

The History of St. John's Episcopal Church

Overview:

St. John's Episcopal Church began doing God's work in north Austin in December, 1960. For much of its early history, St. John's was a Mission Church of the Diocese of Texas; it achieved Parish status in 1995.

This book attempts to capture and summarize the history of St. John's Episcopal Church. It consists primarily of a chronological narrative of the events and activities of the Church, beginning in December 1960 and continuing into 2023. Separate sections discuss the history of the buildings and grounds, the fixtures and furnishings, and the people (clergy, seminarians, and lay leadership) who shaped St. John's throughout the years.

The book is available in both hardcopy and electronic formats. The master hardcopy book is kept as a loose-leaf notebook in the Parish Office. The book is distributed electronically as an indexed and searchable PDF file; if you are viewing this in PDF the navigation bar at the left of the viewer window will allow you to easily jump to any topic.

This book is dedicated in loving memory of Bill Beare. Bill was a longtime parishioner and leader of St. John's who, among many other things, assumed the unofficial role of Parish Historian. Bill passed away in November 2014 before this book was completed. Bill provided many of the sections and source material used in preparing this book, and the book would not be possible without his extensive contributions.

***This book is still a work in progress; your patience is appreciated!
The document was most recently updated in March 2023.***

Index:

- Overview and Timeline
- Summary of Events for each Vicar and Rector
- The Mission Years: 1960 – 1995
- The Parish Years: 1995 – today
- Buildings and Grounds
- Clergy
- Seminarians
- Lay Leadership
- Donations, Fixtures, and Furnishings
- Communion Rail Kneelers
- Our Namesake: St. John The Evangelist
- The Episcopal Shield
- Red Doors

St. John's Episcopal Church

History Timeline

1960 – 1980

- St John's was established as a mission church on December 8, 1960 and accepted into the Diocese of Texas on February 22, 1961.
 - The Reverend Malcom Riker was the first vicar. He established at least 10 churches in the Diocese of Texas, mostly around Austin.
 - During 1958-1960, the Rev. Riker organized his "Gospel" churches of St. Matthew's, St. Mark's, St. Luke's on the Lake, and St. John's, all in Austin.
 - The first location was a rented house near Lamar Blvd on Caddo Street.
- The Diocese of Texas purchased the 5-acre site for our church in May 1962 and we started construction of the church building shortly thereafter.
 - The original building was a simple one story flat roof structure, covering approximately the north half of the current Parish Hall building. Contrary to legend and appearance, it was NOT a double wide trailer.
 - Our address was "PECUSA Street", for "Protestant Episcopal Church of the USA." This street would eventually be paved and renamed Parkfield Drive.
 - The first service in the new church was on March 17, 1963.
- Rev. Riker left St. John's in 1964. During the late 1960's, attendance lagged at St. John's and there was serious consideration within the Diocese of closing the mission. In November 1968, a new Vicar was appointed, and St. John's began a slow recovery over the next several years.
- The major church activity that started in 1979 was the first major remodeling of the church building. While a major motivation was to add more space to the building, there was also a distinct desire to have the building "look like a church." The construction was done almost entirely by volunteer labor and was completed in 1980.

1981-1995

- The Reverend Seth Deleery became the sixth Vicar of St. John's in September 1981. He was the first full-time Vicar for St. John's. Fr. Seth was instrumental in acquiring a substantial pipe organ for St. John's, which remains in use to this day.
- In August 1984, the Reverend Murray Powell was appointed Vicar. Early in Fr. Powell's tenure, St. John's received a letter from a local developer proposing that we sell the Parkfield Drive building and land and purchase an abandoned church building near the corner of Parmer Lane and Lamar Blvd. While the idea may have been tempting, there were many problems with the proposed location and building and St. John's wisely declined the proposal.
- The proposal did encourage the Bishop's Committee to take a serious look at the long-term plans for St. John's, including the potential to become a full parish in the Diocese of Texas. A site plan for St. John's was eventually developed that called for the construction of two new buildings along with major renovations to the existing building. The initial phase for that plan (renovating the existing building) occurred during 1987 and 1988 and produced the building that you see today as the Parish Hall.
- Beyond the physical plant, Fr. Powell introduced several enhancements to the congregational life at St. John's:
 - In 1985, we began serving coffee and doughnuts after the services.
 - Several Family Retreats were held at Camp Allen.
 - The first Fall Fest was held in 1991.
- In October 1992, Fr. Powell left, and The Reverend Paul Taft became the eighth Vicar of St. John's.
- By this time, it was clear to the Bishop's Committee that St. John's needed to make the jump to Parish status, and that was the major focus of the early years of Fr. Taft's tenure. This was a significant risk for St. John's and, and under the "***Parish the Thought...Parish the Reality***" campaign, the Bishop's Committee sought input from the congregation on how to proceed.

- The campaign was ultimately successful, and St. John's was accepted as a Parish in the Diocese of Texas on February 11, 1995. Fr. Taft transitioned from the last Vicar to the first Rector at St. John's.
- Aside from Parish Status, some of the other highlights of the early years of Fr. Taft's tenure included:
 - Cottage Meetings were held to solicit input from the congregation on various topics and to help build social bonds across the congregation.
 - Fr. Taft was a strong supporter of the Cursillo movement and many members of St. John's at the time attended Cursillo.

1995-2013

- Fr. Taft guided St. John's through its early years as a parish and, by mutual agreement between Fr. Taft and the Vestry, he left in June 1998.
- A search committee was formed, and in February 1999, the Reverend Albert Rodriguez became the Second Rector of St. John's.
- The year 2000 saw us emphasizing the children and youth, and we added a youth director to our staff. Our youth director left in 2003.
- The 5:30 PM Saturday Evening Eucharist was introduced in 2000 and continued until 2013.
- The building was getting very crowded so in 2001 we acquired our 2nd building--the portable classroom structure originally called the Youth Building and now called the Annex.
- We had our first experimental bilingual service on Friday, December 13, 2002 followed by a Texas chili and Mexican dish dinner. Bilingual or Spanish language services would continue sporadically for the next few years.
- St. John's became directly involved in two outreach ministries--the Rosebud Mission in South Dakota and El Buen Samaritano in south Austin.
- During 2002 and 2003, a discernment process and capital campaign produced the plans and funding for a large new church building for St. John's. Groundbreaking ceremonies for the building were held on May 17, 2013 and construction continued through 2003 and 2004.
- The first service in the new church building was an Evening Prayer service held on August 23, 2004. The first Eucharist was Sunday, August 29 (8:00 AM).
- Formal dedication of the new building was held on September 12, 2004.
- Throughout the 2000-2010 decades we had several Seminarians who were subsequently ordained as Deacons or Priests at St. John's.
- The 11:45 AM "Prayer and Praise" service with exclusive contemporary music and no Eucharist was introduced in October 2005 and it continued through January 2010.
- The Spanish language service on Sunday afternoon was introduced as a monthly event in May 2007. In November, it became a regular weekly service.
- In 2009 we created, with funding help from the Diocese, the staff position of Newcomers Coordinator (now Director of Growth and Discipleship), resulting in the hiring of Fay Jones.
- The members of St. John's built our Columbarium and Memorial Garden in 2009.
- In December 2010, St. John's celebrated its 50th anniversary.
- St. John's has had a labyrinth on the property since roughly 2009. The original labyrinth was built as an Eagle Scout project and was slightly smaller than the current version and built from limestone rocks taken from the St. John's grounds. During the summer of 2013, the EYC, with help from several adult members of St. John's, completely remodeled the labyrinth and made it a signature part of our landscape.

2014-2018

- Fr. Al retired from active ministry in December 2013. He now teaches at the Seminary of the Southwest.
- In August 2014, the Reverend Matthew Seddon accepted the call to become the third Rector of St. John's.
- During Fr. Matt's ongoing tenure, our Hispanic ministry has greatly expanded, and St. John's continues to strive toward becoming a truly bilingual community. All communications from the church are now presented in both English and Spanish.
- Several new outreach ministries have been established, most notably the Refugee Ministry and the Labyrinth Community Garden.

- St. John's greatly expanded its online presence on the Web, on Facebook, and on YouTube.
- Fr. Matt left St. John's in October 2018.

2019-present

- After a short interval during which several supply priests supported St. John's, the Reverend Ann McLemore joined St. John's as our Interim Rector.
- Rev. Ann guided us through a discernment process which prepared a parish profile for our Rector Search process. A key part of this process was the "Holy Cow" parish survey.
- Early in 2020, the COVID19 pandemic forced us to move to suspend all in-person activities at St. John's. We started a "virtual church" mode in which we live-streamed services over Facebook with recordings also available on our web site and on YouTube. All meetings and Christian Education classes are conducted remotely using the Zoom Online Meeting system.
- St. John's took the initial steps in the Becoming Beloved Community racial reconciliation initiative of the national Episcopal Church by facilitating two Stepping on Sacred Ground conversation groups.
- In September, 2020, we resumed very limited in-person outdoor services using an online reservation system to limit and track attendance.
- Also in September, 2020, we were happy to announce that the Reverend Minerva Camarena Skeith accepted the call to become the Fifth Rector of St. John's. Mother Minerva joined us in January, 2021.
- In 2021 we extended our online presence using the Zoom online meeting system and achieved our goal of not simply having online viewers, but online participants in our worship services.
- We updated our safety protocols and physical systems so that, by Easter 2021, we were able to resume in-person services inside the church building.
- Long-deferred repairs to the north wall of the parish hall were completed, and many of our traditions, including pet blessings, the talent show, celebrating Our Lady of Guadalupe, and Las Posadas resumed.
- During 2021, Bishop Monterroso joined us for confirmations, baptisms, and a Quinceañera, and Bishop Ryan formally installed Mother Minerva as our fifth Rector.
- A team of leaders learned how to lead small group conversations to identify potential new leaders and issues we care about. The listening sessions were kicked off in December 2021 and resulted in the creation of action teams focused on Affordable Housing, Pastoral Care, Congregational Growth, and Racial and Social Justice. Work in these areas is continuing into 2023.
- Other highlights for 2022 included restarting Sunday morning Christian Formation classes and resumption of the popular Jamaica Festival.
- Fay Jones retired from her staff role as Communications Director, and Maria Angie Hernandez was hired as our bilingual Parish Administrator.
- 2022 ended on a somber note as a burst pipe in the parish hall attic caused extensive damage to the building.

St. John's Episcopal Church

History: Summary of Events by Clergy

Vicars

The following persons served as Vicars for St. John's Episcopal Church during its time as a Mission of the Episcopal Diocese of Texas

1st Vicar - The Rev. Malcolm P. Riker

December 8, 1960 – July 30, 1964

- Organization of St. John's as a Mission
- Purchase of the land on "PECUSA" street
- Construction of the original "Motel 6" style building
- Rev. Riker was simultaneously the founder/ vicar of several other Austin area churches.

2nd Vicar - The Rev. Harold L. Cooper

September 16, 1964 – November 10, 1968

- Difficult times; St. John's was very nearly closed.
- Rev. Cooper was never actually paid by St. John's.
- As with our other early vicars, Rev. Cooper was also the vicar at other nearby churches.

3rd Vicar - The Rev. Robert A. Jackson

November 17, 1968 – November 28, 1971

- Very slow recovery, both in terms of membership and in financial status
- A large cross was erected in the parking lot to try to make the facility look more like a church.

4th Vicar - The Rev. Hal Brook Perry

December 5, 1971 – December 9, 1973

- Rev. Perry was also a professor at the Seminary of the Southwest
- Development of subdivisions in the nearby pastureland contributed to growth at St. John's.
- Many records from this time frame were lost in a fire at a parishioner's house.

5th Vicar - The Rev. Robert N. Redmon

December 16, 1973 – June 21, 1981

- Many records from this time frame were lost in a fire at a parishioner's house.
- Significant growth as the nearby neighborhoods grew
- Late in the 1970's, St. John's became known as a "High Anglo-Catholic" church with incense used at all services
- First major remodeling project – addition of the "A-Frame" second floor to the building. Motivations for the A-Frame were to add space and to make the facility look more like a church.

6th Vicar - The Rev. Seth Deleery

September 6, 1981 – August 30, 1984

- Fr. Seth was the first full-time Vicar of St. John's. All previous vicars were shared with other churches in the area.
- Acquisition of the pipe organ
- Second remodeling project – the "Choir Porch"

7th Vicar - The Rev. Murray M. Powell

September 16, 1984 – October 25, 1992

- Imaging the Future and Task Force for Parish Development
- The first Master Plan for the St. John's campus
- Consideration to move St. John's to Parmer Lane and Lamar Blvd
- Third remodeling project -- the 1987 major expansion/renovation
- First Fall Fest

8th Vicar – The Rev. Paul Taft

December 16, 1992 – February 11, 1995

- Strong emphasis on Cursillo activity
- Push to move to Parish Status
- "Parish the Thought.... Parish the Reality"

Rectors

St. John's became a parish on February 11, 1995, and The Rev. Paul Taft became the first Rector of St. John's at that point.

1st Rector – The Rev. Paul Taft

February 11, 1995 – June 14, 1998

- Financial and management difficulties as we adjusted to Parish Status
- St. John's parted ways with Fr. Taft in 1998.

2nd Rector – The Rev. Albert Rodriguez

February 28, 1999 – December 31, 2013

- Construction of the church building, and remodeling of the existing building into the parish hall.
- Acquisition of the Annex as a youth building
- Introduction of Spanish-language services
- Introduction of ministries at Buckner Villas and Oakcrest Manor
- Alcoholics Anonymous and Overeaters Anonymous
- New Staff Position—Director of Growth and Discipleship
- Labyrinth

3rd Rector – The Rev. Dr. Matthew Seddon

August 11, 2014 – October 31, 2018

- Expansion of Spanish-language services
- Stronger integration of the English and Spanish congregations
- Several remodeling/restoration projects on the campus
- Expansion of online ministries: Web, Facebook, YouTube, etc.

- Refugee Ministry
- Homelessness Ministry
- Startup of Labyrinth Community Gardens
- Jamaica, Pet Spectacular and other festive annual events
- Deacon Victoria joins St. John's

4th Rector (Interim) – The Rev. Ann McLemore

April 1, 2019 – December 31, 2020

- Holy Cow Survey for Parish Profile
- COVID 19 Pandemic response
- Restart St. John's newsletter as weekly blast emails
- Virtual Church
- Becoming Beloved Community

5th Rector – The Rev. Minerva Camarena Skeith

January 1, 2021 – present

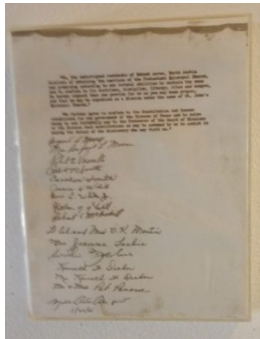
- Recovery from COVID 19 Pandemic
- Major expansion of our online presence
- Several facilities repair/renovation projects
- Agenda of Issues – major efforts toward Affordable Housing, Racial Justice, Pastoral Care, and Congregational Growth
- Semi-retirement for Deacon Victoria
- Hiring Bilingual Parish Administrator

St. John's Episcopal Church

The Mission Years: 1960-1995

This topic consists of a series of reports on the early years of the St. John's Mission Church in the Episcopal Diocese of Texas. It is summarized from a series of newsletter articles that were written by Bill Beare (St. John's Historian) during the 1990s and updated in 2004. These articles are reproduced verbatim as an appendix to this topic.

In The Beginning: 1960 – 1961



On the fest of Saint Mary, our Lord's mother, December 8, 1960, St. John's Episcopal Church began its journey of faith in north Travis County. It was located off the old Dallas Highway, near the Coxville Store and the old Skyline Club, in a rented house at 302 Caddo, in Eubank Acres.

At the first service, there were 23 present, with 17 receiving Communion from the Reverend Malcolm Riker, the great organizer of Episcopal Churches in the Diocese of Texas. During this timeframe, the Rev. Riker organized his "Gospel" churches of St. Matthew's, St. Mark's, St. Luke's on the Lake, and St. John's, all in the Austin, Texas area.

During the first few weeks of St. John's existence, the Reverend Frank Doremus, a professor from the Episcopal Seminary of the Southwest, assisted at the services. In the beginning we alternated between Morning Prayer and Holy Communion. The attendance for those first services ranged from 10 to 23 persons.

On the third Sunday in Epiphany (February 22, 1961), at 12:45 p.m., St. John's took its second major step in its journey of faith by petitioning the Diocese to become an official Episcopal mission.

The next major steps in our journey at St. John's began on October 1, 1961, with Rally Day to set up a Sunday school program at St. John's. On October 22, the first person was baptized at St. John's—Kathryn Elaine McCown, born on April 19, 1960.

The Early Years: 1962 – 1965

In May and June of 1962, the five acres that is now the present site of the church was purchased from R.J. Kramer (namesake of Kramer Lane) for the sum of \$7500 through the Quin Foundation. Soon there would be a Parkfield Drive, which would first be called PECUSA Street, or "Protestant Episcopal Church of the U.S.A."

On August 12, Mr. A. Fisher presented a set of plans for a new church to 25 worshippers. On October 7th, the second annual Rally Day for Sunday school was held with 51 present. On October 28th, a major milestone happened when a business meeting was held after an ante-communion service in which 71 attended. At the meeting, the members voted to build the new church.

The records indicate that the new church was a third completed on February 24, as reported at a Bishop's Committee Meeting. On March 3rd, the church was half finished. On March 10th, 1963, the last service was held at the Caddo Street address.

On March 17, 1963, the Reverend Riker held the first service at the new, unfinished church. By April 7 (Palm Sunday), the outside of the church was completed. The congregation was working on the inside. The Rev. Mr.

Riker commented in the service book how slowly things were progressing. Finally, on September 22, the new altar was finished, thereby completing the new church.



On June 16th, 1964 the Rt. Reverend Percy Goddard, Suffragan Bishop of Texas, ordained to the Sacred Diaconate, Ray Fisher, who had been a seminarian at St. John's. This was the first ordination to take place at St. John's.

On June 28th, 1964, the Reverend Riker installed the Altar Guild for the first time.

The end of the beginning of St. John's Journey happened the next Sunday when the Reverend Riker celebrated his last service at St. John's on August 30, 1964.

On September 6, 1964 the second Vicar of St. John's, the Reverend Harold L. Cooper, preached his first sermon and celebrated Holy Communion.

During the Rev. Cooper's tenure, St. John's became involved in ecumenical relations. On July 4, 1965, the Reverend W. P. Buckner, a Presbyterian minister licensed by the Diocese, preached with a lay reader, Mr. W. Newman, leading Morning Prayer.

Another church milestone occurred on April 13, 1965 when the Reverend Cooper buried a member of the Church of England, Edward Adain. Mr. Adain was not a member of St. John's, but it was our first funeral.

On October 10, 1965 a joint service was held with the Presbyterian and Methodist Churches at Walnut Creek Elementary School. The ministers at that service were the Reverend Bill Osher (preacher) and the Reverend Messrs. H. L. Cooper and David Thomas assisting.

We finished out our fifth year on a joyous note with an ecumenical service held at St. John's with members from St. Mark's Methodist and Trinity Hill Presbyterian Churches joining us for Holy Communion. There were 100 persons present for our anniversary service. The Reverend Cooper was Celebrant, the Reverend David Thomas was the Preacher, and the Reverend Bill Osher was the Epistler.

Difficult Times: 1966-1968

Starting in 1966, St. John's was beset with many problems. The vicar was not paid the portion of his salary that was supposed to be paid by St. John's. The organist resigned, later to come back, and many of the bills owed by St. John's were delinquent or not paid at all. In fact, as far as it can be determined, the Reverend Cooper was never paid by St. John's.

On St. Barnabas Day, June 11, 1967 Bishop S. Milton Richardson made an Episcopal visit by presiding at a Confirmation and Holy Eucharist Service. There were 31 present. Attendance remained very low throughout 1967, and the vicar, the Reverend Cooper, was still not receiving his salary portion from St. John's

Something new happened on January 7, 1968 at St. John's as well as at churches across the country. At that time, we began officially to use the trial Liturgies that eventually became the 1979 Prayer Book.

A congregational meeting was held on March 3, 1968 at which time the future of St. John's was discussed. There was serious correspondence with the Bishop and his staff and the Reverend Cooper recommended that St. John's should be closed down due to lack of attendance and the great financial difficulties that we were having. For the next several months, correspondence went back and forth with the end result that the Bishop decided to keep St. John's open. We can all give thanks for his foresight and confidence in the few remaining members of St. John's. It was such a bad time at St. John's that no services were held during the month of July and members of the mission were told to attend other Episcopal churches. The low point was June 16, 1968 when there were only 6 persons present for service and only 5 received communion.

On November 17, 1968, the Reverend Robert Jackson became the third Vicar of St. John's Episcopal Church by celebrating Holy Communion with 32 present. St. John's ended its eighth year on the first Sunday in Advent with 15 in attendance and eight receiving communion.

Recovery: 1969 – 1973

Like the mythical Phoenix, St. John's began a rebirth slowly out of the ashes. On December 15, 1968, there were 32 people present at the Holy Communion service. Christmas Eve was celebrated at 7:30 p.m. with 43 in attendance, which almost doubled the previous year's number. The Reverend Jackson started an Acolyte Guild for the young men in the church and began using them in the service along with the lay readers.

At a special service in the evening of June 28th, 1970, a wooden cross was blessed on the churchyard to give the old rectangular building and ground a hint that there was a church on the 5 acres.

On June 27, 1971, Bishop Scott Field Bailey officiated at Morning Prayer and Confirmation of three persons from Holy Trinity Episcopal church at St. John's, as Mr. Jackson was supplying that church also and presumably the Bishop was making an Episcopal visit. Nothing else was noted in the registry and all of the Bishop's Committee records were lost for several years. The Reverend Father Jackson's last service was November 28, 1971.

On the last Sunday of our 11th year, the Reverend Father Hal B. Perry became our fourth Vicar. He also was a professor at the Episcopal Seminary of the Southwest. Mr. Perry's tenure began on an optimistic note as the area St. John's serves was beginning to grow. In a recent interview with Mr. Perry's predecessor, Father Jackson, he stated that he felt strongly that St. John's was going to grow because of the new subdivisions in the area.

On June 24, 1973, Fr. Perry held his last regular service as vicar of St. John's. It was the service of Morning Prayer with 24 in attendance.

Fr. Robert Redmon began his ministry at St. John's on July 8, 1973. He became our fifth vicar and until the ministry of Fr. Murray Powell, was the longest serving vicar. At his first service, there were 21 present for Morning Prayer, which was ironic as Fr. Redmon was of the Anglo Catholic persuasion.

Fr. Perry continued to serve as a supply priest to St. John's for the remainder of the year as Fr. Redmon had to juggle his time between Calvary Episcopal Church in Bastrop and St. John's.

The Lost Years – 1974 through 1979

Little is known about the events at St. John's during the years 1974 through 1979. It has been reported that many of the church records from that timeframe were lost in a fire in a parishioner's home.

1980 and 1981 – End of the Fr. Redmon Era

The decade of the 1980s began with the end of an era. During the Rev. Robert Redmon's tenure, St. John's became known as a bastion for high church, Anglo-Catholic Episcopalians. In fact a parishioner's father, an Episcopal priest in the Dallas area, recommended St. John's as a comfortable transition for members of his church who were moving to Austin. St. John's was a place where clergy still celebrated the Eucharist standing in front of the altar facing away from the congregation.

One factor that many remember about this time is Rev. Redmon's use of incense during services. Philip Riley remembers taking home a congregant overcome by the incense during the Christmas service in 1980. He remembered that:

"[We had] incense, like every other Sunday, and it was crazy. And I mean the house was filled with smoke. I liked it just fine, but it does some other people in."

The major church activity that started in 1979 and wrapped up in 1980 was the first major remodeling of the church building. The main purpose of this remodeling was to add a small second story area above the center of the building and to move the south wall of that new center section outward to create a vestibule or narthex area for the church itself. While a major motivation was to add more space to the building, there was also a distinct desire to have the building "look like a church." The construction was done almost entirely by volunteer labor. The roof for this addition took the shape of an "A-Frame" and the second story room was called the "Upper Room." Access to the upper room was (and is) via a narrow, steep stairway behind the kitchen.

In the pictures below, note that the roof on either side of the A-Frame center area is still flat.



1981 became a year of transition and, with transition, change. Fr. Redmond was assigned to a different church, and the Rev. Seth Deleery would become St. John's new Vicar in September of 1981. St. John's had evidently grown to the point where the Diocese felt we needed a full-time Vicar, and Fr. Seth became the first Vicar that we did not have to share with other churches.

Several parishioners who are still active at St. John's in 2015 joined during the later years of Fr. Redmon's tenure, including Margaret Beare, Lyn Burns, Jamie Burns, Claudie Burns (now Cantu), and Philip Riley. Several other active parishioners started attending St. John's during that timeframe, but their letters of transfer were not received until later.

The Deleery Years: September 1981 through August 1984

As noted, Fr. Redmon had an Anglo-Catholic style that was very popular with the St. John's congregation. When Fr. Seth arrived, some staunch Anglo-Catholics in the congregation were leery of the changes that they foresaw coming. Bill Beare commented

"I remember the transition between [Redmond] and when Seth came. I was really upset...so I was really vocal about it. So what did he [Seth] do? He appointed me [Bishop's] Warden."

St. John's continued to grow during Fr. Seth's tenure, so perhaps the liturgical concerns were overblown.

Fr. Seth was instrumental in acquiring a substantial pipe organ for the church in 1983. Initially, the organ was installed at the rear (west) wall of the Church, along the wall next to the kitchen. Shortly after we received the organ, a project was started to bump out the original south wall on the eastern part of the church building in order to enclose the porch area. This added about 4-5 feet of width to the church area; space that was used for the new organ and for a couple of rows of chairs for the choir. The area was called the "Choir Porch."

Several parishioners who are still active at St. John's arrived during Fr. Seth's tenure. These people, in approximate order of the dates when their letters of transfer were received at St. John's, include: Marlene Smith, Bill and Debbie Cox, Kevin and Vicki Flegal, Marvin Rasmussen, Edna Hunter, and Steve Mudge.

The Powell Years: September 1984 through October 1992

Fr. Seth was called by the Diocese of Texas to become the new Canon to the Ordinary, and he left St. John's in August 1984. The Reverend Murray Powell was sent to be our new Vicar.

St. John's continued to grow during this timeframe, and the old building was getting very crowded. As a result, growth of the physical campus was a major concern during this time. Early in Fr. Powell's tenure, St. John's received a letter from a local developer proposing that we sell the Parkfield Drive building and land and purchase an abandoned church building near the corner of Parmer Lane and North Lamar Blvd. The Parkfield land would then be redeveloped into new houses. While the idea may have been tempting, there were many problems with the proposed location and building and St. John's wisely declined the proposal. The land at Parmer and Lamar ultimately was redeveloped into a convenience store/gas station and a mini-storage warehouse.

The proposal did encourage the Bishop's Committee to take a more serious look at the long term plans for St. John's, including the potential to become a full parish in the Diocese of Texas. A Task Force for Parish Development was formed, and the "Imagining the Future" campaign sought input from the congregation on how St. John's should develop. This effort culminated in a Master Plan for St. John's that called for the construction of two new buildings along with major renovations to the existing building. Funding would, of course, be a major issue. A capital campaign raised money to remodel the existing building; the first phase of the master plan. This occurred during 1987 and 1988, and produced the building that you see today as the Parish Hall and Administration Building.

Beyond the physical plant, Fr. Powell introduced several enhancements to the congregational life at St. John's:

- In 1985, we began serving coffee and doughnuts after the services.
- Several Family Retreats were held at Camp Allen.
- We acquired the new "Hymnal 1982" books
- The first Fall Fest was held in 1991.
- Lay Ministries were reorganized and strengthened under Bill Beare (director for Outreach) and Judy Ingram (director for Evangelism).

Fr. Powell and his wife, Sarah, had two young children while at St. John's and we all delighted watching Kate and Will grow up in the church. As many members of St. John's also had young children at the time, the nursery and Sunday School were very important parts of the church at that time.

In October, 1992, Fr. Powell was called to become the Rector at St. Michaels' in Houston.

Several parishioners who are still active at St. John's arrived during Fr Powell's tenure. These people, in approximate order of the dates when their letters of transfer were received at St. John's, include: John and Laurie Williams, Hal and Judy Hughes, John and Mary Hutka, Carol Fritz, and Annette VanDover.

The Taft Years as a Mission: December 1992 through February 1995

The Reverend Paul Taft became the new Vicar at St. John's in December 1992. By this time, it was clear to the Bishop's Committee that St. John's needed to make the jump to Parish status, and that was the major focus of the early years of Fr. Taft's tenure. This was a significant risk for St. John's and, under the "**Parish the Thought...Parish the Reality**" campaign, the Bishop's Committee sought input from the congregation on how to proceed. Reaching a financial commitment from the congregation was also a major part of this campaign.

The campaign was ultimately successful, and St. John's was accepted as a Parish in the Diocese of Texas at its annual meeting on February 11, 1995. Fr. Taft transitioned from the last Vicar to the first Rector at St. John's.

Aside from Parish Status, some of the other highlights of the early years of Fr. Taft's tenure included:

- Cottage Meetings were held to solicit input from the congregation on various topics and to help build social bonds across the congregation.
- Fr. Taft was a strong supporter of the Cursillo movement and many members of St. John's at the time attended Cursillo.
- The Lay Ministries were reorganized into a "Councils" structure.

St. John's Episcopal Church

The Parish Years: 1995 to present

1995-1998 – The Reverend Paul Taft

After being accepted as a Parish in the Diocese of Texas, St. John's entered a brief quiet time as we adjusted to the new reality of being a completely self-sufficient Parish. We now had more freedom to set our goals and define our programs and activities, but we no longer had funding from the Diocese to help us along.

By 1997, our attention again was focused on the lack of space available for worship and fellowship. A steering committee was formed, they updated the master plans for the St. John's campus, and by the end of 1997 they selected an architect for initial design work on a new church building.

Over the previous few years, however, various disagreements between Fr. Taft and the Vestry and congregation of St. John's resulted in Fr. Taft's resignation as rector in June 1998. We established a search committee for a new rector and arranged for supply priests for the next several months. Notably, one of our more active supply priests during the period was Armistead Powell, brother of Murray Powell, our former Vicar.

At the recommendation of the Diocese, all work on the new church building was suspended as we focused on finding a new Rector.

1999- 2013 – The Reverend Al Rodriguez

The Reverend Al Rodriguez came to us from Longview, Texas and guided us on our spiritual journey from 1999 through 2013. Early in his tenure, St. John's focused on youth ministries and we added a Youth Director to the staff. As a part of our focus on youth ministries, we added a portable classroom building to house the youth group. This building is now called the Annex and is used as meeting and storage space.

Fr. Al introduced several new services, including the 5:30 PM Saturday Evening service and the 11:45 AM "Prayer and Praise" service with contemporary music and no Eucharist. The prayer and praise service was discontinued in 2010 and the Saturday service was discontinued in 2013.

Most important, Fr. Al introduced an experimental Spanish language service in 2005. By 2007, this had expanded into a regular weekly service which remains the cornerstone of our Hispanic Ministry.

Concerns over worship space continued, and during 2002 and 2003 a discernment process and fundraising campaign produced the plans and funding for our new Church building. Groundbreaking was held in May 2003 and the building was completed in August 2004. The first service in the new building was an Evening Prayer Service held on August 23, 2004 and the building was formally dedicated on September 12, 2004. Shortly thereafter, the old building was remodeled to become the Parish Hall and Administration Building.

We also expanded our mission outside the St. John's complex, introducing ministries at the Buckner Villas and Oakcrest Manor Nursing Homes. As part of our outreach to the community, we also began hosting Alcoholics Anonymous and Overeaters Anonymous groups.

In 2009, we constructed our first labyrinth on the grounds. The original labyrinth was built as an Eagle Scout project and was slightly smaller than the current version and built from limestone rocks taken from the St. John's grounds. During the summer of 2013, the EYC, with help from several adult members of St. John's, completely remodeled the labyrinth and made it a signature part of our landscape. We also built the Columbarium and Memorial Gardens during the 2009-2010 timeframe.

In 2009 we created, with funding help from the Diocese, the staff position of Newcomers Coordinator, resulting in the hiring of Fay Jones. Fay's role expanded over the years and she now serves as the Director of Discipleship.

In December 2010, St. John's celebrated its 50th Anniversary.

In December 2013, having reached the mandatory retirement age in the Episcopal Diocese of Texas, Fr. Al retired from active ministry.

2014- 2018 – The Reverend Dr. Matthew Seddon

The Reverend Dr. Matthew Seddon came to St. John's in August 2014 from St. Stephen's Episcopal Church near Salt Lake City, Utah. Prior to his ordination, Fr. Matt had been an archeologist and had done extensive research in Central and South America. He was fully bilingual and fully committed to making St. John's a multilingual and multicultural community. All communications from St. Johns are now published in both English and Spanish, and many English-language communications are also published in Braille to support a growing visually-impaired community. Significant efforts have been made to ensure that events at St. John's are accessible to our English and Spanish speakers. While we are off to a good start, much work remains to be done.

Several new annual events were also introduced, including “Jamaica” – a multicultural festival replacing our old “Fall Fest”, an annual Parish-wide summer picnic, and the “Pet Spectacular” which replaced and expanded the older Blessing of the Pets service.

Several small remodeling projects were also initiated at the St. John’s campus—intended to refresh parts of the aging Parish Hall building and to make the campus more accessible to our visually and mobility impaired parishioners. As with our multicultural efforts, much work remains to be done in this area.

Several outreach projects were also started or expanded, including our Refugee Ministry (working with various agencies to assist refugees entering the Austin area), our Homelessness Ministry, and the Labyrinth Community Gardens. We also host a local Famers’ Market on Sunday mornings during the growing seasons.

In July 2017, Father Matt began a series of regularly scheduled meetings (open to all parishioners) to discuss same sex marriage. The question was whether or not same-sex marriage would be approved by St. John's. At that time, the Supreme Court had already voted to approve it. During this timeframe, the Diocese of Texas policy was that each individual parish had to discern whether or not they approved. The discernment meetings went on until May 2018. During this time, Father Matt also invited members to speak to him individually and/or by email. After much thoughtful discussion and feedback, Father Matt presented his findings to the Vestry. Ultimately, same-sex marriage was approved. Father Matt wrote a letter to the Bishop of the Diocese of Texas. Bishop Andrew Doyle signed off in June 2018.

St, John’s has also greatly expanded its online presence. Fr. Matt oversaw a complete rework of our Web site, including a new Spanish-language web presence. We also expanded our Facebook presence and added a YouTube channel on which we publish the weekly sermons (English and Spanish) and videos of other parish events.

Fr. Matt left St. John’s in October 2018 to become Rector of a church in Mexico City, Mexico.

2019- 2020 – The Reverend Ann McLemore (Interim Rector)

The Reverend Ann McLemore came to St. John’s from Jackson, Mississippi in April 2019 as our Interim Rector. Upon her arrival, Rev. Ann helped us reorganize and “clean-up” some of our procedures that had become somewhat cumbersome. She also guided us through a discernment process which included the “Holy Cow” parish-wide survey. This process resulted in an updated parish profile which was published by the Diocese of Texas as part of the process of searching for a new permanent Rector.

Throughout the world during the year 2020, the COVID19 pandemic sickened millions of persons and caused hundreds of thousands of deaths. “Normal” life came to a halt as we all avoided large gatherings, kept distance from one-another, and wore face masks in an attempt

to slow the spread of the virus. St John's suspended in-person services in March and we quickly transitioned to a system in which our Sunday services were streamed online with only a few persons actually present at St. John's. We started with simply streaming spoken morning prayer services from the Chapel area; these services were initially available only on Facebook Live. Eventually, we reached the point where our English and Spanish services once again had music and could be accessed live via both Facebook and our web site. We also recorded all services for later replay on our YouTube channel, and we continued our long-standing practice of recording and publishing sermons on YouTube. We started using the Zoom Online Meeting system to hold Christian Education classes, Fellowship Groups (including a virtual coffee hour), and parish administration meetings online. Our monthly parish newsletter, which had been suspended in 2016, was restarted as a weekly blast email and renamed "The Bridge" ("El Puente") to better reflect the mission statement of St. John's.

In September, we took our first tentative steps back toward in-person worship by starting a weekly outdoor Holy Eucharist service, alternating between English and Spanish, with attendance strictly limited and by reservation only. In November, we returned to the Church building for our weekly services, although still without an in-person congregation.

Becoming Beloved Community is the Episcopal Church's long-term commitment to racial healing, reconciliation, and justice. Included in the Becoming Beloved Community resources provided by the national church is "Sacred Ground" – a dialog series based on race and faith that facilitates groups within churches to hold respectful and transformative dialogue on race and racism. St. John's has thusfar organized two Sacred Ground dialog circles, both of whom are working their way through the Sacred Ground curriculum.

In the meantime, as we were navigating the COVID pandemic and learning how to be an online church, we were still searching for a new permanent Rector. In September, the Reverend Minerva Camarena Skeith, an assistant at St. Mark's Episcopal Church in Austin, accepted our call to become the Fifth Rector of St. John's. While at the Seminary of the Southwest, Minerva did her field work at St. John's from 2017 through 2019. Mother Minerva will join us in January 2021.

2021- Present - The Reverend Minerva Camarena Skeith

The Reverend Minerva Camarena Skeith, know to all of us as Mother Minerva, started her rectorship at St. John's on January 1, 2021. Austin was deeply into the latest Covid surge at that time, so services for the first two months of her tenure were entirely online. To further complicate things, major snowstorms and ice storms affected Austin in January and February, including the infamous Valentines' Day storm that paralyzed much of Texas for almost a week and caused major power disruptions throughout the state.

One of Mother Minerva's first suggestions was that we move to using Zoom as our platform for online worship services; throughout 2020 we had been using only Facebook Live and YouTube. Suddenly, instead of having online viewers, we had online participants in our services. People could read the lessons remotely, and members of the choir could sing remotely. We were starting to become a congregation again.

In the spring, as the COVID infection rates began declining, we started holding online morning prayer services inside the church and in-person Holy Eucharist services outside in the parking lot. We bolted wheels onto our portable altar and other fixtures to make it easier to move things around. Simultaneously, we worked on organizing things in the church building to support moving back to indoor in-person worship. This included installing some new cameras and video switching equipment and connecting our new systems to the existing sound system. By specifying certain pews for seating and installing plexiglass barriers where appropriate, we were able to maximize our seating while observing safe social distancing.

It rained on Easter morning. Although we had started setting up outside, we quickly determined that Mother Nature would have her way. All agreed “We can’t cancel EASTER!” We worked together to figure out how to move the Easter services into the church. Things weren’t perfect, but it was so wonderful that our first services in the church after the long absence were EASTER! Over the next few weeks, we refined our processes for safely holding services in the church building while still supporting remote participation. The new buzzword was “hybrid services.” On the Day of Pentecost, we resumed our customary schedule of three Holy Eucharist services each Sunday.

Throughout the rest of 2021, we refined our safety protocols for worship services and other activities at St. John’s. The plexiglass came down, went back up, and came down again. Coffee was served outdoors, indoors in the parish hall, or not at all. In-person small groups could once again meet in the Parish Hall. Elements of the worship services that we had minimized to manage the time we spent together were restored. While being as proactive as possible, we remained very responsive to CDC and governmental recommendations on how to safely do church during this pandemic.

2021 was not just about the pandemic, however. Long-deferred repairs to the north wall of the parish hall were completed, and many of our traditions, including pet blessings, the talent show, celebrating Our Lady of Guadalupe, and Las Posadas resumed. Bishop Monterroso joined us for confirmations, baptisms, and a Quinceañera, and Bishop Ryan formally installed Mother Minerva as our fifth Rector.

A team of leaders learned how to lead small group conversations to identify potential new leaders and issues we care about. The listening sessions were kicked off in December and continued into the first part of 2023. We have heard many stories of the pressures affecting our families. We have heard about some dreams people have for our church. We have also heard from people who have energy to work together to address some of these concerns and make some of these dreams into reality. An Agenda of Issues has been created to help us focus our energy into concrete goals. These issues focus on Economic Health, Physical and Mental Health, and Institutional Health. Our efforts to begin addressing these issues led to creation of teams addressing Affordable Housing, Pastoral Care, Congregational Growth, and Racial and Social Justice.

A highlight for 2022 was the resumption of our Sunday morning Christian Education classes. These classes included not only bible study but in-depth consideration of issues such as

homelessness in Austin. Resumption of these classes was facilitated by changing the service times for Sunday morning worship.

Another highlight was the resumption of the Jamaica festival which had been suspended for the past two years due to the pandemic. This very popular event helps us connect to our neighborhood and celebrates the many cultures in our congregation.

Significant staff changes occurred in 2022. Fay Jones, who had served in a number of staff positions since 2010 (including Newcomers' Coordinator, Director of Growth and Discipleship, and Director of Communications), decided to retire from her staff role while remaining active as a parishioner at St. John's. Maria Angie Hernandez was hired to become our new bilingual Parish Administrator.

The year ended on a somber note. The week before Christmas 2022 was unusually cold, with temperatures dropping to 14 degrees and staying below freezing for several days. Unfortunately, unknown to all of us, temperatures in the attic of the parish hall stayed well below freezing. Two days before Christmas, we discovered water on the floor of the parish hall entryway. Yes, a water pipe in the attic had frozen, burst, and caused extensive damage to the rest rooms and office areas of the parish hall building. Recovery from this damage and restoration of the parish hall will consume much of our energy and attention as we move into 2023.

St. John's Episcopal Church

History of the Buildings and Grounds

This topic traces the history of the various buildings and other features on the St. John's campus.

The First Building

On the feast of Saint Mary, our Lord's mother, December 8, 1960, St. John's Episcopal Church began its journey of faith in north Travis County. It was located off the old Dallas Highway, near the Coxville Store and the old Skyline Club, in a rented house at 302 Caddo Street, in an area called Eubank Acres.



PECUSA Street

In May and June of 1962, the five acres that is now the present site of the church was purchased from R.J. Kramer (namesake of Kramer Lane) for the sum of \$7500 through the Quin Foundation. This averages out to \$1500 per acre. The note was for 3 years at 3% interest, to be paid semi-annually. Soon there would be a Parkfield Drive, which would first be called PECUSA Street, for "Protestant Episcopal Church of the U.S.A."

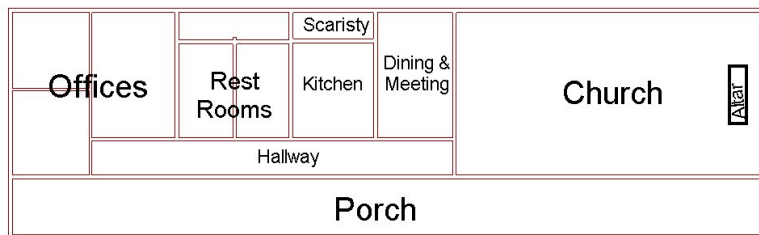
On October 28th, 1962 a major milestone happened when a business meeting was held after an ante-communion service in which 71 attended. At the meeting, the church voted to build the new church. The Bishop's Committee approved the first set of working plans.

The records indicate that the new church was a third completed on February 24, 1963 as reported at a Bishop's Committee Meeting. On March 3rd, the church was half finished. On March 10th, 1963, the last service was held at the Caddo Street address. There were 55 persons present for Morning Prayer.

On March 17, 1963, the Reverend Riker held the first service at the new, unfinished church. There were 48 present, with 30 receiving Communion. By April 7 (Palm Sunday), the outside of the church was completed.



The congregation was working the inside. The Rev. Mr. Riker commented in the service book how slowly things were progressing. Finally, on September 22, the new altar was finished, thereby completing the new church.



Note: The altar was actually attached to the east wall at this stage of construction.

(Rooms are not to scale and wall positions are approximate)

1975 Snapshot

The following snapshot of St. John's site and the nearby neighborhood circa 1975 was written by Bill Beare, Parish Historian.

St. John's in 1975 was on an uncurbed rough street called PECUSA (which stood for Protestant Episcopal Church of the United States of America). This would later become Parkfield Drive. There were only fields of the Gracy farm to the west of the church and a pond northwest of church leading to Mrs. Helen Gracy's farm house and her son's farm house. North of the church was her daughter's house and three model homes of NPC. There was no Quail Hollow, Gracy Woods, or Braker Lane. There was a flock of Guineas belonging to Mrs. Gracy and a lot of ducks in the pond about where Parkfield turns west. On the east and south sides of the property were the duplexes, which remain there today.

On the church grounds all that was here was the church building, a rough gravel parking lot, and three or four baseball diamonds, depending on the number of teams practicing. As to the building it was a wooden one-story building with a long narrow front porch stretching the entire length across the South end. It had a shuffleboard court on it [the porch] and there was white rock on east end. The building was painted gray and the roof was white gravel.

The actual church space was in the area now to the north of the wooden ceiling support posts on the south side of the current chapel area. The altar was on the east end running north and south. There was a center aisle, which began east of the current south door into the old church about seven feet from the kitchen area. There were four small regular windows on the north and south side of church. The walls were paneled in light brown on which hung the current Stations of the Cross. The old pews were high back and very moveable. You knelt on kneeler pads on the floor and if you were short you might not see over the top of the pew.

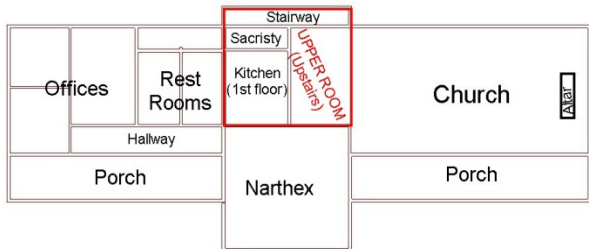
The area which now contains the women's bathroom, Rector's Office, and the corner office/conference room didn't exist—it was outside the boundaries of the building. The current Church Office also didn't exist. On the North side of the hallway was (from east to west) a class room/dining area, the kitchen where it is currently located, two tiny bathrooms, a classroom/library and a very small secretary/vicar's office.

1979 – Construction of the A-Frame

The first major remodel of the St. John's church building occurred in 1979 and 1980. The main purpose of this remodeling was to add a small second story area above the center of the building and to move the south wall of that center section outward to create a vestibule or narthex area for the church itself. While a major motivation was to add more space to the building, there was also a distinct desire to have the building "look like a church." The construction was done almost entirely by volunteer labor. The roof for this addition took the shape of an "A-Frame" and the second story room was called the "Upper Room."



Access to the upper room was (and is) via a narrow, steep stairway behind the kitchen. The upper room was used as the Vicar's office for quite a while; it was also used as an office for various assistant clergy/staff and as a meeting room. Subsequent remodeling of the building did virtually nothing to change the shape, function, or access for this upper room. Access to the upper room does not meet current City of Austin fire safety codes (it is "grandfathered" by the city since we were not within the city limits when it was built), so it is now used only for storage.



Note: The altar was actually attached to the east wall at this stage of construction.

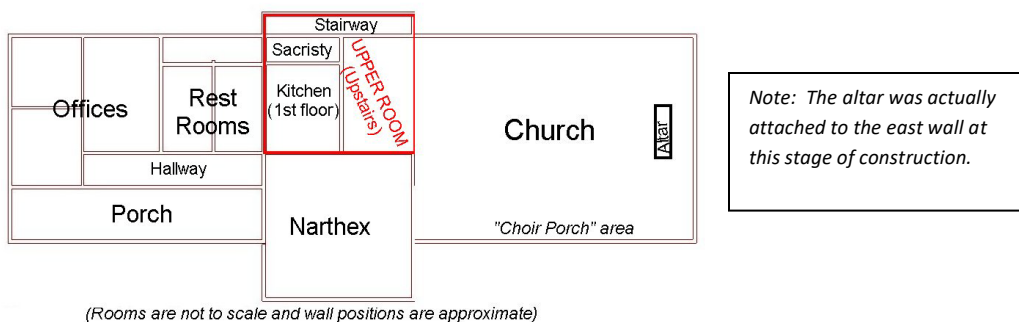
(Rooms are not to scale and wall positions are approximate)

Two rare pictures from 1982 show the general shape and layout of the church building with the A-Frame addition. These pictures are particularly rare since they show SNOW on the church grounds.



1983 – Adding the Organ and Choir Porch

A substantial pipe organ was acquired by the church in 1983. Initially, the organ was installed at the rear (west) wall of the Church, along the wall next to the kitchen. Shortly after we received the organ, a project was started to bump out the original south wall on the eastern part of the church building in order to enclose the porch area. This added about 4-5 feet of width to the church area; space that was used for the new organ and for a couple of rows of chairs for the choir. The area was called the “Choir Porch.”

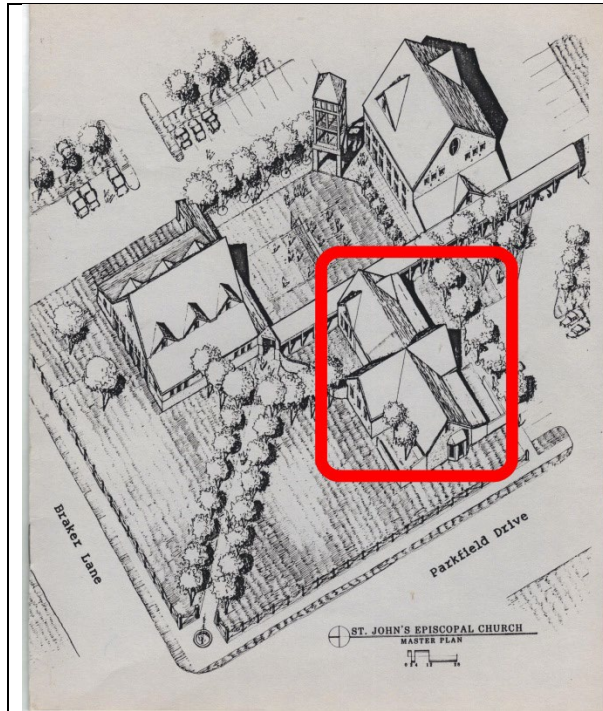


Marvin Rasmussen contributed the following anecdote about this remodeling project:

A funny story: The enclosure of the porch on the east end of the south side of the building was done along with other renovations, one of the more noteworthy being the connection of the building to the city sewers and the decommissioning of the septic tank. By the time the porch was being enclosed, which was a do-it-ourselves project of the congregation, the exact location of the buried and no-longer-used septic tank had been forgotten. The floor of the porch was an inch or so lower than the floor of the nave, so a truck was called out to deliver cement to raise and level the porch floor (the original porch floor was sloped towards the south for drainage). After the cement had been poured through the new exterior windows and the crew of church members was leveling and smoothing the newly poured floor, the cement truck driver stuck his head through the window and reported that his truck had fallen into a deep hole. Sure enough, the back wheels of the truck had indeed broken through the top of the lost septic tank. I guess that the truck driver was relieved to hear that the septic tank was no longer used, and the church work crew gratefully accepted his offer to dump the unused remainder of the load of cement into it. I think that the remaining space in the tank was eventually filled with dirt...

1987-1988 – A Major Remodeling

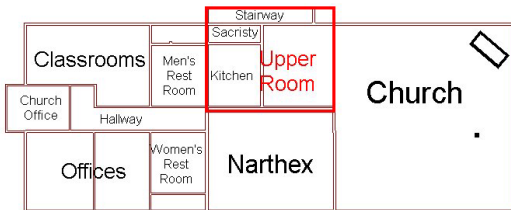
In the mid-1980s, there was general consensus that the current building had become inadequate for St. John's. A master plan for the site was prepared, showing three major buildings (a church, a parish hall, and an administration/classrooms/chapel building).



The mid 1980s **Master Plan**. The existing Parish Hall/Administration Building is highlighted in red.

According to the plan, a new church building would have been built southeast of the existing building; there would also have been a bell tower near the new church building. A parish hall/activity center would have been built northeast of the existing building, and all buildings would have been connected by covered walkways. Parking would have been primarily to the south of the three buildings, not shown in the drawing.

The plan was to first remodel the existing building by extending the south wall out by several feet and creating new roof structures to add attic storage space and to set the architectural theme for the site. Initially, the new floor space would be used to expand the church area and create new restrooms and office/classroom space. Once the new church building was completed, the plan was to again remodel the existing building to create additional classrooms and a small chapel in the church area.



Here are some pictures of the remodeling project showing how massive (and disruptive) the project was. Note that the first picture shows the Reverend Murray Powell at the “stonebreaking” ceremony to start the remodeling.





Yes, we continued to hold services in this building during construction! The building was remodeled according to plan and rededicated in May 1988. These pictures show the layout of the sanctuary and nave in the church area after the remodeling was completed.



2000-2001 – Annex Building

The ANNEX is a small building located adjacent to the Parish Hall. It is a converted portable classroom building that was acquired by St. John's in 2000. It was originally located in the playground area behind the Parish Hall, and was moved to its current location just east of the Parish Hall when construction of the main church building began in 2004.

It is generally used for classroom and meeting space. The youth group regularly uses it for meetings, as do several external groups such as the ESL Classes, homeowners associations, etc.

The Annex was originally called the “YALL BUILDING” and some long-time parishioners will still use that term. The meaning is lost in antiquity.

2004 – New Sanctuary

As St. John's grew, the worship and classroom space in the existing building became more and more crowded. Eventually, during 2002 and 2003 a discernment process and fundraising campaign produced the plans and funding for our new Church building. Groundbreaking ceremonies for the building were held on May 17, 2003.





The first service in the new building was an Evening Prayer service held on August 23, 2004. The first Eucharist was either Saturday August 28 (5:30 PM) or Sunday, August 29 (8:00 AM).

Formal dedication was held on September 12, 2004.

2005 – Parish Hall Remodeling

Shortly after we moved into the new church building, the old building was remodeled to become the Parish Hall and Administration Building. Moveable “accordion” walls were installed to subdivide the large area that had been the church into a dining room and several meeting rooms.

2013 – Labyrinth

St John’s has had a labyrinth on the property since roughly 2009. The original labyrinth was built as an Eagle Scout project, started by Chris Battle, and then brought to fruition by Jeffrey Harry with advice from David Petersen. This labyrinth was slightly smaller than the current version and built from limestone rocks taken from the St. John’s grounds. Sadly, the labyrinth fell into disrepair and, by the end of 2012, the Junior Warden was planning to remove it and return the site to its original condition.

During the summer of 2013, the EYC, with help from several adult members of St. John’s, completely remodeled the labyrinth and made it a signature part of our landscape.



2015 – Additional Parish Hall Improvements

In response to several generous donations, we were able to improve the Parish Hall building in 2015. In particular:

- The old and worn carpet in the entry area for the parish hall building has been replaced.
- The acoustic tile ceiling of the original church area was removed and replaced.
- The old lights in the parish hall have been replaced with new high efficiency recessed lighting.



2021 - 2022 – Video and Computer Equipment Upgrades

The COVID 19 pandemic that started in 2020 and continues into 2023 taught us the importance of having an online presence and making our services available outside the church building itself. In 2020, we broadcast our services on Facebook Live from the chapel, using just a single camera.



Late in 2020, we moved back into the church building and early in 2021, we switched from Facebook to the Zoom Online Meeting system for our broadcasts; Zoom allowed us to support not just viewing our services but also participating remotely. Remote participation became particularly important during the ice/snow storm of February 2021 and during several COVID outbreaks that affected members of the church. Again, early in 2021, we used just a single camera.



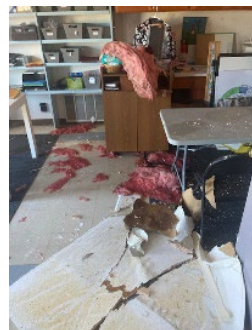
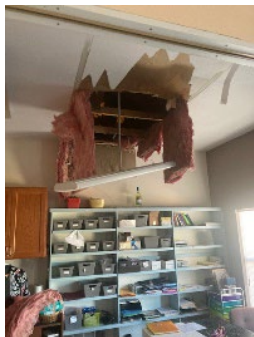
During 2021, several very generous donations allowed us to upgrade our video and computer systems to improve our online service presentation. We now have four cameras in the church building along with rather sophisticated video switching equipment. This new equipment has given us great flexibility and greatly improved our online presence.



December 2022 – early 2023 –Parish Hall Flood

Austin was very cold during the week of December 18-24, 2022; temperatures stayed well below freezing (as low as 14 degrees) for almost 48 hours. However, life continued at St. John's as the altar guild and various other groups completed their preparations for Christmas Eve and Christmas Day services. The bulletins were already done, so virtually all of the preparations that week were in the church itself. The parish hall with all its Christmas decorations remained mostly empty.

Unfortunately, unknown to all of us, temperatures in the attic of the parish hall stayed well below freezing for much of that time. On Friday afternoon, December 23, as the freezing temperatures began to moderate, parishioner and former junior warden Mike Davis stopped by St. John's and noticed water on the floor of the parish hall entryway. Yes, a water pipe in the attic had frozen and burst. Hal Hughes quickly came over and shut off water to the church and parish hall, and various people led by Junior Warden Kevin Flegal began assessing damage.



While Mike's quick discovery of the water damage certainly limited the damage and localized the flooding to the west half of the building, there was still plenty of damage. The ceiling had collapsed in the men's restroom and in the adjacent office area. Floors, both carpeted and tiled, were ruined through much of the building. Sheet-rock wallboard was soaked and ruined. Because we had to shut off water to the entire campus, our 2022 Christmas Eve and Christmas Day services were held without running water or functioning rest rooms. Fortunately, we were able to remove much of the parish hall debris, patch the leak, and restore water to the church building before services on the following Sunday. As of January 2023, the parish hall building remains unusable and repairs are pending.

St. John's Episcopal Church

History: Clergy

Rectors

St. John's became a parish on February 11, 1995, and The Rev. Paul Taft became the first Rector of St. John's at that point.

1 st Rector – The Rev. Paul Taft	February 11, 1995 – June 14, 1998
2 nd Rector – The Rev. Albert Rodriguez	February 28, 1999 – December 31, 2013
3 rd Rector – The Rev. Dr. Matthew Seddon	August 11, 2014 – October 31, 2018
4 th Rector (Interim) – The Rev. Ann McLemore	April 1, 2019 – December 31, 2020
5 th Rector – The Reverend Minerva Camarena Skeith	January 1, 2021 -- present

Vicars

The following persons served as Vicars for St. John's Episcopal Church during its time as a Mission of the Episcopal Diocese of Texas

1 st Vicar - The Rev. Malcolm P. Riker	December 8, 1960 – July 30, 1964
2 nd Vicar - The Rev. Harold L. Cooper	September 16, 1964 – November 10, 1968
3 rd Vicar - The Rev. Robert A. Jackson	November 17, 1968 – November 28, 1971
4 th Vicar - The Rev. Hal Brook Perry	December 5, 1971 – December 9, 1973
5 th Vicar - The Rev. Robert N. Redmon	December 16, 1973 – June 21, 1981
6 th Vicar - The Rev. Seth Deleery	September 6, 1981 – August 30, 1984
<i>Fr. Seth was the first full-time Vicar of St. John's. All previous vicars were shared with other churches in the area.</i>	
7 th Vicar - The Rev. Murray M. Powell	September 16, 1984 – October 25, 1992
8 th Vicar – The Rev. Paul Taft	December 16, 1992 – February 11, 1995

Assisting Priests

The following persons served as assisting priests at St. John's:

The Rev. Dr. David Beer	1980s through 2017, still active at St. John's
The Rev. Fred Raybourn, Jr.	1980s

The Rev. Joel Treadwell	1980s
The Rev. Dorothy Robinson	January 1995 – June 1998
The Rev. Darrell Laremore	March 2005 – October 2010
The Rev. Cathy Boyd	January 2007 – August 2007
The Rev. Rohani Weger	January 2010 – July 2014

Deacons

The following persons served as Deacons at St. John's:

The Rev. Ray Fisher	June 1964 - ?
The Rev. Jerry W. Chapman	1979
The Rev. Richard Gerald "Dick" Marshall	1980
The Rev. Dorothy Robinson	July 1994 – January 1995
The Rev. Darrell Laremore	December 2003 – March 2005
The Rev. Cathy Boyd	July 2006 – December 2006
The Rev. Dr. Edson Way	December 2007 – May 2008
The Rev. Rohani Weger	September 2009 – January 2010
The Rev. Les Jackson	2010 – 2011
The Rev. Laurie McKim	2011 – May 2012
The Rev. Karen Crawford	2013 – May 2014
The Rev. Rod Clark	2013 – May 2014
The Rev. Victoria Mason	December 2015 – present (semi-retirement in December 2022)

Supply Priests

St. John's has been blessed with a number of short term "supply priests" who have helped us through periods of transition. Some of our more notable supply priests have been:

The Reverend Armisted Powell, the older brother of the Reverend Murray Powell, our Seventh Vicar, served St. John's during the transition between the Reverend Paul Taft and the Reverend Al Rodriguez.

The first woman supply priest to conduct a service at St. John's was Rev Donna Mayfield, who worked at the counseling center at the seminary, back in the early 1990s. It has been reported that her bright nail polish was quite controversial!

The Reverend Ben Long served St. Johns several times during the transitions between the Reverend Al Rodriguez and the Reverend Matthew Seddon, and then between the Reverend Matthew Seddon and the Reverend Ann McLemore. Ben Long's father, the Reverend Michael Long, also served St. John's as a supply priest.

Staff

The following persons have served in various significant paid staff roles at St. John's:

Denise Parks – Church Secretary	1980s
Karoline Gebert – Church Secretary	December 1988 – December 1990
Donna Parker – Church Secretary	1990s
Philip Riley – Organist and Choirmaster	1979 through the present
Justin Forgey – Youth Minister	September 2001 – November 2003
Fay Jones – Discipleship Coordinator	September 2009 – June 2022
Felissa Nause – Dia De Los Niños Director	September 2010 through May 2015
Maria Angie Hernandez – Parish Administrator	October 2022 through the present

The Reverend Malcom P. Riker

The story of St. John's begins with the story of Malcolm Riker, a priest with an amazing ability to start new churches.

Malcolm Riker was an Austin native whose parents were both professors at the University of Texas. His interest in the church began early when he was about 11 or 12 years old learning how to be an acolyte and preparing for confirmation at All Saints. His interest in the church grew through high school, but like many of the high school graduates of that time, his plans were interrupted by World War II. During the War, he served as a radar operator on several destroyers involved in many of the biggest naval battles in the Pacific. Despite the interruption caused by the war, Riker's interest in becoming a priest grew and while on leave while his ship was being retrofitted, he wrote Bishop Clinton Quinn and informed him that he wanted to try his vocation as a postulant for Holy Orders in the Episcopal Church. He immediately got a response back from Bishop Quinn acknowledging his application, congratulating him, and notifying him officially that he would recommend him.

Following his discharge from the Navy on February 6, 1946, he returned to Texas and enrolled at the University of Texas to get his Bachelor degree and then on to New York to spend another three years at the General Theological Seminary. Although seminarians were strongly advised not to marry while in seminary, his wife-to-be, Hallie Hall, told him she was not interested in waiting and he got permission to wed. Following graduation, he was sent to St. Michael's in La Marque, Texas where he began his ministry. He quickly grew the congregation at St. Michael's and seeing a need for a mission in Texas City began a new mission there which grew to a congregation of 50 within a year. In May 1955, he again expanded his ministry by starting St. Marks in Alta Lorna. During this time, he developed and refined his pattern for developing new churches. By January 1957, he was serving priest for one parish church and three missions, with a full complement of services in each. During his seven years of ministry in Galveston County, he had baptized 412 persons and presented 800 for confirmation. He had also undertaken fourteen building programs.

In 1958, Bishop Hines assigned Riker as "Special Missioner" for the city of Austin. His first post was as vicar at St. George's where the Bishop had sent him to help solve some internal problems that had resulted in falling attendance and funding. As he worked at mending the rift at St. George's he also started surveying the city for neighborhoods not served by an Episcopal church. Among his findings was an area in (at the time) far north Austin, the home of St. John's, soon to be one of his four "Gospel Churches."

St. John's Episcopal Church

History: Seminararians

Being located in Austin near the Episcopal Seminary of the Southwest, we are fortunate to have had many seminararians do their field training at St. John's.

Seminararians who have served at St. Johns throughout its history are listed below. Note that the seminary year spans from September – June. We are not sure of the details on some of the very early seminararians, so they are listed by calendar year and thus may be listed in multiple consecutive years.

Year	Seminararian	Notes
1961	William Ripley	
1962	William Ripley, Phil Parkman	
1963	John Raymond Fisher	
1964	John Raymond Fisher, R. Brown, Lawson Moore Anderson	The Rev. Fisher was ordained to the Deaconate on June 16, 1964. This was the first ordination to be held at St. John's.
...		
1968	Donald Hugh Dinwiddie	
1969	Donald Hugh Dinwiddie	
1970	Donald Hugh Dinwiddie	
...		
1972	Austin Flint Hubbard	
...		
1980	Richard Gerald Marshall	
1981-1983	William David Holly	
1981-1984	John Hayes Park	
1982-1983	Judith Reagan Liro, Priscilla A. Inman, Richard Griffin Jones (Pete),	The Rev. Pete Jones passed away in 2007. He was the husband of Fay Jones, our Membership Coordinator.
...		
1987-1988	John David Norvell	
1988-1989	Marianne Sorge	
1989-1990	Janie Leigh Kirt	
1990-1991	Richard Arthur Kalber	
...		
1992-1993	Scott Penrod	
1993-1994	Clark Shackelford	
1994-1995	none	
1995-1996	Matt Zimmerman	
1996-1997	Michael Richardson, Gar Demo	
1997-1998	Lex Brackenridge	
...		
1999-2000	Sally Monroe, Gerardo Brambila	
2000-2001	Posey Jackson	
2001-2002	William Stroop, Daryl Hay	

2002-2003	Will Carter, Daryl Hay	
2003-2004	Patricia Millard, Will Carter	
2004-2005	Robin Reeves	
2005-2006	Winnie Mitchell, Scott Jones, Robin Reeves	
...		
2007-2008	Dr. Edson Way	
...		
2009-2010	Andrew Lobban	
2010-2011	Andrew Lobban, Laurie McKim, Les Jackson	
2011-2012	Laurie McKim	
	Ben Long	
2012-2013	Karen Crawford, Rod Clark	
2013-2014	Karen Crawford, Rod Clark	
2014-2015		
2015-2017	Michael Woods	
2017-2019	Minerva Camarena Skeith	Became 5 th Rector of St. John's in 2021
2020-2021		No Seminarian –Covid 19 pandemic years
2022 -	Luis Rivas	

St. John's Episcopal Church

History: Lay Leadership

The historical lay leadership of St. John's is listed below.





Year	Senior Warden / Bishop' Warden	Junior Warden	Clerk	Treasurer
1961	Gus Moore	W. O. Lackie	Mrs. Kenneth Decker	Mrs. Kenneth Decker
1962	Robert M. Smith	James F. Anderson	Robert M. Smith	W. O. Lackie
1963	Robert M. Smith	James F. Anderson	Robert M. Smith	W. O. Lackie
1964	Robert M. Smith	James F. Anderson	Robert M. Smith	W. O. Lackie
1965	Edgar L. Rickard	Pat. P. Pavona	none	Robert M. Smith
1966	Robert M. Smith	David P. Bell	Alfred R. Davey	W. O. Lackie
1967	David P. Bell	James F. Anderson	Joseph W. Pratteni, Jr.	Donald J. Blashill
1968	Robert M. Smith	W. O. Lackie	James Anagnos	David P. Bell
1969	W. O. Lackie	J. L. Smith	James Anagnos	D. J. Blashill
1970	J. N. Anagnos	J. L. Smith	Mrs. B. R. Mausert	B. R. Mausert
1971	W. O. Lackie	J. L. Smith	Mrs. B. R. Mausert	B. R. Mausert
1972	Herbert E. Adams	Fred T. Hankey, Jr.	Don Cox	John A. Swinnea, Jr.
1973	Herbert E. Adams	Fred T. Hankey, Jr.	Don Cox	Don Cox
1974	Don Cox	W. O. Lackie	unknown	W. O. Lackie
1975	Don Cox	Lloyd Parker	Mrs. Shelia Ann Stallings	W. O. Lackie
1976	Max Wright	Lloyd Parker	Valerie Cox	W. O. Lackie
1977	W. O. Lackie	None	Valerie Cox	Don Cox
1978	Valerie Cox	none	Valerie Cox	Don Cox
1979	Howard Riley	David Leitch	Helen Gracy	Don Cox
1980	Howard Riley	David Leitch	Helen Gracy	W. O. Lackie
1981	Howard Riley	Bill Beare	unknown	W. O. Lackie
1982	Bill Beare	Jim Dittman	Elizabeth Donn	W. O. Lackie
1983	Don Cox	Marvin Rasmussen	John O'Quin	Daphne Stocks
1984	Marvin Rasmussen	Bill Cox	Valerie Cox	Don Cox
1985	Linda Olsen	Bill Beare		Don Cox
1986	Valerie Cox	Bill Beare		Don Cox
1987	Fred Walter	Bill Beare		Don Cox
1988	Marion Heard	Marvin Rasmussen		Don Cox
1989	David Leitch	Kim Evert		Marvin Rasmussen
1990	John Williams	Kim Evert		Marvin Rasmussen
1991	Nolan House (resigned?)	Bill Cohn		Marvin Rasmussen
1992	Judy Ingram	Jill LaCour		Marvin Rasmussen
1993	Karen Leitch	Annette VanDover		Marvin Rasmussen
1994	Debbie Cox	Bill Beare		Annette VanDover
1995	Steve Kriechbaum First Senior Warden	Dennise Therkelsen		Annette VanDover
1996	John Williams	Philip Riley		Annette VanDover
1997	Stuart O'Neal Hal Hughes	Mac Cannary		Annette VanDover
1998	Hal Hughes	Margaret Beare	Barbara McMains	Annette VanDover
1999	Hal Hughes	Margaret Beare	Debbie Cox	Annette VanDover
2000	Janet Gilmore	Al Sprague (Jan-June) Jane Powers	Debbie Cox	Annette VanDover
2001	Mary Anne O'Brien	Jane Powers	Deborah Christopherson	Annette VanDover
2002	Mary Anne O'Brien	Ruth Hall		Annette VanDover
2003	John Hutka	Ruth Hall	Mary Lynn Adams	Annette VanDover
2004	Mary Ward	Hal Hughes	Anne Reed	Annette VanDover
2005	Marvin Rasmussen	Hal Hughes	Kay Soper	Annette VanDover
2006	Marvin Rasmussen	Bill Beare	Kay Soper	Annette VanDover

Year	Senior Warden / Bishop' Warden	Junior Warden	Clerk	Treasurer
2007	Kevin Flegal	Bill Beare	Laurie Williams	Annette VanDover
2008	Laurie Williams	Clara Daniels (Jan-Oct) Hal Hughes	Jamie Burns	Annette VanDover
2009	Laurie Williams	Paul Villarreal	Terry Cox	Annette VanDover
2010	Katherine Lilly	Paul Villarreal	Terry Cox	Marvin Rasmussen
2011	Linda Pemberton	Hal Hughes	Steve Mudge	Marvin Rasmussen
2012	Linda Pemberton	Hal Hughes	Don Robertson	Marvin Rasmussen
2013	Don Robertson	Hal Hughes	Autumn Jordan	Marvin Rasmussen
2014	Don Robertson	Mike Davis	Fay Jones	Marvin Rasmussen
2015	Linda Villarreal	Mike Davis	Fay Jones	Marvin Rasmussen
2016	Sandra Ward	Margaret Beare	Fay Jones	Marvin Rasmussen
2017	Chad Hall	Margaret Beare	Fay Jones	Marvin Rasmussen
2018	Chad Hall	Will Neer	Fay Jones	Marvin Rasmussen
2019	John Williams	Hal Hughes	Fay Jones	Marvin Rasmussen
2020	John Williams	Hal Hughes	Sandra Welles	Marvin Rasmussen
2021	Paula Foy	Hal Hughes	Maria Caballero	Sandra Welles
2022	Steve Kriechbaum	Kevin Flegal	Maria Caballero	Sandra Welles Noreen McMahon
2023	Maria Caballero	Kevin Flegal	Mary Anne O'Brien	Noreen McMahon

St. John's Episcopal Church

History: Donations, Fixtures and Furnishings

This is a list of significant items received at St. John's over the years. Pictures are included when available.

CHURCH	
	<p>Altar: The present altar was designed and built by David Petersen, a parishioner and accomplished furniture craftsman who also designed and built the credence tables, communion rails, tabernacle, and all of the ornamental woodwork in the church. The altar table includes a marble inlay that was used in the original altar in the old church building.</p>
	<p>Altar and Paschal Candles: The wooden altar candle holders and the Paschal Candle holder were designed and built by David Petersen and consecrated with other sanctuary items in September 2004. The candles themselves are oil candles.</p>
	<p>Processional Cross and Torches</p> <p>In February 2004, St. George's Episcopal Church in Port Arthur, TX was disbanded, and many of the furnishings of the church were donated to other churches within the Diocese of Texas. St John's was a major beneficiary of St. George's misfortune, and many of the Sanctuary furnishings for our church came from St. George's via the Diocese. In particular, the torches used in processions came from St. George's, as did the Processional Cross. An inscription on the Processional Cross indicates that the cross was dedicated "To the Glory of God and in Loving Memory of Lieutenant John W. Drake." Lieutenant Drake was the co-pilot on a B-17G bomber that crashed on July 11, 1944 while returning from a mission during World War II. The Drake family lived in Port Arthur, Texas and worshipped at St. George's.</p>
	<p>Office Light Candelabra</p> <p>The candelabra located on either side of the Tabernacle were donated by Mark Hartwell, in memory of Bill Beare.</p>



The **Baptismal Font** was donated by Helen Gracy and her family, in memory of Richard Swearingen Gracy.



The **Tabernacle** was designed and built by David Petersen and consecrated with other sanctuary items in September 2004. The roof of the tabernacle is gold sheet inlay. The cross on top of the tabernacle came to us from St. George's in Port Arthur.



Lectern/Pulpit/Ambo:

We have a single structure in the Sanctuary for liturgical readings and for preaching. This combined pulpit and lectern is more correctly called an "Ambo" and it was built by David Petersen and consecrated with other sanctuary items in September 2004.



The **Metal And Glass Cross** suspended above the altar in the Sanctuary was designed and built by Steve Kriechbaum, a parishioner and jeweler. Steve completed the cross in November 2005.



The **Christus Rex** that is displayed above the doors between the narthex and the nave was donated by Howard and Midge Riley in the 1980s. It was mounted over the altar in the old building prior to 2004.



The **Prayer Bench and Tracery** in the rear of the church building were built by David Petersen and installed in 2016



The **Our Lady of Guadalupe Icon** was donated by Sra. Maria Nuñez.



The **Our Lady of Walsingham** painting was painted by Ruth Beer, wife of the Rev. Dr. David Beer, in memory of her brother, Gene Ustby.



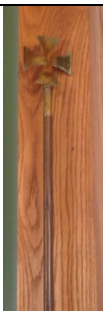
The “Cambridge” **Paten and Chalice** were donated by Margaret Thorpe Cashin and Jim and Nora Jackson, in memory of Jack Cashin. The inscription on the paten also lists Margaret Willcox Thorpe and John S. Thorpe.



The “Hampshire” **Paten and Chalice** were donated by The Rev. Murray Powell and Sarah Powell in thanksgiving for the people of St. John’s.



The **Thurible and Incense Boat** were donated by The Rev. Dorothy Robinson in 1995.



The **Priest’s Cross** came to us from St. George’s Episcopal Church in Port Arthur, TX.



The **Celebration Altar Hangings** (White/Gold) were donated by Bill and Margaret Beare.



The **Green Altar Hangings** were donated by Bill and Debbie Cox in 2012.



The **Red superfrontal** altar hangings were donated by Liz and John O'Quin.



The **Purple superfrontal** altar hangings were donated by Liz and John O'Quin.



The **Blue Altar Hangings** were handcrafted by Yolanda Jones, wife of the Rev. Scott Jones (former seminarian) They were funded by Bill Beare.

Get picture during Advent

The **Rose (pink) Altar Hangings** were handcrafted by Yolanda Jones, wife of the Rev. Scott Jones (former seminarian) They were funded by Bill Beare.



The **Bible** was donated by the Reverend Al Rodriguez.



The Missal Stand came to us from St. George's. It carries the inscription "*Given to the Glory of God by Martha Sallyann Booth Bernhardt.*" A Google search indicates that Ms. Bernhardt lived in Port Arthur and may have been a parishioner of St. George's.



The **Holy Water Lavabo Bowl** was donated by the Rev. Dr. David Beer and Ruth Beer.



A **Lavabo Bowl** was donated by Annette VanDover.



A **Travelling Communion Set** was donated in memory of the Rev. Joel Treadwell by Trinity Episcopal Church in Tallulah, Louisiana, where Fr. Joel had been the Rector from 1974 through 1983.



The **Ossuary** was built by David Petersen.



The original **Virge** (staff carried by Vergers) was donated by Howard Riley.

The second small **Virge** was donated by Bill Cox.

A third **Virge** (also suitable for use as a **Beadle Pole**) came to us from St. George's Episcopal Church in Port Arthur, TX.



The four note **Sanctus bells** were donated by the Rev. Robert Redmon.



Communion Rail Kneelers are covered in a separate topic.



The large “wagon wheel” **Advent Wreath** that hangs above the credence table was built by the Rev. Al Rodriguez.



The small **Advent Wreath** that attaches to the Paschal Candle stand was built by David Petersen.



The **Bishop's Chair** was donated by Charles and Edna Hunter





The **Gothic Screens** in the north and east windows of the Nave were hand-crafted by the Rev. Al Rodriguez.



The **Stations of the Cross** plaques that line the walls of the nave were donated by The Rev. Robert Redmon, 5th Vicar of St. John's.



The **Alms Basins** came from came to us from St. George's Episcopal Church in Port Arthur, TX. Other Alms Basins were used in the original church.

	<p>The original lectern was donated by the Rev. Malcom Riker and was part of the furnishings of the original church. It is now used in the Narthex.</p>
	<p>The large brass Flower Vase was donated by Janice Treadwell in memory of The Rev. Joel Treadwell.</p>
	<p>The Pall was donated by Bill and Margaret Beare, in memory of Anni Davis. The Ossuary Pall was also donated by Bill and Margaret Beare, in memory of Howard Riley</p>
	<p>A fair linen was donated by Cindy Deleery in memory of her grandmother. Ms. Deleery was the wife of The Rev. Seth Deleery.</p>
	<p>Torch stands were donated by Liz O'Quin.</p>
	<p>Colored Acolyte Cinctures were donated by Margaret and Bill Beare, in memory of H. William Beare, Sr.</p>
	<p>Second Collection Offertory Bags (velvet bags) were originally donated by Bill Beare and are now used by the Altar Guild.</p>

CHAPEL / PARISH HALL



Chapel Altar – The original altar in the old church building was a stone altar with a carved wooden top located approximately where the chapel altar and columbarium now stand. The carved wooden altar top was handcrafted by David Leitch, a parishioner. While the stone altar was de-consecrated and demolished when the parish hall was remodeled in 2004, the wooden top (minus the inlay) remains in use as part of the chapel altar. The base of the chapel altar is now a repurposed home bar that was purchased by the Reverend Albert Rodriguez, the 2nd rector of St. John's.



The **stained glass window** depicting St. John the Baptist that is located in the chapel area was donated by the Rev. Robert Redmon in the mid-1970s while he was the 5th Vicar at St. John's.


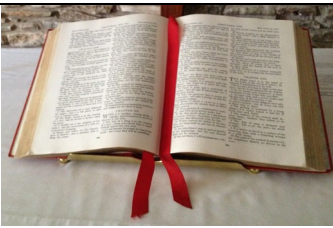

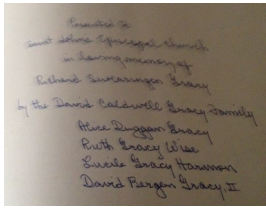



Note that the namesake saint for St. John's is St. John the Evangelist, the author of the Gospel According to St. John.





The **Large Wooden Cross** on the wall behind the chapel altar was originally mounted on the roof of the parish hall/administration building, back when it was the only building on the St. John's property. The cross is constructed from five distinct types of wood. While it stays mostly in the chapel, it is moved to the main sanctuary on Good Friday and stays there throughout the Easter season. It was donated by Janice Treadwell and her family in memory of the Reverend Joel Treadwell, a retired priest from the Diocese of Louisiana who was a parishioner and who assisted at St. John's during much of the 1980s.



The **Aumbry** in the chapel was donated by David and Karen Leitch and handcrafted by David Leitch.

	<p>The “Old” Processional Cross was donated by the Rev. Malcom Riker and was used in the original church in the 1960s.</p>
<p>Need to determine which pottery set was donated.</p>	<p>A Pottery Chalice and Paten were donated by Liz O’Quin.</p>
	<p>The King James Version Bible used in the Chapel was donated in memory of Richard Swearingen Gracy, by members of the Gracy family.</p>  
	<p>The Missal Stand in the chapel is inscribed “In Loving Memory of Arnold W. Hunka.” We have no further information on the stand, who donated it, or who Mr. Hunka was. This particular missal stand appears to have been in use at St. John’s since the 1960s.</p>
	<p>The Columbarium Cross may have come to us from St. George’s in Port Arthur.</p>
	<p>Black and Gold Cross:</p> <p>It is reported that the black and gold cross that hangs in the entry area of the Parish Hall is the original cross used at St. John’s, donated by the Rev. Malcom Riker in 1961 or 1962.</p>
	<p>The brass Advent Wreath used in the old church was donated by Linda and Larry Olsen and the Rev. Murray Powell and Sarah Powell.</p>

	<p>The old Bishop's Chair was donated by Jack and Vera Carswell.</p>
	<p>The candlesticks used on the chapel altar and brass Paschal candle stand used in the chapel were first used in the original church in the 1960s.</p>
	<p>The Sanctuary Chairs used in the old church were donated by Helen Gracy. Those chairs are now used in the Parish Hall.</p>
	<p>The Prie-dieu in the Chapel was donated by Jack Caswell</p>

FLAGS AND BANNERS



The **American Flag** was donated by Girl Scout troops 358 and 714. Both troops were sponsored by St. John's.

The **Texas Flag** was donated by VFW Post 8787.

The **Episcopal Church flag** was donated by Bill and Margaret Beare in memory of Eugenia Harris.

The **Anglican Communion Flag** came to us from St. George's Episcopal Church, formerly of Port Arthur, TX.



The **St. John's Parish Banner** was funded by Bill and Margaret Beare and fabricated by Hink Johnson.



The Parish banner depicts an eagle perched upon the Shield of the Episcopal Church. A sash across the eagle bears the Latin inscription "***Vestibulum Augeri Pius Erga Deum***" which loosely translates to "***A place to grow spiritually.***" The bottom of the Episcopal Shield carries a silhouette of the Church cupola, a signature architectural feature of the church building.



The **Liturgical Season Banners** were donated by Sheri Rasmussen and by the Rev. Al Rodriguez.



St George's Banners – donated by The Rev. Al Rodriguez

	<p>Ribbon Banners (used on Pentecost Sunday) were handmade by Fay Jones.</p>
 	<p>Other Ribbon Banners in the church were various Sunday School projects.</p>

MUSICAL ITEMS



The **Hymn Board** above the choir seating was made by the Reverend Murray Powell, the 7th Vicar of St. John's. The original front door of the church was changed when the building was remodeled in 1988, and Fr. Powell (an accomplished woodworker despite having been born with only one hand) made the hymn board out of wood recycled from the door.



Pipe Organ – Wicks Organ Company, date undetermined; Otto Hofmann, 1983; Pieter Visser and Associates, 2004

The story goes that our pipe organ, a creation of the Wicks Organ Company, started life in a Lutheran Church in the Midwest. The years of its initial installation and journey to Austin are unknown. Mr. Otto Hofmann, central Texas organ builder extraordinaire, brought the organ to Austin and installed it in the home of a university professor. At a later time the owner decided to sell the organ, and leaflets were sent to local churches. The Rev. Seth Deleery, the 6th Vicar of St. John's, opened his mail and seized the opportunity for St. John's to have a pipe organ. Thanks to a generous donation by parishioner Helen Gracy, the organ was purchased, installed by Mr. Hofmann, and dedicated with a service of choral evensong by October, 1983.

When our new church was built, the parish engaged Pieter Visser and Associates of Houston to install the organ in the new space. The pipe chest was elevated and the façade reworked to produce a most attractive appearance which complements the beauty of the new worship area. With excellent acoustics in the new church, the pipe organ serves well to support congregational singing even though it consists of a limited number of ranks of pipes. Through the years few repairs have been needed since this is a durable machine.

We are blessed to have this particular version of the “King of Instruments” in our midst to assist us in singing God's praise. Few parishes of our size have a pipe organ, so we can be especially appreciative of Father Seth Deleery for following through on a leaflet that came in the mail, and Helen Gracy for being so generous.



The **new piano** was donated anonymously. It is a studio grand piano, meaning that the strings inside are the same length as those in a grand piano, only in an upright position.



The **electric piano** and bench in the parish hall was given by Janet Gilmore.

Get picture

The 2 octave set of **Choir handbells** were donated in Thanksgiving for the life of Marcia Kay Hauk by her sister, Annette Hauk VanDover.

An older **piano** was donated by Susan and Doug Gavin. This piano is now in the home of a parishioner.

Songs of Praise hymnals were donated by Alison Louise Brown.

ARTWORK



The **Our Lady of Walsingham** painting was painted by Ruth Beer, wife of the Rev. Dr. David Beer, in memory of her brother, Gene Ustby.



The new **Lady of Guadalupe** painting was donated by Sra. Maria Nuñez.



The old **Lady of Guadalupe** painting was donated by the Rev. Al Rodriguez.



The **23rd Psalm artwork** and the **Lord's Prayer artwork** in the Narthex were both hand stitched by Wanda Summerlin, a parishioner, in 1989.



The **Diocesan Shield** was donated by Bill Beare.



The **Genealogy of the Bible** painting was donated by Helen Gracy



The **Ethiopian Style hallway pictures** outside the Church Office were painted by Ruth Beer, wife of the Rev. Dr. David Beer.



The **Last Supper painting** was donated by Eileen and John Goodman.



The **Pietà** above the Columbarium in the Chapel area was donated by Eileen and John Goodman when the columbarium was established in 2010.



The **large statue of St. John** which is located in the Memorial Garden at the east side of the Parish Hall was installed when the new church building was dedicated in 2004. It was donated by Tyler Fletcher of Fletcher's Antiques and Rare Books in Salado, Texas. The statue was originally solid grey in color; John Lamphere, a parishioner, painted it to better represent St. John.



A small statue representing the **Ascension of Jesus Christ** is located in the Narthex, on the wall between the two entry doors. This statue was donated by The Reverend Al Rodriguez.



The **Our Lady of Guadalupe Plaque** was donated by the Reverend Al Rodriguez.



The framed **Pastor's Prayer** artwork was donated by Fr. Al Rodriguez.



The framed **Red and Purple Cloths** were donated by Fr. Al Rodriguez.

A ceramic **Nativity Set** was donated by Elizabeth Dodd.



The set of **portraits for our current Bishops and past Vicars and Rectors** was donated by Bill and Margaret Beare.



GROUNDS AND LANDSCAPING



Benches near the Outdoor Memorial Garden are marked with the particulars of their memorials.



The **Outdoor Chapel** that is located south of the Parish Hall (sometimes called the St. Francis Chapel) was an Eagle Scout project of Aleric Meilstrup.



The **Outdoor Baptism patio** located between the Church and Parish Hall was an Eagle Scout project of Ryan Swanson.

The **Rock Cross** outside the Parish Hall was donated by Bill Beare.

The **Arizona Ash Tree** was planted by Girl Scout Troops 358 and 714.

The **Apple Tree** was provided by the Campfire Girls.

The **“Grandparents’ Tree”** was donated by the Steve Mudge family and the Jim Jackson family.

COMPUTERS AND AUDIO/VIDEO EQUIPMENT



Equipment for the video switching system and video cameras used for streaming our worship services was donated by several individuals.

The "Owl" Camera used for Zoom meetings was donated by the Reverend Paul Skeith.

A laptop computer and video camcorder were donated by Bill and Debbie Cox.



Equipment to support additional channels for the wireless microphone system was donated by Bill and Debbie Cox.

The electronic carillon part of our sound system was funded by a lead donation from Elaine and Jerry Jackson in 2008.

MISCELLANEOUS DONATIONS

Office chairs and pictures were donated by Donna Parker.

Various Library Books were donated by The Rev. Robert Redmon, the Rev. Joel Treadwell, the Rev. Al Rodriguez, and Evelyn Mitchell.

LOST OR REMOVED ITEMS	
	Black altar hangings that had been used for Good Friday, All Souls Day, and some funerals in the original church are missing.
	The portable altar that was used in the Caddo Street location is missing.
	The bell that had been used outside the Parish Hall (when it was the original church building) is missing.
Need picture	A Celtic Holy Water Bowl that was crafted by Karoline Gebert in memory of her grandmother Virginia was damaged in an accident several years ago.
	The Playscape that used to be on the grounds near where the Annex building now stands was funded by Judy Ingram, in memory of her parents.
	The Gospel Book that was used in the 1990s was donated by Edith Powell and The Rev. Murray Powell in memory of Edward L. Powell, Sr. It is no longer used because it covered the older lectionary readings series.
	The old Parkfield Drive Sign was donated by Bill and Margaret Beare in memory of H. William Beare, Sr. The sign has since been replaced.

St. John's Episcopal Church

History – Communion Rail Kneelers

In February 2004, St. George's Episcopal Church in Port Arthur, TX was disbanded, and many of the furnishings of the church were donated to other churches within the Diocese of Texas. St John's was a major beneficiary of St. George's misfortune, and many of the Sanctuary furnishings for our church came from St. George's via the Diocese of Texas. In particular, the communion rail kneelers came to us from St. George's. They were hand made by the members of St. George's in 1971, and many have needlepoint signatures. The icons on the kneelers represent Jesus, the Holy Spirit, and several of the Apostles.



The Alpha and the Omega -- God the Father and God the Son

Alpha and Omega are the first and the last letters of the Greek alphabet. They have been employed from the fourth century as a symbol expressing the confidence of Christians in the scriptural proofs of Jesus' divinity. This symbol was suggested by Revelations, where Jesus Christ, as well as the Father, is written as "the First and the Last."



Chi-Rho

Chi and Rho are the first two letters (XP) of "Christ" in Greek ΧΡΙΣΤΟΣ. (Christos). Sometimes it is called the Monogram of Christ or Chrismon or Labarum. In this case, the Chrismon is presented in a stylized fashion with grapes and wheat.



The Holy Spirit

The Holy Spirit is often represented as a dove descending from Heaven.



St. Paul

The shield of St. Paul carries the words "*Spiritus Gladius*," which can be translated as "Sword of the Spirit." (Ephesians 6:17) This is a reminder that the battle is spiritual and needs to be fought with God's strength through the Word and through prayer.



St. Peter

The symbols that represent Saint Peter are the Keys of the Kingdom and an upside-down cross. The upside down cross represents the tradition that Peter felt that he wasn't worthy to be crucified in the same way that Christ was and so was crucified head down.



St. John

St. John is often represented with a chalice and a serpent; referring to an unsuccessful attempt to murder him using poisoned wine. The legend states that when John said a blessing over the wine, the poison formed into a serpent and slithered out of the chalice, making the wine safe to drink.



St. Andrew

The shield for St. Andrew carries the sign of the saltire (x-shaped) cross to represent the way in which he was martyred and the fishing hook for his former occupation.



St. Bartholomew

The shield of St. Bartholomew carries the sign of the three knives to represent his martyrdom.



St. James the Greater

The shield of St. James the Greater traditionally carries the sign of a sword to represent the way in which he was martyred (not shown in the kneeler) and one or more shells to represent his pilgrimage by the sea at Compostela.



St. James the Less

The shield of St. James the Less represents the method of his martyrdom. Having been beaten to death, a club may be used as his symbol, or as is shown on our kneeler, a saw is used to represent reports that his body was sawed into pieces.



St. Simon

The symbol for St. Simon is a fish lying on a book to represent his work as a fisherman and his evangelizing.



St. George

While St. George was not one of the Apostles, his symbol (a knight's helmet with crossed lances) is included in the set of kneelers since he was the namesake saint for St. George's Episcopal Church in Port Arthur.

St. John's Episcopal Church

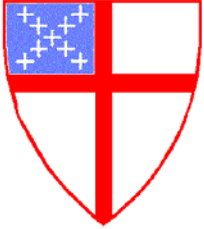
History – “St. John”

The Rev. Malcolm Riker, the great organizer of Episcopal Churches in the Diocese of Texas, established four "Gospel" churches in the Austin area in the 1960-1961 timeframe: St. Matthew's, St. Mark's, St. Luke's on the Lake, and St. John's. As such, the namesake saint for our parish is St. JOHN THE EVANGELIST, the author of the *Gospel According to St. John*.

There is a mild point of confusion in that, during the 1970s, the church received the donation of a beautiful stained glass window depicting St. JOHN THE BAPTIST. This window is installed in the chapel area of the parish hall.



St. John's Episcopal Church Episcopal Shield



The Episcopal Church Seal was adopted by the General Convention in 1940. The red cross that divides the white field into four rectangles is the cross of Saint George, the patron saint of England. The colors, red, white and blue are the colors of the flags of both the United States and England. The blue field contains a cross made of nine crosslets. The composite cross is the cross of Saint Andrew, the patron saint of Scotland. Each of the nine crosslets, which make up Saint Andrew's cross, represents one of the nine dioceses, which met in Philadelphia in 1789 to form the Protestant Episcopal Church in the United States of America, the first Anglican Church outside of the British Isles. The nine founding diocese were Connecticut, New York, Massachusetts, New Jersey, Pennsylvania, Maryland, Delaware, Virginia and South Carolina. The cross of Saint Andrew remembers the fact that bishops of the Scottish Episcopal Church consecrated Samuel Seabury, the first bishop of the Episcopal Church and of the diocese of Rhode Island. The Seal thus reveals the heritage of the Episcopal Church with its origins in both the Church of England and the Scottish Episcopal Church.

St. John's Episcopal Church History – Red Doors

From the web site of the Episcopal Church of the USA:

Q: Why do so many Episcopal Churches have red doors?

A: It's because red doors traditionally mean "sanctuary" – the ground beyond the doors is holy, and anyone who goes through them is safe from physical (and spiritual) harm. In ancient times, no one could pursue an enemy past red doors into a church, and certainly no one could be harmed or captured inside of a church. Today, the red reminds us of the blood of Christ and that we are always safe in God's care!



St. John's Episcopal Church

The Mission Years: 1960-1995

Appendix: Detailed Early History 1960-1973

Detailed history of the period 1960 through 1973 is taken almost verbatim from newsletter articles that were written by Bill Beare (St. John's Historian) during the 1990s.

The First Year

On the fest of Saint Mary, our Lord's mother, December 8, 1960, St. John's Episcopal Church began its journey of faith in north Travis County. It was located off the old Dallas Highway, near the Coxville Store and the old Skyline Club, in a rented house at 302 Caddo, in Eubank Acres.

At the first service, there were 23 present, with 17 receiving Communion from the Reverend Malcolm Riker, the great organizer of Episcopal Churches in the Diocese of Texas. Rev. Riker organized his "Gospel" churches of St. Matthew's, St. Mark's, St. Luke's on the Lake, and St. John's. Since that time, he has also organized St. Alban's and St. Christopher's in Austin, and St. Paul's in Pflugerville.

During the first few weeks of St. John's existence, the Reverend Frank Doremus, a professor from the Episcopal Seminary of the Southwest, assisted at the services. In the beginning we alternated between Morning Prayer and Holy Communion. The attendance for those first services ranged from 10 to 23 persons.

On the third Sunday in Epiphany (February 22, 1961), at 12:45 p.m., St. John's took its second major step in its journey of faith by petitioning the Diocese to become an official Episcopal mission. It was the 8th service of the church, and there were 18 people present.

On May 7, the church was air-conditioned. On May 14, St. John's had its first covered-dish dinner following the service of the Great Litany and sermon. There were 26 people present. The next week, on May 21, St. John's got its first organ. The Right Reverend John Hines, Bishop of Texas, came on July 16, 1961, confirming 5 persons and receiving 2 from the Roman Catholic Church. There were 36 people present, the largest attendance up to that time. On September 27, the service was changed from 12:45 p.m. to 9:30 a.m. The third major step in our journey at St. John's began on October 1, 1961, with Rally Day to set up a Sunday school program at St. John's. On October 22, the first person was baptized at St. John's—Kathryn Elaine McCown, born on April 19, 1960. On November 19, Mr. Riker moved the service back to 12:45 p.m. because he was organizing St. Luke's on the Lake. The first service at St. Luke's on November 26 was also the last service of the first year of St. John's. It was the first Sunday in Advent, and was celebrated by Holy Communion with 21 people present and 17 receiving Communion.

Laypersons involved the first year included:

- Lay servers: William Ripley and E.L. Miller
- Bishop's Warden and Clerk: Robert Smith
- Junior Warden: James F. Anderson
- Treasurer Dr. William Lackie:

- Bishop's Committee: Leonard Massey, Eddie Rickard, Roger Lilly, Keith Reed, Pat Pavone, and Rankin McCown.

The Second Year

The beginning of the second year for St. John's, which was the last month of 1961, saw an attendance average of 25. There were 30 on Christmas Eve, which fell on a Sunday that year.

On January 6, 1962, the Feast of the Epiphany, the second baptism at St. John's occurred: Mary Margaret Rickard, the daughter of Edgar L. and Billie Margaret Rickard.

William Ripley continued to assist at our services. Mr. Ripley was apparently a seminarian at the Episcopal Seminary; however, this has not been confirmed.

In May and June of 1962, the five acres that is now the present site of the church was purchased from R.J. Kramer (namesake of Kramer Lane) for the sum of \$7500 through the Quin Foundation. This averages out to \$1500 per acre. The note was for 3 years at 3% interest, to be paid semi-annually. Soon there would be a Parkfield Drive, which would first be called PECUSA, or Protestant Episcopal Church of the U.S.A.

Life Signs...

On June 3, 1962, the Reverend Malcolm Riker administered the third baptism: John Darrell Johns, son of Johnnie and Dorothy Johns. He was the first male baptized here.

On August 12, Mr. A. Fisher presented a set of plans for a new church to 25 worshippers. That must have shaken some souls because the next Sunday only 7 showed up for church. However, they apparently had second thoughts, because the following Sunday there were 34 present and attendance stayed around or above that for the remainder of the year.

On October 7th, the second annual Rally Day for Sunday school was held with 51 present. The next Sunday was an all-time high in attendance, with 61 present.

On October 28th, a major milestone happened when a business meeting was held after an ante-communion service in which 71 attended. At the meeting, the church voted to build the new church. The Bishop's Committee approved the first set of working plans.

Church Leaders...

The Parochial Report for 1962 listed the Reverend Malcolm Riker as Vicar; the Senior Warden and Clerk was Robert Smith; the Junior Warden was James F. Anderson.

Other church officials included Dr. William Lackie as treasurer. Bishop's Committee included Leonard Massey, Eddie Rickard, and Roger Lilly to serve until 1965. Keith Reed, Pat Pavone, and R. McCown to service until 1966. The Senior Warden, Junior Warden, and Treasurer were serving until 1964. There were no licensed Lay Readers in 1962. Besides William Ripley, apparently a seminarian or a lay reader from another church by the name of Phil Parkman (sic) did Morning Prayer when the Reverend Riker was on vacation in July, and he had assisted once before at a service.

At the end of the first year, there were 24 Communicants. During the second year, 14 were added, bringing the total to 38. There was not an Episcopal visit during the second year for Confirmation Services.

Not High, Not Low...

In the early 60's in the Episcopal Church, a measure of its churchmanship was the number of communion services held during the month. So-called "low" churches had communion once a quarter or once a month, while "high" churches had it every Sunday during the month. St. John's at that time apparently fell in the middle, with 26 communions in 1961 and 25 in 1962.

Third Year

The third year of St. John's saw the congregation preparing for a visit from the Bishop, which occurred on December 23, 1962, when Bishop John E. Hines, the Diocesan Bishop, made an Episcopal visitation to confirm 8 people and to receive one from the Catholic Church. There were 39 present at the service.

The Christmas Eve service had 38 in attendance for Holy Communion. On January 20th at 12:45, St. John's held its Annual Meeting after Ante-Communion, with 75 people present (which is more than St. John's had at its Annual Meeting in 1991). After the meeting, 70 people went over to the new location off Kramer Lane for the groundbreaking ceremony for the new building.

Besides the confirmation in December, the fourth person was baptized at a private service on December 22. She was Cynthia Ann Karnstadt, the 12-year-old daughter of Harry and Jane Karnstadt. On January 19, 1963, the Rev. Mr. Riker baptized Virginia Ann DeVall, infant daughter of William and Gladys DeVall, also at a private service.

The records indicate that the new church was a third completed on February 24, as reported at a Bishop's Committee Meeting. On March 3rd, the church was half finished. On March 10th, 1963, the last service was held at the Caddo Street address. There were 55 persons present for Morning Prayer.

On March 17, 1963, the Reverend Ricker held the first service at the new, unfinished, church. There were 48 present, with 30 receiving Communion. By April 7 (Palm Sunday), the outside of the church was completed. The congregation was working the inside. The Rev. Mr. Riker commented in the service book how slowly things were progressing.

On Holy Saturday, Leslie Gayle Smith, daughter of R.M. and Carolyn Smith and Richard F. Wilson, son of Philip and May Wilson, were baptized. The next day, on Easter, 103 people attended service and heard the junior choir from St. Matthew's.

On June 2nd, three adults were baptized so that they could be confirmed by the Bishop the following Sunday. They were Karen Reed, Ann Rohr, and Supit Sukruengron. On June 9th, 125 people attended church and Bishop Hines confirmed 16.

During the remaining part of the third year, the church had a Vacation Bible School in August, attended by 38 children. On Rally Day, September 15, there were 96 present. On September 22, the new altar was finished, thereby completing the new church.

On September 8, 1963, Daniel McKnight, son of Arthur and Elizabeth McKnight, was baptized and on November 24, Roger Williams was baptized. These were the events of the third year of St. John's.

Fourth Year

The fourth year (1963-1964) saw St. John's continuing with great promise and expectation. On Sunday, December 22, the church had its Children's Christmas Service, with the children doing their thing. Bob Smith, a member of the mission as previously reported, conducted the service.

The Reverend Keith Bardin (who died in July 1990) conducted the Christmas Eve service along with the next three Sunday services. He was a long time associate at All Saint's and a friend of Canterbury, the Episcopal ministry.

The Reverend Riker returned January 19, 1964. The next Sunday, he baptized four of the Stubblefield family, but did not enter them in the Parish Registry. They were apparently related to Gail Rogers Stubblefield, who was confirmed in 1963. This was so uncharacteristic of the Reverend Riker, who is noted for his meticulous record keeping.

The attendance continued to range between 60 to 80 people. The Reverend Riker also changed the weekday communion from Thursday, which he started in October 1963, to Wednesday on February 19, 1964. At 11:00 a.m. on Palm Sunday there were 70 present and on Easter Sunday, there were 98 in attendance. On Friday, May 15th, the Reverend Riker baptized Robert Bryant and William Cain who were then confirmed the following Sunday. The Rt. Reverend John Hines, Bishop of Texas, confirmed six others on that Sunday, May 17th and received two others from the Roman Communion.

On Tuesday, June 16th, the Rt. Reverend Percy Goddard ordained to the Sacred Diaconate, Ray Fisher, who had been a seminarian at St. John's. This was the first of three ordinations that have taken place at St. John's.

On June 28th, 1964, the Reverend Riker installed the Altar Guild for the first time. Wednesday, July 29, 1964 the Reverend Riker baptized Tim Orr, an adult who attended St. John's. On August 1st, the Reverend Riker officiated at the first wedding to take place at St. John's between Tim Orr and Alexa Hamison. August 13th Harry and Walter Karstadt, the children of Mr. and Mrs. Harry Karstadt, Sr. were baptized. On August 23rd, with 96 persons present, the Vacation Bible School had their graduation.

The end of the beginning of St. John's Journey happened the next Sunday when the Reverend Riker celebrated his last service at St. John's on August 30, 1964. The Reverend Riker was truly a great priest and a great missionary in this diocese. It is the opinion of this writer that had he stayed as a full time minister instead of part time with several churches, St. John's would have been a thriving parish earlier. But then, we might not have had St. Alban's, St. Christopher's or St. Paul's, so I guess God moves in mysterious ways, His wisdom to behold and comprehend.

On September 6, 1964 the second Vicar of St. John's, the Reverend Harold L. Cooper, preached his first sermon and celebrated Holy Communion with 55 present and 21 receiving communion. He continued alternating the service between Holy Communion and Morning Prayer. The only eventful thing that happened at the end of the fourth year was the marriage of Dennis A. Cooper and Anne Fae Smith on October 2, 1964. So ended the fourth year of St. John's.

Fifth Year (Ecumenical Awakenings)

The fifth year (1964-1965) began on December 13, 1964 with Morning Prayer led by one of our seminarians, Mr. R. Brown, and the Reverend Cooper, our Vicar. There were 35 present at the service.

On Christmas Eve, the Eucharist was celebrated with 60 persons in the congregation for the 8:30 p.m. service. Then as now, the Christmas Day service was lightly attended with only 11 communicants.

The first service in 1965 was on January 3 – an instructed Eucharist. Later that afternoon, Rosemary Wilson, daughter of Mr. and Mrs. Phillip Wilson was baptized. The Annual Meeting was held after the service on January 10th. During that service, the Women of the Church installed new officers.

The next major event was conducted by the Rt. Reverend Scott Field Bailey on Saturday, March 6th to the new Vicarage at 8614 Honeysuckle Trail and did a house blessing at which there were 33 people present. The next day, there was a Confirmation of three adults, Mary Bell, Anna Cooper, and Alfred Davey; and four children, Virginia Anderson, Nancy Brown, Harry Karnstadt, Jr., and John Tennyson.

A member of the congregation that year was the Reverend Lawson Anderson, who was assisting the Vicar from time to time. He preached on March 14th when the Vicar was not there. The officiant at Morning Prayer was one of our lay readers, Mr. Bob Smith.

On July 4, 1965, the Reverend W. P. Buckner, a Presbyterian minister licensed by the Diocese, preached with a lay reader, Mr. W. Newman, leading Morning Prayer.

September 12th, after the service (Penitential Office) a congregational meeting was held with 40 present. It has not been ascertained what the meeting was about as the minutes were lost.

St. John's at that time became involved in ecumenical relations, for on October 10th a joint service was held with the Presbyterian and Methodist Churches at Walnut Creek Elementary School. The ministers at that service were the Reverend Bill Osher (preacher) and the Reverend Messrs. H. L. Cooper and David Thomas assisting.

On November 7th, the church had a covered dish dinner after the service of Holy Communion with 54 persons attending.

We finished out our fifth year on a joyous note with an ecumenical service held at St. John's with members from St. Mark's Methodist and Trinity Hill Presbyterian Churches joining us for Holy Communion. There were 100 persons present for our anniversary service. The Reverend Cooper was Celebrant, the Reverend David Thomas was the Preacher, and the Reverend Bill Osher was the Epistler.

The Sixth Year

In our sixth year, St. John's was in trouble. It was the start of a decline that lasted for several years. Christmas Eve of 1965 saw only 37 persons present with 26 receiving Communion. The next week, there was a family baptism on Wednesday, with 15 present. It was the baptism of Burgess and Theodore Bell, children of David and Maybell Bell. For some reason, Burgess Bell's name was removed from the Baptismal Roll at a later date.

The Altar Guild met on Thursday, January 20th, for a meeting and Holy Communion. There were five women present. On January 26th, during the service, David and Maybell's marriage was blessed. The service that day was the Office of Instruction. There were 26 present.

The first evidence of the Catholic tradition, that later developed at St. John's under the fifth vicar was seen on January 6th when Sister Joyce of the Order of St. Anne (Episcopal) spoke to 31 people, with 22 receiving Communion. Our next ecumenical worship service was held at St. Mark's Methodist Church on February 13. There were 25 from St. John's, with a total of 130 from Episcopal, Presbyterian and Methodist churches. The Reverend Bill Osher was the officiant and the Reverend Messrs. Dave Thomas and H. L. Cooper read the lessons.

On April 10th (Easter), there were 72 at the service. On April 27, the second funeral took place at St. John's for Mrs. Mabel Crawford, a non-member. Later that year, Mrs. Augusta Mehl, also a non-member, was buried on November 26, 1966. Both of these funerals were conducted at the request of the families and Cook Funeral Home. Previously, on April 13, 1965, the Reverend Cooper buried a member of the Church of England, Edward Adain. Mr. Adain was not a member of St. John's, but it was our first funeral.

On Wednesday, May 11th, the Women of the Church met for a meeting and corporate Communion. There were nine ladies present. May 22, the church was without an organist as Mr. Mausert quit suddenly.

Nothing else was noted in the registry until September 18th, when Lisa Cooper, daughter of Dennis and Anna Cooper, was baptized at St. David's Hospital. She was born prematurely. On November 5, 1966 the first private confession was held at St. John's by the vicar. On December 4th, the last service of the sixth year of St. John's was held. It was a service of Holy Communion. There were 45 present with 20 receiving Communion.

During this year, St. John's was beset with many problems. The vicar was not paid the portion of his salary that was supposed to be paid by St. John's. The organist resigned, later to come back, and many of the bills owed by St. John's were delinquent or not paid at all. In fact, the Reverend Cooper was never paid by St. John's and as far as it can be determined, was never paid.

The Seventh Year (Further Decline)

The beginning of the seventh year of St. John's life saw 16 people attending the service, which was the smallest anniversary count to date. It was not too many more that attended on Christmas Eve, with 30, and an additional 16 on Christmas Day.

Nothing eventful happened during January and February of 1968. On Palm Sunday, there were 20 attending and on Easter, 36. On Sunday, May 28th, Father Dan McCabe and Tom Gee spoke on the Fish Program. The Reverend Cooper continued to officiate at funerals for Cook Funeral Home.

On St. Barnabas Day, June 11, Bishop S. Milton Richardson made an Episcopal visit by presiding at a Confirmation and Holy Eucharist Service. There were 31 present.

August 13 saw the baptism of Eric Livingston Dahlke into Christ's family at St. John's. On September 24th, the Sunday school began with 24 present at worship service.

On the last day of the 7th year at St. John's (December 3rd), there were 16 people present. This was the same number that started the year.

As can be seen, St. John's continued to have problems. The vicar, the Reverend Cooper, was still not receiving his salary portion from St. John's (however small) and life on Pecusa (Parkfield) was at a standstill.

The Eighth Year (Death Averted)

At the beginning service of the eighth year of St. John's, there were 13 persons present for Morning Prayer and sermon on the second Sunday in Advent (December 10, 1967). At the Christmas Eve Communion Service 22 attended with 17 receiving communion.

Something new happened on January 7, 1968 at St. John's as well as at churches across the country. At that time, we began officially to use the trial Liturgies that eventually became the 1979 Prayer Book.

On January 21, the third Sunday in Epiphany, the annual church meeting was held. There were 23 present with 15 receiving communion. The trial liturgy was used again. The next day, Fr. Cooper heard the Rite of Confession.

A congregational meeting was held on March 3, 1968 at which time the future of St. John's was discussed. There was serious correspondence with the Bishop and his staff and the Reverend Cooper that St. John's should be closed down due to lack of attendance and the great financial difficulties that we were having. For the next several months, correspondence went back and forth with the end result that the Bishop decided to keep St.

John's open. We can all give thanks for his foresight and confidence in the few remaining members of St. John's. It was such a bad time at St. John's that no services were held during the month of July and members of the mission were told to attend other Episcopal churches. The Reverend Cooper had basically given up on St. John's. The low point was June 16, 1968 when there were only 6 persons present for service and only 5 received communion. During the four services in August, there were 12, 7, 11, and 18 attending with the third Sunday led by a lay reader.

September 15 saw the start of the Sunday school for the new year with 14 present and led by a lay reader. The shining light apparently which held St. John's together during this difficult time was Bob Smith who was a long time member of the church. A bright spot during this time was the dedication of a new organ given in memory of Bernard R. Massart by his son Barney Massart who had been the organist a year or so before, and who apparently started playing for St. John's again.

The last service by the Reverend Cooper was held on November 22, 1968. It was Morning Prayer with Baptism. Loretta Lackey, the daughter of Dr. Bill and Jean Lackey was baptized. There were 50 present, the largest number since October 23, 1966.

On November 17, 1968, the Reverend Robert Jackson became the third Vicar of St. John's Episcopal Church by celebrating Holy Communion with 32 present. St. John's ended its eighth year on the first Sunday in Advent with 15 in attendance and eight receiving communion.

Like the mythical Phoenix, St. John's began a rebirth slowly out of the ashes. It was during this time of trial that Dr. Bill Lackey is first mentioned in church records. He and his wife, Jean, were instrumental in holding St. John's together and were still active members of St. John's when your author began attending nine years later.

The Ninth Year

On December 15, 1968, the beginning of our 9th year, there were 32 people present at the Holy Communion service. Christmas Eve was celebrated at 7:30 p.m. with 43 in attendance, which almost doubled the previous year's number. The Reverend Jackson started up an Acolyte Guild for the young men in the church and began using them in the service along with the lay readers.

On the evening of January 19th, Bishop Scott Field Bailey confirmed four young people of the Gracy clan. They were Richard, Lance, Kathy Gracy and their cousin Jerry Smith. There were 75 present for the service of Evening Prayer and Confirmation.

At Easter, the Reverend Jackson celebrated Holy Communion with 29 present and 15 receiving communion.

The church limped along for the rest of that year for the most part, uneventfully. Sunday School began on September 7th with 19 present for church. We had a seminarian for the first time in several years, a gentleman by the name of Mr. Dinwiddie.

On November 16th, the church used the trial liturgy again (which eventually became the 1979 Prayer Book). At the end of the 9th year, on December 7th there were 12 people present.

As you can see, it was still touch and go for St. John's, but progress was being made with the Acolyte Guild and a seminarian to help out.

The Tenth Year (Life Goes On)

On December 14, 1969, St. John's began its 10th year of existence with 21 persons attending Morning Prayer led by the Rev. Mr. Jackson.

On Christmas Eve, Mr. Jackson celebrated communion, with 39 present and 28 receiving communion. For the first three Sundays in January, the services were held without heating as it failed to work. During the rest of the winter and spring, the church continued to have the assistance of Mr. Don Dinwiddie, the seminarian assigned to St. John's.

On Easter Sunday, 37 persons attended the service with 27 receiving communion.

At a special service in the evening of June 28th, a wooden cross was blessed on the churchyard to give the old rectangular building and ground a hint that there was a church on the 5 acres.

On Sunday, November 8th, Don Cox assisted at Morning Prayer with 23 persons attending. Don and his wife, Valerie, are the links to the church as it is today. Of St. John's present members, they are the two longest attending active members of our church. Don and Valerie transferred to St. John's from the church in Alice, Texas on March 4, 1971.

The year ended on December 6th, 1970 with 32 persons attending Holy Communion, with 23 receiving. During this 10th year, there were no baptisms, confirmations, marriages or deaths at St. John's. It was a very uneventful year.

On November 16th, the church used the trial liturgy again (which eventually became the 1979 Prayer Book). At the end of the 9th year, on December 7th there were 12 people present.

As you can see, it was still touch and go for St. John's, but progress was being made with the Acolyte Guild and a seminarian to help out.

The Eleventh Year

On December 13th, the beginning of the 11th year of St. John's, there were 36 present at Morning Prayer. Don Cox was one of the Lay Readers.

On Christmas Eve, we had 67 present, with 40 receiving communion. Father Jackson was the celebrant, Deacon A. F. Hubbard gave the sermon, and Don Cox was the layreader/acolyte.

The trial Liturgy was used a total of four times during the year. On Easter Sunday, there were 43 present with 32 receiving communion. Father Jackson was the Celebrant with Reverend Deacon Hubbard and Mr. Don Cox assisting.

On June 27, 1971, Bishop Scott Field Bailey officiated at Morning Prayer and Confirmation of three persons from Holy Trinity Episcopal church at St. John's, as Mr. Jackson was supplying that church also and presumably the Bishop was making an Episcopal visit. Those confirmed were Mr. and Mrs. Carroll R. Moore and Mr. Vessie Hardy (all from Holy Trinity).

Nothing else was noted in the registry and all of the Bishop's Committee records were lost for several years. The Reverend Father Jackson's last service was November 28, 1971. He celebrated Holy Communion with 25 persons present and 17 receiving communion.

On the last Sunday of our 11th year, the Reverend Father Hal B. Perry became our fourth Vicar. He also was a professor at the Episcopal Seminary of the Southwest. We had 15 present with 10 receiving communion.

The Twelfth Year

The 12th of December was the beginning of our twelfth year of St. John's and the second service of our fourth vicar, the Rev. Hal B. Perry. (He was also an assistant at St. Matthew's Church.) There were 20 in attendance for Morning Prayer.

Mr. Perry's tenure began on an optimistic note as the area St. John's serves was beginning to grow. In a recent interview with Mr. Perry's predecessor, Father Jackson, he stated that he felt strongly that St. John's was going to grow because of the new subdivisions in the area.

On Christmas Eve, Father Perry celebrated Holy Communion with 32 present and 25 receiving. Nothing of note appears in the registry until Easter when there were 57 in attendance. It must be pointed out that this was a capacity crowd because the sanctuary was quite a bit smaller then.

We averaged about 25 people at services for the rest of the year. On Wednesday, November 29, in an evening service, the Rt. Rev. Scott Field Bailey celebrated Holy Communion with Confirmation. The confirmed were Mary Anne Farmer, Debra Carlene Gracy, Lynn Alice Hankey, Sharon Medrick and Anna Suzette Smith. There were 62 present with 35 receiving communion.

Some of the members of the mission who aided the priest that year with services were Bob Smith, who was a long time member at St. John's, Dr. Bill Lackie, important in the middle era of our history, and Don Cox, who passed away in 2007 but whose wife, Valerie, is still a member of St. John's.

The Thirteenth Year

On December 10, 1972, St. John's began its 13th year of existence with the service of Morning Prayer conducted by Fr. Hal Perry. There were 19 people in attendance. Christmas Day Fr. Ed Scott celebrated Holy Communion with 38 present. On April 21, Angela Cecila Lee was baptized at St. John's during the Easter Vigil and Holy Baptism Service, which was the first time such a service was held here. The next day, Easter Sunday, the attendance was very good. There were 67 present for the service of Holy Communion.

On May 20, at the regular Sunday service, Monica Paijekeaemer was baptized. On June 24, 1973, Fr. Perry held his last regular service as vicar of St. John's. It was the service of Morning Prayer with 24 in attendance.

Fr. Robert Redmon began his ministry at St. John's on July 8, 1973. He became our fifth vicar and until the ministry of Fr. Murray Powell, was the longest serving vicar. At his first service, there were 21 present for Morning Prayer, which was ironic as Fr. Redmon was of the Anglo Catholic persuasion.

Fr. Perry continued to serve as a supply priest to St. John's for the remainder of the year as Fr. Redmon had to juggle his time between Calvary Episcopal Church in Bastrop and St. John's. On December 6th, the last service of the 13th year, Fr. Redmon held Evening Prayer and Litany with 10 present.

St. John's Episcopal Church

The Parish Years: 1995 to Present

Appendix: Raw Yearly Commentary

This section includes yearly summaries for Fr. Al Rodriguez's tenure at St. John's. It comes from various sources and has not been fully proofread or verified for correctness in all details. It is included as an appendix to give background for the years 1999-2013.

1999

The year 1999 was a year of transition, as Fr. Al and the people of St. John's got to know each other and adjust to each other's styles of worship and fellowship.

2000

The year 2000 saw us emphasizing the children and youth, we added a youth director to our staff. In this year we became directly involved with the Rosebud Mission in South Dakota.

The Saturday Evening Eucharist (5:30 PM) was introduced this year and continued until 2013.

2001

In 2001 we acquired our 2nd building; the portable classroom structure originally called the Youth Building and now called the Annex. Its initial location was behind the original building, near the current playground area. It was moved to its current location when construction on the new church began in 2003.

2002

The senior high school went on the first mission trip to Juarez, Mexico, where they participated in building a house for a family and a wall for an orphanage. In December, we celebrated our 40th birthday, a little late, with the congregation dressed in the style of the 60's. We had our first bilingual service on Friday, December 13, followed by a Texas chili and Mexican dish dinner.

2003

During 2003 we were blessed with 3 seminarians. We continued the process of the final choices for the soon to be new Church building. Bishop Payne officiated at the groundbreaking in May, 2003. In the summer we experienced a construction delay for the new church due to the need for a height variance for the copula and the cross. The City of Austin finally approved the height variance issue for the new building and construction continued throughout the summer, fall, and winter. David Peterson was commissioned to create all the decorative woodwork in the new Church, as well as the new altar, ambo, and other liturgical furnishings. One of our long time members, Helen Gracy died in August.

2004

In 2004, we developed an "extended families" ministry for a new social means of learning

more about our fellow parishioners. We celebrated our first Seder Supper under the guidance of Janet Gilmore Smart. On June 6th, Bishop Daniels came for Confirmation and presented four God and Family awards to Sarah Riley, Ryan Swanson, Kevin Harry, and Virginia Gebert. Our first service in our new building was held on August 15. Bishop Wimberly officially dedicated the new building on Sunday, September 12. We lost another of our loved member Ruth Kuykendall in October.

2005

In 2005 we welcomed Rabbi Monty Eliasov who presented classes and explanation of general Jewish terminology and practices. We ordained Fr. Darrell Laremore at the Church. We are again blessed with 3 seminarians.

The 11:45 AM "Prayer and Praise" service with exclusive contemporary music and no Eucharist was introduced in October and it continued through January 2010.

The Spanish language service was first offered as an experimental event.

2006

In 2006 we opened our doors to host Alcoholics Anonymous. Anyone involved in work with children was required by the Diocese to be certified under Safe Guarding God's Children. Fr. Al took his first sabbatical at St. John's. Fr. David Beer was the Priest in charge. We were blessed with new altar hangings for Rose Sunday and a blue set for the Advent Season. Yolanda Jones, our seminarian's wife, made these. Rev. Cathy Boyd joined the staff as a part time Deacon. We lost Midge Riley this year. Fr. Beer retired as an assisting Priest at St. John's for the last 7 years

2007

On January 13, 2007, Cathy Boyd was ordained by Bishop Wimberly at St. Johns. Fr. Al hosted the first new comer's luncheon on March 11. Our first annual St. John's Musical Talent Show took place on June 3rd. In August, Rev. Cathy Boyd left us to join the staff of Trinity School. Our Rally Day took place on September 16, (Mexico's Independence Day) and so we celebrate with a traditional Mexican Fiesta and Celebration of all the newcomers for the year. Rabbi Monty joined us again for a 6-week class on Kabbalah Hebrew. In November we hosted the first major play production in our new building, "Rosita's Day of the Dead"

The Spanish language service on Sunday afternoon (typically scheduled for either 1:00 PM or 1:30 PM) was introduced as a monthly event in May. In November, it became a regular weekly service.

2008

Reverend C. Andrew Doyle was elected to replace Bishop Don Wimberly. The people of St. John's participated in a major food drive to help the victims of Hurricane Katrina.

2009

In 2009, we started the year by discovering the we had, even in hard economic times increased our average Sunday attendance by 35 over year 2007. On February 1, we were honored to have the new Bishop Andrew Doyle present the candidates for Confirmation. In

April we stepped further into the electronic age, with the help of Kay Soper we claimed a place on Facebook. Rev. Williams, father of John Williams, joined us and taught classes on the beatitudes and on the Book of Revelation. We created, with help on funding from the Diocese, a new position on our staff of Newcomers Coordinator, resulting in the hiring of Fay Jones. Through many hands we the members of St. John's built our new Columbarium.

2010

- The continued solidifying and jelling of the Spanish language component, the so-called "One O'clock Service" which now participates seriously in the Stewardship pledge campaign; six teen-agers from this group were confirmed in January.
- The addition of the Shabbat ministries focusing primarily on social outreach and volunteer opportunities in and around the parish area in north-central Austin.
- We lost a hard worker and dear friend, Harris Latchman in March. He was the first person to have his ashes placed in our Columbarium. Thanks to Hal Hughes we created our new Memorial Garden, to complement the Columbarium. We had our first Disposition of the ashes of Roy Dale Langdon on July 3.
- The 11:45 AM "Prayer and Praise" service was discontinued in January.

2011

- The 5:30 PM Saturday service, the 9 AM and 1 PM Sunday services were growing; between these two smaller English services, we counted an average Sunday attendance ranging from 40 to 45 persons. The Spanish service at 1PM on Sundays had a range of between 40 and 50. The 10:30 AM service, however, remained at a steady 75 to 80 persons.
- Two years in row we had record-breaking number of persons being Confirmed, Received and renewing their Baptismal Vows.
- Our Hispanic congregation continues to mature congregationally, and slowly but surely, they are discovering that there is Via Media that blends in our tradition of Reformed Protestantism and rich and liturgical Early Church catholicity.
- Our youth ministry, the EYC, has produced a group of enthusiastic teen-agers who actually have fun together. They are also learning the ins and outs of fund-raising and mission trips. Most of them have also contributed to the resurgence of the Acolyte corps now very active in the parish.
- Our Children's Christian Education and Formation classes added a new "middler" age group that had not received attention in the past. Our other children's classes are facing the challenges of a decreasing number of children, plus the scheduling obstacles of parents who can bring the children to class

2012

Foremost of note for 2012 is the beginning of the Ark of the New Covenant campaign, which had its culmination in the fall. The ARK campaign has as its goal the revitalization of the parish as a missionary faith community. It also aims to encourage the majority of the congregation to become involved in ministry areas, especially in the immediate neighborhoods surrounding the parish. In all, 8 cottage meetings were held to present the ARK campaign to as many of the parishioners who could attend, plus a presentation at the Sunday main service.

Many of the activities of St. John's are traditions of long standing and were celebrated again in 2012 with much fun and continued interest. The Daughters of the King sponsored the Epiphany Trifle Party and their annual Quiet Day. The Vestry continued the Pancake Supper enjoyed on Mardi Gras AKA Fat Tuesday AKA Shrove Tuesday. Philip Riley and the choir spearheaded the annual Talent Show, as well as caroling and the awesome

Christmas Eve music. Our children and youth thrilled us with their retelling of the Nativity Story.

Some new and recreated traditions included Fr. David Beer reincarnating St. Francis of Assisi for the Blessing of the Animals. Our second annual Fiesta BBQ was even more successful than the first with much participation on the part of St. John's and many of our neighbors joining us for fun and food. The 5th Sunday Luncheons continued with lots of creative themes, and even a Saturday evening event.

Our sense of service to others continued unabated as St. John's participated in Habitat for Humanity; the EYC traveled to Bastrop County to join with other teens from the Diocese of Texas to help those who lost their homes and businesses to the 2011 fires, and our other outreach efforts continued, including substantial assistance to St. John's Community Center and El Buen Samaritano. Many of our parishioners work tirelessly in other ways to spread God's Kingdom in Austin.

2012 also brought the celebration of Fr. Al's 15th anniversary at St. John's; the graduation from seminary of Deacon Laurie McKim; the revival of ECW (Episcopal Church Women); a financially successful fundraiser under the guise of a garage sale; and a new pictorial directory – the first in about 5 years.

2013

The Saturday, 5:30 PM service was discontinued

RAW UNFORMATTED REPORTS:

2000

This was the year to emphasize children and youth, including allowing them to have the major responsibilities for services on the fifth Sunday of each month. Moreover, St. John's became directly involved in two outreach ministries—the Rosebud Mission in South Dakota and El Buen Samaritano in south Austin, both ministries involving poor and oppressed peoples.

Holy Week included a traditional Jewish Passover Seder, with Jewish and Christian liturgies held back to back. An Easter Vigil Curtain was introduced which veiled the sanctuary during the darker phase of the Vigil. An interesting book, *How He Priested: The Story of Malcom P. Riker*, came off the press. Fr. Riker was the founder of St. John's and of several other Episcopal churches in and around Austin. The book contained the names of the some 4,000 persons Fr. Riker had presented for confirmation.

In August, elementary kids, K-5, had a Friday night lock-in with crafts, dinner, games, movies, and fellowship. The new portable building underwent remodeling to serve as the new EYC meeting place, and we created a pictorial directory of the congregation to help unite church members as a family.

As Advent and Christmas activities approached, St. John's choir took part in the North Austin Caregivers Concert. This annual event was composed of the choirs from fifteen Austin congregations of all denominations, and was a truly joyous musical experience for all of us.

The year started with Fr. Al Rodriguez as the Rector. Ruth Hall was the Junior Warden and Mary Anne was the Senior Warden. Our Vestry consisted of John Hutka, Anne Reed, and Gary Stein. Raleigh Tirion, Annette VanDover, Mary Ward and Bill Williams. Justin Forgey was the Youth Minister.

Our annual garage sale for the benefit of the St. John's Neighborhood Center continues as an Outreach project, we netted \$2350.00. We also continue the Nursing Home ministry.

We have a steering committee that is making progress for the building of our new Church building.

In June Posy Jackson was accepted as a postulant. Sally Munroe was ordained in Denver. Will Carter and Daryl Hay were our seminarians. Paul Taft shows us a stained glass window from St. Stevens and it was accepted. The Diocese promises a \$500,000 gift to build a new sanctuary. In August we celebrated the "Mexican American" evangelization and ministry. St. Stephens Episcopal Church in Liberty bestowed a gift of a stained glass window depicting the life of Christ. Our senior high school youth went to Juarez Mexico on a mission trip. They participated in building a house for a family and a wall for an orphanage to help keep out the bad elements. We created a new ministry to include hospitality committee, newcomer's reception, and the greeters and ushers. Georgia Strickland went to the Episcopal Convent and learned to tat and upon returning she gave demonstrations. In December we celebrated the 40th birthday of the Church, we had the congregation attend Church in dress of the 1960's. We had our first bilingual service on Friday, December 13, followed by a covered dish meal featuring Texas chili and Mexican dishes. We shared our riches by having a giving tree for the needy families of the St. John's Neighborhood Center.

Year 2003

The year started with Fr. Al Rodriguez as the Rector. John Hutka was the Senior Warden, Ruth Hall was the Junior Warden. Our Vestry consisted of Mary Lynn Adams, Hal Hughes, Steve Mailstrup, Anne Reed, Gary Stein, Annette VanDover, and Mary Ward. Justine Forgey continued as Youth Minister. We had 2 seminarians, Daryl Hay and Will Carter. Patricia Millard joined the list of seminarians. Our steering committee began the process of picking out the colors and fabric and carpet for the new building. Hal Hughes agreed to be our liaison overlooking the construction of our new church. Groundbreaking for the new building was on May 17th, officiated by Bishop Claude E. Payne. The Flying Flock left for their trip to Britain. St. John's attendees were Rev. David Beer, Georgia Strickland, Mary Anne O'Brien and Anne Reed. They visited some of the southwestern counties of England including Devonshire and Cornwall. Those receiving Holy Communion that year were Martha Burek, Lyndsay Harry, and Will Cox. In the summer we experienced a construction delay for the new church due to a height variance for the cupola and the cross. By August the Church furnishings committee were fine tuning the nave and the sanctuary setup for the new church with David Peterson as furnishing and furniture designer. The Youth Group had a "Lock In" for the end of summer. Helen Katherine Wiginton Gracy died in August 2003. In September the General Convention accepted the election of Bishop Gene Robinson, leaving many members opposing the action. The City of Austin approved the problem with the height variance.

Year 2004

The year started with Fr. Al Rodriguez as the Rector. Mary Ward was the Senior Warden, Hal Hughes was the Junior Warden. Julius Dubcak, Wayne Harry, Judy Ingram, Marvin Rasmussen, Anne Reed and Kay Soper were Vestry members. We developed an "extended families" ministry for a new social means of learning more about our fellow parishoners. We welcomed our new seminarian Darrell Laremore and his wife Karyn, from the Diocese of SE Florida. They have a new daughter, Chays, that they recently adopted from Kazakhstan. We had our first Seder Supper put together by Janet Gilmore Smart. Our previous seminarian Patricia Millard graduated from the Seminary. Another of our seminarians, Will Carter and his wife Judy, have accepted a church. They will be at St. Philip's Episcopal Church in Hinesville, Georgia. After many issues with the height of the cupola for the new Church, the City of Austin has formally granted us a variance. Our first service in our new building will be on August 15, 2004 and the formal dedication will be on Sunday, September 12, 2004. Bishop Don Wimberly will officially dedicate the new building. We had a wonderful reception that we hosted for all of our parishoners and invited guests. We lost one of our loved members Ruth Kuykendall on October 14, 2004.

Year 2005

We started the year losing a member William O. Smith on January 4, 2005. Our vestry consisted of Marvin Rasmussen, senior warden, Hal Hughes, junior warden, member were Julius Debckak, Kevin Flegal, Wayne Harry, Judy Ingram, Judith Jolmston, Janet Smart, and Kay Soper. The total square footage at St. John's has recently increased by 228 , including worship related areas, parish hall, nursery and classrooms. A new ministry is that of Morning Prayer Services at Buckner Villas.

The Rabbi Monty Eliasov presented classes and explanations on general Jewish terminology and practices. St. John's Church has a red door; the red door traditionally means "sanctuary" and that the area beyond the doors is holy, and anyone going through them is safe from physical and spiritual harm. The red door today reminds us of the blood of Christ and that we are safe in God's care.

Father Al organized a Parish-to-Parish trip to England and Northern Ireland. Dr. Beer became the principal clergy in charge during Father Al's priestly sabbatical.

Father Darrell Larrimore was ordained here and then licensed by the Diocese of Texas to function as a priest in the convocation. New seminarians were Robin Reeves, Winnie Mitchell and Scott Jones.

We were fortunate in having a new computer this year and also a new air conditioner. Grounds were cleaned up by hauling off gravel, getting rid of railroad ties, and cutting trees under the utility lines.

Plans were made for a third service on Sundays enhancing the traditional and very Episcopal form of worship.

A Children's Chapel time was introduced to run concurrently with the main Eucharist service and to instruct children more about our liturgical and ritual based faith.

A Fall Harvest Fair was held on Saturday, November 2, featuring arts/crafts, antiques and collectibles, with vendors in the parish Hall and outside. The event netted over \$2,100.00.

Year 2006

In January we opened our doors to Alcoholics Anonymous to give them a meeting place. The Vestry consisted of Marvin Rasmussen, senior warden, Bill Beare, junior warden, Jamie Burns, Clara Daniels, Julius Deback, Kevin Flegal, John Gordon, Judy Ingram, and Kay Soper. The Diocesan program Safe Guarding Children's that all members of the parish who deal with the children of the Church have to be certified in order to work with anyone under the age of 18. Fr. Al took a sabbatical for the months of May, June, and July. Fr. David Beer will be the Priest in charge and Fr. Laremore will assist as his time permits. We were blessed with new altar hangings for the Rose Sundays and a blue set for the Advent season. Scott Jones and Robin Reeves were our seminarians. As of July the Rev. Cathy T. Boyd will join the St. John's staff, part time as a Deacon. She will be ordained Priest in January, 2007. We lost another member Midge Riley. Our seminarian Robin Reeves graduated. Rev'd. Cathy Boyd was ordained as Deacon in Houston on June 24th. Fr. David Beer retired as the Assisting Priest at St. John's for the last 7 years.

2008

In 2008 the Reverend C. Andrew Doyle was elected to replace Bishop Don Wimberly, effective June, 2009.

Father Al joined parishioners from Grace Church, Georgetown and other parishes, on a parish-to-parish trip to the United Kingdom, near the city of Surrey, in the small village

of Crondall.

The Second Annual St. John's Musical Talent Show was held on a Sunday spring evening. Drought caused a staggering sprinkler consumption this year.

"Rally day" is a tradition that harks back to the time when most Episcopalians spent a good portion of the summer away from their city homes, and quit going to church for a couple of months. Rally Day became a special Sunday when most people returned to fall worship services. Rally Day took place in September at our St. John's Church.

A major food drive was helped by St. John to assist people from the Galveston area who are living in shelters as a result of the devastation caused by Hurricane Katrina.

The second Arts and Crafts Fall Harvest Fair netted over \$4,000.00 this fall.

As Christmas approached, parishioners were busy with the usual yearly holiday activities including the St. John's Giving Tree, the North Central Caregivers Christmas Choral Benefit of music, the preparation of Christmas boxes by The Daughter of the King, filling baskets for the Senior Citizens at the John's Community Center, and preparing for the 2009 rummage sale.

2009

A lot of people were glad to see the end of 2008 with its economic woes and gloomy financial setbacks, but happily St. John's in spite of everything saw an increase in both pledges and increased worship attendance. We found, for example, that our Average Sunday Attendance (ASA) had risen some 35 percent from 2007.

On January 31 the annual rummage sale was held in conjunction with Resurrection Church and the proceeds assigned to St. John's Community Food Pantry. On February 1 we were honored to have the new Bishop, Andrew Doyle, present for Confirmation, and of course our time-honored tradition of sharing trifles took place on Epiphany. Soon the Lenten season was upon us, starting with Ash Wednesday on February 25 (with our usual Shrove Tuesday Pancake Supper the evening before) .. Easter was a glorious occasion, with the main service being preceded by an Easter Egg Hunt for the children and young at heart. This year's Diocesan Counsel Meeting went well, with nothing too controversial but with some spirited discussions. Fr. Al was elected to the diocesan Executive Board, whose function is to work with the Bishop on policy issues, much like a Vestry works with its church. Paul Villarreal took on the job as St. John's Junior Warden and got to work on organizing the upkeep of the grounds. April saw our church take another step forward in the electronic age, with Kay Soper's help, and claimed its place on Facebook. The scheduled change of the Sunday 8 a.m. service to 9 a.m. went without a hitch, and in fact the number of folks attending this later hour doubled!

As summer approached, we were lucky to have the Rev. Frank Williams at St. John's as a Visiting Scholar and Lecturer. The Rev. Williams, a biblical scholar, taught classes on the Beatitudes and on the Book of Revelation. It was decided that the church would create a new part-time position of Newcomers Coordinator, resulting in the hiring of Ms. Fay Jones in September. The Youth of St. John's renewed their meetings in the Y'ALL building every Sunday at 9 a.m., their gatherings consisting of discussions on Faith, God, the Bible, and life issues, but reserving the fourth Sunday of each month as "a fun day." Before we knew it, the Advent and Christmas seasons were upon us once more with their auras first of Expectation, and then of Joyous Celebration. As always, it was hard to separate the secular uses of Christmas from the spiritual ones, but our worship, fellowship, and liturgy all helped to keep our priorities right as this fourth decade