

# The S. Stephen

## Sesquicentennial 2012

Vol. 11, No. 4

### My dear people:

The beginning of the Year of Our Lord 2012 brings us to the Sesquicentennial of our church building, for which we have chosen the celebratory theme, "150 Years on George Street."

In areas where the Church is in decline, and financially-strapped congregations face the prospect of selling off expensive-to-maintain buildings, the slogan is often voiced that "The Church is the people, not the building." That is at best a half-truth. Of course the church is the people. But buildings matter, deeply.

A consecrated church in particular is not merely a utilitarian function room or meeting hall. It is a holy place. Here Christ himself makes his dwelling in the Blessed Sacrament reserved in the Tabernacle upon the High Altar. When we enter the church's precincts, we are moving into sacred space and treading on holy ground. In the words of the Patriarch Jacob: *"How awesome is this place! This is none other than the house of God, and this is the gate of heaven"* (Genesis 28:17).

Moreover, the church building shapes the life, character, and identity of the worshipping community just as, over the years, the worshipping community shapes the appearance of the church building. The building in which we worship stands as a visible sign of our invisible fellowship with the generations who have worshiped here before us, each making their own unique contribution to the adornment and decoration of these physical surroundings. The works of religious art and devotional shrines testify to the continuity of our shared faith down through the centuries.

As we look back in gratitude for 150 years in this church building, the Sesquicentennial reminds us of our obligation of stewardship to care for this building for the sake of the generations who will come after us. Despite the gloomy prognostications of one or two naysayers in the past twenty years or so – and I have little patience for such talk – we have every reason for confidence that S. Stephen's Church will flourish on George Street for another 150 years to come. The Sesquicentennial is thus a celebration not only of thanksgiving for our past but also of hope for our future.

### *From the Rector*

The key observances of the Sesquicentennial are scheduled for Sunday 19 February 2012. At the 10 am Solemn High Mass we shall welcome the Rt. Rev.

Arthur B. Williams, Jr., Retired Bishop Suffragan of Ohio, as our guest preacher. The Mozart *Mass in C* will feature the orchestral accompaniment of the St. Dunstan Consort. Fittingly for the Dedication celebration, this Mass promises to be one of the musical, liturgical, and homiletical highlights of the season.

That same evening, we will offer a Solemn Evensong and Benediction at 5:30 pm followed by a Dinner at the Hope Club, 6 Benevolent Street, at 7 pm. We hope for attendance by as many as possible of our friends in the wider community as well as the solid support of our regular parishioners. Those on our mailing list will have received a separate invitation to the Evensong and Dinner with an RSVP form. If you have not received this, however, please call or email the parish office and ask for one.

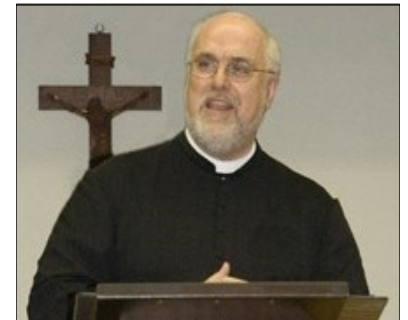
We are still planning to publish a collection of essays on various aspects of the parish's history in celebration of this 150<sup>th</sup> Anniversary Year. It will be ready later this year. In the meantime, however, we have the opportunity to begin our celebrations of 150 Years on George Street this February 19. I look forward to joining with you in the festivities.

With all good wishes and prayers, I remain, faithfully,

Your pastor and priest,

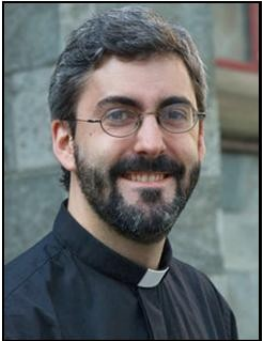
*Fr. John D. Alexander +*

Fr. John D. Alexander



## From the Curate

By Fr. Michael G. Tuck



One of the great advantages to our location here on George Street has been our proximity to Brown University. Indeed, if I recall the history correctly, this was one of the reasons that this location was chosen over the other leading option. As I have looked through the histories of both the parish and the chaplaincy, I have been intrigued by

the many different ways that the parish has interacted and supported the outreach to the university community over the years.

S. Stephen's involvement in work with the student body is almost as old as our George Street building. In 1865, only three years after the completion of the current structure, a group of students organized the Episcopalians at Brown into the Bishop Seabury Association. It is clear from the histories that Dr. Henry Waterman, our rector at the time, was instrumental in establishing this group, and he saw student-outreach as a key opportunity presented by the new location. For several years, the Bishop Seabury Association held an annual lecture, and two of the three original speakers were leading lights of the Anglo-Catholic movement: the Rev'd Dr. Ferdinand Ewer and the Rev'd Dr. Morgan Dix. Both inspired many of these students and rallied them to the Anglo-Catholic cause. The impact of this original group was profound. Within ten years, eighteen students went on to become priests, and one of them became a professed brother of the Society of St. John the Evangelist.

Behind the scenes, the parish played an important role in the success of the Bishop Seabury Association. It must have been through Dr. Waterman's connections that the Association was able to secure such dynamic speakers, and the records of these lectures are preserved only through the efforts of a publishing committee composed of S. Stephen's parishioners. The Bishop Seabury Association served the spiritual needs of students for 38 years before finally dissolving in 1903. However, this was not the end of the Episcopal Church's presence at Brown.

In the late 1940s, a Canterbury Club was founded and its work continued through the 1960s. In this period, the local parishes of Grace Church, St. Martin's, S. Stephen's, and the Cathedral worked collaboratively to provide for the students at Brown, Pembroke – the women's college – and the Rhode Island School of Design. Again, due to our location, S. Stephen's became the host for many, if not most, of the campus ministry activities. In much of the campus ministry literature, the Stu-

dent Center address is listed as 114 George Street. Services were held in our chapel, and meetings took place here as well. The one notable exception was the annual tea luncheon held at the Bishop's house at 10 Brown Street, a tradition I would love to revive. Once again, the parish played a critical role in providing hospitality and support to the infrastructure of the campus ministry. In addition, the rector's name – then Fr. Warren Ward – appears frequently on the list of speakers at student groups' Lenten lecture series.

Throughout the 1960s and 1970s, the undergraduate community continued to flourish under the leadership of chaplains such as the Rev'd John Crocker and the Rev'd Sheldon Flory. Later, the campus ministry came under leadership of the Rev'd David Ames, who served as chaplain from 1979 until 2001. Throughout this entire time, S. Stephen's continued to be a key resource for the spiritual development of many students, some of whom went on to service in ordained ministry. I often hear from alumni/ae clergy who tell me how important their time at S. Stephen's was to them in their spiritual formation (as it was for mine).

At this point in our history, we are again considering how best to incorporate outreach to the university community into our parish's mission to the wider world. As the university continues to expand and change, our ministry will need to adapt as well. With the university's increased focus on professional and medical programs, there will be a significant increase in older students—an area of potential work for us. Our location in the historic heart of the campus also means that we are uniquely positioned to work with the undergraduate population as well. This is an exciting time to be working with the talented young adults right in our backyard. One of our challenges is that we, as a parish, may not directly see the fruits of our labors. But by working with future leaders, we plant seeds that will certainly produce a future harvest. Relations with the university community have been a hallmark of this parish since we moved to George Street 150 years ago, and we are privileged to continue this ministry today.



### Submission Dates for The S. Stephen

**Lent/Holy Week/Easter Issue:** 27 February 2012

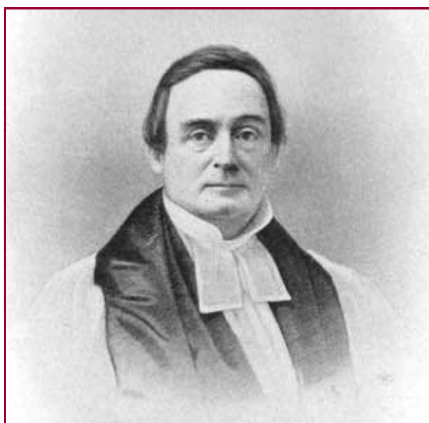
**Pentecost Issue:** 30 April 2012

These are the dates to submit notices or articles for **The S. Stephen** for the coming program year. If you have something you would like to submit or an idea for something you would like to see in our newsletter, please contact Phoebe Pettingell, Copy Editor, at [Phoebe1446@aol.com](mailto:Phoebe1446@aol.com) or (401) 323-1886.

## CHRIST CHURCH, PROVIDENCE, 1839-1851: THE AFRICAN-AMERICAN PARISH THAT MERGED WITH SAINT STEPHEN'S

*By Fr. Alexander*

Meeting in the newly-constructed Saint Stephen's Church on Benefit Street, the Rhode Island Diocesan Convention of June 1843 took at least two actions of historical importance. Following the death in February of Bishop Alexander Viets Griswold of the Eastern Diocese—which comprised all of New England except Connecticut—the delegates elected



*The Rt. Rev. John P. K. Henshaw,  
Bishop of Rhode Island*

John P.K. Henshaw bishop of a newly independent Diocese of Rhode Island. They also formally admitted into the diocese the African-American parish of Christ Church, Providence. Thus, for the first time in the history of the Episcopal Church, black delegates were seated with voice and vote in a diocesan convention. They were James W.

Johnson, Benjamin Barney, John M. Ray, and George Head. Johnson and Ray were the parish wardens, and Head was the clerk. Within ten years, however, Christ Church had disbanded and its members had been transferred to Saint Stephen's. While Christ Church never numbered many more than forty families, its story is significant not only as a glimpse into the social history of the nineteenth century Episcopal Church, but also as background to the early formation of Saint Stephen's congregation. It is an aspect of our parish history that deserves more attention than it has hitherto received.

Christ Church was the fourth black parish in the Episcopal Church, after Saint Thomas's African Church, Philadelphia (1794); Saint Philip's Church, New York (1818); and Saint James's First African Church, Baltimore (1824). It was also the fourth black Christian congregation in Providence, after the African Union Meeting House (1818), the Second Freewill Baptist Church, and Zion Methodist Church. The formation of these congregations generally reflected the desire of black Christians in northern cities to escape second-class treatment in white churches. In Philadelphia, for example, blacks walked out of Saint George's Methodist Church in 1794 when the congregation tried to segregate them in the upstairs gallery. One group led by Absalom Jones formed Saint Thomas's African Church, which gained ad-

mission to the Episcopal Diocese of Pennsylvania with Jones as Lay Reader; Jones subsequently became the first African-American to be ordained to the diaconate and priesthood in the Episcopal Church. Another group, led by Richard Allen, eventually constituted itself as the African Methodist Episcopal (AME) Church. Such congregations often received the support of wealthy white patrons. For example, here in Providence Moses Brown assisted in the creation of the African Union Meeting House. In his book *The Afro-Yankees: Providence's Black Community in the Antebellum Era* (1982), Robert J. Cottrol writes that white support of black congregations had mixed motives: "partly to get black members out of white congregations, partly to minister to the large numbers of blacks in Providence who were not church members because they would not abide segregated pews" (p. 57).

Christ Church, Providence, was organized in 1839 and initially met in a schoolhouse on Washington Street with S.G. Degrasse as its minister. In March of 1841, however, the Vestry extended a call to Alexander Crummell, then twenty-two years old, to take charge of the parish as Lay Reader. Crummell had grown up in Saint Philip's Church in New York, and was already well known as an aspirant for holy orders whose admission to the General Theological Seminary had been blocked on account of his race by New York Bishop Benjamin T. Onderdonk. He had instead pursued theological studies at Yale University, where he had come to the attention of Bishop Griswold of the Eastern Diocese. Griswold encouraged Crummell to pursue ordination in his diocese, and the call from Christ Church, Providence, soon followed. Crummell's achievements at Christ



*Absalom Jones*

Church included planning and supervising the construction of a new church building on Union Street: "a small, neat, wooden building thirty-eight by fifty-two feet." The parish was legally incorporated in March, 1842.

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Rhode Island thus became the only state that, having disenfranchised blacks, re-enfranchised them before the Civil War. For years afterward, working-class whites in Rhode Island blamed blacks for the defeat of the Dorr Rebellion, and derided them as servants and dependents of the white aristocracy.

Alexander Crummell seems to have played a key role in organizing and leading the black community during this political crisis. He later wrote: "I secured ... their political rights in Rhode Island. During the political agitation in that state the leading colored men communicated their interests to my hand and judgment; and laid upon me the burden of drafting the documents and addresses and of taking the steps which secured in the end their political rights." Nonetheless, Crummell's relations with the vestry of Christ Church were deteriorating. On May 29, 1842, at the height of the political crisis, Crummell was ordained to the diaconate in Boston.

About a fortnight before his ordination, Crummell called on Bishop Griswold, who told him that the congregation was disappointed with his ministry. The bishop's informant, Dr. Crocker at Saint John's Church (now Cathedral), had relayed the congregation's concerns that Crummell was lacking in piety and zeal, and had become so proud that he would no longer visit them. Crummell expressed his hurt and indignation in a letter to the vestry, reminding them of his labors to secure funds for the church's construction, a task which he had never promised to undertake. By the Fall of 1842, the Vestry was openly expressing dissatisfaction with Crummell. In September, his precarious financial situation forced him to take his wife to her mother's home in New York. Finally, on Sunday, October 27, he announced his resignation with immediate effect; the Vestry refused to open the church that evening for a meeting in which he had planned to make a final address. Interestingly, Bishop Griswold consecrated the building one week later, on November 3.

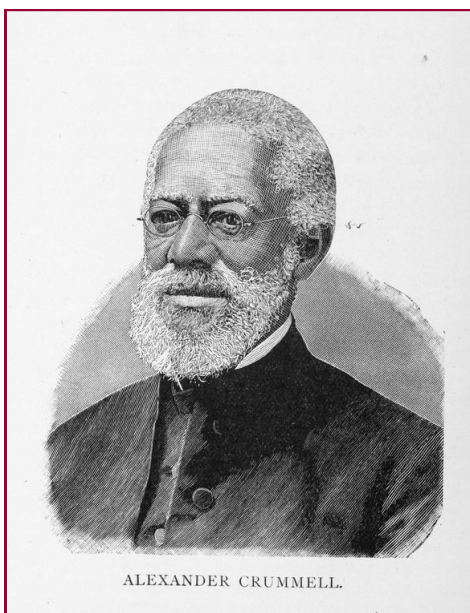
His ministry in Providence having failed, Crummell went to Philadelphia – a larger city with a larger black population – in the hopes of founding a second African-American parish there. The Bishop of Pennsylvania was Henry Onderdonk, brother of the Bishop of New York who had blocked Crummell's admission to General Theological Seminary. Onderdonk expressed willingness to receive Crummell into his diocese on the condition that he promise not to seek admission to the Diocesan Convention either for himself or for any congregation that he might establish. Crummell refused to comply: "That, sir, I shall never do." After several weeks, Onderdonk did accept Crummell's letters dimissory from Rhode Island, but only after having secured a change to the diocesan canons formally barring black clergy and congrega-

tions from the Diocesan Convention.

Against this background, the Rhode Island Diocesan Convention's 1843 admission of delegates from Christ Church was all the more remarkable. Some historians have supposed that this action reflected the socially progressive Evangelical tendencies of the Episcopal Church in the state. There is, however, another possibility. In his book *Piety in Providence: Class Dimensions of Religious Experience in Antebellum Rhode Island* (2000), Mark S. Schantz shows that Episcopalians largely supported the Law and Order forces during the Dorr War. When Governor King called for a day of Thanksgiving on Sunday, July 21, 1842, Episcopal clergy throughout the state preached sermons denouncing the wickedness of rebellion. One such sermon was preached at Trinity Church in Newport and subsequently published by Francis Vinton, who had been the first Rector of Saint Stephen's just two years before. It is thus possible that Christ Church's admission to the Diocesan Convention was part of the package of

rewards for African-American support for the Law and Order party during the recent political crisis.

Following Crummell's departure for Philadelphia, the Vestry of Christ Church voted December 4, 1842, to call Benjamin Franklin, a white, as rector. (Franklin had been one of the founding members of Saint Stephen's in 1839.) Franklin was ordained Deacon in Boston on December 21, and began work at Christ Church on Christmas Day. His tenure was short-lived, however, as he announced his resignation at a Vestry meeting on April 18 of the following year, to take effect a week later on April 23. The parish's financial situation appears to have been the decisive factor. Having served just four months, Franklin presented a bill for \$100, one-third of



his annual salary of \$300, and then announced that he was contributing \$25 of his salary to the church, thus reducing his bill to \$75, for which the vestry voted to thank him. Franklin received his salary on April 26. In the meantime, the Vestry voted on April 24 not to call another clergyman for the time being, as the church was unable to pay one. But then the Vestry minutes of May 8 record that James C. Richmond had accepted the call to become Rector. It appears from the Journal of Convention that Richmond was a diocesan missionary serving several parishes with no compensation, so that his services came without cost to Christ Church.

James C. Richmond was thus the white rector of Christ Church in June 1843, when the parish was formally admitted into the Rhode Island Diocesan Convention. In his *History of the Afro-American Group of the Episcopal Church* (1922), George Freeman Bragg quotes the following touching passage from Richmond's report to the Convention:

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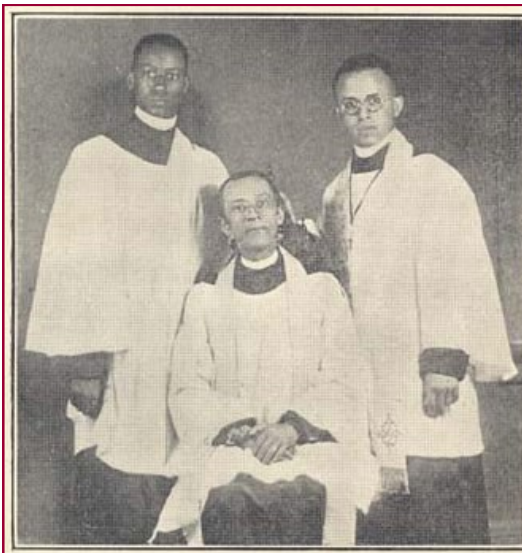
*This is the only colored church in New England, although there are several meeting houses of different sects in the city of Providence. The services, the church and the worshippers, present an appearance of order, neatness and regularity which are seldom equaled, and can hardly be surpassed. The organist is a colored girl under twenty years of age, and the music is excellent. It is hoped that all persons truly interested in this portion of the people will attend the services when able, see for themselves, and assist this needy branch of our vine (which has just been received into our Convention) with their prayers and their substance.*

Despite this moving plea for support, the subsequent history of Christ Church through the 1840s comprises the sad record of a doomed congregation's struggle to survive.

Although funds had been raised by Crummell and others to help pay for the new church building, at the beginning of 1843 the parish was encumbered with a debt of approximately \$2,000. In 1844, Bishop Henshaw reported to the Diocesan Convention that he had met with the Vestry to "suggest a plan by which they might relieve themselves from their embarrassment," involving an annual subscription payable over ten years. The following year, the bishop reported that the Christ Church was "still destitute of a rector," with services being taken by Lay Readers and the occasional visiting clergyman.

By 1846 the parish's situation had improved to the point where it was able to call a rector. Eli Worthington Stokes was a black priest from Maryland who had become friends with the future Bishop Henshaw of Rhode Island when Henshaw was Rector of Saint Peter's Church, Baltimore. Stokes was serving a black parish in New Haven, Connecticut, when Bishop Henshaw asked him to come to Providence to take charge of Christ Church. Stokes began his work there on May 29, 1846. Bishop Henshaw reported the following to the 1846 Diocesan Convention:

*The Rev. Eli Worthington Stokes has been elected Rector of Christ Church, Providence. He has entered upon his labors for the spiritual benefit of our coloured brethren, with encouraging prospects of success. This congregation has again adopted a plan for relieving their place of worship from a debt (by which it has been embarrassed ever since its erection) by their own systematic contributions. If they persevere in it with spirit and energy, they will deserve, and I doubt not, receive, the liberal aid of more favored parishes, and thus, by God's blessing, secure for their permanent use, a neat and commodious edifice which they may justly call their own.*



*George Freeman Bragg and Sons*

The bishop's words reflect the assumption that the indebtedness was deterring the wealthier parishes of Rhode Island from assisting Christ Church financially, so that if the debt could be liquidated such support would be more forthcoming. This assumption proved unfounded.

On August 5, 1847, Stokes left on a trip to England to raise funds, and returned in January 1849. During his absence, the services of the church were again taken by Lay Readers and occasional visiting clergy. At the Diocesan Convention of 1849, Bishop Henshaw reported the success of Stokes's mission in glowing terms. Stokes had been received cordially by the "Archbishops, Bishops, and Clergy" of the Church of England. He had raised the funds to pay off the mortgage on the building so that Christ Church was now debt-free. Bishop Henshaw had written the Archbishop of Canterbury to thank

him for the generous support that Stokes had received in England. Reading these words, is hard to avoid a feeling of bewilderment and disappointment that Stokes had to travel all the way to England to raise these funds when wealthy residents of Providence and Newport were paying exorbitant pew rents in parishes such as Grace, Trinity, Saint John's, and indeed Saint Stephen's. Perhaps it was Bishop Henshaw's intention to point subtly to the irony of the situation.

For Christ Church, the assistance was too little, too late. Stokes had resolved to move to Liberia and work there among the freed slaves who were establishing their own colony in West Africa. On December 9, 1849, the Second Sunday of Advent, a

service was held at Saint Stephen's for Stokes and several other missionaries bound for Liberia. No further mention is made of Christ Church in the Journals of the Diocesan Convention. The final entries in the Vestry log indicate that the parish voted to direct its trustees to convey the church building to the "Rhode Island Episcopal Convention for the Missionary and other purposes" on December 2, 1851. Thereafter, the historical record concerning Christ Church, Providence, falls silent.

According to George Freeman Bragg, the former members of Christ Church were transferred to Saint Stephen's. Fr. Norman Catir writes that although the first notation of a "colored" communicant in the parish registers of Saint Stephen's is found in 1856, it is more likely that the transfer took place in the early 1850s shortly after Eli Stokes went to Africa and the parish was dissolved. Writing in 1922, Bragg recalls preaching in Saint Stephen's during the rectorate of Fr. Fiske (1884-1919), when "there were some eighty or one hundred colored communicants attached to that parish" (p. 105). Writing 44 years later, Fr. Catir commented: "from the time of this transfer, one of the earliest American parochial

integrations, to the present, Saint Stephen's has counted a sizable number of Negro communicants among its members" (p. 28).

Assuming that the former members of Christ Church had some say in where they were transferred, the obvious question arises: Why Saint Stephen's? Here we can only speculate. During the short rectorate of George Leeds (1840-1841) Saint Stephen's had taken its first steps in an Anglo-Catholic direction, and in 1850 Henry Waterman, a full-blown Tractarian, had returned to begin his second term as rector. It is just possible that during its short existence, Christ Church had also tended in an Anglo-Catholic direction. Alexander Crummell's biographer Wilson Jeremiah Moses describes him a "moderately high churchman" who was once accused of Romeward tendencies on account of his belief that humanity had a natural need for outward "forms, rules, and observances." Toward the end of his life, Crummell expressed admiration for the revival of Ritual in the Church of England, as well as for the work of the Anglo-Catholic sisterhoods (p. 282). In Liberia, Eli Stokes was known as a High Churchman, and blamed some of his troubles with the Evangelical Bishop Payne on differences in churchmanship. Since Providence already had three African-American congregations representing various strands of Evangelical spirituality, it is plausible that blacks who joined the Episcopal Church might be attracted to more formal expressions of Anglican worship. As a Tractarian parish, moreover, Saint Stephen's most likely professed a theology emphasizing the equality of all baptized people as brothers and sisters in Christ, regardless of race, national origin, or social class. Whatever the reasons, the congregation that eventually moved to the new Saint Stephen's church building on George Street in 1862 was already the product of what was in effect an early parish merger between the "old" Saint Stephen's on Benefit Street and Christ Church on Union Street. The racial integration then established remains to this day one of our parish's greatest gifts.

#### Acknowledgements:

*My heartfelt thanks are due to Father Michael Tuck for extensive historical research at the Diocesan Archives and the Rhode Island Historical Society; to Bishop Arthur Williams for kindly reading and commenting on an earlier draft of this piece; and to Father Larry Bradner who in several enjoyable conversations helped me focus the themes of this story.*



## SESQUICENTENNIAL CELEBRATION

**Sunday 19 February 2012**

**Solemn Mass 10 am**

The Rt Rev. Arthur Benjamin Williams, Jr.

*Guest Preacher*

**Solemn Evensong 5:30 pm**

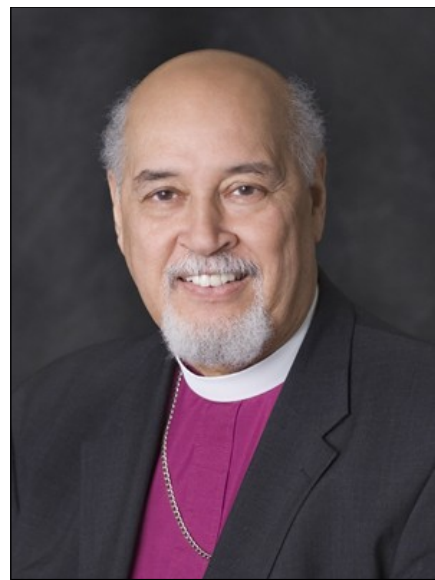
*Followed by dinner at THE HOPE CLUB*

### **The Rt. Rev. Arthur Benjamin Williams, Jr.**

Born on June 25, 1935, in Providence, Rhode Island, Bishop Williams received his early education in the public schools of East Providence. He graduated from Brown University in 1957, after which he was commissioned a line officer in the United States Navy where he served until he entered the General Theological Seminary. He graduated and received a Master of Divinity degree in 1964.

Bishop Williams was ordained to the diaconate on June 20, 1964, and the priesthood on March 27, 1965, by Bishop John Higgins of Rhode Island. He served at Grace Church, Providence, St. Mark's Church, Riverside and the Cathedral of St. John before accepting a call in 1968 to Grace Church in Detroit. He served as Assistant to the Bishop for Ministry Deployment and Urban Affairs of Michigan, Archdeacon of Ohio and Bishop Suffragan of Ohio.

Bishop Williams is presently Assisting Bishop in the Diocese of Ohio. He is the Episcopal Visitor to the Order of St. Benedict, a member of the House of Bishops Committee on Religious Communities and a faculty member of CREDO. During the 2007-2009 Triennium he served as a consultant to The Calendar Committee of the Standing Commission on Liturgy and Music which organized *Holy Women, Holy Men: Celebrating the Saints*. He chaired the Editorial Committee of *Lift Every Voice and Sing II*, published in 1993. From 1995-2003 he served as Vice President of the House of Bishops. His memberships include the Episcopal Peace Fellowship, the Union of Black Episcopalians and the Rowfant Club of Cleveland.



*The Rt. Rev. Arthur Benjamin Williams, Jr.*



# RICHARD UPJOHN

## S. Stephen's Architect

*By Phoebe Pettingell*

On 21 February 1859, the corporation of S. Stephen's discussed the desirability of moving from their location on Benefit Street to a site more conducive to growth. They voted to ask the rector, The Rev. Henry Waterman, to appoint a seven-man committee to study the feasibility of raising money for this venture, finding a site, and designing a new church. A lot on George Street was ultimately purchased, and an architectural firm chosen to draw up plans: Richard Upjohn and Son. Upjohn was an Englishman who immigrated to the United States in 1829. A man of strong Tractarian convictions, he favored the gothic style, until recently despised as too medieval, and unsuitable for Protestants. In 1845-46, Upjohn had designed and supervised a new edifice for Trinity Church, Wall Street, New York, in the Perpendicular style, with tight, symmetrical lines. It caused a sensation, as the first

holding together the glass screen separating the Lady Chapel from the nave. As Father Alexander remarked in a 2006 sermon preached for the Feast of the Dedication, "Upjohn no doubt remembered the medieval churches dotting the landscape of his native England, with random bits and pieces added on, knocked down, and rebuilt over hundreds of years: a tower and steeple here, a chapel there, a porch here, a parallel nave at the side, and so on."

Trinity Wall Street sponsors a map showing all existing Upjohn churches [<http://www.trinitywallstreet.org/news/articles/richard-upjohns-world>]. Among his accomplishments, the architect produced *Upjohn's rural architecture: Designs, working drawings and specifications for a wooden church and other rural structures* [1852]. This was the genesis of "Carpenter Gothic," which allowed many country parishes to replicate the beauty of Upjohn's structures in remote areas. The current Episcopal calendar of saints and worthies, *Holy Women, Holy Men*, commemorates Richard Upjohn, along with architect Ralph Adams Cram and ecclesiastical designer, John LaFarge, on De-



*Richard Upjohn  
1802—1878*

major example of gothic revival in the United States. He also designed Grace Episcopal Church in downtown Providence (1845).

Our parish was fortunate to have secured Upjohn at the height of his mature powers, and S. Stephen's remains a jewel in his illustrious catalogue of designs. As Dr. Waterman had desired, its gothic lines create a sense of awe and harmony appropriate for Anglo-Catholic ritual. Such a building speaks to the mystery, majesty, and complexity of our God who created all things. Unlike his earlier work, Upjohn now modeled his building on the early gothic Decorated or Middle Pointed style with its pleasing variations of symmetry in such details as the pillars of the nave and placement of the Lady Chapel. The architect also liked irregular stonework—notice the variations in the sizes and shapes of the stones on the outside of the building. And he experimented with unconventional materials like plaster for stone and the gothic-style wooden tracery



*Trinity Church, New York City*



## The Consecration of S. Stephen's on George Street:

Abbreviated from *Saint Stephen's Church in Providence:  
The History of a New England Tractarian Parish, 1829-1964*  
by the Rev'd Norman Joseph Catir Jr.

On February 20, 1862, less than a year and a half after the cornerstone had been laid [see p. 6 of the September/October, 2010 issue of *The S. Stephen*], the corporation... requested the Bishop to consecrate their new structure on Thursday, February 27, 1862. The new Saint Stephen's, built upon a rock, we trust spiritually as well as physically, stood as a distinguished example for its times of the Middle Pointed or Decorated English Gothic. Richard Upjohn, the architect, was a strong Tractarian churchman.... On the day of the consecration of the new Saint Stephen's Church a heavy snow-storm raged and swirled, but the elements neither dampened the enthusiasm of the worshipers nor dulled the splendor of the consecration ceremony.

*This beautiful Church was consecrated to the worship of Almighty God according to the order set forth in the Book of Common Prayer of the Protestant Episcopal Church in the United States of America. At the hour appointed, the Right Reverend Thomas M. Clark, Bishop of the Diocese of Rhode Island, in his Episcopal robes, attended by a large number of clergy in their surplices was received at the entrance of the church by the wardens and vestry of the parish. The procession of the clergy walked up the middle aisle of the church, repeating the twenty-fourth psalm alternately, the Bishop taking one verse, the clergy another.*

There follows, in the *Providence Journal's* account of the consecration, a list of the clergy present, among them such notable men as the Reverend Francis Vinton and the Reverend James Eames, former rectors; the Reverend John Henry Hopkins, Jr., of the Diocese of New York; and the Reverend Doctor George Randall, future Bishop of Colorado.

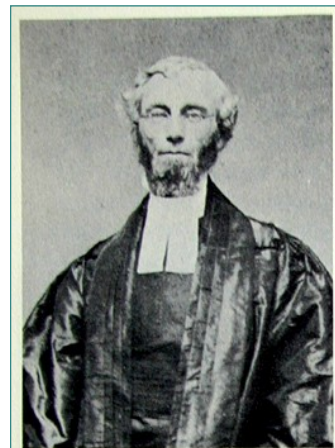
*The Bishop sitting in his chair behind the altar, the request to consecrate the church was presented by William Binney, Esq., Junior Warden of the Parish. That most impressive book of consecration was then read by Bishop Clark, standing up and facing the congregation, after which, returning to his chair, the sentence of consecration was read by the Reverend Doctor Waterman, Rector of the parish. The consecration service was closed by the usual Thanksgiving offered by the Bishop.*



*Thomas March Clark, Bishop*

Morning Prayer was then sung, followed by the Ante-Communion service. The entire congregation joined in singing the seventy-ninth psalm to the tune of "Old Hundred" to close the service, "young men and maidens, old men and children, joining in the song of praise, till the very rafters rang with the joyous melody." [*Providence Journal*]

**[Father Catir goes on to illustrate the contrast between an earlier example of Upjohn's work, *Grace in downtown Providence*, and the new S. Stephen's with a reminiscence written by "a prominent city official."]**



THE REVEREND HENRY WATERMAN, D.D., third rector, 1841-1845; fifth rector, 1850-1874

*I remember vividly the return of some of our household from the consecration service fifty years ago. We were Grace Church people. That was the city's great piece of ecclesiastical architecture then, and its interior was (as you do not remember) rather dark and somber. Its graceful construction lines were all un-"decorated"; none of the windows could fairly be called "illuminated" except the chancel window, and even this while full of symbolism was not very full of light. We children did not need to have explained what the poet meant by his "dim religious light." And the happy radiant enthusiasm with which my grandmother and my aunt came back from the new Saint Stephen's is a delight to remember. There was light and color to talk about, and the windows and their stories. And the last thing that had caught their eyes was (naturally) the bit of wood-carving all around the casing of the door into the vestibule. There was a humanness about it that was lacking in the superb severity of the building they were used to, and they would talk about it with rapture. You may be sure it wasn't long before my mother and I went to service in the new church, probably the next Sunday.*

...This account vividly shows how new the look of Saint Stephen's seemed to churchmen in 1862 and also how far the Catholic Movement had come in raising the standards of the entire Church to a more dignified and colorful ceremonial norm. The letter also foretells how effectively the new Saint Stephen's would, in years to come, draw many people to her through the glory of her services and the certain speech of her architecture (pp. 37-38.)

## THE TREASURER'S CORNER

*By Ransom Widmer*

To be competitive, a business must plan for the future—perhaps five to ten years in advance. But the Church has a much longer and indefinite period to plan for: until our Lord's return. And so, in our sesquicentennial year it makes good sense to think of the future, about the next one hundred and fifty years.

S. Stephen's Church and its Guild House is where our community worships and does God's work. The church's architecture and art work fill us with awe and inspire our liturgy. The Guild House provides the facilities to serve the underprivileged and to come together as a parish family. But these buildings are old, their artwork and facilities require constant care and maintenance, and at times improvements are required either because of city regulations or community needs. These issues present a major challenge which our parish needs to successfully deal with now and in the future.

Accordingly, part of our Parish Development Project is to identify needed capital improvement and to design and implement a Capital Budget Campaign with the aid of Peter Saros, our professional consultant. Our Buildings and Grounds Committee is currently identifying and defining capital improvement projects as well as reviewing some potential outside source of funding. Soon, a parish Capital Budget Plan will be launched in the parish with opportunities for donations spread over the next two to three years.

With your support, the success of these activities will ensure a vibrant, financially strong S. Stephen's for our next sesquicentennial celebration.

### LENT IS COMING...

Join us for our annual

### SHROVE TUESDAY PANCAKE SUPPER

21 FEBRUARY 5:30 - 7 pm

*In the Great Hall*

*For more information, contact the parish office at 421-6702.*

### SOCIETY OF MARY

will meet Saturdays

4 February & 10 March

following 9:30 am Mass and

recitation of the Rosary

ALL ARE WELCOME.

### THE GUILD OF ALL SOULS

will meet on Monday evening 6 February  
for Parish Requiem Mass at 6 pm.

*The Guild of All Souls prays for the departed. If you  
have recently suffered a loss, find comfort in better un-  
derstanding the mystery of the Resurrection.*

## The Presentation of Our Lord Jesus Christ in the Temple

Thursday 2 February 2012

Plainchant Evensong 5:30 pm

Sung Mass 6 pm

*In the Lady Chapel*

Please join us for our next

### PARISH DEVELOPMENT DINNER

Wednesday 15 February 2012

Dinner ~ 6:30 pm; Program ~ 7-ish to 8:30 pm

Speaker: Mr. Peter Saros, M.Div.

*Parish Development Consultant*

**Please let us know you are coming by contacting  
the parish office via phone at 401-421-6702,**

**Ext.1, or send an email to**

***office@sstephens.necoxmail.com***

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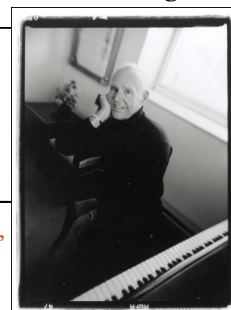




# Quodlibet

by James Busby

**quodlibet** (kwäd'lə bet') *n* [ME fr. ML quodlibetum, fr. L quodlibet, fr. *qui* who, what + *libet* it pleases, fr. *libere* to please] 1. a piece of music combining several different melodies, usually popular tunes, in counterpoint and often a light-hearted, humorous manner - *Merriam Webster*



As I write for our sesquicentennial issue of S. Stephen's it seems appropriate to touch on two wildly disparate items concerning our parish church and her music.

Firstly, a few words about our organ. Unless a parish or foundation owns a Rubens or a tidy chunk of Manhattan, the most valuable single item is usually its pipe organ. I constantly remind the building and grounds committees and those who insure us of this fact. Nothing is really known about the first organ at the George Street church. It has been speculated that it might have been the Benefit Street instrument, moved. However, in 1893, a splendid instrument was purchased from the firm of Frank and Hilbourne Roosevelt. The brothers Roosevelt, cousins to President Theodore, built what were simply the finest instruments to be had in this country at the time. Their early experiments with electricity and elegant tonal design put them at the forefront of their craft. As an amusing aside, the brothers mortified their socially well-connected mother when they would go off to the organ factory carrying lunch pails like laborers. Though wonderful organ builders, they proved to be terrible businessmen so their firm didn't last long. Fortunately, they survived for a sufficient number of years to build notable instruments about the East Coast.

In 1917, the Austin Company of Hartford was commissioned to supply a new instrument for S. Stephen's, using bequeathed funds of \$12,616.07, a tidy sum in that age.

In 1938 extensive mechanical renovations and some tonal work was performed by the noted American organ builder Ernest Skinner, whose father Washington Martin Skinner had been a choirmaster and organist at S. Stephen's some sixty years earlier.

In 1955, another total renovation was accomplished by the Austin Company, and was dedicated in memory of Robert Hales Ives Goddard—former vestryman and Senior Warden—with an organ recital by George Faxon, formerly organist at the Church of the Advent, then at Trinity Church Boston, as well as massed choirs conducted by Everett Titcomb, singing his *Victory Te Deum*, a renowned composition at that time. The only other addition in the late 1980s was a distinguished set of Tuba Mirabilis pipes salvaged from the Ernest Skinner organ in the Municipal Auditorium in Springfield Massachusetts: the gift of Mr. R. H. I. Goddard, Jr.

S. Stephen's organ possesses much color, from the orchestral sounds of the 1917 Austin to some splendid pipe work from the Roosevelt instrument. For comparison's sake, S. Stephen's is able to hold its own in organ size with the sister parishes, which I list here:

*Church of St. Mary the Virgin, New York, Aeolian-Skinner*  
— 93 ranks

*Church of the Advent, Boston, Aeolian-Skinner* — 77 ranks

*S. Stephen's, Providence, Austin* — 76 ranks

*S. Clement's, Philadelphia, Austin* — 51 ranks

*Church of the Resurrection, New York, Casavant* — 40 ranks

At the close of Fr. Catir's loving parish history, we find Hollis Grant, who was appointed organist/choirmaster in 1944, in place. On another occasion, I plan to write about this tenure, as well as the founding of the Saint Dunstan Conference for church music at S. Stephen's.

It seems appropriate at this point to list my predecessors and their dates of service, gleaned from back issues of *Kalendars* and *The S. Stephen*. Hollis remained in position until 1971. An interim period found William Dineen, Brown University organist, and Adele Adams, now Sister Adele Marie, Society of St. Margaret, holding the console. David Pizarro was appointed in September 1972 and remained until September 1974, when he left to become organist and master of the choristers at the Cathedral of St. John the Divine in New York. After that, Eric Fletcher, an organ scholar of King's College Cambridge, was briefly employed, until April of 1975. Earl Eyrich was appointed in September of 1975. One thing of enduring value from his three-year tenure was the engagement of Peter T. Gibson as cantor, which continues happily to this day. On Eyrich's departure in September of 1978, David Hewlett—formerly of The Church of the Resurrection, New York—was appointed. Thom Niel served S. Stephen's from 1983 to 1991. Then after an interim period, I began duties in September of 1993. It will be left for another generation to assess this work.

*Soli Deo Gloria.* —James

I'm grateful to use as a resource *Saint Stephen's Church in Providence, the History of a New England Tractarian Parish*, by Norman Joseph Catir, Jr., as well as back issues of *Kalendars* and *The S. Stephen*.

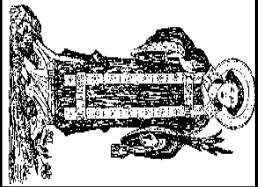


*The choirmaster inspects the innocuous-looking pipes of the Tuba Mirabilis, which is voiced on wind pressure three times higher than the rest of the organ. This speaks directly into the south aisle, possibly to the consternation of some who sit there!*



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# The S. Stephen

Sesquicentennial 2012



*Alexander Crummell*  
*Story on Page 3*