A BRIEF HISTORY OF GRACE-ST. PAUL'S CHURCH
Mercerville, New Jersey

THE FOUNDING OF THE PARISH

Grace-St. Paul's parish is the realization of a vision by forward-looking parishioners from two congregations, Grace Church in East Trenton and St. Paul's in South Trenton. Both congregations began as missions of St. Michael's Church, which itself was organized in 1703, and is the oldest Episcopal parish in the Greater Trenton area, as well as one of the oldest in the state of New Jersey. St. Michael's provided financial support and the properties on which each initial congregation built its' church. St. Paul's was organized in 1874 and became a parish in 1901. Grace began as a mission in 1875, and became a parish in 1896.²

According to Carl Swinger, former Treasurer for both Grace-St. Paul's and the Diocese of New Jersey and the Diocese’s first archivist, St. Paul's Church was originally established by a small group of St. Michael's communicants who held planning meetings in "private residences on Centre Street."³ Centre Street was one of Trenton's "largest and most prominent thoroughfares" in the city's historic Trenton Ferry District.³ Swinger offers the following details of St. Paul's founding and development:

ST. MICHAEL'S CHURCH
- St. Michael's was founded by immigrants from England during the colonial period and has a rich and interesting Revolutionary and Post-Revolutionary War history.
- In the nineteenth century, the congregation began to focus its energies specifically on mission work; in due course, St. Michael's would become known as "The Mother Church of Trenton."
- Its many missionary projects included the establishment of a school for the children of German immigrants in the 1840's, a refuge in the 1860's for African-American freedom seekers, and, most pertinent to this chronicle, St. Paul's and Grace Churches, organized in 1847 and 1875, respectively.
- St. Michael's Church web address is www.stmichaelstrenton.com.

---

¹ This history is compiled from a variety of sources, including from a previous historical statement printed in the Grace-St. Paul’s parish directory, printed c. 1995, from a variety of partially archived materials, such as newspaper clippings, service leaflets/programs, and other official and unofficial documents, etc.; from web site searches; and from written or oral testimonies from current parishioners, circa 2009-2010. For purposes of brevity, resources/references will not be rigorously documented. Note that a dearth of available/accessible archival information/materials on St. Paul’s Church explains the lack of its presence in this account.
³ Carl Swinger, from page one of a typed manuscript entitled "Grace-St. Paul's Church," which is collected in the GraSP archives, circa 1987. Swinger’s information, according to a note attached to his manuscript, was “compiled from Vestry Minutes and Old Diocesan Journals.”
…First services were held in the offices of Messrs. John and Charles Hewitt of the Trenton Iron Company on Hamilton Avenue. The establishment of this company appears to be a factor in creating this parish as a number of the employees were Episcopalians.

In 1848 Captain William E. Hunt donated the site for the Church which was completed and consecrated in 1849. St. Michael’s Church provided financial support for many years and eventually St. Paul’s Church, with growth in numbers, became a self supporting incorporated parish in 1901.

The parish ministered to the South Trenton community and the parishioners who no longer lived in the area until 1955 when the congregation voted to merge with Grace Church in Mercerville in the developing of a strong parish in this area.5

St. Paul’s Church, located at 337 Centre Street is on the New Jersey and National Registers of Historic Places.6 It is noted for its Norman Revival style architecture and features a front gable, main stone block and stone tower, along with Gothic arch windows and Gothic arch central entryway plank doors. The original construction consisted of the brownstone church, which was remodeled in 1881, and a parish school, enlarged in 1885. Currently, the building is occupied by the Damascus Christian Church.7

That which would ultimately become known as Grace Church, was

5 Swinger.
6 Period documents note St. Paul’s address as 335 Centre Street, but twenty-first century resources list the its location as 337 Centre Street.
established as another mission of St. Michael's Parish, to serve the "growth and the needs of that part of the city known as 'East Trenton.'" A room was rented at the northeast corner of Clinton Avenue and Sheridan Street and Sunday School classes began on February 21, 1875—attendance was 30 persons. The residents of that particular area of East Trenton were largely of English lineage and many families were connected to the pottery industry.

The mission quickly outgrew its accommodations and in just a little over a year's time money was offered by the Senior Warden of St. Michael's to help build a proper church building for the mission. Ground was purchased on the southeast corner of Clinton and Sheridan, and St. Michael's Chapel was officially open in September 1876. The mortgage for the chapel was paid off in eight years. Around the chapel's seventeenth anniversary, the Reverend Milton A. Craft, originally from the Diocese of Southern Virginia was elected to assist the rector of St. Michael's Parish, which put him in charge of the Chapel. In 1896 under the guidance of Rev. Craft, the Chapel became a self-supporting and incorporated parish known as Grace Church. When Grace Church celebrated its sixtieth anniversary in 1937, it had had only two rectors. Rev. Craft ministered to the congregants of both chapel and church until 1935 and for a total of forty-two years.

From A HISTORY OF TRENTON, 1679-1929: TWO HUNDRED AND FIFTY YEARS OF A NOTABLE TOWN WITH LINKS IN FOUR CENTURIES, VOLUME 1 (1929)

Grace Church had been started as a mission of St. Michael's Church in 1875, the ground being the gift of Samuel K. Wilson, a warden of St. Michael's Church. In 1896 it was organized as an independent parish under the Rev. Milton A. Craft, who had been assistant minister in the charge of the chapel since 1893. Two flourishing missions have since in turn sprung out of Grace Church, St. Andrew's in 1895 and St. Luke's in 1913. Those responsible for the formation of the parish, besides Mr. Craft, were James Walkett, George Cochran, Henry Robinson, Harry Klagg, Jr., and Charles Bradbury.

The present and the only rector the parish has ever had is the Rev. Milton A. Craft, whose ministry covers a period of thirty-five years. His twenty-fifth anniversary was observed by the parish on September 24, 1918.

† † †

Milton A. Craft, rector of Grace Church, North Clinton Avenue, has spent his whole ministerial life in Trenton, being at present probably the oldest pastor, with perhaps one exception, in point of continued service in the city of Trenton. Mr. Craft was graduated from the Alexandria Seminary in 1892. He was ordained to the priesthood in 1893 and came to Trenton the same year to act as assistant minister of St. Michael's Church with special charge of Grace Mission. Thus he has served one congregation for thirty-five years. The celebration of his twenty-fifth anniversary, September 24, 1918, was a notable event in the city and brought together in the Crescent Temple a large assemblage of his parishioners and friends.
A brief notice announcing a congregational meeting to discuss the possible relocation of Grace Church appeared in a Sunday service leaflet dated August 5, 1945:

**NOTICE—CONGREGATIONAL MEETING**

On October 9, at 8:00 p.m., there will be held a special congregational meeting for the purpose of discussing the desirability and possibility of changing the location of Grace Church. This is a matter in which all those who are connected with Grace Parish are keenly interested, and it is therefore very important that all the members of the congregation should attend this meeting and should, if they wish to do so, express their opinions on the subject.

The very next year, the congregation of Grace Church sold its Clinton and Sheridan Avenues’ building and relocated to Mercerville where suburban expansion created a new potential for growth. In a letter written December 4 by Grace Church Junior Warden and Church School Superintendent Frederick J. V. Hancox one of the reasons for a Mercerville relocation was explained thusly: “This district is a growing residential community where many of the members of both parishes [i.e., Grace and St. Paul’s] now live, and is more than two miles from the nearest Episcopal church.”

According to Carl Swinger, “During the period of October 6, 1946 to August 17, 1947, services were held with St. Paul’s Church on Centre Street. The two churches were very eager to consolidate into one, but, according to consolidation documents archived with the Diocese of New Jersey, although the Standing Committee was in favor of the union, they acknowledge opposition from St. James’ Church in Hightstown. Attorney Frederic M. P. Pearse, who was brought into the process to assist the churches and diocese in the legal procedures for merging, indicated in a letter early in 1947, that the Rector and Vestry of St. James’ didn’t oppose a merge *per se*, but hoped,

...that some arrangement might be made whereby [Grace and St. Paul’s] could find a place which would perhaps be more desirable on the outskirts of Trenton than Mercerville in view of the fact that quite a few of the Episcopalians of Mercerville are members of St. James’ Church.”

---

8 Frederick J.V. Hancox to Frederic M.P. Pearse [Jr.], 4 December 1946, in Grace-St. Paul’s Consolidation Documents, Archives of the Diocese of New Jersey, Trenton, NJ.
9 Frederic M.P. Pearse [Jr.] to Frederick J.V. Hancox to Frederic M.P. Pearse, 7 January 1947, Archives of the Diocese of New Jersey. Frederick J.V. Hancox to Frederic M.P. Pearse
The actual, official consolidation of the two churches into Grace-St. Paul’s would not be consented to by a unanimous vote of the Standing Committee and the Right Reverend Alfred L. Banyard, Bishop of the Diocese, until October 14, 1955. In the interim, a spiritual presence was necessary to begin evangelism in Mercerville; the Grace Church congregation assembled every Sunday for just over two years at the Mercerville Firehouse. Dreams of a brand new Grace Church home were realized on East State Street Extension in Mercerville after years of hard work, fundraising, and sacrifice. In November of 1949, the original church building (the present day Community Hall) and parish hall were completed. Appropriately, the new parish hall was dedicated by The Right Reverend Bishop Wallace J. Gardner on November 27 of that year to the memory of the first Rector of Grace, the Rev. Milton A. Craft. In 1952, the rectory was built on the Sheridan Road property adjacent to the church with the help of many parishioners.

In 1953, an increase in communicants to Grace made improved worship and space for Christian education a crucial new mission for the church. A larger church complex needed to be built; an expansion plan was hatched and approved. Then rector, The Reverend Dr. Olin Gluck Lager set forth the plan in “A Prospectus of the Proposed Building Expansion Program of Grace Episcopal Church,” noting:

To be good stewards of the opportunity afforded us a Parish in the heart of a growing community to serve our Lord, His Church and our fellowman, Grace Church Parish as been resolved to launch a Building Program to provide more adequate facilities for Worship, Christian Education, Fellowship and Community Service.”

---

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Grace Church Societies, Organizations, and Traditions</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Altar Guild</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Annual Yuletide Fair and Bazaar</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bazaar Council</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bible School</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Boy Scouts</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Calistoga Club</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Chicken Patty Suppers</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Church Choir</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Church School and Council</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dorcas Society</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Flower Committee</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Food Sales</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Girls’ Friendly Society</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Harvest Home Suppers</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Men’s Club</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mothers’ Club</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Semi-Annual Rummage Sales</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>“Teen-Agers”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Women’s Auxiliary</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Young People’s Fellowship</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

---

10 “A Prospectus of the Proposed Building Expansion Program of Grace Episcopal Church,” c. 1953-54.: 2. A photocopy of the original undated prospectus can be found in the Grace-St. Paul’s archives.
The new building plan, designed by architect William Heyl Thompson, called for the construction of one building with three floors (i.e., basement, first floor, and second floors) and four basic units: 1) the Church Building, 2) the Administration Building, 3) the Christian Education Building, and 4) the Social Activities Building. According to the prospectus: “The first two units are new buildings which are to be added to the present structures. The two latter units are existing buildings which are to be renovated for their new functions.”

The financial goal for the building campaign was $275,000—a figure that equaled $2.2 million almost sixty years later—and was to be raised by volunteer Grace Church canvassers. The prospectus proper ends with the statement below, which was no doubt intended to bolster or convince the more conservatively-minded, frugal or skeptical members of Grace on the expansive expansion:

As you have viewed the entire plan, you may say, “this is far more than we need at present.” This may be true, but as a living Church we must “plan today to be adequate for tomorrow.”

---

11 Ibid., 4.
12 Ibid., 7.
Unfortunately, Rev. Dr. Lager and his congregation did not realize plan as put forth in 1953, nor in 1954. However, development of a different and long hoped for sort would occur in 1955 with the consolidation of Grace and St. Paul’s Churches.

**GRACE-ST. PAUL’S CHURCH: 1955 –THE PRESENT**

On October 14, 1955, just four days after Bishop Alfred Banyard and the diocesan Standing Committee unanimously consented to the consolidation of Grace Church with the parish of St. Paul’s Episcopal Church of Trenton, a special meeting was held at the Mercerville locale to merge both parishes and their personnel under the corporate title of “The Rector, Wardens, and Vestrymen of Grace-St. Paul’s Church in Mercerville, New Jersey.” In the October 1955 issue of the Grace-St. Paul’s *The Disciple*, Rev. Dr. Lager provided an early statistical *indication* of the success of the consolidation.

![AN INDICATION](image)

The Rev. Dr. Lager, according to long-time Grace-St. Paul’s parishioner Roberta Cash, was “a great man... he was compassionate, a doer, and a builder...” Accordingly, with the parishes finally merged, Lager and his amalgamated and revitalized congregation returned to the plans for expansion to accommodate their ever-growing numbers. Carl Swinger, who was the Building Fund Treasurer during the post-merge expansion period, notes in a letter from 1994, that the original building program had to be cut back, because it proved “too ambitious for the congregation having exhausted all borrowing and credit.” Swinger indicates that in 1956, the year the **cornerstone for the new church** was laid, the parish owed $149,000. Resultantly, dreams for an administration wing, a second floor to the social activities and Christian education units, a stage for theatrical performances, etc., were all dashed. Swinger notes, “You only have to look at the door from the ‘courtyard’ to the Rector’s Office to see the building ‘cut off.’”

Another unfortunate architectural casualty of the original plan was the high tower with cross. However, it was not a lack of funds that put the kibosh on it, but instead the neighbors, who complained that the **tower** went beyond the building.

---

13 Reproduction of legal document outlining and certifying the steps of consolidation of Grace-St. Paul’s Church, addressed to the “Clerk of the County of Mercer,” and filed by Rector Olin Gluck Lager and “Secretary of the Rector” Robert C. Carhart. Date original certification was filed was 15 October 1955. Photocopy found in Grace-St. Paul’s archival materials.

14 *The Disciple* 2, no. 8 (October 1955): 3. *The Disciple* is the forerunner of *The Parish Pulse*.

15 Roberta Cash, 2009. Cash also noted Lager’s interest in antiques, and of the quality of his wife, Mrs. Lager, who “was a real lady.”

line and slapped an injunction on its erection; this stopped the building, which had already started, and financially impacted Grace-St. Paul’s further in lawyer’s fees.

Eventually the new church building was built and then dedicated on December 15, 1956, just in time for Christmastide services. One final addition to the Grace St. Paul’s Church complex was heralded in the February 1957 edition of The Disciple:

The above item makes reference to the 1,600 pound bell removed from St. Paul's Church tower on Centre Street. The bell was placed in the inner courtyard of the new Grace-St. Paul church complex, and continues to call the faithful to worship every Sunday morning.

The Start of a Grace-St. Paul's Tradition, 1955

Clergy Affiliated with Grace-St. Paul's Church*

Rev. Dr. Olin Gluck Lager, Rector, 1955-1966
Rev. Donald B. Duncan, Rector, 1966-1969
Rev. Patricia A.P. Wight, Deacon/Priest Associate
Rev. Elmer L. Sullivan, Priest Associate
Rev. Lee Alison Crawford, Priest Associate
Rev. Veretta Hoston, Deacon
Rev. Susan Norris, Priest Associate
Rev. Linda Carlson-Scholer, Priest Associate
Rev. Cornelia P. Spoor, Deacon
Rev. Denise Cavaliere, Parish Secretary
Rev. Lois J. Schembs, Interim Rector, 2008-2010
Rev. Susan Richardson, Rector, 2010-2012
Rev. Amy S. Cornell, Priest-in-Charge, 2012-

*List is not exhaustive; does not include supply priests.
GRACE-ST. PAUL’S CHURCH
SOCIETIES, ORGANIZATIONS, AND TRADITIONS

THEN

- Altar Guild
- Annual Yuletide Fair and Bazaar (held at the Army Training Center, Nottingham Way), later Christmas Bazaar and Cafeteria Supper
- Card/Bunko Parties
- Church Choir
- Church School and Council
- Couplers Club
- Electric Youth Group
- Craft Show
- The Disciple
- Episcopal Church Women
- Episcopal Young Churchmen
- Father-Son Banquet
- Girls’ Friendly Society
- Jr-Hi Youth Group
- Lenten/Advent Dime Folders
- Men’s Club
- Memorial Flower Committee
- Mothers’ Club
- Navajo Indian Gift Giving
- Roast Beef Dinners
- St. Elizabeth Guild
- Sales: Food, Bake, Candy Apples and Christmas and Easter Candy
- Semi-Annual Rummage Sales
- Strawberry Festival
- Suppers: Oyster, Buffet, Peach Festival
- “Teen-Agers” /Teen-Agers Canteen
- Valentine Dance
- Women’s Auxiliary
- Young People’s Fellowship
- Youth Choirs (Boys and Girls)
- Young Adult Club
- Youth Group

Sunday Service Leaflet from 1961
Featuring Morning Prayer

Sunday Service Leaflet for the Sunday Following President John F. Kennedy’s Funeral Service, December 1963
During the 1960's and into the mid-70's, the parish remained fairly stable, but in the late 1970's families began to migrate out due to corporate relocations. The resulting decrease in parishioners caused budgetary restrictions. A turning point for renewal occurred in two ways:

**Sunday Service Leaflet From November 1967—Includes a Note on an Ostensibly Contentious Proposed “New Liturgy”**

**Rev. Donald Duncan’s Christian Call to Action in the Midst of the Local and National Civil Rights Movement, as Printed in the Grace-St. Paul’s Newsletter, June 1968**


“The main altar was black marble, and when parishioners came forward for communion, they went all the way up toward the altar where there were railings. Eucharist was celebrated the first Sunday of every month. The 8 a.m. service was held in the [basement] chapel. The chapel was used for weekdays and holy days.”

Barbara Bromley on Woman on the Altar:

"Doris Close [and I] were the first women to serve as chalice bearers at Grace-St. Paul’s. Under Fr. Edward Cook, Nils Benson served as a Lay Eucharistic Minister. However, when Fr. David Adams was interim, between Fr. Cook and Fr. Jack Zamboni, women were not allowed at the altar.”
In 1981 the "Venture in Mission" campaign was designed to fund new ministries in the Diocese of New Jersey and which renewed a spirit of commitment at Grace-St. Paul's despite its financial issues.

A 1988 vestry retreat was convened to reorder priorities and responsibilities.
In 1989, a mission statement was formulated by Grace-St. Paul’s Clergy Search Committee, whose members broke up into small groups to develop individually each item of the statement. The mission statement was officially adopted in 1990. It reads as follows:

**OUR MISSION...**

*To provide a spiritual and physical environment for the worship of God and growth of faith.*

*To spread to all people the Gospel of Jesus Christ by word, deed, and music.*

*To conduct worship services and to administer the Sacraments according to the liturgy provided in The Book of Common Prayer.*

*To provide supportive, forgiving, and caring fellowship for parishioners of all ages.*

*To minister to the sick, the troubled, the infirmed, and all those in need of God’s love.*

*To serve and assist others in our local and worldwide communities.*

*To support the programs of the Diocese of New Jersey, promote the growth of the Episcopal Church, and encourage Christian unity.*

On June 25, 1990, the Grace-St. Paul’s community celebrated “a very special ‘First’” with the ordination of the Rev. Patricia Ann Page Wight; this was the first priestly ordination to take place within the walls of the church. Rev. “Pat” had served as deacon at Grace-St. Paul’s and was a full-time Staff Chaplain at St. Francis Medical Center in Trenton. Following her ordination, she continued her ministry with Grace-St. Paul as Priest Associate until she was called to work a new ministry at Trinity Cathedral in Princeton. In total, the Rev. Wight was affiliated with the church for seven years.
In 1994, Rector Rev. Jack Zamboni, the Wardens, and Vestry, of Grace-St. Paul’s, along with the Long-Range Planning Committee, developed a vision to carry out its mission statement and to sustain parish life into the twenty-first century. That vision included expanding Christian education; sharing a life in Christ through evangelism and new-member ministry; engaging in ministry to others by committing funds; opening the church building to community groups; providing service through the efforts of parishioners; and renovating the buildings to provide a better environment for worship, education, ministry, and fellowship. Two programs were initiated to make the collective vision a reality:

- The Emma Henderson Fund for Mission, Ministry, and Education
- The Building for Ministry Campaign.

The Emma Henderson Fund for Mission, Ministry, and Education allowed Grace-St. Paul’s to expand it’s clergy; in September 1995, long-time volunteer Priest Associate the Rev. Susan Norris was hired on as a paid, part-time member of the clergy staff. The Fund also allowed for the expansion of Christian formation and outreach.
opportunities and housed homeless families as a founding congregation of the Mercer County Interfaith Hospitality Network (IHN) in 1997. Several clergy and lay members worked diligently to help organize IHN/Mercer, serving as board members and congregational coordinators. Grace-St. 0Paul’s served as a host congregation throughout IHN’s ten-year existence in Mercer County.

On Grace-St. Paul’s Outreach and the Interfaith Hospitality Network

Greg Cooper

“GraSP participated in the Interfaith Hospitality Network (IHN) with other Mercer County churches. IHN was a program to care for homeless families. Each congregation in the network housed the families for a week, providing lodging and meals. The network provided transportation for the families on weekdays from the host church to the IHN center in Trenton. From there the adults went to work or worked on finding employment and the children went to school or daycare. Volunteers at the host congregation prepared meals, helped kids with homework, took families to do laundry, slept overnight as chaperones, and helped more families in at the beginning of the week and to the next congregation at the end. GraSP was a founding member of IHN of Mercer County and also provided several members for its Board. We hosted families every two to three weeks depending on the number of congregations participating. The Youth Group helped, as did some other churches that couldn’t host families overnight.”

Susan Higgins

“Having homeless families in our church brought us face to face with a need many of us have never known and taught us much about acceptance, tolerance, and being God’s hands and feet in our community. Deacon Veretta Hoston was very involved, as was Jack Dalton and Pam Kelly who was a former parishioner.”

The Building for Ministry Program began in Spring 1995 with the goal of making improvements to the church’s physical plant and to establish a modest reserve. The program consisted of three phases:

- Phase 1—Major Repairs
- Phase 2—Interior Renovations
- Phase 3—Church Renovation

The Building Ministry Capital Fund enabled the church to renovate its meeting and fellowship facilities, making Grace-St. Paul’s accessible to the disabled, and improve its lighting and sound system in the church proper. In 2004, further improvements added a 28-rank pipe
organ to fill the balcony and the sanctuary with music.

In 2005, Grace-St. Paul’s celebrated the 50th anniversary of the merger of Grace and St. Paul’s congregations.

The generous bequest of Mary Burgess in 2006 allowed Grace-St. Paul’s to establish three new Funds:

- The Burgess Ministry Outreach Endowment—for projects beyond Grace-St. Paul’s
- The Burgess Endowment—for support of the ministry budget of the parish
- The Burgess Facilities Fund—to fund needed capital improvements to the church facilities

Grace-St. Paul’s open doors have served the wider community in the final decades of the twentieth century and into the Twenty-first, as local groups use our space. These groups have included:

- Alcoholics Anonymous
- Narcotics Anonymous
- Overeaters Anonymous
- Mercerville 5-Pointers Club (seniors)
- DeMolay Society
- International Order of the Rainbow
- Hamilton Masquerade Square Dance Club
- English as a Second Language classes
- African Violet Club
- Enable (respite care for families of disabled children)
- YWCA nursery program
- Hamilton Township Recreational Sports Meetings and clinics
- Red Cross (church sponsored blood drives)

In 2006, a Memorial Garden was dedicated on the
grounds of Grace-St. Paul’s so that its parishioners may be laid to rest at their spiritual home.

Grace-St. Paul’s Sunday congregational life, as of 2010, is comprised of two worship services at 8:00 and 10:00 am, Church School during the 10:00 am service and after-service Coffee Hour after each service. Coffee Hour should really be renamed Coffee Hours, since much of church fellowship happens there, enhanced and fueled by an array of goodies made by congregants; a traditional favorite, Italian People’s Bakery’s half-torpedo rolls with butter; overflowing cups of tea, juice, coffee; and friendly chit chat. The congregation has striven to create a welcoming space for all of God’s children to feel welcome, valued, and needed. Age is not a barrier (at times the Vestry members’ ages have ranged from 17 years old to 70-something), nor are gender, ethnicity, sexual orientation, or race barriers to participation and fellowship. The parish is includes Cradle

Roberta Cash on the Founding of the Grace-St. Paul’s Memorial Garden

“Val Noto was the first Chairperson of the Memorial Garden Committee, which... included Roberta Cash, Jim Davis, Amy Davis, Christopher Cox, Barbara Bromley and Barbara Nichols. After parishioner Marlea Labasi, who was in her mid-50’s, passed away, her family were anxious to have her cremated. They had a golf tournament in her memory and gave $4,000 to Grace-St. Paul’s to start the Memorial Garden. Fr. Jack Zamboni had gained knowledge of memorial gardens while on staff at a church in Toms River. The Garden is completely sustained by donations.”

Grace-St. Paul’s Parishioners Interred in the Memorial Garden*

Nicola E. Cox
Daniel Cannula
James “Jim” Davis
William R. Cox

*current as of September 1, 2010

*Current as of September 1, 2010
Episcopalian, former Roman Catholics, and new inquirers, and all are invited and encouraged to participate as fully as they wish.

OUR MISSION GOALS
(circa 2010, as stated in the Grace-St. Paul's Parish Profile)

Grace-St. Paul's strives as the Living Body of Christ to:

1. Provide All People under Heaven with a safe, nurturing environment where they can explore and realize their spiritual goals while acknowledging the vast diversity of God’s Children
   - Our Buildings and Grounds Ministry works hard to keep the church up to code.
   - Our children explore their voices in their own choir, in our Church School, through Vacation Bible School, and even during the services.
   - People are safe to be who they are; we share our joys and sorrows without hesitation.

2. Act to help all reach God through prayer, music, fellowship, material sacrifice, and a greater understanding of the Word of God through the Gospel of Jesus Christ
   - Worship services are provided twice on Sundays and for Healing and Eucharist once during the week, on Wednesday nights.
   - Music is central to the 10 am service.
   - Join us for Coffee Hour after each Sunday service to catch up on the week’s events!
   - Each year our Stewardship Ministry inspires parishioners to work towards tithing by giving freely of their time, talent, and treasure.
   - High worship days and festivals are cherished.

3. Nurture a loving, forgiving, caring physical and spiritual space filled with hopeful souls committed to healing and uplifting the sick, troubled, and infirm
   - Our Burgess Outreach Ministry works to fund ministries for children, women, and global renewal.
   - The Church School and Youth Group learn about Giving through projects contributing to local soup kitchens, shelters for women, and Millennium Development Goals.
   - We believe in the importance of pastoral care from our clergy and from each other in times of need; our people really care.

4. Focus our earthly energies, time, treasure, and God-given talents locally and worldwide under Episcopal leadership and values.

At Grace St. Paul's Episcopal Church tradition continues to meld with innovation and novelty, especially when it comes to church activities and outreach. The Episcopal Church Women and Girls Friendly Society, juniors through sponsors, are actively involved in the community and the parish.
Trenton Area Soup Kitchen has been a focus of outreach ministry for many years. We support its mission with food (collected in the **T.A.S.K. Barrel**), financial donations, and volunteers serving at the kitchen. Many of our congregation’s activities and fundraisers have successfully and regularly included people from the local area. Most notably, our semi-annual Roast Beef Dinner serves at least 500 people on average. An annual English Tea revives a beloved Grace-St. Paul's tradition and has a loyal following, as has Songs and Sweets, a concert with desserts served during the intermission. The annual Rummage Sale has people lined up at the door well before opening time, and several of our parish families first came to Grace-St. Paul’s through Vacation Bible School (VBS).

The **Rev. Dr. Susan Richardson** became the fifth Rector of the Parish in November of 2010. Prior to her call to Mercerville, Rev. Richardson was an Assistant Minister from 2006-2010 at Philadelphia’s historic Christ Church. She was also an Associate of Holy Cross Monastery in West Park, New York, and was awarded a 2008 Transformational Ministry Fellowship by the Episcopal Church Foundation. Although she served at Grace-St. Paul's for less than two years, her impact was transformative.
The Rev. Amy S. Cornell, a cradle Episcopalian, born and raised in Iselin, New Jersey, answered God’s call to become Grace-St. Paul’s Priest-in-Charge in August 2012, just one month after graduating from the General Theological Seminary in New York City. While completing her degree, she worked for a year at St. Francis in Dunellen, where she was mentored by none other than former Grace-St. Paul’s Rector, Rev. Jack Zamboni.

MORE GRACE-ST. PAUL’S MEMORIES

Barbara Baggott on the "Songs and Sweets"

“The Vestry was looking for new fundraisers. I had noticed after being at the church for a few years that Grace-St. Paul’s had so many talented, trained singers and we never heard them sing! This included Patricia Bartlett, Lydia Kugler, Richard Kugler, Robert Bullington, our own Fr. Jack Zamboni, and others. A Sunday afternoon recital was planned, with an intermission of delicious treats served in an elegant café setting. The first ‘Songs and Sweets’ was held in October 1999. The volunteer performers dressed in beautiful gowns and tuxedos and sang a variety of opera numbers, show tunes, and occasional sacred songs. The music lovers who came to the show were thrilled by the entire event. This was a successful fundraiser for Grace-St. Paul’s. This event was added to our budget as an annual fundraiser. It was enthusiastically supported by Fr. Jack Zamboni as he personally appreciated the opportunity to use his vocal talent in this way. Over the years, a variety of performers have volunteered their services and many parishioners have continued to provide a lovely ‘sweets’ intermission. This event continues to be appreciated by local music lovers.”
Lydia Kugler on the Grace-St. Paul's Banner

"About 8 years ago [i.e., in 2001-2002], our youth traveled to the National Cathedral in Washington, DC, to participate in the National Acolyte Festival. The banners carried by the various churches were impressive, but, sadly, GraSP did not have one. When we returned home, I spoke with Fr. Jack. He concurred that we should indeed have one and I could take on that project. Working from a 1 ½” corporate seal impression, I created the banner which hangs on the altar. It was created from almost 75% recycled fabric and trims, complete with carrying bag. When the youth returned to Washington, DC, [for a subsequent festival] they proudly processed with our Grace-St. Paul's banner, even receiving accolades from the Washington Cathedral Administrator."

On beloved parishioner and leader Jim Davis:

Stephen Cosgriff

“Jim Davis was a warm smile and a welcomed hand when needed. He was both a warm and unassuming companion, and an encyclopedia of church history. He is, of course, greatly missed by all of us, as he wore a 'big set of shoes' in the fellowship of this church."

Barbara Bromley

“Jim Davis was on all committees. He was the go to guy for everything. He never pushed his weight around. Whether he led or was at the bottom rung, he participated 100%.”

Paula Alekson

“Unfortunately, Jim Davis suddenly and unexpectedly passed on before the history of Grace-St. Paul’s was collected. Jim was a dynamo—especially for someone in his late-seventies, early-eighties. I think he may have signed up to host coffee hour every Sunday. He seemed to have limitless knowledge and energy. Just before his passing, the kitchen was being renovated and Jim, single-handedly, took on the huge project of scouring the range hood/fire-suppression system. He made it shine and gleam like the sun.”
Barbara Bromley on the Epiphany Party

“This celebration was held on Sunday at 5:00 p.m. on January 20th or the week before the annual Parish Meeting. The menu featured ham, boiled potatoes, green beans, gold glow salad, tomato juice, and a special “Ten Talents” Cake, which included a bean, a pea, and a dime, etc., put in cake after baking, but before frosting. We sang the same “classic” hymns every time, including “We Three Kings.” For this song the men (including Jim Davis) would dress as kings and come in bearing gifts. The tradition ended during Fr. Jack’s rectorship, because the church women got too busy to set it up.”

Kimberly Bresler on Being a Parishioner at Grace-St. Paul’s

“I came to GraSP on Advent in 1999, seeking a new church home after moving to Princeton to attend graduate school. I had been “church shopping” since moving in September and hadn’t found a parish that “fit.” But once I found GraSP I never left…I was drawn more and more into the life of GraSP, as a lay reader, lay Eucharistic minister, intercessor, chorister, and vestry member, as well as occasional adult ed. teacher. GraSP has been a much needed spiritual constant for me in a sometimes trying world—both personally (diverse, supporting friends through serious illness and death, etc.) and economically (e.g., 9/11, economic downturn, wars, etc.). I feel grateful for all that GraSP has been for me—liturgy, spiritual support, musical outlet, fellowship, education, etc.”

A few of Long-time Parishioner
Dorothy Henman’s Grace-St. Paul’s Memories:

“Rose Pullen was very involved and active in the church and brought me to Grace-St. Paul’s. Rose is the person who started the selling of the greeting cards to benefit the ECW [a ministry that Dorothy took on following Rose]. Rose died at the age of 98.”

“Grace Church was ‘low Episcopal,’ and St. Paul’s was ‘high.’”

“Coffee Hour in the 1970’s featured only rolls and coffee.”

Barbara Bromley on the Epiphany Party

“This celebration was held on Sunday at 5:00 p.m. on January 20th or the week before the annual Parish Meeting. The menu featured ham, boiled potatoes, green beans, gold glow salad, tomato juice, and a special “Ten Talents” Cake, which included a bean, a pea, and a dime, etc., put in cake after baking, but before frosting. We sang the same “classic” hymns every time, including “We Three Kings.” For this song the men (including Jim Davis) would dress as kings and come in bearing gifts. The tradition ended during Fr. Jack’s rectorship, because the church women got too busy to set it up.”