Evening Bible studies were later added, conducted in private homes. Vestry meetings were opened by prayer, followed by a brief study of the gospel for the coming Sunday. Father Bob placed Bibles in the pews, a close fit between the prayer book and the hymnals, and often could be seen walking around with an extra Bible tucked safely under his arm.

Father Bob recognized early that friendship and Christianity went hand-in-hand; so many social events were introduced, including military bridge and New Year's Eve parties occurred. A new men's club, St Andrews, was formed. At Christmastime, the church provided toys for children whose parents were confined in prison.

While trying to patch and plaster the ceiling of the 163 year-old church in 1990, many structural problems were discovered. As soon as one problem was uncovered, others were revealed. Massive renovation work was undertaken and Sunday services were once again moved to the parish house.

During this time, Trinity became the benefactor of a generous bequest from Claire Hill, a life-long parishioner. This gift could not have come at a better time. The fund was quickly disbursed but due to the wisdom of the vestry, ten per cent was set aside to create the Claire Hill Memorial Outreach Fund, established to give financial support to the community.

When the services returned to the church in October, the building shone with fresh paint, new carpet and upholstered seat cushions and kneelers.

Under the leadership of Michelle and Steve Hill, the youth group prospered. High school students formed ACTS, (Active Christian Teens) while the junior high pupils organized JAM (Juniors in Active Ministry). Both groups had active programs and enjoyed the KIDZONE, a room with computers and videos, located in the lower level.

Father Bob and Mim left Trinity Church after eleven successful years. Father Samuel Henderson served as interim priest for a year and would later return to serve.

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IT IS TIME TO WORK FOR THE LORD

Trinity Episcopal parish has always used various means to pay the expenses and maintenance of the church. When the building was first built, pews were sold to help with the construction costs. Later, the "Trinity Amateurs" put on theater productions at City Hall.^{x1} Spaghetti dinners and bean suppers were prepared for the public and both men and women did the cooking. Crabmeat sandwiches became a favorite and were offered on the last Friday of the month, which included deliveries to various businesses. Later, the crabmeat sandwiches were replaced with lobster rolls but only during the summer fairs. The turkey dinners, under the watchful eye of Arlene Murchison, became a well-known and faithfully attended event.

Peggie Rosa, a long time parishioner at Trinity, started the "Miles of Pennies" jars, placed between the church and the parish hall with a sign to donate loose pennies for unbudgeted needs of the parish. Over the years, much has been purchased with this fund, including a refrigerator, a hefty contribution for a new stove and two air conditioners for the parish hall.

The ECW once held Christmas silver teas at private homes and later sponsored a Christmas fair where crafts and food were for sale. The Cookie Walk, started by Carol Pape, is still a favorite where home-baked cookies are displayed and buyers walk around the table, selecting the kind and amount desired.

The summer fairs have always been a great parish event with men, women and children taking part. Some were rather intricate, particularly the Olde English Fairs, which included a wandering minstrel, a court jester, tea and crumpets and parishioners dressed in old English garb. Some of the fairs had donkey rides and trampoline tents for the children's entertainment. One fair sponsored an art show that closed Cleveland Street to make room for the artists. Flea markets, organized for many years by Roy Couch, became a prosperous fundraiser and usually were part of the fairs. Rummage sales were also successful. When the 2007 summer fair found many baskets left over, Father David Robinson suggested people grab one and fill it with a personal assortment to be auctioned off in the fall. It turned out to be a fun and successful event.

Left to right - Rob Moody, Sharon Boutet, Chuck Moody and Steven Boutet, 1967 (Trinity Church archives)



*Olde English Fair, 1977
Left to right:
Jeffrey Neal, Sylvia Goss,
Janet Fernald, Denise Neal.
(Photo by Lorraine Tait)*



On September 11, 2001, four jet aircrafts crashed into the World Trade Center Twin Towers in New York City, a field in Pennsylvania and the Pentagon in Washington D.C. Live television brought the horrors of those events right into the family living room, leaving scars of the attacks etched on the minds of young and old alike. Father Mark S. Winward, the rector at Trinity, was no stranger to the defense of his country. He was, at that time, serving in the Naval Reserve and immediately recognized the emotional disturbance 9/11 caused. A parish special meeting was called and Father Mark led the congregation in prayer. Putting his counseling training to good use, he encouraged parishioners to speak their thoughts, concerns and fears. Out of this forum came stories of various attempts to locate loved ones in the attacked areas, not knowing if they were alive or dead. Others related stories they had heard and one person told of the loss of his friend – one of the airplane pilots killed in the attack.

Later, Father Mark phoned his military command at Bethesda Naval Medical Center and asked if he could help, only to be told they were seriously understaffed. Because of this, Father Mark voluntarily left Trinity to serve for a limited time in Washington, D.C. While there, he was urged to join the military staff when the Bishop of the Armed Forces said, “Mark, you are a gifted chaplain and I know you have struggled with this calling for a long time. Everything is changed now. We are at war. We have a critical shortage of chaplains. The Navy needs you. Our country needs you.”^{xii} With this advice, Father Mark left parish work in the spring of 2002 and became a military chaplain.

KEEPING UP OUR FATHER’S HOUSE

For the second time, in 2002, Father Samuel Henderson arrived at Trinity Church as interim priest. Father Sam was well known in the diocese as a healer of fragile congregations. Trinity could not have wished for a better spiritual leader. Not only did he improve the parish, but he improved the church property as well. Day after day, Father Sam could be found painting the rather drab parish hall a sunny yellow. With paintbrush firmly in hand, he didn’t stop with the meeting room but even ventured out into the hallway and stairway.

The Sunday school classrooms, in the lower level, became a serious problem when mold was discovered. Classes were held in various corners of the large hall, the lounge and even in the rector’s office. Jeff Haines, the junior warden, was in charge of the buildings and grounds, and quickly gathered bids to remove the mold. It was a long and tedious process but the final results produced a new Sunday school area. The original six classrooms were converted into three rooms, leaving space for a large, multi-purpose area. Senior Warden Barbara Marciarelli praised the many parishioners who helped with this project, observing, “So many people came together to volunteer their time and talents and just look at what we have accomplished.”^{xiii}

Since a serious drainage problem had created the mold situation, it needed to be addressed, as well. Even before the parish house was built, older Saco citizens remember skating on ice that formed naturally on that property. With

In 2007, Trinity welcomed the addition of the Rev. Linda Cappers as the church's new deacon. Linda hopes to teach and work with the various parish ministries, as well as the church's outreach programs. Other deacons at Trinity included the late Rev. Jeffrey Ferguson, who was sponsored and served at Trinity until she became Chaplain at the woman's prison in Windham. She later helped organize St. Nicholas in Scarborough. Another deacon, The Rev. Gail Chandler, spent three months at Trinity, under Father Robinson's tutorship, before she was ordained on June 28, 2008.

The future of Trinity Church looks bright. With God's help, we will continue to grow and prosper.

Sallie Huot
 Gerard Labbe
 Amy Ouellette
 Shawn Ouellette
 Patricia Sampson

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TRINITY EPISCOPAL RECTORS AND CLERGY

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| <p>1636-1640 Richard Gibson
 1640-1679 Robert Jordan
 1827-1827 E. M. P. Wells
 (Gardiner ME)
 1826-1827 B.C. Cutler (Quincy MA)
 1826-1827 G. W. Hathaway
 1827-1827 Petrus S. Ten Broeck
 1827-1827 Alonzo Potter
 1827-1827 Gideon W. Olney (later
 Bishop New York)
 1827-1828 Horatio Potter
 1828-1828 Samuel Fuller
 1828-1829 Norris M. Jones
 1829-1829 Clement F. Jones
 1831-1833 Joseph Muenscher
 1833-1834 John A. Vaughan
 1834-1835 Steven Millett
 1835-1836 William Horton
 1835-1836 William Wailand
 1836-1839 William Horton (R)
 1840-1841 Sylvester Nash
 1841-1841 J. Paine
 1841-1842 Thomas L. Randolph
 1843-1844 Reuben E. Taylor
 1845-1847 Frederick Gardiner
 1848-1849 J. Pinkney Hammond
 1849-1852 George Slattery
 1853-1853 Daniel C. Weston
 1854-1858 Samuel Cowell
 1858-1858 Daniel C. Ingraham
 1859-1859 Edwin W. Murray
 1859-1861 John B. Southgate
 1861-1867 Samuel S. J. Evans</p> | <p>1868-1880 W. J. Alger
 1881-1885 Edwin. F. Small
 1886-1887 A. W. Snyder
 1887-1888 Charles T. Ogden
 1888-1898 Henry W. Winkley
 1899-1902 H. L. Wood
 1902-1907 Richard L. Sloggett
 1907-1907 Rufus Horton Jones
 1909-1914 Thomas Burgess
 1914-1928 Richard L. Sloggett
 1928-1929 Edward C. McAllister
 1929-1935 Archibald S. Winslow
 1935-1936 Ernest A. Pressey
 1936-1941 Victor Lyle Dowdell
 1941-1944 Otis L. Mason
 1944-1945 Ralph W. Dow – Deacon
 in charge
 1945-1948 Maurice W. Venno
 1948-1949 Elmer J. Templeton
 1949-1950 Gerald Van Fleet –
 Lay Reader
 1950-1951 John T. Payne
 1951-1955 William E. Brown
 1956-1958 Gene Scaringi
 1958-1964 Thomas Knox
 1965-1976 Gerald E. Burt
 1976-1982 Robert DeWolf
 1985-1986 James H. Davis
 1988-1999 Robert T. Mountford
 1999 Samuel Henderson, Interim
 2000-2001 Mark S. Winward
 2002-2006 Samuel Henderson, Interim
 2006- David Robinson</p> |
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