

HISTORY OF ST. PAUL'S CHURCH

by

RUTH ELLEN SWETT

I am indebted to the following persons for help received in preparing this History of St. Paul's Church of Bakersfield, California.

Rev. William E. Patrick

Miss Matilda L. Sweitzer

Miss M. D. Gardette

Mrs. Cora Bender

Mr. Henry Scott

Mrs. Hugh Allen

Local Church History

St. Paul's Protestant Episcopal Church

District of San Joaquin

Bakersfield, California

Looking back through the years into Church history of Bakersfield, none is more interesting than the history of St. Paul's Protestant Episcopal Church. It's growth from a very small group of earnest men and women, meeting in an upstairs room of a little school house, to its quaint but dignified and lovely edifice, makes a story rich in human as well as statistical interest.

St. Paul's Church was named for Saint Paul, one of the first and greatly beloved Missionaries, sent out by our Lord, Jesus Christ.

Regular services were started in 1879. Before that time services had been held in the homes of interested Church people. Some of these early families were Mrs. Mary B. Brundage, Mrs. McGrann, Mrs. W. A. Chittenden, Mrs. Olive Smith, Mrs. Barker, Dr. and Mrs. McLean, J. S. Drury, Landers, Packards, Goodrich, Mrs. Le Roy Stanley(nee Flora Willows), Withingtons, Mrs. Williams(mother of Mr. J. R. Williams) and Judge Erick.

In 1879 Rev. Douglas O. Kelley, who started many Missions in the San Joaquin Valley, held regular services in what is now known as Emerson School. At that time it was "The Railroad School" and consisted of three rooms, two downstairs and one upstairs, where church services were held.

Dr. D. J. McLean was warden, Alonzo Coons, treasurer and P. D. Jewett, clerk.

Music for the services was provided by Mrs. W. A. Chittenden, who until her death a few years ago remained a most earnest worker

in St. Paul's Church/ Her husband, Mr. W. A. Chittenden, his brother James Chittenden, Miss Cora McGrann, now Mrs. Bender, and Miss Mollie Colby comprised the choir.

Mrs. Chittenden liked to tell of those early years in the church. Her home was some distance from the church in what is now East Bakersfield. The trips back and forth were made in a spring wagon. Each Sunday the family organ was placed in the wagon and carried to the schoolhouse for the services. The roads were poor and Mrs. Chittenden related that on a dark nights after services they often allowed the horse to choose his own way, he seemed to know exactly where irrigation ditches crossed and how best to avoid them.

The woman's Guild of the Church then as now gave bazaars, plays, festivals, etc. to help with the expenses.

Mr. H. H. Clapham, lay reader under Mr. Kelley, came down from Fresno for occasional services when Mr. Kelley could not come. At this time (1881) the Rt. Rev. William Ingraham Kip confirmed the first class of candidates.

The first resident rector was Rev. Thomas A. Griffiths who came in 1882-1883. Two years later, Mr. Clapham, having been ordained, came to Bakersfield. The following years were eventful ones in St. Paul's Church history.

Mr. Clapham secured lots at the corner of 17th. and I Streets and soon the church was built, On Nov. 21st. 1886 Bishop Kip opened the new church and confirmed seven candidates. Nineteen children were baptised on that date.

The few children of the Church families had been gathered together by Mrs. Chittenden as the early beginning of a Sunday School, but it was not until Mr. Clapham came that a regular Sunday School was organized. Both Mr. and Mrs. Clapham worked zealously to hold the Sunday School together and keep the children interested.

Mrs. Clapham was the superintendent of the Sunday School assisted by four teachers, Mrs. Chittenden, Mrs. McMurdo, Mrs. ~~Wick~~ and Mrs. Miller.

Mr. Henry Scott who at that time was a boy of eight years tells some interesting facts in connection with the Sunday School of that early day. He recalls having won a book, offered as a prize by Mr. Clapham, to the boy who could first repeat the Catechism. Mrs. Scott, Mr. Scott's mother was an ardent worker in the church and led the singing in the Sunday School.

To stimulate interest and good attendance among the younger children, each was given a small picture card along with their pink lessons slips. When a child had five small cards he exchanged those for a larger one. A scrap book for these larger cards was given to the child who had the best ~~attendance~~ record for the year both as to lessons and attendance. Good times were provided at Christmas time when a festival was held for the children either in the Town Hall or in the Clapham home on the corner of 17th. and E Streets. The annual "Children's Day" festival was held at the Mill where the children had great sport playing around the grain bags.

On Jan. 18, 1891 the church which cost \$3000 was consecrated by the Rt. Rev. William Ford Nichols, S. D., Assistant Bishop of California. On March 4, 1891 St. Paul's Mission was definitely organized as a Parish with Rev. H. H. Clapham, Rector, Captain Chas E. Jewett and Dr. Snook, wardens; C. Bickerdike, treasurer; Joseph V. Morley, Clerk. Miss Laude Metcalf was one of three candidates in the first class confirmed by Bishop Nichols.

St. John's, Roseale, opened Easter Sunday 1892 and services were held there for a few years. Later the building was sold to the Ash family.

Mr. Clapham moved to Los Gatos in 1892. Then followed various

clergymen who remained for short periods. Rev. L. Y. Jessup, Rev. Hobart Chetwood, Rev. Edward Morgan (Father Morgan, as he was called) became Rector in 1898.

An incident of those early days was the great fire which destroyed most of the business section of Bakersfield. The fire burned furiously all around but left both St. Paul's Church and the Roman Catholic Church unharmed. The flames came so near that a stained glass Memorial window for Mr. Jamison's son was removed for safety.

The years that Father Morgan served St. Paul's stand out most vividly in the church's history. Many progressive steps were taken and much accomplished in the way of missions, new organizations, etc.

In 1901 the church building was moved to what is now East Bakersfield. It became St. Barnabas Church Mission/ Rev. Hugh Ramsey, assistant to Father Morgan, conducted the Sunday School and most of the services of this Mission. He took a great interest in the Railroad men of whom there were a great many in those days. He visited them in the shops and in their homes. His Sunday evening congregations were made up largely of these men. Later St. Barnabas Mission was discontinued, much to the regret of many- particularly parents of the Sunday School children of which there was a goodly number.

In the meantime the new church had been erected in Bakersfield at the cost of \$15,000 with Ben MacDougall as architect. The new church was opened by the Rt. Rev. William F. Nichols, D. D. on New Year's Day. At this time the Altar was blessed. The Altar was a gift from Mrs. W. F. Tevis of Stockdale in memory of her father, Romualdo Pachecho, one time Governor of California. Other gifts from the Tevis family included the Retable, six brass candles sticks, vases, altar rail, Rose window and marble baptismal Font.

Among Father Morgan's many activities was the organization of a

boy's choir. He also started missions at Greenfield and Rio Bravo which later were discontinued.

Rev. Walter B. Clark succeeded Father Morgan and remained from 1905 to 1907, followed by Rev. David M. Crabtree.

During the five years of Mr. Crabtree's stay the Rood Screen separating the chancel from the Nave was erected and the present organ installed. After his departure early in 1912 Rt. Rev. Anson R. Graves, A. A., a retired Bishop, supplied the services until Rev. Charles Hitchcock came and stayed for two years (1912-1914). At this time additional windows were added to improve lighting conditions.

Rev. Benjamin E. Diggs served from 1914-1920. It was at this time May 18, 1915 that the church was consecrated by Rt. Rev. Louis Childs Sanford, D. D., Missionary Bishop of San Joaquin. Rev. George Kenison was the next rector remaining but seven months. He was followed by Rev. W. A. Cash 1921 to 1924. Various clergymen were sent to Bakersfield by the Bishop until the present rector, Rev. Wm. E. Patrick came on March 18, 1925. A new rectory was acquired in 1929 and a bequest enabled a new lighting system to be installed.

The history of St. Paul's would be incomplete without mention of the Guilds. St. Paul's Guild has had a continuous history since the early 1880's. They had met in the homes of members but in 1898 the Guild Hall was erected. St. Agnes Guild and St. Mary's Guild were largely instrumental in carrying on the work of the church,

The Woman's Auxiliary which was the Missionary Guild had a creditable existence for many years. Its chief object being sewing and preparing boxes for foreign and domestic missions. They were also custodians of the United Thank Offering. Later the organization was absorbed by the Guilds in 1930.

St. Margaret's Guild was originally organized by Mrs. Cash as the Chancel Guild. It met evenings for women who could not attend after noon Guild meetings. At the suggestion of Mr. Patrick in 1925 the name was changed to St. Margaret's Guild. The Church Service League was created at the suggestion of the Bishop to include all organizations. They made monthly reports and at the annual meeting the Secretary made a combined report of the various organizations. During the later years of the League's existence the monthly meetings were poorly attended finally at the end of 1934 the League was discontinued. St. Paul's and St. Margaret's Guild and the Sunday School now carry on that work.

The work of the Guilds is outstanding. They with the Sunday School give an annual pledge to the Parish-- they work for the Lenten and Advent boxes and pay the annual Service League assessment. Mission study and missionary education and Church History have been some of the projects of the Guilds. St. Margaret's Guild sponsors the care of the grounds.

The Sunday School organized almost fifty years ago has carried on. Its present enrollment being one hundred twenty. At one time the enrollment reached two hundred. Miss M. D. Gardett is Superintendent, with Mrs. W. B. Lyons supervisor of the Primary. Through mite boxes during Lent and Advent the Sunday School has made fine contributions to missions.

The Altar Guild prides itself on taking care of the Altar, vestments and appointments of the Chancel and Sanctuary. The Choir with Mrs. Nichols as paid organist and Mr. Chas. Wakefield, Jr. volunteer director, consists of six men and twelve women (193_).

The Young People's Fellowship was reorganized in 1933. It meets Sunday nights and has a corporate communion on the first Sunday of each month. Some of the members teach in Sunday School. They send delegates to the annual summer conference at Camp Sierra.

At the present time, January 1936, they are covering the kneeling benches.

Other organizations have flourished from time to time in the history of the parish. Among them were Men's Club, Brotherhood of St. Andrew, Junior Brotherhood of St. Andrew, Girls' Friendly Society and Boy Scouts.

Since becoming a parish in 1891 there has been a long line of wardens and vestrymen. The present vestry consists of the Rector, Rev.

Wm. E. Patrick,

Senior Warden, Dr. Fred J. Crease

Junior Warden, W. E. Peterson

Clerk, W. A. Alexander

Treasurer, C. E. Wakefield, Jr.

Percy Cooke

Glen E. Stanfield

J. Benson Wrenn

Robert Young.

Bakersfield, California

January 1936

Ruth Ellen Swett