

New Jersey Herald

November 3, 2019

Christ Episcopal Church celebrates

250 YEARS

1769-2019



A month-long celebration for the sestercentennial

By Jennifer Jean Miller
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NEWTON

Founded in 1769, Christ Episcopal Church has a long and colorful history, some of which is highlighted in this section, from its historical roots to its community outreach that continues as the heart of the church.

Starting with a ceremonial horseback ride to the Historic Sussex County Courthouse and concluding with its Gala Anniversary Celebration, several notable activities are scheduled this month to celebrate the church's 250th anniversary.

Events for today, Sunday, Nov. 3

The church's rector, The Rev. Canon Robert Griner, will travel on horseback from Andover Township into Newton, in ceremonial dress, to re-enact a portion of the two 50-mile rides from Elizabeth into Newton that The Rev. Dr. Thomas Chandler took in November 1769 and on Dec. 28, 1769, to establish the church. Chandler, who served as the rector of the St. John's Church in Elizabeth, organized Christ Church's vestry at the Sussex County Courthouse on Dec. 28, 1769.

Griner will stop at the courthouse at 9 a.m. to recite from historical church documents before the procession returns to the church for a 10 a.m. choral Eucharist and Baptismal service. Griner will use the church's first "Book of Common Prayer," dated 1662, for the special service.

At 4 p.m., the Christ Church Newton Senior Choir will perform at the church at 62 Main St.,



From left, Christ Episcopal Church historian Merritt Ierley, church Warden Nick Pachnos and The Rev. Canon Robert Griner hold a copy of the original charter that established the church.

"Hands Across the Sea," a concert of sacred patriotic American and British music. Tickets for the concert are \$20 per person; and the concert is modeled after the "The Last Night of the Proms" Henry Wood Promenade Concerts, held each year at London's Royal Albert Hall. The concert will feature baritone soloist John Beasley and soprano soloist Shannah Yerofeyev, with orchestra and organ accompaniment. Songs include: George Frideric Handel's "Zadok the Priest;" Vaughan Williams' "Five Mystical Songs;" Peter Wilhousky's arrangement of

the "Battle Hymn of the Republic;" Hubert Parry's "Jerusalem;" and Thomas Arne's "Rule Britannia."

Events for Saturday, Nov. 23

On Saturday, Nov. 23, at 7:30 p.m., the Christ Church Newton Senior Choir will perform "Evensong," an Anglican evening prayer liturgy, accompanied by the 1662 "Book of Common Prayer," a book given to the church's first rector, The Rev. Uzal Ogden, on the occasion of his ordination. The Bishop of Buckingham, The Right Rev. Dr. Alan Wilson, of the Church of England Diocese of Oxford will also preach that night, with a light reception after the event.

Events for Sunday, Nov. 24

Sunday, Nov. 24, will be the final day of 250th anniversary planned festivities with The Most Rev. Julio Murray, bishop of Panama, archbishop and primate of Central America, preaching at both the 8 a.m.

and 10 a.m. services that day.

At 3 p.m. on Nov. 24, the church will hold its Gala Anniversary Celebration at the Lake Mohawk Country Club, 21 The Boardwalk in Sparta, with both Wilson and Murray presiding over the event with congratulatory wishes for the parish. The keynote presenter for the gala will be The Right Rev. Carlye Hughes, bishop of the Diocese of Newark.

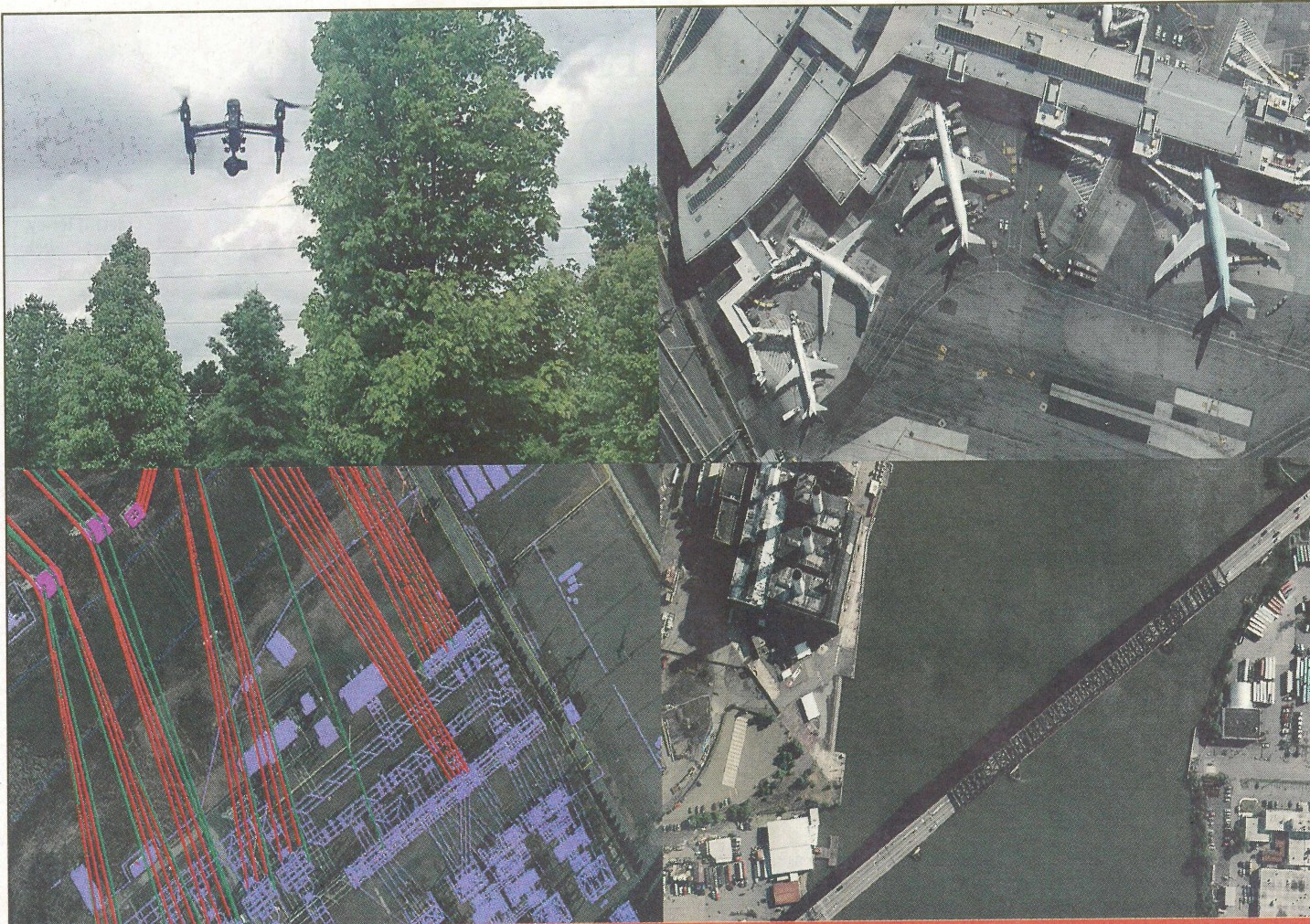
Tickets for the gala are \$50 per person.

To purchase tickets to the upcoming events for Christ Church, visit: www.christchurchnewton.org/ or call: 973-383-2245. For information about the 250th anniversary calendar of events, visit: www.christchurchnewton.org/anniversary-events-celebration.

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One of church's first books offered prayers to King George

By Jennifer Jean Miller
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When Christ Episcopal Church's first parishioners convened for worship in 1769, it was at a time in history when there was tension and division among colonists, with some who were loyal to the crown and others seeking independence from England. For some, it could have been risky to recite prayers from the church's first "Book of Common Prayer," because of its references to the importance in praying for King George.

King George III was Great Britain's and Ireland's king in 1769, who started his reign less than a decade before the date of Christ Church's founding. The Book of Common Prayer, according to Christ Church's Historian Merritt Ierley, was presented to the parish in 1773 on the occasion of the ordination of Rev. Uzal Ogden, the parish's first rector. Ogden served as the rector until his resignation in 1784.

Even though he resigned his post,



Merritt Ierley, Christ Church Episcopal Church historian, carefully opens the church's "Book of Common Prayer", which was presented to the church in the late 1700s.

[PHOTO BY DANIEL FREEL/NEW JERSEY HERALD (NJH)]

Ogden continued to assist as rector through 1792 and a successor was not named until 1820.

It is uncertain when the book,

which is tucked within the church archives, was published, as its publication date and place of imprint is missing, but is believed to be the 1662 version, which contains prayers for King George I, King George III's grandfather. Ierley said he believes the ancient leather-covered book was likely rebound around 1892, because of penciled inscriptions on the front inside cover with that date. Gilt-stamped on the cover, the book reads, "Presented by William Kelly, Esquire, to the Parish of New Town, Sussex County, New Jersey, on the Ordination of Uzal Ogden, Junior, the First Minister of the Church of England for that Parish. Anno 1773."

According to Ierley's book written for the church's 250th anniversary, "The Broken Staff The Improbable Story of Uzal Ogden 1744-1822," Ogden hailed from a family generally known as "rich, powerful, influential and cultured."

The Ogden family and Ogden's father were known for the founding of another Church of England parish in 1743 — the year before Ogden was born — Trinity Church in Newark. That church was chartered by King George III's father, King George II, in 1746.

Ogden was believed to have received his education at home with tutors; and particularly took a liking to religious books. He eventually earned an honorary doctorate from

Princeton University, but received his undergraduate education under the tutelage of The Rev. Dr. Thomas Chandler, a Loyalist, from approximately 1767 through 1770 — the latter the year that Ogden accepted his role as Christ Church's rector. Chandler's role was to ready Ogden for his ordination; and immerse him in his knowledge of the "Book of Common Prayer," which directed parishioners to ask God to "have mercy upon the whole church and to rule the heart of thy chosen servant GEORGE, our King," with the print of the name "George," interestingly in all capital letters, while the word "God" is not.

Some additionally took offense to the prayers asking that "Sovereign Lord King George may vanquish and overcome his enemies," some noting the prayer was in opposition to their goal of independence from England.

It was also Chandler who rode his horse from where he served as rector in Elizabeth to Sussex County in November 1769. Chandler made another trip on Dec. 28, 1769, to the Sussex County Courthouse — where parishioners met in the early years — to organize Christ Episcopal Church's first vestry, or the assembled parish, with the church leadership chosen from among the church's first 50 families.

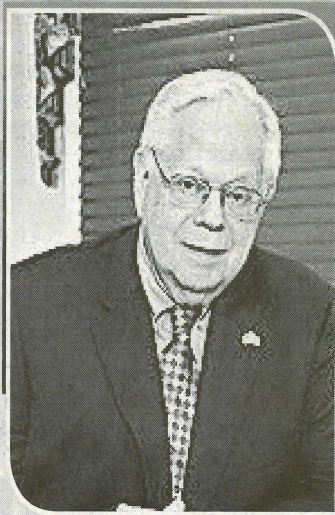
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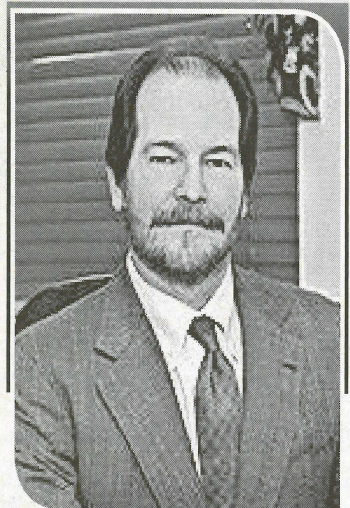
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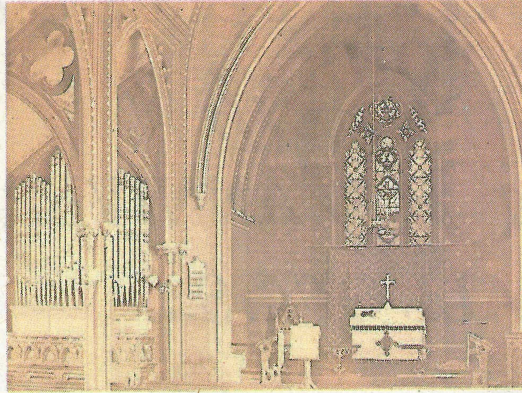
The rector experience, then and now

By Jennifer Jean Miller
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When The Rev. Canon Robert Griner drives from his home in Andover to Christ Episcopal Church in Newton each morning, he feels in touch with nature and the beauty of the area — sights he believes that the church's first rector, The Rev. Uzal Ogden, also likely experienced.

Griner will be journeying north into Newton on Route 206 from the Andover Township area on Nov. 3, to re-create a segment of the ride that Ogden's mentor, The Rev. Dr. Thomas Chandler, made twice at the end of 1769, when Chandler helped to organize Christ Episcopal Church. Griner, who will be attired in 1700s-style vestments and a powdered wig, will ride into Newton on "Sky," a horse from the Spring Valley Equestrian Center, located in Fredon, along with a representative from the equestrian center and police escort. The equestrian center donated riding lessons and the use of the horse to Griner, who has been training for the re-enactment ride.

Although the powdered wigs are no longer part of a rector's regular



The interior of Christ Church in 1897. The church did not have a physical building until 1823, and the current church was built on Main Street in 1868. The Rev. Uzal Ogden, the church's first rector, preached in Newton every third Sunday at the Sussex County courthouse and other meeting places.



Christ Episcopal Church's interior today is very similar to that of years past, however, The Rev. Canon Robert Griner notes that outreach and opportunities in the church exist today that did not exist back then. [PHOTO BY DANIEL FREEL/NEW JERSEY HERALD]

attire, the dress for rectors within the Episcopal Church, Griner said, has basically remained the same, outside of a few details. One of those elements, Griner said, is the robe's collar, with Ogden's fashioned with two vertical rectangles. The wig that Griner will wear for his ride to emulate Chandler will differ from what Ogden would have worn. While Chandler's wig was an

imperial-style, similar to what was worn in the House of Commons with flowing curls, Ogden simplified his look with what Griner described as a "gentleman farmer," patriot-type of wig with a ponytail in the back.

It was Griner's original goal, he said, to travel from Elizabeth — or "Elizabethtown" as it was known in Chandler's day — to Newton to replicate the full ride that Chandler took from the parish of St. John's Church where he served as a rector.

However, in this day and age, with highway regulations disallowing horses, cities along the way that would not be horse-friendly and the need for police escorts through all of the municipalities, Griner said that dream was not feasible.

Nonetheless, Griner's ride today, will not only honor Chandler's original journeys, but also will mirror what Ogden experienced as he regularly traveled the trail that is now Route 206 into Newton, which passed through one of the active sites during the Revolutionary War, the Andover Furnace area. Ogden's ministering territory encompassed approximately 2,000 square miles, with his preaching rotating each week among Newton, Knowlton, Roxbury and Hackettstown. Originally from Newark, Ogden's ministry also stretched into his hometown, plus a neighboring community — Belleville then known as "Second River," plus Morristown and far west into Pennsylvania.

Although Newton rectors discontinued traveling to the parishes in Knowlton, Roxbury, Hackettstown and beyond many years ago, there are families who travel to Newton

for services from outside of Sussex County. Griner said some of the church's 200 parishioners attending weekly services are from Belvidere, Hope and Milford, Pa.

Diversity within the first and current parishes

A common thread that has endured the last 250 years, Griner said, is a diverse congregation, with the Episcopal Church known for its inclusiveness.

Within the first 50 Christ Episcopal Church families were the more well-to-do and educated, lawyers like Thomas Anderson and Nathaniel Pettit.

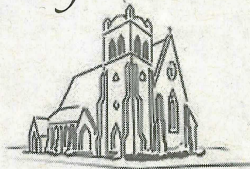
However, Chandler's first impression of the church's families in the place he called "a perfect wilderness," was that they were mainly impoverished and unable to support public worship.

In today's parish, Griner said, there is also a range of socioeconomic backgrounds among parishioners. There is a greater representation of diversity as well in the body of the church, with a large segment of African and Caribbean Americans and Latinos who are a part of the congregation. In Ogden's day, the inclusiveness also existed, with Ogden performing baptisms on African-American congregants. According to church historian Merritt Ierley, the Church of England as a whole embraced diversity even in the 1700s.

As part of the current church's outreach, Griner said, there is a partnership with the Diocese of Panama,

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Congratulations

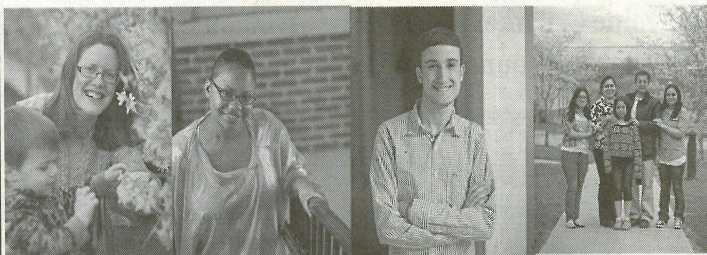


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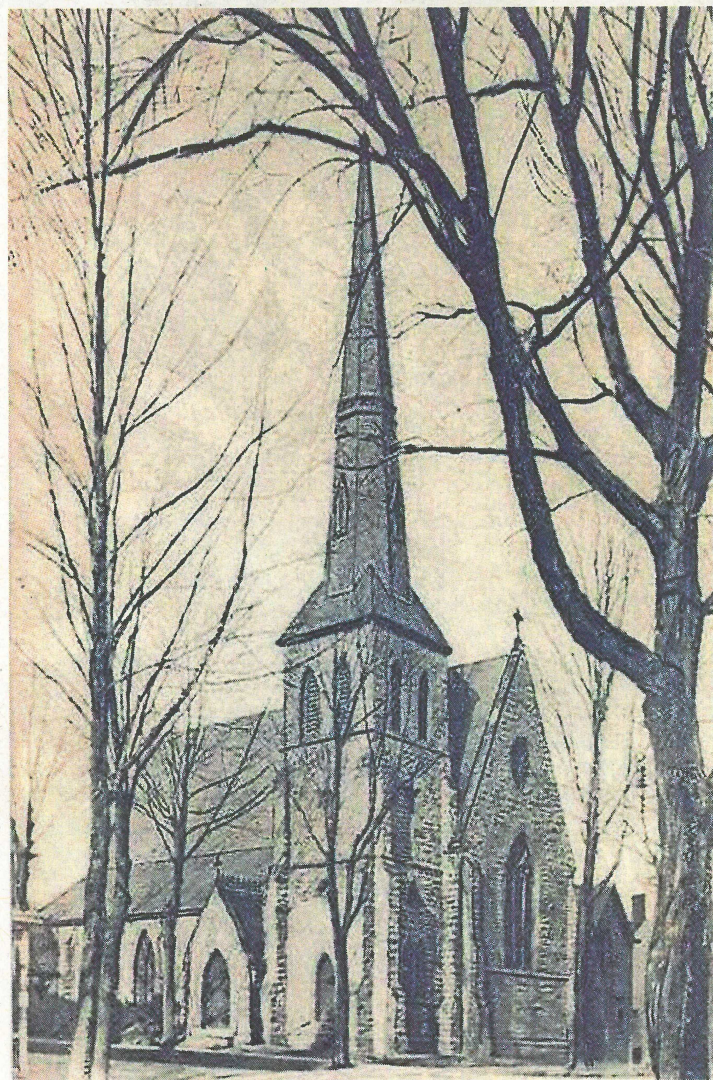
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honor our community of
faith which continues
to grow today.*

— — — — —

A TIMELINE OF 250 YEARS

By Jennifer Jean Miller
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This historic photo of Christ Episcopal Church shows its steeple, which was damaged by lightning in 1929 and had to be removed.



The church today still lacks its steeple.

Since it was formed 250 years ago, Christ Episcopal Church has continued to evolve, from 50 families first meeting in the Sussex County Courthouse in 1769, to approximately 200 individuals in 2019 who attend weekly and sit in the sanctuary's 325 seats on the pews — a number that can surge four times yearly to 600 people.

Educational programs for all ages, music programs and outreach round out the church's physical and spiritual presence.

The church's rich history is chronicled in periodicals and books from church historians past and present, including the current church historian Merritt Ierley's books "An Inheritance of the Faithful" and "The Broken Staff — The Improbable Story of Uzal Ogden, 1744-1822." Once a part of the Church of England, the church is the third oldest within the Diocese of Newark.

CHRIST EPISCOPAL CHURCH 1769-2019

November 1769 - The Rev. Dr. Thomas B. Chandler, the rector of the St. John's Church in Elizabeth, visits Sussex County on horseback and meets with 50 families who profess their faith to the Church of England.

Dec. 28, 1769 - Chandler returns to Newton, then known as "New Town" to organize the church's first vestry or leadership, choosing two wardens and 19 vestrymen for Newton; plus wardens for the parishes in Knowlton and Roxbury townships.

1770 - Jonathan Hampton, also of Elizabeth and a vestryman in Chandler's church - who owned property in Newton, donates 10 acres for the Christ Church parsonage, which stands today on Dunn Place as the "1770 House."

April 1770 - The Proprietors of East Jersey, the colony's jurisdictional authority, granted 200 acres of land to the parish in the Fredon area, about 3.5 miles outside of Newton.

June 5, 1770 - The Rev. Uzal Ogden, then 24, accepts his role as Christ Church's first rector, leading services in Newton the third Sunday of each month; and on other Sundays in Roxbury, Knowlton and Hackettstown, which were eventually phased out.

Dec. 25, 1770 - The church wardens and vestry requested a £30 yearly salary for Ogden "in consideration of his services in the church."

Sept. 21, 1773 - Ogden is ordained by the The Bishop of London The Rt. Rev. Richard Terrick.

Aug. 15, 1774 - The Church Charter, a document that is displayed in the church today, is granted on behalf of King George III by Benjamin Franklin's son William Franklin, the royal governor of New Jersey.

Oct. 1, 1774 - The church receives a bill for issuance of the charter, payable to the provincial government.

Dec. 13, 1774 - William Franklin makes a contribution to the church, canceling the debt for the administrative fees for the charter.

1776 - Ogden marries 21-year-old Mary Gouveneur, with their first child Nicholas born later that year.

Dec. 6, 1776 - Ogden leaves Newton for New York, because of the discord in the colony in the colonists' quest for independence and wrote to the Society for Propagation of the Gospel that he sought shelter in New York.

July 16, 1779 - Ogden writes to Commander-in-Chief George Washington to send him one of his published sermons and prayers.

Aug. 5, 1779 - Washington responds to Ogden to thank him for "the good wishes and prayers you offer in my behalf."

Aug. 10, 1784 - Ogden submits his letter of resignation to Christ Church, for an appointment at Trinity Church in New York City, with patriot Thomas Anderson assigned to take charge of the church's deed, prayer book, Bible and its charter.

March 29, 1823 - The church gains possession of the tract where it is situated today.

Nov. 19, 1823 - The first Christ Church building - fashioned in an early Gothic Revival style - is erected and consecrated on the same site where it exists today, with seating for 250.

Nov. 20, 1823 - Clarkson "Dominie" Dunn is chosen as the church rector and Ogden's successor.

1824 - By this year, the church has its first organ.

March 12, 1838 - A church bell, acquired from Spain, is installed in the building.

March 1857 - Dunn resigns to become a rector at Grace Church in Elizabeth and son-in-law Nathaniel Pettit assumes the role.



Sunday school class circa 1900. The rector, pictured at left, is The Rev. Charles Leighton Steele, Sr.

1860 - The church building is repaired to include a new slate roof, stained glass windows, new ceiling, color to the walls and exterior plaster.

May 1865 - The church begins fundraising for a new building, raising \$4,650 via a subscription.

1867 - The first Christ Church building is deemed unsafe and services are relocated to the Sussex County Courthouse and Rinker's Hall, another building then on the square.

May 1868 - Plans are drawn up for the construction of a new church building; and Rev. William Welles Holley becomes the new church rector.

Aug. 21, 1868 - The cornerstone is laid for the building that is now the site of Christ Episcopal Church.

July 11, 1869 - This is the first Sunday that the present church building is used for services.

1870 - The Rev. William H. Moffett

begins as rector.

1885 - Moffett steps down as rector to accept an appointment from President Grover Cleveland as U.S. Minister to Greece, with Rev. Samuel Edson assuming the rector role.

1886 - The church is redecorated with carpeting, a marble shelf and gas corona on the chancel, among improvements.

1889 - A new organ is presented to the church.

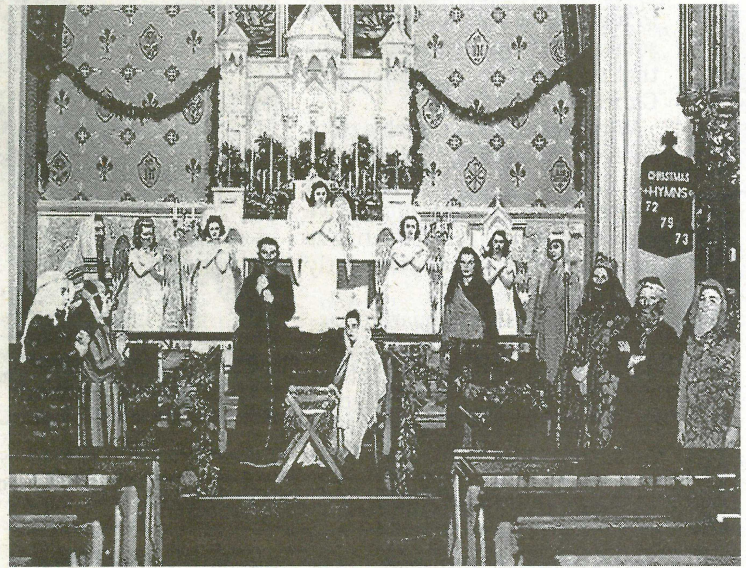
1892 - Edson resigns to be a part of the Diocese of Easton in Maryland and is replaced by Charles L. Steel.

1905 - The church and parish house undergo renovations, including electrical lighting, wallpaper, cushions for the pews and new windows.

May 1910 - Steel resigns to take the role of rector of Calvary Church in West Philadelphia; and the retired Rev. James Earl Hall serves as acting rector



The Girls Friendly Society, 1939, is one of the many outreach groups that served the community over the years.



Christmas pageant 1938.

until Rev. Ernest C. Tuthill is appointed.

1915 - The Rev. George A. Green becomes the new church rector, organizing Newton's first Boy Scout Troop.

1919 - Green resigns for a role as head chaplain for New York's Seaman's Church Institute, with Dr. Gilbert Lee Pennock in place until 1923.

1923 - The Rev. George R. Hewlett begins serving in the first of his two terms as rector.

1927 - Hewlett departs to join Pennsylvania's Diocese of Bethlehem.

1928 - The Rev. Oscar Meyer, coined a "latter-day Uzal Ogden," begins his service as rector.

1929 - The church loses its steeple during a summer thunderstorm, with the damage so severe to the spire, it is dismantled for safety.

1934 - Hewlett begins serving for another term after Meyer departs for mission work in Warren County.

1947 - Hewlett retires and The Rev. Leonard F. Nichols takes his place as rector, with membership doubling under his tenure from 459 to 1,000.

Sept. 29, 1963 - Nichols retires and The Rev. William Dougherty takes his place.

1969 - Holley Hall, the two-story parish hall, is dedicated as a connection between the sanctuary and the

Thomas Anderson House, which was purchased by the church in 1965.

Jan. 1, 1982 - Dougherty retires as rector, but continues as rector emeritus.

July 24, 1983 - The Rev. Joseph D. Herring begins serving as the church's rector.

Sept. 21, 1992 - Christ Church is added to the New Jersey Register of Historic Places.

Nov. 12, 1992 - Christ Church is added to the National Register of Historic Places.

1998 - Herring's service ends and The Rev. Bradford G. Whitaker's begins.

2003 - The Rev. Canon Robert T. Griner, the present rector, starts serving with the church.

January 2011 - After developing a partnership with the Diocese of Panama, Griner helps dedicate a new church in the village of Lajas Lisas.

2017 - Among its many outreach programs within the community, one parishioner starts the "Sunday Brunch in a Bag" program to help provide meals for those in need on Sundays; and now serves approximately 85 individuals each Sunday.

November 2019 - The church marks its 250th anniversary with a month-long calendar of celebratory events.



The church nave and altar underwent renovation in 2015.

Thomas Anderson, assigned to safeguard church's founding documents, books

By Jennifer Jean Miller
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Although he was a part of one of Sussex County's first families, not much has been written about the accomplishments of Thomas Anderson, who also helped to found several historical cornerstone institutions in Newton — some that still exist today — including Christ Episcopal Church.

With a focus on the church's 250th anniversary, an interest in Anderson and learning about him has been renewed because of his impressive accolades, which included acting as the guardian of the church's early archives.

A deputy assistant quartermaster general of the Continental Army during the American Revolution, Anderson was so well-connected in his day that in the historical Anderson family papers, now in the care of the New Jersey Historical Society, there exists military discharge paperwork for an individual among Anderson's papers signed by George Washington, commander of the Continental Army. In fact, it is believed that Washington dined in Anderson's home — now part of the Christ Church complex — in 1780 while staying at the hotel that once existed on Park Place before a fire engulfed it in 1857.

The Daughters of Colonial Wars in New Jersey marked Anderson's home with a special historical marker in 1958 because of his significance in the community.

Both Anderson and his first wife, Letitia Thornton Anderson, were not only devout to their church, but to the cause of patriotism within the budding nation. In Anderson's role as deputy assistant quartermaster general, he was charged with directing supplies for the Revolution, with some of those supplies stored in Newton and even his home. His wife was one of several brave "Ladies of Trenton," a group of women who advertised in local papers their pledge to financially support the patriots and war effort, an act that some historians have said placed figurative targets on the women's backs.

Professionally, Anderson worked as a lawyer and was the county's first surrogate, appointed by Royal Governor William Franklin in 1768,



Thomas Anderson's home, now part of Christ Church, is rumored to have been visited by Gen. George Washington in 1780. [PHOTO BY DANIEL FREEL/NEW JERSEY HERALD (NJH)]

the son of Benjamin Franklin — a role Anderson retained until his death. He was also Sussex County's acting clerk from 1770 through 1777. In 1774, he served on the Sussex County Committee of Correspondence — a group that helped to exchange ideas about the pursuit of independence. In 1775, he served on the Committee of Safety, a counter-government initiative; and was the county's sheriff from 1775 to 1777.

On a personal level, Anderson was a founder of Harmony Lodge No. 8, A.F. & A.M. in Newton — founded in 1788 and now the second oldest lodge in the Grand Lodge of New Jersey, according to the group's website. Anderson served as Harmony Lodge's Master from 1789 through 1791, then again in 1795 through 1797 and finally, 1800 through his death 1805. He also helped to found Newton's first school, the Newton Academy; and was one of the school's elected trustees in 1801. The building still stands today across from Christ Church.

Newton's town square was groomed, according to information provided by the United States Department of the Interior National Park Service about its Newton Town Plot Historic District, to accommodate the most desirable real estate on the Green, with plans for

the academy, church, Episcopalian parsonage and cemetery on what was then called "New York Road," today's Main Street.

Jonathan Hampton, a well-known Freemason, lawyer, surveyor and devout Episcopalian, was appointed to survey land tracts under British rule including 2,500 acres that belonged to William Penn, which comprised Newton's Town Plot.

It was Anderson who was one of the first buyers of the town lots, his home architecturally styled in the "Federal" style common for that time period. He owned two tracts on Park Place, including 1.39 acres in 1783; and .3 acres in 1784, for his home, on the space that is currently occupied by the Park Plaza Offices.

Constructed in 1785, Anderson's house at 62 Main St. is the only surviving building associated with Anderson and the only structure from the 1700s that had faced the Newton Green. Anderson's home, which was featured on Newton's town map drawn in 1813 — eight years after his death — was moved up the street adjacent to Christ Church in 1896.

In 1965, owners Martin and Anna Snook sold it to the church.

Anderson's role in the church was unique not only because of the significance of his home and its connection

to the present-day church, but because of his extensive involvement. He was one of the church's first vestrymen — a member of the church's body of leaders — serving in 1769 and 1774; and from approximately 1776 through 1784. From 1784 through 1794, Anderson was a church warden — a role that helps to provide care to the congregation. He was additionally a delegate to the Diocesan Convention in 1791 and 1792.

One of Anderson's special roles that garnered no official title was as the guardian of the church's Charter document from 1774, the church's land deeds, its Book of Common Prayer and its Bible. Anderson was assigned, per church meeting minutes from Aug. 10, 1784, on the occasion of the resignation of the church's first rector Rev. Uzal Ogden, to safeguard these items. This was an important assignment as the parish remained without a rector until 1820, well beyond Anderson's death in 1805.

Anderson's Last Will and Testament, of which a copy is available at the Sussex County Surrogate Office, does not specify that Anderson assigned the guardianship of the church books and other documents to his beneficiaries. Christ Church historian Merritt Ierley said he believes Anderson likely physically passed the items to his son, William T. Anderson, outside of his will for safekeeping, before his death.

Anderson is buried in the Old Newton Burial Ground.

Although the whereabouts of the Bible is presently unknown, Ierley said Anderson was instrumental in helping to preserve the other artifacts, which was additionally important since the church was without a physical location until 1823. With neither a rector nor a church building, Ierley said he believed Anderson was chosen as a viable individual to care for these items based on his character and vocation; and these important relics could have been lost to time, if not for Anderson.

Jennifer Jean Miller can also be reached by phone at: 973-383-1230; on Facebook: www.Facebook.com/JMillerNJH and on Twitter: www.twitter.com/JMillerNJH.

BOOK

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Ogden traveled to London from Newton for his ordination, according to Ierley's book. Ogden departed from New York to London around July 1773, with his ordination on Sept. 21 of that year, by the Bishop of London the Rt. Rev. Richard Terrick. Ogden stayed in London through November, arriving back to New York on Jan. 3, 1774. Though Newton was his home base, Ogden ministered in Pennsylvania and throughout northern New Jersey in an area of about 2,000 square miles, including in Knowlton, Roxbury, Hackettstown, Morristown, Newark and Belleville.

In those early years, Christ

Church parishioners met for services in Newton every third Sunday of the month, with Ogden preaching in Knowlton, Roxbury and Hackettstown on the other Sundays. He also conducted prayer services in private homes occasionally during the week.

Ogden married in 1776 - the year that the colonies officially became a battleground for independence - and he and his wife Mary, eventually joined by their children, resided in the parsonage.

The parsonage, on Dunn Place, is known as the "1770 House" and is said to be Newton's oldest structure. It has been a private residence since 1868.

Ierley questioned in his book whether Ogden was a Tory or Patriot, but noted that the church itself did not shut its doors during the Revolution, as there was not an actual church building until 1823.

RECTOR

From Page 6

with parishioners in Newton and Panama visiting one another's parishes.

1769 and 2019 sermons

The implementation of the church's sermons over the last 250 years, though both incorporate the church's "Book of Common Prayer," certainly differ. Ogden used the 1662 version of the book, with Griner taking his readings from the 1979 version.

The versions, Griner said, differ in their outlook of the world, which in the 1662 book, the world was viewed as "troublesome" and a place where individuals found struggle. On the other hand, from today's view, the words from the 1979 version, Griner said, are more optimistic about life and a person's place in it. More individuals in the first church were likely afraid of God's wrath, rather than first recognizing His love, Griner said; a view that would likely deter churchgoers of today.

He described Chandler's sermons as very academic, but Ogden's as more heartfelt, spontaneous and moved by the Holy Spirit. Ogden's emotional approach may have been one of the factors that cost him his consecration after he was elected bishop of New Jersey.

Although he was more unconventional than other rectors of his day,

Griner said Ogden would perhaps be appalled by the services today versus those of his own.

Additionally, the duration of the services would differ, with today's service lasting approximately one hour, while 250 years ago, a service was much longer. While churches have developed competition from other distractions since Ogden's day, Griner called Ogden's sermons "the only game in town." Attendees to Christ Church's first services, Griner said, traveled from various points in Sussex County to the Sussex County Courthouse, one of the locations where services were held until the church's first building was constructed in 1823. Ogden was also the only ordained minister in the area and those of other religious denominations would attend his services in their quest for God, for their social interactions and entertainment.

Fellowship and outreach then and now

One of the first documents that Christ Church leadership drafted in 1771, shortly after the parish was founded, was of a social nature. Griner said Christ Church parishioners documented the need for a license to conduct a lottery; and acquire a gallon and a half of rum. The rum was requested for what was documented as a "parish frolic social event," Griner said.

After Ogden's departure from the church in what Ierley called a "dark era," the church was without a permanent rector and building until 1823. In spite of that, the church, in 1805, sought approval from the state

Ierley surmised in his book that while most of the parishioners were patriots, Ogden was likely a Tory for a period of time, as he disappeared from Newton on Dec. 6, 1776, to New York for a month - then considered a Tory hotbed.

Ierley found correspondence that showed that Ogden sheltered himself in New York City, writing to the Society for the Propagation of the Gospel, known as the "S.P.G." in London that "I have on account of the political confusions of the country, been obliged to leave my mission and family and have taken refuge in this city."

After Ogden returned to Newton, he wrote to the S.P.G., according to Ierley's book, about the challenges since the Declaration of Independence, on how his parish could pray for King George III, without appearing to pray for him. Ogden admitted to the S.P.G. he removed

the liturgy and simply preached instead.

In spite of his loyalty to the crown, while living in Newton in mid-July 1779, Ogden wrote to and mailed one of his sermons and expressed his prayers to General George Washington. Washington - also an Episcopalian - wrote back to Ogden in early August, thanking him for his correspondence.

It is here that historians like Ierley question Ogden's full loyalty to the crown, mentioning that his alma mater at Princeton University was then coined a "seminary of sedition." His letter with prayers to Washington prayed that Washington "long wear the wreath of laurel woven by the hand of America."

Jennifer Jean Miller can also be reached by phone at: 973-383-1230; and on Facebook: www.Facebook.com/JMillerNJH.

Legislature to donate the funds it had earned from renting out its rectory and from its agricultural lands. The intent was to provide funding to the Newton Academy - a school opened in 1802 - to educate the most impoverished students.

As the church has evolved over the last 250 years, the church has developed a plethora of outreach, education, music and fellowship

opportunities that did not exist in Ogden's day.

"It would seem strange to him (Ogden) to have all of these groups that we have now," Griner said.

Jennifer Jean Miller can also be reached by phone at: 973-383-1230; on Facebook: www.Facebook.com/JMillerNJH and on Twitter: www.twitter.com/JMillerNJH.

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WE PARTICULARLY WISH TO EXPRESS OUR GRATITUDE TO THE REVEREND CANON ROBERT GRINER FOR HIS TIRELESS EFFORTS IN TENDING HIS FLOCK AND MAKING CHRIST EPISCOPAL CHURCH A WONDERFUL PLACE TO WORSHIP. WE ALSO WISH TO THANK HIS FAMILY, ERIKA, JESSE AND ELIOT, FOR ALLOWING ROBERT TO GO ABOVE AND BEYOND IN FULFILLING HIS CALLING.

TO THOSE IN OUR COMMUNITY SEARCHING FOR A CHURCH HOME, WE WELCOME YOU TO JOIN US.

PEACE,

ROBERT, DAWN, MAGGIE AND JULIA CHARLTON

Outreach, education and fellowship are part of church tradition

By Jennifer Jean Miller
jmiller@njherald.com

From Christ Episcopal Church's first parishioners' interests in 1805 to donate funds to Newton Academy toward the education of students in need, to present-day parishioners providing "Brunch in a Bag" to feed hungry community members, the church has a longtime tradition of outreach.

Organized outreach efforts at the church began in 1879, with the establishment of the Parish Guild, an initiative within the church that church historian Merritt Ierley described as an activity to raise funds to help with those who were ill or impoverished within the community. The guild additionally raised funds to maintain the church altar and the building's upkeep.

Other organizations within Christ Church started to form, some of a philanthropic nature and others for ministry, fellowship, education and as part of the musical programs.

By 1900, the Brotherhood of St. Andrew, an evangelistic Bible study group, sprouted up. The Sewing Society started in 1901. Daughters of the King, a women's prayer group, also became a part of the church in 1903.

In 1910, the church saw the development of the Altar Guild - succeeding a portion of the Parish



Guild - and the start of the church's Women's Auxiliary. The Parish Guild and Women's Auxiliary eventually merged in 1942.

In 1912, the church's vested choir was also established.

In 1915, the new church rector The Rev. George A. Green, organized Newton's first Boy Scout Troop. More activities for young people followed, with the inception of the Young People's Fellowship in 1936 and junior choir in 1939. The Girl's Friendly Society was another group

within the church during the 1930s.

During World War II, the Sussex County Chapter of the Red Cross met

The Episcopal Church Women's Group meets monthly for fellowship, such as at this craft night in March, but also focuses on community service.

See **OUTREACH**, 15



The Christ Episcopal Church Choir, 1912. Christ Church is known for its musical outreach.

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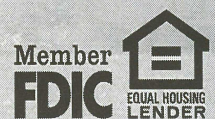
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OUTREACH

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at the church, with parishioners and members of the community assisting with mobilizing clothing to send to Europeans in need. The newly-merged Parish Guild and Women's Auxiliary collected donations for the Red Cross and the military-support organization USO; and sent Christmas care packages to those serving during World War II.

Today's women's ministries

As part of the tradition of Christ Church women helping others, in today's church, a branch of the national group National Episcopal Church Women's Organization, exists at the church through the Episcopal Church Women's Group. In addition to meeting monthly for potluck lunches and fellowship, the group focuses on assisting within the community.

"Sisters in Christ" is another group of women that meets each Sunday, that support one another within a confidential gathering.

Community outreach opportunities

Christ Church parishioners can choose from a range of opportunities to serve, depending on where they find their calling leads them.

"Helping Hands" is a church initiative that where parishioners of all ages and skill levels help senior citizens with household maintenance, construction projects and yard work.

The "Christ Church Blanketeers" apply their knitting, sewing, crocheting and other handiwork talents the second Saturday of each month to create blankets for individuals and animals in need.

Parishioners can volunteer the fourth Wednesday of each month to help serve lunch at Manna House, a community effort through the First Presbyterian Church of Newton to provide hot lunches during the weekdays to low-income individuals.

Christ Church hosts families who are homeless within the community approximately five weeks a year, providing food, shelter and companionship to those who are staying as part of the Family Promise program. Parishioners can assist by preparing meals and staying overnight at the church.

"Sunday Brunch in a Bag," one of the newest volunteer initiatives,

provides a nourishing brown-bagged lunch on Sundays to those in need.

For those within the church able to travel, there are missionary opportunities to help outside of the United States through the partnership the church shares with the Diocese of Panama. On past trips, Christ Church helped to construct a new church in one village, build a home for a disabled individual who was part of one of the parishes within Panama's diocese and assisted with other hands-on projects.

Opening its doors

As it has done over the years, Christ Church has opened its doors for outside groups to use its facilities. Alcoholics Anonymous regularly meets at the church. Pathways 2 Prosperity, a group that provides mentoring and opportunities to low-income individuals, also convenes at the church as does Sussex County Community College's English as a Second Language program. Area music programs use the church's facilities, including the Children's Chorus of Sussex County, Sussex County Youth Orchestra and Sussex County Oratorio Society.

Educational programs

The church offers Christian Educational programs to all age groups. Sunday School provides a Christian education to children from preschool through high school. Children also participate in the Christmas Pageant and a spring play.

Teens can participate on Sundays in "Journeys," Christ Church's Youth Group. Bible discussions, outreach to seniors at Liberty Towers and trips to Panama following the Rite of Confirmation are some of the activities the youth have participated in.

Adult Bible Study is an option for the church's adult population each Thursday.

Music program

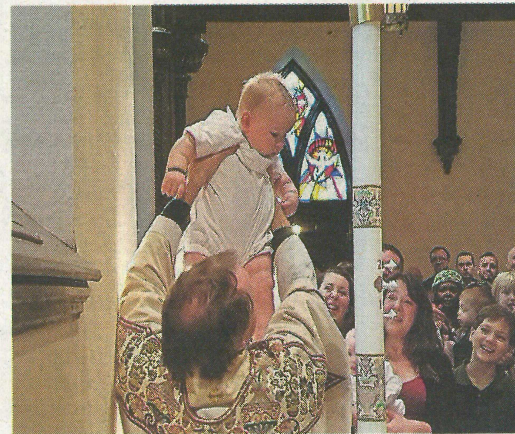
Christ Church is known for its musical outreach with its Senior Choir performing regularly on Sundays, often accompanied by guest musicians. The Junior Choir is comprised of musicians in grades 1 through 6. The two choirs join together in December to perform Nine Lessons & Carols.

Fellowship

As the church's first families enjoyed a "parish frolic," as documented in the church archives from



ABOVE: The Helping Hands crew assists a Newton resident with some home repairs.



LEFT: Christ Episcopal Church welcomes a new member of its family in November 2017.

1771, the tradition of time together is something today's parishioners still enjoy. Coffee hour following service, the monthly church breakfast, Lenten potluck suppers, concert

receptions, stewardship dinners, Sunday School parties, the Easter Vigil reception and yearly church picnic are among the regular church gatherings.

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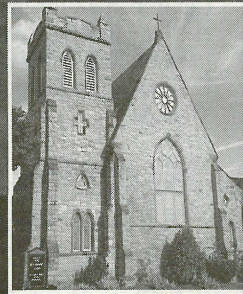
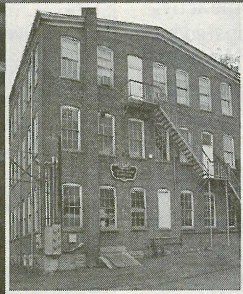
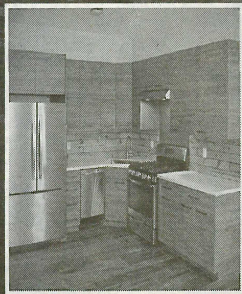
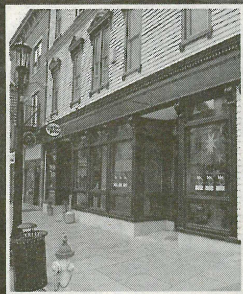


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