

Timeline of Events in the Life of Christ Church, Albemarle 1973—1984

- 1973 The parish supports the creation of a halfway house for alcoholic men in Albemarle through the donation of furnishings and supplies.



Easter during the time when the altar was positioned immediately in front of a dossal curtain and the priest celebrated Eucharist facing the altar

Although weekday services have been held occasionally for a number of years, Father Byrum begins to hold them daily in 1973 due to interest amongst parishioners. When Father Phil is out of town, parishioners take responsibility for reading Morning and Evening Prayer. Frances Harris recalls reading Evening Prayer aloud by herself one evening, at least she thought she was alone until she heard a peculiar noise. She looked around and saw one of Mrs. Teeter's cats sitting in Father Phil's chair chiming in with the prayers. These were the days when the church doors were unlocked and remained open to encourage people to use the church for meditation and prayer.

Father Byrum holds the first baptism by immersion when Vivian and Cleve Miller are baptized at Lake Tillery. Other lakeside baptisms follow.



Deborah Ledbetter, Father Phil and Amy Aycock



Father Phil, Harley & Barbara Clark, Eddie Ratiff

- 1974 Christ Church begins plans for what will become one of its biggest contributions to the community—the Food Pantry. The idea grows from discussion in an adult Church School class and is endorsed by the vestry.

The parish requests and receives a \$3,000 grant from the diocese to establish and maintain a home for mentally retarded adult males that is named Chivington House in recognition of parishioners Marie and Jack Chivington's contribution to mental health issues through their active participation in the Stanly Association for Retarded Citizens. Chivington House meets the needs of handicapped persons in state institutions who qualify to be discharged but have no home to which they can return.



Chivington House

A group of four women from the church organize and establish a Flea Market as a fund raising activity on the first Saturday of the month from October through May. Areas of the Parish Hall are cordoned off to form individual booths that are rented to members of the community for a nominal fee. The Flea Market becomes very popular and successful as a fund raising project while providing an efficient and effective way to offer craft and new items as well as to recycle things that have outlived their usefulness to the original owners.



Flea Market founders-Anne Byrum, Joan Giglio, Judy Mudge and Helen Harris



An individual booth at the Flea Market, this one offering the results of the vendor's "green thumb"

- 1975 In January, the Food Pantry opens for the purpose of feeding the needy with parishioners and community members contributing food and money. The Christ Church Episcopal Church Women make gallons of soup that is frozen and kept in the freezer. The food is available to anyone in need and distributed by the rector with considerable help from parishioner, Frances Harris. Other churches and

organizations such as Social Services, the Health Department and the Employment Security Commission learn quickly that they can refer the hungry to Father Phil at any time and be assured that the individuals will be fed with no hassle or red tape. Bags of groceries are even placed on the porches of those too proud to ask for help. In 1985 the Food Pantry is approved by the Metrolina Food Bank, which allows groceries to be purchased at greatly reduced costs. By 1986 so many churches and individuals are drawn into this ministry that the Stanly County Christian Ministries (SCCM) is founded and the Food Pantry moves to a larger facility in a centralized location. While housed at Christ Church, the Food Pantry fed 7,520 individuals and received donations in food and cash of almost thirty thousand dollars.

Members of the parish begin assisting with the Meals-on-Wheels program.



Parishioners Frances Harris and Helen Comber pick up meals at Stanly County Hospital



Helen Comber delivers a meal to Christ Church parishioner, Mrs. J. U. Loftin

1976 In the parish newsletter, Father Phil notes January 25, 1976, as “one of the most memorable days in the history of our parish.” In an afternoon service, Bishop Fraser administers the Sacrament of Confirmation to twenty-two young people

and adults, and receives one adult from another Communion. This is the largest confirmation class to date for the parish and one of the largest groups that Bishop Fraser has confirmed in five months.



Lisa Lowder, David Hoff, Mark Scrimgeour, Dodd Lowder and Amy Aycock

acolytes have served the parish faithfully for years, however until the mid-1970's they were all boys until Kathleen Ballenger and Carroll Smith asked Father Phil why they could not be acolytes, too. He replied, “Why not?” so they become the first girls to serve in that role at Christ Church.

In September, a group of parishioners charters a bus for a pilgrimage to Washington D.C. to attend one of the special services celebrating the completion of the nave at the National Cathedral. The Archbishop of Canterbury is present for the occasion as well as President Gerald Ford. The highlight for everyone from the parish comes when, much to his surprise, Father Phil is asked to assist in the celebration of the Eucharist.

- 1977 In October the church has the honor of having the Sacrament of Confirmation administered by The Most Reverend John E. Hines, retired Presiding Bishop of the Episcopal Church in the United States. Bishop Hines is assisting Bishop Frazer with visitations during a time when the diocese is without a second bishop. One parishioner, John Robinson, is unable to be confirmed in the church because he is paralyzed so Father Byrum and Bishop Hines confirm him in his home. Mr. Robinson is thrilled to have the bishop in his home, and the Bishop, upon returning to the car with Father Phil, said, "Philip, thank you for the privilege." Years later Bishop Hines sees Father Phil and immediately remembers Christ Church, especially his visit to the Robinson home.

- 1978 The Sacristy is extensively renovated under the direction of parishioner, Becky Bradley.

- 1979 The Long-Range Planning Committee reviews the needs of the parish and engages Omnia Design of Charlotte to develop a master plan that includes the much-needed expansion of the Parish House. A columbarium is designed on the east side of the church. Another result from the work of this committee includes detaching the altar from the chancel wall to allow for the celebration of the Eucharist with the priest facing the congregation.



The Christ Church Columbarium



General Glore and Coy Ritchie
at the auction

The Gullledge residence east of the church at the corner of Pee Dee Avenue and Miller Street becomes available for purchase. Parishioner, Brigadier General James Glore accepts the responsibility of raising the necessary funds. Within a few days he solicits sufficient donations from parishioners and friends of the parish to allow the property to be acquired by Christ Church without the use of any parish funds or future indebtedness to the church. An auction is held to sell the home's fixtures and other architectural elements. The house is removed and the property landscaped.

1980 Christ Church is offered an opportunity to operate a food concession at the Stanly County Fair. While the endeavor is viewed initially as a means of raising funds for the parish and its programs, it soon becomes much more as parishioners



The Christ Church Fair Booth

it soon becomes much more as parishioners come into regular contact with the traveling staff that supplies the rides and concessions at county fairs and carnivals. The daily fare of home-cooked food is greatly appreciated while providing opportunities for conversation and fellowship that continue to grow through subsequent years. At the request of the concessionaires, the Father Phil holds prayer services and celebrates Holy Eucharist at the fairgrounds.

On October 18 and 19 Christ Church holds a celebration commemorating the 40th anniversary of the consecration of the church and the 90th (actually the 93rd or 94th) anniversary of the first Prayer Book services in Stanly County. The festivities include a pig-pickin' on Saturday afternoon, Sunday dinner on the church grounds and 'Reflections of the Past' by Ada Shaver. Special guests include Christ Church's first full-time resident clergy, The Rev. Hall Partrick and his wife, Charlotte plus long-time members of the parish. The occasion prompts a history of the parish written by parishioner, Dr. Juanita Kruse.



Father Philip Byrum & Father Hall Partrick



90th Anniversary Celebration—Rev. & Mrs. Partrick with long-term parishioners

Alva Hawkins, Ruth Little, Charlotte Partrick, The Rev. Dr. Hall Partrick, Elmina Hearne Surratt, Frances Harris, Addie Belle Loftin, James C. "Poss" Wilhelm, Ada W. Shaver

Christ Church establishes a mission, St. Mary Magdalene, in Troy. Father Byrum serves as priest-in-charge from 1980 to 1987.



Share-a-Home on Main Street

The concept of establishing a place to accommodate elderly people who do not need or desire nursing home care but who, for one reason or another, can not manage an individual residence originates at Christ Church. Elbert Johns, a Christ Church communicant, serves as chairman of the project, which involves other churches, organizations and individuals. Grants from the Mecklenburg

Presbytery, the Episcopal Diocese of North Carolina and the United Thank Offering of the Episcopal Churchwomen allow the home to be set up without county, state or federal funds.

- 1982 Serious plans are made for the expansion of the Parish House, which is desperately needed due to lack of sufficient space for educational classrooms, offices and other parish needs. Parishioner, William Comber prepares the plans for the building, contributions are solicited and fund raising activities are held to fund the project, however, it is five years before ground is broken on this project.



Christ Church joins with First Lutheran, Annunciation Catholic and Central United Methodist to sponsor Vacation Bible School.

- 1983 Parishioner Betsy Ballenger is one of five recipients of WBTV's Jefferson Award for her work in fighting drug abuse. She is responsible for starting a community Drug Education Program and a support group called Parents-in-Action.
- 1984 Christ Church holds its first Madrigal Dinner in the Parish House, which is decorated to recreate the atmosphere of an Elizabethan Christmas feast complete with costumed singers and servers. Three performances require much work and cooperation but are met with enthusiastic response from the sell-out audiences.