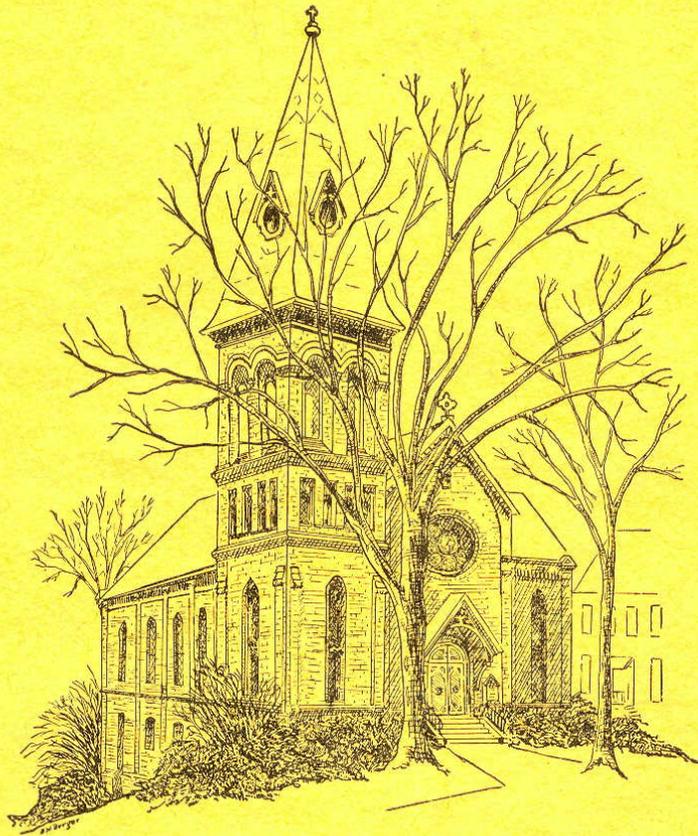
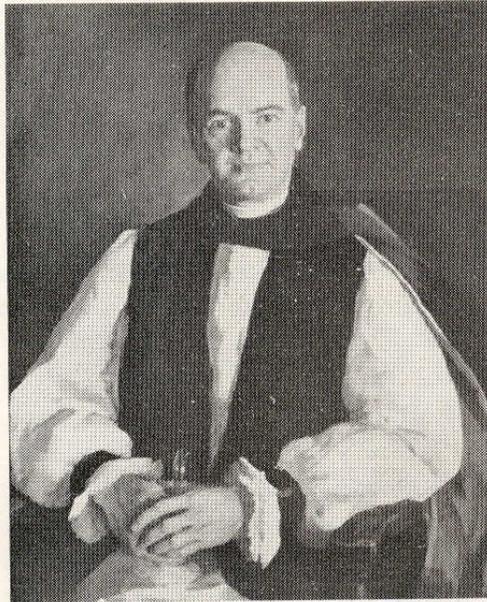


Fifty Years
of the Episcopal Church
in Southbridge, Mass.
1904 - 1954



Holy Trinity Church
Southbridge, Mass.



The Rt. Rev. W. Appleton Lawrence,
Bishop of Western Massachusetts

DIOCESE OF WESTERN MASSACHUSETTS

Diocesan Offices: 17 Chestnut St. Springfield 3, Massachusetts

My Dear Parishioners of Holy Trinity Church, Southbridge:

I am happy to be able to send you all this message of hearty congratulations on the completion of 50 years of spiritual helpfulness and wide services, to the community and the diocese and the general church. I feel that I have a special interest and relationship with Holy Trinity because it was the first mission to become a parish after I became a Bishop. I would also like to add to my hearty congratulations, my high confidence and very best wishes for the 50 and more years ahead. These I want to express both personally and officially.

Your friend and Bishop, W. Appleton Lawrence

"WE LOOK BACK!"

To compress the story of fifty years of service into small booklet form is a difficult task. There is always the temptation, in trying to do justice to all persons and projects involved, to become unnecessarily wordy and involved. The author of this sketch, "Fifty Years of the Episcopal Church in Southbridge, Mass.", has happily not fallen prey to this. Mr. Walter G. Buckley, former Clerk and Warden of Holy Trinity Church, many times Delegate to the Diocesan Convention, member of many committees of the Diocese of Western Massachusetts, founder together with his wife of the Holy Trinity Endowment Fund, has sifted through much material about this Parish and has presented a fascinating account of the birth of a new Christian Family. It tells the story of men and women who worked hard and long in face of seemingly unfair hardship (none of us who have merely read about it can fully understand the discouragement of two devastating fires); who proudly relinquished all Diocesan assistance to become a responsible part of the Church throughout the world, and whose daring dreams coming into reality have given us today a pattern for courage and performance. To those who have thus labored,-and they were many-Holy Trinity Church itself is their monument. And as theirs is a great accomplishment, so ours is a great debt. May we prove faithful stewards and grateful inheritors.

NORMAN LAWRENCE KELLETT, B. D. Fourth Rector of Holy Trinity Church

THE EPISCOPAL CHURCH IN SOUTHBRIDGE

The first Episcopal Mission in Southbridge was started in 1871 and the first services were held in a small hall in the Whitford Block on the corners of Main and Hamilton Streets. Sometime later services were held in the District Court Room in the Ammidown Block on Main Street. The principal supporters were the three Grant brothers, who owned and operated the Columbian Mill. This mill was located on East Main Street, near what is now the old lens plant of the American Optical Company. Reverend Mr. Spear was in charge. Many of the members of the Church worked in the print works at Sandersdale. When continued interruptions in the business at Sandersdale caused many families to leave town, the Mission ceased operations.

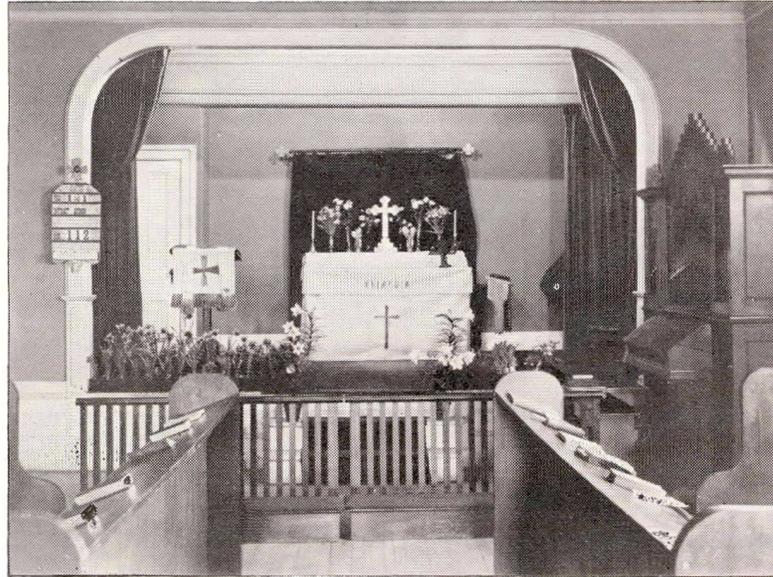
A second attempt was made and a new organization formed with Mrs. Mary Blair as president, John Heale as secretary and Henry Merrill as treasurer. Meetings were held in a hall owned by William Edwards, who allowed the Mission free rent for a year. The Edwards Block was destroyed by fire in 1875. An effort was made to save the furnishings of the Mission. The exposure and exertion on the part of Mrs. Blair resulted in an illness, which caused her death. The altar used at that time was saved and stored in the Edwards home on Main Street. This was later the home of Mr. George W. Wells and his family. The altar was later discovered and placed in our present Church in September 1925. With the death of Mrs. Blair the second effort to establish a Church ended.

The early records are not too clear but they indicate that services were held at various times in the G. A. R. Hall, old Masonic Hall, the Methodist Church and the Town Hall. The men who conducted these services were Reverend T. C. Cooley, Reverend Roger Howard, a Reverend Mr. Buck and a Reverend Mr. Boyer.

A third attempt to establish a Mission was announced in the Southbridge Journal of November 13, 1879. There was a good deal of interest at the first meeting held on November 20, 1879, and a considerable amount of money was raised to defray expenses. Services were held in "Dresser's small hall" by Reverend D. E. Jennings, and later the Good Samaritan Hall was used. Wilfred Kilton, a Lay Reader, conducted the services.

1. On May 30, 1880 Bishop B. Paddock delivered a sermon.
2. On June 10, 1880 funeral services for Jane McCotte were held at the Union Church. She was the first person baptized under the auspices of the Mission on July 21, 1871. She left a bequest of \$50.00 to the Mission. *(All of the above information was furnished by Miss Katherine L. Edwards of Boston in letters dated April 16, (1916, June 10, 1925 and January 24, 1930.)*

In 1892 the Rector of the Church in Webster failed in his effort to establish regular services here. When the Right Reverend A. H. Vinton became first Bishop of Western Massachusetts, one of his first acts was to send men to investigate and report on the possibility of establishing a Mission in Southbridge. The report was favorable. On Friday evening, January 27, 1905, the Reverend Frederic W. Bailey held the first service, renting for the occasion Social Hall, in the Masonic Building. There is no record of the number present, but it was large enough to encourage him to go on. Regular services were begun on Sunday afternoons, and interest quickly developed.



Social Hall, in Masonic Building, Main St., Southbridge Services held here from 1904 to 1921.

On May 14, the third Sunday after Easter, Bishop Vinton visited the Mission and confirmed twenty persons, prepared and presented by the Priest-In-Charge. This was a great day for the new Mission. After the services the Bishop called together a group of men for a business meeting. Besides the clergy there were present: Samuel Sharpe, Harry W. Hill, William H. Hurlbut, Robert Wardle, Walter Metcalfe, William Sanders, William Beardwood, Samuel Norris and Aaron H. Pease. After thorough discussion it was decided to organize the Mission under the title, "Holy Trinity Church."

The first Priest-In-Charge was Reverend Frederic W. Bailey, June 1, 1905, Ascension Day. In the election that followed these officers were elected: Senior Warden, Harry W. Hill; Junior Warden, William H. Hurlbut; Treasurer, Samuel Sharpe; Clerk, Robert Wardle. Executive Committee, A. H. Pease, Walter T. Metcalfe, W. Mainard, William Sanders and William Beardwood. Finance Committee, Harry W. Hill, Samuel Sharpe and Robert Wardle. Committee on Church Service, A. H. Pease and Walter T. Metcalfe. All of these men have passed on.

Reverend F. W. Bailey resigned and in June 1907 Reverend George H. Hoyt was appointed Priest-In-Charge. Under Mr. Hoyt's direction considerable progress was made. The Harrington lot on Hamilton Street was purchased in 1909 at a cost of \$2000. It was expected that a Church would be erected on this site. At that time it was felt that a suitable church, seating 125 people, could be erected for \$10,000.

A building fund was started in January 1909. The first names that appear in the record book are Mr. and Mrs. John Pollard; others include Mrs. Monroe Walters, Mrs. Robert Wardle, Miss Alice Clarke, Miss Josephine Clarke, and Mrs. George Cheney. It is interesting to note that the amount raised in 1909 was \$2491.31. Of this amount \$1511.21 came from the Bishop, the Diocese, and other churches and friends of the Mission.

On May 3, 1910, Reverend George H. Hoyt resigned to accept a call to Saint Agnes Chapel of Trinity Parish, New York City. His resignation took effect July 1, 1910. Reverend Charles S. Champlin was appointed Priest-In-Charge by Bishop Davies on November 10, 1910. During the next four years progress was slow but steady. On June 20, 1914 Mr. Champlin resigned to accept a call to become Rector of Grace Church in Baldwinsville, New York.

Reverend C. Morton Murray was appointed Priest-In-Charge in March 1914. He had been Rector of Saint Peter's Church in Springfield. Because of his contacts in the diocese, a number of contributions to our building fund were secured. The Worcester Convocation met in Southbridge for the first time. At this time transportation was rather difficult and, as a result, a large number of delegates had to be entertained by members of the Mission. It was a successful Convocation, and it stimulated more interest in our Mission on the part of the Churches in the Diocese.

A large framed picture of Bishop Alex H. Vinton, D.D., for whom our church was to be a memorial, was presented by Ellen H. Merrill of Worcester on January 7, 1917.

The trustees reported on January 15, 1917 that, in addition to a building lot valued at \$2000, the Building Fund in Southbridge amounted to \$3769.75; in addition there was also in Springfield \$2132.97, and in Worcester \$540; a total of \$6442.72. By January 13, 1919 this fund had increased to \$7768.72. In November 1920 Reverend C. Morton Murray resigned due to ill health. Bishop Davies appointed Reverend John C. Petrie Priest-In-Charge.

Reverend John C. Petrie informed the Executive Committee on March 28, 1921 that the Hamilton Woolen Company had offered to sell the Union Church Building and land to the Mission for the sum of \$15,000 - and in addition, the Parsonage and land for \$5000. The committee voted in favor of the purchase and called a special Parish meeting to put the matter before the members.

Note: The Hamilton Woolen Company first offered to sell the Church to the "Union Congregational Society," explaining that the company originally built the Church for their people who found it difficult to go downtown to Church. It was to be a non-sectarian Church. Now that the Church had joined the Congregational group, the owners of the mill felt that they could not continue to support the organization. The "Union Congregational Society," due to lack of members as well as funds, declined to purchase the Church building and it was then offered to us.)

At a special Parish meeting held on March 31, 1921 at the Y. M. C. A. with Bishop Thomas W. Davies presiding, Archdeacon Mott was present. All aspects of the proposed purchase were discussed. A vote was taken and the results were 98 in favor and 8 against the purchase. The estimated value of the property at that time was \$57,500. A committee to purchase the property was appointed, consisting of Harry W. Hill, J. A. Rice, R. A. Rice, Miss Alice Clarke and Mrs. F. W. Rowley. The trustees were authorized to sell the building lot on Hamilton Street. Bishop Davies was present and preached the sermon at the first service in the new Church on May 1, 1921.

Reverend John C. Petrie resigned as Priest-in-Charge on May 1, 1921 and Archdeacon Mott assumed temporary charge of the new Church. At a special meeting held at the Church on May 19, 1921 it was voted to form a corporation to be known as Holy Trinity Church, to succeed

Holy Trinity Mission. There followed a lively discussion about the name of the Church. It was voted that the proper name should be "Trinity Church". A corporation was formed and the following incorporators were elected: H. W. Hill, Joseph Law, R. A. Rice, W. G. Buckley, J. A. Rice, Godfrey Oddy, Frank H. Darling, Martin Peterson, Walter Wood, J. H. Wilcock, Harold E. Morehouse, Abel Steenburn and Richard Quarry. It was voted that a Board of Trustees consisting of Alice M. Clarke, Harry W. Hill and J. A. Rice be authorized to purchase the Church, Parsonage and land from the Hamilton Woolen Company for the sum of \$20,000 and take the title in the name of Alice M. Clarke. Miss Clarke was authorized to execute a note secured by a mortgage on the property.

A special parish meeting was held on June 5, 1921 to discuss more fully the action taken at the meeting of May 19th, which changed the name of Holy Trinity Church to Trinity Church. A letter from Bishop Davies concerning the change was read. After a general discussion, vote was taken to rescind the action of May 19th, and those present voted 36 to 6 in favor of Holy Trinity Church.

On June 8, 1921 the Incorporators of Holy Trinity Church held their first meeting, and elected Walter G. Buckley, Clerk. They then proceeded to elect twelve Vestrymen. The Vestrymen then elected the following officers: Senior Warden Harry W. Hill; Junior Warden William H. Hurlbut; Treasurer Josiah A. Rice; Auditor James H. Wilcock; Clerk, Walter G. Buckley.



First Christmas in present Church, 1921, before Chancel alterations.

The acquiring of the Church Building and Rectory marked the end of an era lasting 16 years. During that time services had been held in a public hall. All through the years the Altar, Choir Stalls, Seats and Books had to be arranged before the services and stored away afterwards. The organs, of which there were several, were always foot or hand organs pumped in full view of the congregation and sometimes to the amusement of the younger generation. Membership in the church showed a slow growth. The interest of many fluctuated depending on the Priest-in-Charge. Money was always a problem. All sorts of schemes for raising money for the building fund were tried. Throughout the years a comparatively small group of the faithful saw to it that

things were done. It is interesting to note that during the period of 1909 to 1921 the building fund grew to \$16,785.62. Of this amount \$10,261.04 came from outside sources, chiefly the Diocese, the Bishop, and other Churches. The remaining \$6,524.58 includes a profit of \$1,500 on the sale of the Hamilton Street lot.

October 1, 1921, the Reverend Leigh R. Urban began his duties as Priest-in-Charge. His was a very fortunate choice for our Church. An excellent preacher, well versed in art and music, and devoted to the Church. There was at once more active interest in the Church on the part of many who never felt at home in the Mission Hall. There were people loosely attached to the Church who now became interested. The first problem to be faced was making more churchly the interior of the building. With the assistance of the Bishop an architect was secured to suggest changes. His plans were adopted and the "Chancel Fund" started.

The annual Parish Meeting on January 24, 1923, indicated considerable progress had been made since we acquired our own building. The mortgage was still \$5000. On April 23, 1923, the Treasurer reported that the mortgage had been paid. A portion of this money was received from outside of Southbridge.

Herbert E. Wilkinson, for the Pulpit Memorial Committee, reported on October 23, 1929, that a Pulpit and Lectern had been ordered at a cost of \$495. It was voted to put a brass plate on the pulpit in memory of former pastors of the Union Church. The Lectern was to be a memorial to Reverend Frederic Bailey and Reverend George H. Hoyt.



Present Church building after Chancel changes had been made, 1925.

The Twenty-Fifth Annual Meeting was held on January 22, 1930. Harry W. Hill, who had been Senior Warden of the Church during this time was presented with a Prayer Book by the Vestrymen of this Church. Of the forty-five members present, only 8 were members of the original Mission at the time it was organized.

On May 17, 1930, Reverend Leigh R. Urban resigned as Rector in order to become Canon at the Cathedral in Springfield. He left at the end of September.

A new furnace was installed in September, 1930, which was expected to solve the heating problem. On Sunday morning, October 12, 1930, a fire, caused by a defective smoke pipe, resulted in severe damage to the Church. All of the local Protestant Churches, the Y.M.C.A., and the Masonic Building Association offered the use of their buildings for services until our Church was repaired. The offer of the Y.M.C.A. was accepted. The church collected \$16,420.68 from the Insurance Company. This money, together with the gifts from members, was used to complete the interior of the Church according to the original plans.

The following December, after the Reverend William M. Tilton was appointed Priest-in-Charge, services were held in the rebuilt Parish Hall. The rebuilt Church was opened for services April 20, 1931, and was consecrated by Bishop Davies on September 29, 1931.



Chancel following the rebuilding after 1931 fire.

The Reverend George R. Metcalf succeeded The Reverend William Tilton as Priest-In-Charge on May 1, 1932. On January 22, 1936, the Parish voted to become self-supporting, and Bishop Davies was notified. After receiving yearly assistance from the Board of Missions of the Diocese for the past twenty-eight years we were now on our own. It was a source of considerable satisfaction to the group of devoted men and women who had worked hard to raise funds and interest new people in the Church.

The Parish voted on January 21, 1937, to make application to the Diocesan Convention for full union, and the application was filed the next month. In June of that same year it was announced that the Parish had been admitted and could now elect a Rector. The Reverend George Metcalf was elected on the first ballot. His Rectorship ended the following December when he resigned to become associate Rector of the Church of the Advent in Boston. On February 10, 1938, the Reverend William H. Cole accepted the call to become our second Rector.

A hurricane struck the town September 27th, 1938, and severely damaged the Elm Street Congregational Church, the Universalist Church, and St. Mary's Roman Catholic Church. We suffered slight damage to the roof of the Church. Messages of sympathy were sent to the officials of the damaged churches, and we offered the use of our Church for any of their activities. All of the affected churches were able to make temporary repairs that enabled them to use their own buildings.

In January of 1939 Senior Warden Harry W. Hill resigned after thirty-three years of continuous service. This history would not be complete were we not to acknowledge his outstanding contribution to this Parish. He was the prime mover in the successful effort to start a Mission, and then to build a Church home. There were many times in the early years when there was a serious question about the ability of the Mission to carry on. Harry Hill had the vision and the courage to fight for survival. It was a source of great satisfaction to many who knew him that he was able to see Holy Trinity Church firmly established before ill health forced him to relinquish his duties.

The Church was again damaged by fire on July 20, 1940. This was much more serious than the previous fire had been. It apparently started under the Chancel, and was not discovered for several hours. The cause was assumed to be defective wiring. All of the Protestant Churches and the Y.M.C.A. rallied to our assistance. The offer of the First Baptist Church for the use of its building was accepted, and our services were held there until our Church was repaired. The sympathy of the Diocese was expressed not only through messages of sympathy, but also by gifts of money which helped in the cost of replacing damaged Altar linens, vestments, etc.

An insurance adjustment of \$23,221.07 was promptly made. The Property Committee retained the services of Mr. Arland Dirlam, a well-known Church Architect. His advice resulted in many changes which improved and beautified our Church. The total cost of the reconstruction reached a total of \$25,144.18, of which \$2,300.00 was obtained through a loan. On April 6, 1941 the Church was reopened, and Bishop W. Appleton Lawrence was present to reconsecrate it. Many new memorials were given, among which was the Hill Chapel, given as a memorial to Harry W. Hill by his family. The Children's Chapel was dedicated on Easter of 1941 in memory of Sarah Cole, the daughter of our Rector, and the Altar to Peter Whiting

The Chancel as it is today, 1954



On January 5, 1942 an Endowment Fund was started with the gift of \$1,000.00. The following year, on January 18, the Rector announced that the indebtedness of the Parish had been paid. The Rev. William H. Cole resigned on July 31, 1944 to take charge of a group of Missions in upper New York, with headquarters in Clayton. He was followed by the Rev. Francis X. Cheney in September, 1944. Mr. Cheney came as a Deacon, and after his ordination to the Priesthood in May of 1945, he was elected the tenth Pastor of Holy Trinity Church, the third Rector. On Trinity Sunday, May 27, 1945, the Parish celebrated its "Fortieth Anniversary". A commemorative service of the Holy Communion was held in the morning with the Rev. Canon Raymond H. Kendrick as Celebrant and Preacher. In the evening Bishop Lawrence was present for Confirmation, and confirmed or received eleven candidates. A reception followed the service.

In April, 1948, the Parish voted to join the Southbridge Council of Churches, a new organization.

The Rev. Francis X. Cheney resigned on April 30, 1948, to take up work in Texas. He was followed by the Rev. Norman L. Kellett in September, 1948, who became the eleventh leader of the Parish, the fourth Rector.

In June, 1949, it was found necessary to repair the steeple of the Church and to replace the tower Cross. The Vestry voted that this should be done as a tribute to and in honor of the men and women of the Parish who served in World War II. Contributions were made to cover the cost of this memorial, and a plaque was placed in the Vestibule.

A set of Carillon Bells was installed in the tower of the Church on December 10, 1950, as a memorial to Dr. Theodore L. Story, a former Vestryman, and a staunch Christian. This was the gift of his wife, Mrs. Theresa M. Story.

In February of 1950, the Rector started the University of Life, a program of Adult Religious Education, with the cooperation of the several clergymen of this area. This has come to be a very worthwhile and inspiring project each Lent, shared in by more than 500 adult members of the Southbridge churches.

A "Forward Vision Committee" was appointed in January of 1954 to study the present and future expansion needs of the Parish. And in March of the same year a committee was named to plan for an appropriate observance of the "Fiftieth Anniversary" of the Parish. This committee consisted of the Rector, Rev. Norman L. Kellett, Chairman; Wardens C. Frank Kirby and J. C. Reid; Vestryman J. A. Wilhelm; Mrs. John E. Merrill and Mrs. John Crosbie, presidents of the Church Aid, and the Evening Branch of the Church Aid respectively; Mrs. Alton Cowles, Miss Edythe Cunningham, Mrs. C. Frank Kirby, Mrs. J. C. Reid, and Mr. Walter G. Buckley.

The history of Holy Trinity Church would be incomplete if tribute were not paid to the devoted groups of women who, through the entire life of the Parish, have worked in such a consecrated manner for the Church. Without their help in raising funds, and their unfailing loyalty, it is doubtful that the Mission would have survived. The women of our Parish have been represented for the past twenty-five years by one or more of their number in Diocesan circles. Added honor was achieved when Mrs. Harold R. Moulton was elected to the Executive Board of the Woman's

Auxiliary in 1952. This was a well-deserved honor as Mrs. Moulton has for many years given herself to the work of the Church in the Diocese and the Parish.

Two men from Holy Trinity Church have entered into the Priesthood, the Rev. Edgar Wilcock and the Rev. Howard Bingley.

In World War II a great many of our young men and women served in the Armed Forces. Some failed to return. Our Service Flag contains sixty-six stars, of which two are gold.

O God, who hast brought us into the Church of Thy dear Son, make all in this Family to be of one heart and mind in love toward Thee; and grant that our common life and work may help to bring in Thy Kingdom; through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

THE CLERGY OF HOLY TRINITY CHURCH

Rev. Frederick W. Bailey, June, 1905-June, 1907
Rev. George H. Hoyt, June, 1907-May, 1910
Rev. Charles S. Champlin, Nov., 1910-June, 1914
Rev. C. Morton Murray, March, 1914-November, 1920
Rev. John C. Petrie, February, 1921-December, 1930
Rev. Leigh R. Urban, October, 1921-May, 1930
Rev. William M. Tilton, December, 1930-February, 1932
Rev. George R. Metcalf, May, 1932-December, 1937
Rev. William H. Cole, February, 1938-September, 1944
Rev. Francis X. Cheney, May, 1945-June, 1948
Rev. Norman L. Kellett, June, 1948

WARDENS OF HOLY TRINITY CHURCH

1905 to 1922 Harry W. Hill, Senior Warden; William H. Hurlbut, Junior Warden
1923 to 1930 Harry W. Hill and Josiah Rice
1931 to 1938 Harry W. Hill and Walter G. Buckley
1939 to December, 1941 Walter G. Buckley and Harold R. Moulton
1941 December, Harold R. Moulton and Arthur Kay
1942 to 1945 Harold R. Moulton and John C. Dirlam
1946 to 1949 Carl G. Hard and Abel Steenburn
1950 Heywood Fox and John Tyler
1951 Carl G. Hard and Joseph C. Reid
1952 to 1954 Joseph C. Reid and C. Frank Kirby

"WE LOOK AHEAD!"

The foregoing history tells a simple story of faith, courage, and accomplishment. We who stand today on the threshold of tomorrow cannot help but be inspired as we contemplate our common responsibilities. Our problems at times may seem difficult. They pale into insignificance as we realize our predecessors met and overcame the challenge of their day with confidence. They were small in numbers, but powerful in dedication. Holy Trinity Church has been richly blessed with men and women who were able to see beyond the present into the future. Their vision has left us a good inheritance. With the same enthusiasm in the spirit of service we are called upon to set our sights on the welfare of future generations. May they say of us, as we do of those who have served here before us: "We thank Thee, O God, for a job well done in Thy Name."

Joseph C. Reid, Warden.



The Rector, Wardens, and Vestrymen, October, 1954.

Sitting: Frank Haigh, Dana P. Bent. Treas.; Joseph C. Reid, Warden; Rev. Norman L. Kellett. Rector;
C. Frank Kirby, Warden; Dr. James E. Cross, Clerk; Julian A. Wilhelm.

Standing: Merritt F. Farren, John C. Scammell, Earl R. Bullard, W. Gray Buckley, Alton N. Cowles, Hans R. Cerny,
Barker W. Schofield, George Mozley. Other members; John C. Dirlam and Sofocles E. Kollios.

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Walter Gray Buckley
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Susan Page Howland