



GRACE EPISCOPAL CHURCH
HISTORY

GRACE EPISCOPAL CHURCH HISTORY

I. IN THE BEGINNING...

Grace Episcopal Church, Port Orange, is located about one third of the way down the east Florida peninsula, and is part of an original Spanish land grant deeded in 1790. The area was noted as the west bank of the Halifax River about six miles from the inlet. The location had an open river front with a draught of seven feet allowing small steamships and other boats to dock there. The surrounding terrain was high and reasonably dry. Settlement began in 1865 and the area was divided into lots in early 1867 to be used as homes, small groves, or businesses. A lot could be purchased cheaply and with clear title. The name Port Orange was adopted by the trustees of a company in the Old Mill on the river. It had also been called Ponce Park and Orange Park, but one name had to be chosen for a Post Office so a steamer could deliver mail to the town. The town now had several families, a general store, hotel, winery, and doctor. The large Dunn Lawton Plantation to the north employed some residents.

Florida had many missionaries who came to work with the people, but it was not until January 1838 that a primary convention was held to organize the seven Episcopal churches into a diocese. Due to lack of funds, the Seminole War, hurricanes, and disease, it was not until 1851 that the Missionary Diocese of Florida was formed with the Rev. Francis H. Rutledge of Tallahassee elected bishop. He served for fifteen years. The Rev. John Freeman Young was consecrated Bishop of Florida in May 1867. He immediately started missionary work along the east coast. In 1871, he visited Daytona and held services there. By 1877, the need was felt for regular services, and he sent two missionaries to reside in the area. The Rev. William Carter and The Rev. H. B. Stuart Martin stayed in Port Orange and traveled by boat, bicycle, and on foot carrying cartons of clothing, vestments, and prayer books to perform their duties. The first mission established along the Halifax was St. Mary's Daytona Beach in 1877. The following year, the Bishop himself celebrated the Eucharist and preached in Port Orange. In 1881, The Rev. H. B. Stuart Martin became permanent missionary of the Halifax River Region and covered only a twenty-five mile area while also being rector of St. Mary's and holding services in Ormond, Port Orange, and elsewhere as needed.

By 1884 the diocese had 30 parishes and missions. In 1887, the Rev. Frederick Towers became priest-in-charge of St. Mary's and assumed duties as missioner of the Port Orange Episcopalians. In the next few years the worshipers met in three different places. The first was a store which also housed the post office on the northwest corner of White Place and Halifax Drive, and the next was in Allandale in the Primitive Baptist Church now site of the Port Orange Recreation Center. That was known as the Community Church and was intended for all denominations and was used by the Congregational and Episcopal

churches. The last move was to a small building where Port Orange United Methodist church is now located. In the Diocesan Journal of 1888, Grace Church is listed as a mission and is shown to have five families and a total of 20 persons: number of communicants - 13; 27 services were held, one of which was Holy Communion. The report was made by the Rev. F. Towers, and in that year he baptized on March 3, 1888, Benjamin Hayden, Frederick Hayden, and Victor Vieullaume. Benjamin, a toddler, was not baptized without incident. At every question asked of his parents and sponsors, Benjamin himself answered vehemently, "No-No!" Father Towers had two burials in 1888. On March 11, he buried William Sinclair Fleming, age five months; and on July 21 he buried Frederick Hayden, age two years. Frederick had been baptized in March. All services were listed at the Congregational Church. In 1889 Bishop Edwin G. Weed preached at Port Orange at 10:00a.m.

There were nine communicants in 1890. They were the Millburn family, Charles Sr., and Jr.; the Meekers; Haydens; Vieullaumes; and Hammond. The Rev. Charles W. Arnold became the rector of St. Mary's in 1890 and was priest-in-charge of St. Mary's and missionary for Grace until 1906. He was a retired priest who came to Florida to join his son in growing citrus in the Sanford area. He soon left that for the opportunity for missionary work in the new frontier. The Rev. Arnold made the trip from Daytona on his bicycle or walked. There is a bronze plaque in the chapel in his memory. The first listed confirmations were held in the Congregational Church, Port Orange, on June 14, 1891. The confirmands, Ethan and Victor Vieullaume and Mary Smith, were presented by the Rev. Arnold and confirmed by Bishop Weed.

There were 80 parishes and missions in the Diocese of Florida; and Bishop Edwin G. Weed, elected and consecrated in Jacksonville in 1886, felt the need for a division of the diocese. The partition occurred October 13, 1892, and William Crane Gray was named Bishop of the Missionary Jurisdiction of Southern Florida. There were five parishes, thirty-nine missions, and six mission stations in the new jurisdiction. At the first convocation of the newly created Missionary Jurisdiction of South Florida, on February 21, 1893, Grace Church is listed as an Organized Mission. On February 28, 1893, Bishop Gray preached in the school house to a large congregation and later attended a reception in his honor at the hotel.

On December 20, 1893, the bishop visited the beautiful new church in Port Orange. The Rev. C. W. Arnold read the service and the bishop preached and confirmed five persons. The new church was largely made possible by the generosity of Dr. and Mrs. Charles H. Meeker, but all communicants had a part in the project with gifts of money and services. Dr. Meeker from Rahway, New Jersey, once owned most of the land which is now the city of Port Orange. His home still stands at the corner of Meeker Place and Riverside. On

November 3, 1892, Dr. Charles H. Meeker and his wife, Mary E. Meeker, conveyed to the diocese a section of land to be used for the building of a church. The land was a lot 90 x 300 feet on the southwest corner of Church Street and Ridgewood Avenue. The architecture of the church, built in 1893, is known as Florida Gothic and is similar to many of the mission churches built at that time. The building is 65 feet long and 33 feet wide, built of white board and batten frame, plain glass windows then, and a tall bell tower with a wooden cross on top. The bell and hanger were ordered from Europe by the Meekers and given to the church. The pews were hand sawed, cut, and built by parishioners. The ladies of the parish made the bright red, horse-hair padded cushions for the pews. The kneelers were added in 1951.

The altar is located on the west side with a very small sacristy on the north side. The altar was originally under the windows against the retable. The hanging crucifix was added in 1955. The processional cross was a gift of the Hunter family in memory of John Wesley Hunter and was given in the 1960s. A small pot bellied stove with a tall brick chimney was located where the small entrance on the south side is today, and heated the building. The church was lighted by a large kerosene hanging chandelier and the wall sconces. These have now been all converted to electricity and two more lights have been added.

Soon after the erection of the church, Dr. and Mrs. Meeker gave as a memorial to Mrs. Meekers father, Dr. Nathaniel Wood, a signed three-part Tiffany stained-glass window over the altar depicting the Good Shepherd in a crimson robe watching over his sheep. The glass is known as circus glass, and the figure changes with changing light. After the death of her husband in 1902, Mrs. Meeker gave the church another three-part signed Tiffany memorial window. This window portrays St. Luke as the Beloved Physician and is the east window. The Meekers also gave the first Bible as a memorial to Mrs. Meekers father, Dr. Wood, and the retable cross.

The Rt. Rev. William Crane Gray returned to consecrate the church in 1894. On February 10, 1894, he wrote, "Had a very trying time in my endeavor to reach Port Orange. Was detained at Orange Junction nine hours, then had a slow train which put me off at New Smyrna after midnight, compelling me to get a conveyance by daylight Sunday morning to drive to Port Orange in time for the Consecration Service on Sunday, February 11. Rev. Arnold's heart was rejoiced by seeing the church at Port Orange consecrated this morning. One person was confirmed. The great interest manifested in this church by Dr. and Mrs. Meeker, has undoubtedly enabled us to consecrate this beautiful mission church to serve God at a much earlier date than we could otherwise have hoped for. May the good Lord suitably reward them for their work and labor of love!"

The first marriage in the new Grace Church was that of Hampton H. Robinson and Florence Ada Montague on August 8, 1895, performed by the Rev. C. W. Arnold.

The (*former*) parish hall was originally known as Ridgewood Hall and was the Port Orange City Hall, Community Hall, Recreation Center, and a place where everything happened. It was built in 1897 and willed to Grace Church by Mrs. Meeker on April 19, 1913. The bequest included the hall, a lot 99 x 545 feet on the corner of Ridgewood and Dunlawton, where the shopping center is today, and a bequest of \$2500 to invest and be used for the benefit and maintenance of said church. It is a large building, 75 x 33 feet. A kitchen and bath located in the rear were added in 1950. The hall originally stood across Church Street from the chapel facing Ridgewood Ave. (*This structure is now located on Jean Frances Street & Ridgewood Avenue, approximately one mile south of the church campus. The building has been restored and altered to serve as a wedding chapel.*)

II. THE MIDDLE YEARS

In the early part on the century, clergymen served the mission on a part-time basis, at the bishop's direction. Sunday services were held, but the parish activities were very limited. The priests came from St. Mary's in Daytona or St. Paul's in New Smyrna. Among them were:

Rev. A. J. Wilder	1906-1911
Rev. Robert Tufts	1912
Rev. Edgar A Sherwood	1913-1914
Rev. William A. Blaker	1915
Rev. William B. Hays	1921
Rev. J. Cyril Martin	1921-1928
Rev. Oliver Cox	1930-1936
Rev. Northey Jones	1936-1937
Rev. Eldred Simkins	1937-1944
Rev. William Shelby Walthall	1944-1946
Rev. John Armfield	1945-1950
Rev. Dale Cosand	1950-1954

In 1922 the Missionary Jurisdiction of Southern Florida achieved diocesan status, and the Diocese of south Florida was created, based in Orlando. The Rt. Rev. Cameron Mann was the first bishop.

The booming economy of Florida went bust in the late 1920s followed by the Great Depression. With an average Sunday attendance of from ten to twenty, Grace Church weathered the period due in main to the devotion of the few members. The “Grace Church Guild,” the forerunner of the Episcopal Church Women, met faithfully and were concerned with all the work of the parish: Sunday School, building and grounds, Altar Guild, and the entire parish staff. From their minutes:

May 1921...

The Vice President said that the rector, Rev. Hayes, had asked why the church should be locked after services. As the wine is kept in the sacristy, the sacred vessels for communication and other things of value, it was deemed best to continue locking the doors as no one lived near enough to the church to be a real protection and any member of the congregation could get the key at any time. The treasurer said that Mr. Tuttle had spoken to her about having the outhouse in the back of Guild Hall moved to a less conspicuous place. It was plainly seen from Mr. Tuttle’s house, and he would give \$5 towards the removal of it. The matter was tabled until the fall.

March 1923...

It was decided to allow Mrs. Morgan to pasture her cow on the grounds of the Guild Hall, provided said cow did not prove a “nuisance.”

May 1924...

The treasurer reported the cost of wiring Guild Hall and putting in (electric) fixtures was \$68. (The electric bill for the month of March 1925, was \$1.25)

Grace Church continued to serve the Port Orange area through World War II under the bishopric of the Rt. Rev. John D. Wing. Although the parish family was growing in numbers, there was often a financial shortfall. Through the fundraising efforts of the Guild, under the direction of the priest and bishop, the mission struggled to meet its diocesan assessment. The 1948 annual report indicated there were 31 regular communicants and a clergy salary of \$600.

From 1950 - 1954 the Rev. Dale Cosand served Grace Church as well as St. Paul’s Church. He helped build the mission into a enthusiastic church body. During his tenure, many changes were made in the operation of the church. Fr. Cosand had gorgeous vestments and was very particular about having everything done correctly in the service. Being a musician, Fr. Cosand greatly encouraged the ministry of music in the church. A Wurlitzer organ was purchased in 1952, and large senior and junior choirs were formed under the

direction of Mrs. Lillian Hunter. Mrs. Hunter and her husband Wesley were very devoted church members. He was the perpetual senior warden as well as being in charge of building and grounds. She planned and cooked wonderful dishes for the parish dinners. The Hunter home on Halifax was open to all church members. In 1951 water service was added to the sacristy; a kitchen and toilet were installed in the parish hall.

III. TO THE CENTENNIAL

At a very special Vestry meeting in August 1954, the Bishop of Central Florida, the Rt. Rev. Henry I. Louttit, told the members that Grace Church was no longer connected with either St. Mary's or St. Paul's. In March 1954, Grace Church signed a Resolution of Incorporation and now would have to stand alone. The Rev. Benton Ellis came to serve from 1954-1956. Fr. Ellis was ordained to the priesthood at Grace Church on December 29, 1954, in the church's first ordination. From the first issue of *The Port Orange News*, a local newsletter published by C. H. Osteen on December 23, 1954:

“Ritual and splendor of the highest degree in the Episcopal Church, comparable only to the Coronation of the Monarch of England, will pervade the ordination of the Rev. H. Benton Ellis into the priesthood, December 29 at 10 am. Rev. Gale D. Webb, St. Mary's Church, Daytona Beach, will be the presenter of the candidate to the Rt. Rev. Henry Louttit of Orlando, Bishop of South Florida, who will ordain Rev. Ellis.”

With Fr. Ellis at Grace Church, the parish continued to receive diocesan support as a mission church and grew in numbers and ministry. A vicarage was built in 1954 on land across Church Street from the parish hall. It was built for \$8,150 by borrowing \$2,500 from the diocese, and a mortgage on the Guild Hall. It was used until 1964 when Reid Hughes purchased the Ridgewood-Dunlawton corner.

The Rev. Arthur Dimmick served as vicar from 1956-1960. The congregation had grown from about 9 members; 7 Millburn's and 2 Meekers, in 1890, to 50 communicants in 1956. Ridgewood Avenue was widened between 1957 and 1961 to make it four lanes and at that time both of the buildings were moved. The church was moved back 100 feet and the parish hall was moved across Church Street and behind the church. The State Department of Transportation paid \$9,590 for the land taken.

The Rev. J. M. Wheatley served as vicar from November 1960 to November 1961. At this time there were three services on Sunday and one mid-week. Average Sunday

attendance was 90-100. There were 30 students in Sunday school. The Men's Club, a chapter of "The Brotherhood of St. Andrew," had 11 members. The Ladies Auxiliary, with Mae Brame as President, had 26 members.

The Rev. G. L. Glaser served as vicar from 1962-1964. It was during this time the large tract of land on the Ridgewood-Dunlawton corner was sold for \$45,000 cash. With this money, some diocesan loans were paid off, legal fees paid, and the two 59 foot lots south of the church known as the Cottrell land were secured for \$12,000 from the Crippled Children's Hospital Foundation. A portion of this land had been owned at one time by Mary McLeod Bethune where she intended to have a school for the children of the railroad workers living near the tracks. A new vicarage was purchased on Coral Way West for \$18,000 since the vicarage had gone with the corner lot. The Coral Way vicarage was sold in May 1979.

The Rev. Theophilus Powers was ordained at Grace Church in August 1964 and served until 1968. In 1956 discussion first began about the need for an office building. In August 1966 ground was broken for the building which through the skills of Charles Whitby and Harold Busley only cost \$7,500. October 2, 1966, Bishop Louttit blessed the building, and it was dedicated as a memorial to Charles Milburn, first warden and founder. His wife, Sara C., had been first president of the Guild in 1925. The library was dedicated to Mae Brames who had worked many years for the church.

On October 24, 1965 a testimonial dinner was held at Grace church to honor Mrs. Mae Elliott, who had been a member of Grace Church since its founding. She was the daughter of Mr. & Mrs. Charles Millburn, Sr., the first family on record to the church. Bishop Louttit was guest speaker for the dinner. Mrs. Elliott often told of a childhood memory she had of Grace Church. It was her responsibility then to be sure the firewood box at the church was kept full. For this she was paid five cents a week, and she would faithfully save these wages until she had a sum she felt was worthy of offering to the church.

In 1968 Grace Church marked a milestone, observing its 75th Anniversary of the dedication of the church. Later that year in September, Grace Church welcomed a new vicar, the Rev. Paul Thompson. In 1969 the Episcopal Diocese of South Florida was split to create three new dioceses. Grace Church became part of the Diocese of Central Florida, and the Rt. Rev. William H. Folwell was elected first diocesan bishop.

A highlight of the Thompson tenure was the preservation and restoration program during the early 1970s. In 1973, the ten side windows of plain bottle glass were removed and replaced with stained and leaded glass depicting the life of Christ. In the place where the

stove has once been, a baptistery window was installed in stained glass and the baptistery light from St. Mary's was hung. In the narthex is a beautiful and different stained-glass window, a gift of the Najarian family with the writing in Armenian. The Scripture in the window is John 13:34 which reads; *"I give you a new commandment, that you love one another. Just as I have loved you, you also should love one another."* In addition to windows the church, parish hall, and vicarage were painted; the church was rewired and carpeted; the belfry repaired; and heating and air conditioning added to the parish hall. The total cost was \$11,500.

Fr. Thompson left in late 1978, and Bishop Folwell appointed the Rev. E. B. Pugh interim vicar. He served six months as interim vicar and as Sunday Supply Priest. A seminary graduate and his wife were due June 1979. The congregation welcomed the new vicar, the Rev. Christopher N. Gray and his wife Paula. Fr. Pugh continued as Sunday Supply until Deacon Gray was ordained January 6, 1980, at St. Luke's Cathedral in Orlando. At this time Grace Church had been a mission for 89 years. Fr. Gray is the great-grandson of the Rt. Rev. William Crane Gray who consecrated the church in 1894.

The kick-off dinner for the Diocesan Venture in Mission was held December 9, 1979, and the little mission church topped all the churches in the diocese with pledges of 184%. Grace Church had already begun its outreach.

The 1980s found Grace in rapid growth along with the Halifax area. The Sunday services went from two to four morning services. Holy Eucharist and Healing followed by Bible study on Tuesdays, Holy Eucharist Wednesday evenings, Holy Eucharist and men's breakfast and Bible study Thursday mornings became the normal week. On August 6, 1980, Molly Rice was ordained to the Diaconate by Bishop Folwell in Grace Church. That month Grace also had its first Vacation Bible School shared with All Saint's Lutheran and 40 children attended.

In January of 1981, Bishop Folwell assigned the Rev. Benjamin (Pete) Waite as full-time deacon of Grace Church and as a much needed assistant for Fr. Gray. Corky Wirth was hired as a part-time secretary. In May, Grace had their first Annual Parish Picnic. The next purchase was the two-bedroom house west of the parish hall, which was purchased for \$26,000 and converted to a Sunday School by the Thursday morning Men's Bible Study Group and Club. In October a parish picnic was held (note of interest: It was this parish picnic that Fr. Rick Burhans and Carolyn Burhans first met), so each parishioner could vote on a special request for full parish status from the diocese. One hundred and fifty people attended. The vote was unanimous.

In January of 1982, at the Annual Diocesan Convention, Grace was granted full parish status after at least 92 years as a mission. Fr. Chris Gray and 25 members of the congregation proudly stood before the delegates to accept this new status. In March of that year, the first assistant priest, the Rev. Frank Hutchings, was sent to Grace. The festival services were too large for the church so either the parish hall or glen behind the office building were used for Christmas, Easter, and bishop's visits. The celebration of parish status was held in the glen with the whole parish attending.

It was obvious Grace needed to build a new church, so the Vestry hired Nils Schweitzer, an Episcopal architect, to conduct workshops to begin planning for the building. From the outset it was apparent that the parish wanted a church, not an all-purpose building, and it should be built in a style compatible to the chapel, which was to be left strictly alone. At an evening meeting in January 1983, his final report was given.

Meanwhile, the design and finance committees had formed. The committee and Father Gray toured various Episcopal churches built recently in Central Florida. It was decided to hire a local architect so the building would be well supervised. With the Vestry's approval, the group chose Joe Blais and Lee Sayers. They had experience building liturgical churches.

The committee visited more church buildings with them and decided that the choice would be a plan similar to St. John's in Kissimmee, Epiphany in Port Orange, and St. Richard's in Winter Park, was the choice. In these there are no more than eight rows from the altar, and there is a natural warm feeling to the congregation. The finance committee considered the finances in the congregation and how the church could be built without any large contributions but many small ones. They investigated and received loans from the National Church, Diocese of Central Florida, and St. James, Ormond Beach. A grant also was received from the UTO for handicapped facilities and commercial loan.

The Building Dinner to present the plans to the congregation was held June 10, 1983, at the Treasure Island Inn. A Packet of the building program booklet and pledge cards were ready and presented to those present which included most of the parish. Dinner was free with a love offering and cost the Vestry only \$200. The rest was given. Pledges began to come in, and final plans were started. The winter residents had a luncheon and introduction to the building plans in February 1984 and happily joined the planning for the new church. The Diocesan Board gave its approval for our building in December 1983.

To obtain the necessary building permits from Port Orange, the church had to buy more land for parking and storm water retention. Jeff Evans sold the church some of his back lot adjacent to the church property on the south side and agreed that worshippers could park in his lot on Sundays. The Addair family owned a triangle of a lot on the side of Monroe Street which they sold to the church for \$5,000, with \$3,000 being a donation to the building fund. This gift gave access from the parking lot to the street. Because of storm water retention requirements, the church had to settle for a shelled parking lot rather than paving.

During the architect's final drawings, the choir was moved to the rear from the front right of the nave. The final building plans were approved in May of 1984 and went out for bids. Again, a local firm was chosen so control would be easier. Bids were opened on June 6, 1984, and the Vestry chose to have Bomar Construction build the church.

Groundbreaking was June 24, 1984, Grace parishioners wore their Grace Church tee-shirts and brought shovels (many of them painted gold). A large group assembled including all the Episcopal priests in the deanery and most of the Port Orange clergy.

Actual building began in September 1984. Carl Formas and Tom Maloney, representing the Vestry, came daily to check on the building. Lee Sayers came at least once a week. A very experienced finish carpenter did the new entry to the chapel by the baptistery where the old stove had been. The doors' new lintels matched the others. The memorial garden for the burial of ashes was also established at this time between the church and what was soon to be called the chapel. The finish carpenter donated the materials and his labor for the cross in the memorial garden and the three crosses on the church reredos with the Risen Christ figure.

Members of the congregation were given the opportunity to make memorial and thanksgiving gifts to furnish the church, and to buy the stained glass windows and altar vessels. Decisions for furniture and decorations were interesting. Sample pews were brought by two companies and the Vestry and spouses sat through a meeting trying them out. The final bid went to Sauder, who also made the altar furniture. The altar is a smaller copy of the altar at the Cathedral of St. Luke's in Orlando. The pulpit was designed to go with the altar rail and altar. The font (which has eight sides, a symbol of rebirth) and the flower stands were designed to match the pulpit. The wood stain in the altar area is darker than on the pews. There were at least seven meetings to decide the color for the pews as different parts of the church were built. The committee always seemed to return to the original color.

The tile floors and unadorned pews are designed to enhance the acoustics. The windows feature the twelve apostles and were designed and executed in Orlando by J. Piercey Studio, Inc. He designed them in a “light pallet” and blended the traditional with the contemporary. The Risen Christ was designed and carved by Kenneth C. Pacetti, St. Augustine, who trained in wood carving with the masters in Oberammergau, Germany. The figure was designed with hands extended as a welcome and invitation to “come unto me.” He is risen and stands in the shadow of Calvary, the three crosses.

First services were held in the new church on March 17, 1985, filling every pew as well as the folding chairs in back. The official consecration was Sunday, April 14, 1985, with the Rt. Rev. William Folwell officiating. Again, it was a full house. Those helping in the building of the church were honored; architects, builders, construction crews, window designer, sculptor, building committee, finance committee, and especially the parishioners, whose stewardship and faithfulness made the new church a reality.

On September 29, 1986, Wallace Smiley was ordained a deacon in a beautiful evening service celebrated by the Rt. Rev. William Folwell.

The year 1987 was memorable because in June the first full-time assistant priest arrived. The Rev. Dabney Smith came from seminary and was ordained a deacon at St. James in Ormond Beach. He was ordained to the priesthood at Grace Church on December 28, at 7:00 p.m. by The Rt. Rev. William Folwell. This was the third ordination to the priesthood at Grace. Everyone benefited from a second priest for the parish.

In October 1987, the church purchased the duplex that was later remodeled into a meeting place for the Alcoholics Anonymous groups. The playground was built south of the library by the men of the parish.

Sadly for the congregation, in July, The Rev. Dabney Smith, with his family, left to head his own church in Indiana. The parish welcomed The Rev. Tige Newell from seminary and his ordination as a deacon at All Saints, Winter Park. He was ordained into the priesthood December 13, 1989, by Bishop Folwell at Grace Church.

Grace’s Centennial year began with a contest to design a tee shirt. The winning design was by Beth Cuff. The Centennial Committee chose the motto, “A Century of Grace” 1890-1990. The Grace Church Follies were held in February at St. Mary’s with all organizations Mary’s with all organizations participating. “Century of Grace” bumper

stickers went on sale in February.

In April, the plans for the congregational gift of thanksgiving for the 100 years were unveiled. A 5-foot stone mosaic was to be created by Jim Piercey, Inc. for the narthex wall in the church.

In July, Steve Cuff and his family left for seminary at Nashotah House. He was the first seminarian sponsored by Grace Church.

The chapel renovation was completed in October and included cleaning, painting, and installation of new blue carpeting and cushions.

Centennial Week was November 4-11. The week's celebrations included services using the 1794 Prayer Book and the 1884 Hymnal, a Prayer & Praise Service, Ice Cream Social & Period Costume Contest, and closing service with Bishop Howe celebrating followed by a parish pig roast.

There have been many changes and much growth in the 100 years of Grace with a continuing gift of the Holy Spirit. From the original five families and nine communicants, Grace has grown to more than 300 families and 811 baptized members. From one part-time circuit priest, there are now two full-time priests and a deacon, plus two more helping priests. Grace Church has grown from the confirmation of three by Rt. Rev. Edwin Gardner Weed on June 14, 1891, to the confirmation of 12, receiving of 3, and reaffirming of 7 by Rt. Rev. John W. Howe on November 11, 1990; and from the baptism of three in March 1888 to the baptism of Courtney Smith, Rex Stanford, Paul and Adam Bachman, Michael Rannie, and John Miller in October 1990.

The people of Grace Episcopal Church are anticipating joyfully their second 100 years.

First edition of History concludes here, Clara Fowler, editor.

IV. AFTER THE CENTENNIAL

The years between Grace's centennial celebration and the publication of a new edition of the history brought another stage of transition. Fr. Chris Gray accepted a call to become rector of St. Mark's Church in Venice, Florida during Holy Week 1991. The following year of parish self-study and a national search process brought Fr. Jeff Bunke from Ohio to join Fr. Tige Newell as clergy servant leaders guiding the course of our Port Orange parish family into its second hundred years.

A series of neighborhood meetings and vestry deliberations have led to the formation of a new mission statement and a three to five year plan for the ministry. Its goals are high - but not beyond the reach of this wonderful community of faith empowered by God's Holy Spirit. The future will certainly bring many opportunities for our individual and common witness to God's love and saving power for all people. May our second century be marked by an outpouring of God's amazing grace, offered to all who will receive our Lord!

The Rev. Jeff L. Bunke, Rector (June 3, 1993)

Grace Episcopal Church Mission Statement 1993

We, the family of Grace Church, are called to be joyful instruments of God's love, peace, and grace. With the guidance of the Holy Spirit, we seek to build community and to share the Gospel of Jesus Christ.

During these years, two gifted and dedicated youth ministers (and a host of assisting advisors) have served the growing population of parish teenagers: Elisabeth "Lisa" Mitchell (during the early 90s) and Jonathan Marz (at the beginning of the new millennium). Kay Bunke and Kathy Wilson served as interim youth ministers following Lisa Mitchell. Fr. Gray Echols filled the role of youth minister during his tenure.

1993-1995 was a time of emphasis on Christian Education, the building and rebuilding of ministries. The profile of our congregation began to change as more families with children came into the membership. Our music began to change under the leadership of Fr. Jeff, an accomplished musician and singer. A praise band was formed and began playing once a month at the Rite Two service, adding a new element of spirit and joy to the service.

In December of 1993, we bid farewell to our Assistant Rector, Fr. Tige Newell and his family as they moved to St. Michael's in Colonial Heights, Virginia where Fr. Tige would serve as the Rector. It soon became apparent that Fr. Jeff was in need of help. We

warmly welcomed a small army of retired priests, residents within the church family, who returned to “active” service. Fr. S. H. Lewin Shaw, Fr. Paul Thompson, Fr. Paul Miller, Fr. Andy Kuhber and Fr. Tyrrel Dear. Fr. Gray Echols then came to assist with great vigor and evangelical fire. Following two years of service, Fr. Gray Echols moved on to St. John’s in Melbourne, Florida. Fr. Joe Maher, with his gentle wit and love, came to serve as assistant on a part-time basis following his retirement as rector of Holy Child in Ormond Beach. The Rev. Carolyn Kirk Biggs came as a full-time assistant upon her ordination to the (transitional) diaconate.

The need for expanded facilities was recognized in 1980 when the plans for a new Sanctuary were developed. The priority at that time was the new church building, but, as our membership grew, we also had a growing need for fellowship, classrooms, and office space. The minimum cost to bring the 100 year old parish hall up to building codes would be approximately \$320,000. In effect, this would put a new facility inside a 100 year old building and gain none of the needed space. A Vision Statement was developed and neighborhood meetings were conducted to determine direction.

In October 1993, the Vestry adopted a plan that wisely called for acquisition of additional property for parking, drainage, etc. The target date for the construction of a new parish hall was the year 2000. A strip of land adjacent to the church property, (and commonly known as “the Evans property”), became available and was purchased by the congregation for \$80,000.

In November, the Vision Group reported to the Vestry that the neighborhood meetings had voted unanimously to proceed with the new building plan. Although other names were suggested, “Parish Life Center” was the one that was voted on. Following the unanimous approval of the congregation to proceed, a Fundraising Committee and Building Committee were formed. The architects began working on the blueprints. Following interviews with randomly-selected families of the congregation and the analysis of our giving record, a consultant firm reported that a fundraising campaign could reasonably anticipate \$600,000 to \$650,000 in pledges over a 3-year period. Plans were made for the consultant to conduct the campaign in May to July.

A surprise critical operating financial shortfall put the plans for a new Parish Life Center in jeopardy. As the curate’s position was eliminated from the budget for a new year, the fund-raising consultant advised that building plans should be put on hold due to the lack of financial support from the congregation and that in view of our financial shortfall, no

financial institution would consider making a loan of the size needed. During the remainder of the year, our financial position continued to improve, and at the Annual Meeting, the congregation voted 86 to 25 to proceed with a fund-raising campaign for a new Parish Life Center. All vestry members were enlisted to make a personal call on parishioners to answer questions/concerns about under-taking the building project. The purpose was not to collect pledges, but to ascertain the climate for a fund-raising campaign and the willingness to make a commitment.

Vestry member, Fred Heise, worked with the City of Port Orange in an effort to have them move the old Parish Hall, restore it, and maintain it as a historical building since it was the first Port Orange City Hall. The Mayor was in favor but the City Manager did not feel it should be undertaken. At a City Council Meeting, Mr. Douglas Clark, a local investor and real estate developer, offered to pay the expenses to move it to a 10-acre property he owned off Halifax Drive and then restore it to its original state. What a blessing! We really did not want to see it bulldozed when the construction was ready to begin. Mr. Clark later confirmed that he would remove the Parish Hall by October 10, 1997.

In June 1977, our financial position allowed us to pay off our loan with First Union as well as our \$25,000 debt to St. James. The mortgage burning will be a part of the fund raising dinner. The cost of the new building had been estimated at \$1,329,000. On September 20, 1997, the Chair of the Building Committee, Harry Jennings, reported that we had \$914,722 in gifts and pledges.

We learned that the flower shop two doors down the street was for sale when the prospective purchaser came to inform us that she had to have a release from us to use part of our parking space for her business. We somewhat reluctantly agreed to give her the required release, but God had different plans for us! The sale fell through!! After offers and counter-offers, we prevailed and purchased the property that would now provide us with office space during the time of construction of the new Parish Life Center. Before that event, we had been looking at rentals that would have averaged at least \$2000/month. It definitely seemed that God was hitting us over the head to let us know He wanted us to have that new building.

Sayers and Hawkins were retained as the architects, (they were the architects for the church buildings), as well as Bomar Construction Company, who was the contractor for the church building. We were on our way, but we had no space for Sunday School, classrooms, a library, meeting rooms, or a place for social gatherings! We came to realize that we had to make the church into a multi-purpose building no matter how inadequate. To accomplish this, we removed all of the “side section” pews from the east and south sides of the church

building and put in tables and chairs. We took the sink from the old Parish Hall, some of the cabinets, and a refrigerator and fitted them into the anteroom of the lady's room in the church building. Not beautiful to behold, but it was functional.

The big day was here!! On the Feast of Pentecost, May 31, 1998, we had the official ground-breaking ceremony. Many of the congregation wore tee-shirts printed with "We Did It!" As an added touch, we had an old fashioned plow that was pulled by the Vestry with Fr. Jeff manning the reins. 'Twas a sight to behold!

On October 14, 1998, Fr. Paul Thompson was transferred to the Church Triumphant and we mourned the loss of a wonderful friend and priest. He left instructions for a champagne toast at the reception following the service of celebration of life. This was done as we shared many happy memories. He will be greatly missed.

For a few months it appeared that nothing was happening. Then the building began to emerge and take shape and the excitement grew with it! In the first week of August 1999, we were told that we could begin to move furniture and equipment into the building, but that we could not occupy it until we received a Certificate of Occupancy from the City of Port Orange. That certificate is dated August 20, 1999.

Deacon Sandra Fisher was among a cadre of strong vocational deacons to serve at Grace. Her sudden illness and death in early 2001 left a deep void as well as a powerful legacy for social witness and service in the community.

The Grace Church campus continued to develop and offer space for refreshment, renewal, celebration and reflection. The property at 4170 Ridgewood Avenue was purchased to serve as temporary office and meeting space during construction of the Parish Life Center. It then served briefly as a thrift store. Next it became home for a dynamic partner ministry called The House Next Door - a branch of Deland's premiere non-profit children and family counseling and service agency. Four full-time and several contract counselors operated from this location every day. Parenting classes, labs, and group therapy sessions used the Parish Life Center facilities for additional ministries/services to the community.

The Memorial Garden begun in the early 1980's was outgrown by 2002. A beautifully enlarged meditation garden, walk and waterfall provides space for expansion of this ministry well into this century. Much of the credit for this enrichment was due to the gifts and expertise of parishioner Fred Heise as well as the families of Marian Ranous and Phil and Louise Yarnall.

As in all other areas of our society, technology entered the church's life and brought many blessings as well as challenges. The entire Parish Life facility was networked for computer, video, and sound transmission. Both the chapel and church buildings were included in the electronic web. A wonderful gift of plasma display panels was installed on either side of the sanctuary in the church building prior to Holy Week 2002. They permit projection of images and text, bringing new elements and flexibility to our worship.

The ancient art and ministry of Christian healing grew rapidly, especially since the parish's association with Jacksonville's Christian Healing Ministries. Full days of healing prayer, a growing intensive two-on-one prayer ministry, and a training program enabling and empowering this wonderful ministry made an indelible mark, not only at Grace, but throughout the region.

Fr. Jeff and several members of the congregation have felt the call to explore the possibility of starting a mission church west of I-95 where housing developments and the population were growing rapidly. Our current mission Statement says it all — *“We are the church of open arms. We are a community that celebrates Jesus. We are disciples committed to growth in membership, in outreach and in stewardship. We glorify God and empower people for service.”*

Updated edited by Wynne Bishop and Fr. Jeff Bunke

DEACONS (Vocational) WHO HAVE SERVED AT GRACE

Molly Rice	Patricia Nahikian
Pete Waite	Sybil Meheux
Wallace Smiley	Susan McCaffrey
Sandra Rowe	Patricia Longacre
Sandra Fischer	

PRIESTS CALLED TO SERVE AT GRACE CHURCH

H. B. Stuart Martin	1881	
Frederick Towers	1887	1890
C. W. Arnold	1890	1906
A. J. Wilder	1906	1911
Robert Tufts	1912	
Edgar A. Sherwood	1913	1914
William A. Blaker	1915	
William B. Hays	1921	
J Cyril Martin	1921	
Oliver Cox	1929	
Northey Jones	1936	1937
Eldred C. Simkins	1937	1944
William Shelby Walthall	1944	1946
John S. Armfield	1946	1950
Dale W. Cosand	1950	1954
Edmund Sills	1954	
Benton Ellis	1954	1956
Arthur B. Dimmick	1956	1960
Fletcher P. Wood	1960	
J. McNeil Wheatley	1960	1961
Gordon L. Graser	1962	1964
Theophilus J. Powers	1964	1968
Paul L. Thompson	1968	1978
Ernest B. Pugh	1978	1980
Christopher N. Gray	1979	1991
Dabney T. Smith (Assistant)	1987	1989
Tige Newell (Assistant)	1989	1991

PRIESTS CALLED TO SERVE AT GRACE CHURCH (Cont'd)

(Interim Rector)	1991	1992
(Associate)	1992	1993
Jeff L. Bunke (Rector)	1992	2007
A. Tyrrel Dear (Priest Associate)	1993	
S. H. Lewin Shaw (Priest Associate)	1994	1995
Gray T. Echols (Curate)	1995	1997
Joseph A. Maher (Assistant)	1998	2002
David S. Hoag (Priest Associate)	1999	
Carolyn K. Biggs (Assistant)	2002	2006
Marlowe K. Iverson	2007	2008
Rick Burhans	2008	Present

Construction Details of Grace's Chapel

The Chapel of Grace Church was constructed in 1893 according to the Carpenter Gothic building plans used frequently in that era. Native cypress and heart pine form the fiber of the structure. The building's windows were originally filled with shaded & clear glass. These were later replaced (front and rear) near the turn of the 19th to 20th centuries with memorial windows crafted by the Tiffany Studios. In the 1970s, when major building restoration was accomplished, the side memorial windows, crafted by Willet Studios, were added.

The structure was used as the primary worship space for a struggling congregation from 1893 through 1984. The growth of both parish and community in the latter decades of the 20th century led to construction of the adjacent worship center and more recently the Parish Life Center at the rear of the campus. The chapel currently houses weekday worship services and is the site for numerous weddings, baptisms and funerals expecting less than 75 persons in attendance.

The pews were hand-fashioned by parishioners at the time of the Chapel's construction. The blue cushions, while re-covered several times over 100 years, are still the original "horsehair" filled pads. The lighting fixtures include the original fixtures, adapted from their whale-oil fuel supply to electricity. The altar and baptismal font are original to the structure, although both have been moved from their first locations (the altar away from the west wall and the font away from a position on a platform at the east end of the nave beneath the St. Luke window).

The crucifix suspended above the entrance to the chancel originally hung in the refectory of St. Gregory Abbey in Three Rivers, Michigan. The *Regina Coeli* statue at the rear of the nave above the votive lights stand is a "polychromed" figure, probably crafted in the early 20th century. Both of these elements date to the tenure of Fr. Paul Thompson.

The stained glass windows are perhaps the most striking feature of the building. Louis Comfort Tiffany was perhaps the most prolific and sought-after designer of stained glass at the turn of the 19th to 20th centuries. The Good Shepherd (front) and St. Luke (rear) windows are excellent examples of the Tiffany Studio's work.

The Good Shepherd window (above the altar) depicts a favorite theme of many Christian believers. Christ, the good shepherd, holds a lamb in his arms while others cluster close about his feet and legs. As you look at this window, note the inclusion of organic matter-twigs and leaves-between the layers of glass. Examine the rich texture of the sheep's

wool and the grosgrain/satin “texture” of Jesus’ robes. If you move near to and look carefully across or up the window, you will observe “layering” of up to seven layers of glass to create the effect Tiffany desired. This window is particularly stunning in mid to late afternoon hours when the setting sun depicts the perfect Florida sunset in the window ablaze. This window was given by the Meeker family (a local founding family of the community - Dr. Meeker being the local physician) in memory of Mrs. Meeker’s father.

At the opposite end of the chapel, the St. Luke window is Tiffany’s only recorded depiction of the physician/evangelist. Tiffany’s techniques with favrile glass, layered elements and hand painted features (e.g., the face, hands & feet) are well represented. In many ways, this window is a far better representation of the Tiffany art than the Good Shepherd (but this is certainly open to debate).

The balance of the windows in the Chapel were crafted by Willet Studios of Pennsylvania. The technique employed - silk screen designs applied to pieces of flat glass - allows for greater efficiency in producing art glass windows. The scheme of the side windows begins with the SW corner (the Annunciation) and continues around the room in counter clockwise fashion to depict various scenes from the life of Christ. The first window, the Annunciation, includes traditional medieval/reformation period images for this scene, including the priedieu (kneeling bench), the Mary symbols of the lily and the MR (Maria Regina) and the unifying theme of acanthus leaves (symbol for life).

The next window portrays the nativity. Next is Jesus’ first miracle at the wedding in Cana of Galilee. Next is a depiction of the Sermon on the Mount. On the opposite side of the nave we encounter the Last Supper, the Crucifixion, the Resurrection (look for the paschal pennant & the pomegranate in the smaller symbols) and the Ascension (look for Jesus’ footprints “left behind”). The window at the SE corner depicts baptism. In the tower you’ll find a window depicting Paul’s missionary journeys (the inscription is in Armenian, the window, a gift of the local Armenian ethnic community), and a wonderful transom window depicting the Revelation imagery of the victorious Lamb (again, look for the paschal flag) sitting upon the book bearing seven seals.

J. Bunke, September 2002

FIRSTS

BAPTISM: At Port Orange Congregational Church. Benjamin Hayden, born February 1884; Frederick Hayden, born March 1887; and Victor Vieullaume, born July 1877, were baptized March 3, 1888 by Frederick Towers.

BURIAL: William Sinclair Fleming, age 5 months, birth date unknown, date of death, unknown, was buried March 11, 1888 at Congregational Church by Fr. Frederick Towers.

CONFIRMATION: At Port Orange Congregational Church, Ethan Vieullaume, Victor Vieullaume, and Mary Smith on June 14, 1891, by the Rt. Rev. Edwin Gardner Weed.

BAPTISM AT GRACE CHURCH: Ella Agnes Montage, birth date unknown, baptized May 1893 by Fr. C. W. Arnold.

CONFIRMATION AT GRACE CHURCH: Olive Cook, Mary Savage, James S. Cowan, A. E. Cowan, E. Bennett, on December 20, 1893 at the consecration of the church.

MARRIAGE: Hampton H. Robinson and Florence Ada Montage, August, 1895, by Fr. C. W. Arnold at Grace Church.

FIRST COMMUNICANTS: Charles Milburn Sr.; Mr. & Mrs. Charles Milburn, Jr. and children; Dr. & Mrs. C. A. Meeker; Benjamin Hayden; Victor Vieullaumes; Fanny Hammond.

ORDINATION: H. Benton Ellis on December 29, 1954 by the Rt. Rev. Henry I. Louttit.

Grace Episcopal Church

4110 S. Ridgewood Avenue, Port Orange, FL 32127 ✦ P.O. Box 290245, Port Orange, FL 32129 ✦ Office: (386) 767-3583

Fax: (386) 761-2439 ✦ Email: parish@egracepo.org ✦ webpage: <http://graceepiscopalportorange.org>.

Sunday Celebrations of Eucharist: 8 & 10:30 a.m. ✦ Weekday Celebrations: Tuesday 9:15 a.m. and Wednesday 6 p.m.

The Rt. Rev. Gregory O. Brewer, Bishop of Central Florida ✦ The Rt. Rev. John W. Howe, Bishop of Central Florida, retired The Rev. Rick Burhans, Rector, The Rev. Susan McCaffrey, Deacon, The Rev. Patricia Longacre, Deacon, The Rev. Canon, Dr. B. W.

Pete Wait III & Dr. Shirleen S. Wait, Missionaries in Residence, Terry Schmitt, Worship Leader ✦ Organist - Carolyn Gosse ✦

Pianist - Bari McDaniel