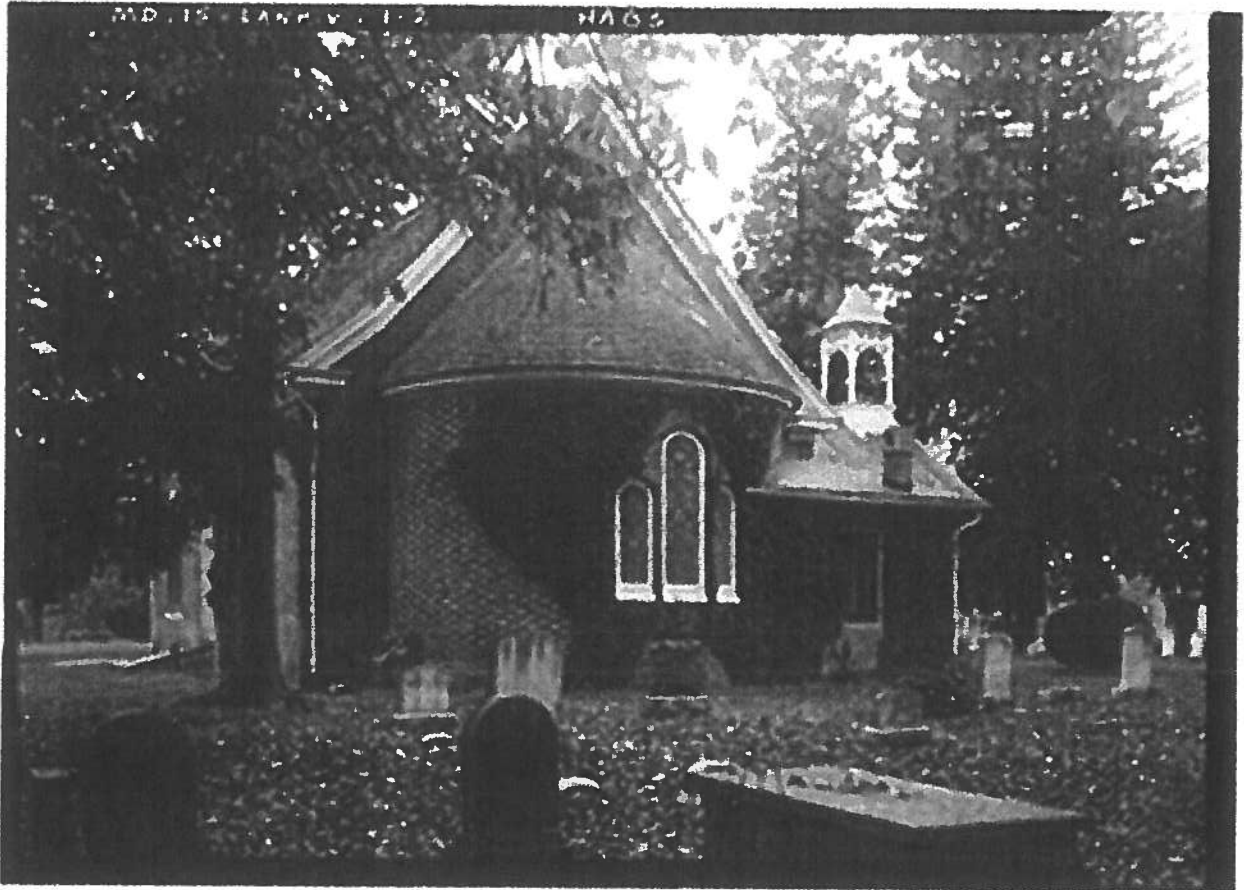


Solstice Celebration V
In the Beginning

June 24, 2018



Pursuant to an Act of Assembly, entitled *AN ACT FOR THE SERVICE OF ALMIGHTY GOD, AND THE ESTABLISHMENT OF THE PROTESTANT RELIGION IN THIS PROVINCE*, wherein it is ordered that its counties within the Province of Maryland shall be divided into parishes AND LIKEWISE, BY THE SAME LAW, IT IS ORDERED that the Justices of the County, with the Freeholders, shall close six vestrymen of each respective parish, which accordingly was done and performed the Twenty-Fourth day of January, *Annoque Domini* 1693.

Whose names are hereunder inserted, *viz*,

Jan'y 30,	{Mr. Thos. Smith	Mr. Chas. Tilden
1693	{Mr. Wm. Frisby	Mr. Michael Miller
	{Mr. Hans Hanson	Mr. Simon Wilmer

St. Paul's Parish, Kent, 7579 Sandy Bottom Road, Chestertown, Maryland, 21620

Solstice Celebration V
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ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

The Solstice Celebration Committee thanks the countless volunteers, parishoners and members of the Kent County historic preservation community, for their many contributions.

Introduction

When Solstice V was in its planning stages, we thought it would be interesting to find out about what led up to the founding of St. Paul's Parish and some of the forefathers that were leaders in this important event.

We learned that there been a church called St. Peter's and a thriving town named New Yarmouth on Eastern Neck, both predating St. Paul's. (New Yarmouth even had horse racing.) They had declined over the years and finally disappeared.

Research resources varied in the spelling of names and dates of some events. We appreciate the work of the diligent researchers that preceded us. Original records are scarce.

The decision was made to concentrate our study on Eastern Neck and Eastern Neck Island. All so long ago, but definitely not far away.

In the Beginning...

Captain John Smith, a true Renaissance Man—explorer, journalist, diplomat, master cartographer—was one of the first to travel the length of the Chesapeake Bay. In 1608, he left Jamestown in his shallop, a shallow-drafted vessel popular in the 17th century that could navigate nooks and crannies. Traveling for 3 months, he made 2 back-to-back voyages. His first voyage yielded the discovery of the Patowmeck (Potomac) River thereby inspiring the settlement of St. Mary's on the St. Mary's River, a tributary of the Potomac. St. Mary's became Maryland's Colonial Capitol until it moved to its more central location of Anne Arundel Town (later known as Annapolis) in 1695. The 2nd voyage brought him along the Eastern Shore.

In 1612, 4 years later, he published his map of Virginia, which still included the land that became the colony of Maryland in 1632, 20 years later. This map plus his written descriptions of the territory inspired the multitudes of immigrants that followed. The first English settlement in Maryland was a trading post on Kent Island.

A persistent undercurrent of religious friction rumbled between the Roman Catholics and the various sects of Protestants. In 1632, Maryland was created as a new colony for the refuge of the Catholics. There were Catholics there of course, but soon there were more Protestants than Catholics. The new settlers were primarily English, and though they lived far from England, they were still under strict English rule. In 1633, the first vessels to bring new settlers were the Ark and the Dove.

The newly minted colony was pristine, with miles of shoreline filled with sea life. The land provided plentiful game. The Algonquin-speaking Indian tribes living along coastal waters were hunters and gatherers and by and large friendly; however, occasionally, the resentment of the Indians against the colonists' settling on "their" lands

would cause strife. The new settlers suffered from harsh winters, storms, diseases and the lack of basic needs. That was discouraging and devastating, but still they came.

One of the first of the "move-ins" was Joseph Wickes who had looked over the Chester River 3 miles east of his plantation on Love Point, Kent Island, to Eastern Neck Island and dreamed of living there. In fact, it is said that Joseph Wickes had named the Chester River for his English boyhood home.

Researched and written by Kathie Meehan

About 1650, Wickes and other settlers from Kent Island began to cross the Chester River to settle on Eastern Neck and Eastern Neck Island. Among them were John Smythe, Hans Hansen, Thomas Hynson, Thomas Ringgold, Thomas Broadnox, and others. Thomas Ringgold obtained a grant of 1200 acres that he called "Huntingfield," Joseph Wickes took a substantial tract on Eastern Neck Island and Thomas Broadnox took up land that is now known as "Chesapeake Farms." Many others took large tracts as well.

St. Peter's, the first church in the present Kent County, was built in 1652 at the head of Church Creek on Eastern Neck. It served as the place of worship for the founders of New Yarmouth, Kent County's first settlement. The Church and the opportunity to worship using the Book of Common Prayer must have been a great comfort to the early settlers. The service was probably conducted by a lay leader as there were no priests to guide them.

New Yarmouth was founded in 1674 by James Ringgold, son of Thomas Ringgold, and Samuel Tovey when it was declared that the County Court should be held in some part of the Eastern Neck rather than on Kent Island. Ringgold leased 100 acres of his "Huntingfield" estate to Tovey to become the site of the planned town. The fact that a church already existed was important because in order to be called a "town" it was required to have both a church and a divine service. Ten years later, after the Act for the Advancement of Trade had been passed, New Yarmouth became an official town and a Port of Entry in Kent County for all ships trading there. The town had a courthouse, a jail, tavern, and at least 2 shipyards. According to one source, the town's port bristled with activity and its harbor was thronged with shipping from the seven seas."

On the agricultural side of the economy, farmers specialized in tobacco, which became the principal product the colonists could exchange for essential imported goods. Tobacco also served a monetary role and as a measure of value for rents, taxes and even for the payment of fines for misbehavior. Although tobacco was the crop of choice, and the most easily traded, single crop dependency, especially one so difficult to grow, would lead to future problems.

Gradually the population moved northward to an area near another port town, namely "New Town" (later to become Chestertown.) The church leaders began to position themselves and the Church to take advantage of this situation by planning for a new church to be built 6 miles north of St. Peter's and 8 miles west of New Town. This location would place them in a position of retaining the members of St. Peter's and perhaps gaining new members from the area around New Town. They were also sensitive to the fact that emphasis on creating a new church meant neglect of the old one. It was a difficult decision, but they were men of vision and made the choice that the future would be with St. Paul's. When the Reform Act was passed in 1692, St. Paul's was identified as one of the original 30 parishes to be created.

On the ascension of co-monarchs King William III and Queen Mary II to the throne in 1689, the Provincial Assembly appealed to them to secure a future of their "religion, rights and liberties under a Protestant government." In response, on March 12, 1691, William and Mary sent an address to the colonists of Maryland in which they said: "We have sought to fit to take our Province of Maryland under our immediate care and protection." In the same year, the new Royal Governor, arrived in the colony, having received instruction from the Crown to "take especial care that God be devoutly and duly served," the Book of Common Prayer read and the Blessed Sacrament be administered according to the rites of The Church of England." In addition, instructions also stated that churches be built and competent maintenance be assigned to each minister. On May 10, 1692, the Protestant religion became official through the enactment of "The Act for the Service of Almighty God and the Establishment of the Protestant Religion within the Province." On June 9, 1692, the Law was signed on behalf of Their Majesties King William and Queen Mary."

It was unclear what transpired in the next six months; however, it is a matter of record that January 24, 1693, was the day appointed by Order of the Justices of the County for the election of vestrymen for St. Peter's. On that day the principal freeholders and justices met at the house of Thomas Joce in the the town of New Yarmouth and elected six vestrymen for St. Peter's by free election. One week later, on January 30, 1693, the same six vestrymen were also elected as vestrymen for St. Paul's. This action would lead to a smooth transition when the new church building was erected in 1695.

Researched and written by Pete Dillingham

The Vestrymen elected that day are on this plaque that we see every Sunday. We probably assume Wilmer Park is named after Simon Wilmer. And most of us know that the President of Washington College lives at the Hynson-Ringgold House. But what else do we know? It turns out that they had many things in common. All but one of them came from turbulent 17th century England. All of them left friends and families and comfortable homes for the unknown wilderness of America. They had at least 36 children among them, some of whom died in childbirth and some of whom grew up, married each other and went on to build the homes they are known for today.

They acquired great tracts of land, owning well over 7000 acres in Kent County alone. And, because the settlement was so new and the population so limited, they needed to fill a variety of roles in public life. They were commissioners, delegates to the State Legislature, judges, attorneys, surveyors, merchants, architects and planters. Two of them were even colonels. They were busy!

And what do we know specifically? Let's start with Thomas Smyth. He was born in England in 1648, came to America in 1680 and acquired 400 acres where, sometime in the late 1700's, a home was built called Trumpington. We're pointing out where these homes are on the map, so that you can see how spread apart they are. One of the reasons that St. Peter's moved to St. Paul's was to have a church in a more centralized location. Smyth's descendants, the Strongs, still live there today. He was an active merchant and planter and served in a variety of civic positions, including Commissioner, Justice, delegate to the Maryland Legislature, Coroner, and logically, Registrar of Wills. In 1719, he gave 100 acres to be used as the site of the first free school in Kent County. When it came time to procure a rector for St. Paul's, he and Michael Miller went to St. Mary's to engage Rev. Vanderbush, a colorful, if not particularly spiritual character, to say the least. There's more information on him in the Vestry House.

William Frisby was only 9 when he came with his family to Virginia in 1664 and later they settled in Cecil County. He eventually acquired over 1250 acres of land and settled what would later be called Hinchingham. He was opposed to the Puritan Revolt against Lord Baltimore during the Protestant Revolution of 1689. Consequently, as a Provincial Agent, he traveled back and forth to England and was so well-regarded that in 1693, he was sent on a mission to present the Lord

Bishop of London the Act of Assembly, which established the Church of England, by law in the Province of Maryland.

Hans Hansen was the only one of the original Vestry members who was not born in England. His family came from Sweden and he was born in 1645 on Timican Island, New Sweden, Delaware, which we now know as Chester, Pennsylvania. His parents died when he was young and he was adopted by Joseph Wickes. In 1679 he bought land later known as Kimbolton. He served as a Commissioner in both New Yarmouth and Chestertown and was a county Judge and delegate to the Legislature. His daughter Sarah, who died when she was only six, was the first recorded interment at St. Paul's.

Charles Tilden, the youngest of the first six, was born in 1659. His family eventually settled at Great Oak Manor in 1677. His home came to be known as The Reward. He also served as Commissioner at both New Yarmouth and Chestertown and later as Justice of Kent County and delegate to the State Legislature. But he was most highly regarded as a gifted builder and architect and helped with the creation of the first church here. His grandson, a "chip off the old block", built our beautiful Vestry House and IU church in Worton.

Michael Miller was born in England in 1644 and came to the colonies first to Talbot County and then to Kent County by 1670. He was one of the major landowners of 17th century Maryland and his home eventually became known as Godlington Manor. He worked many years as an attorney and as a Justice, Commissioner, and Sheriff in Kent County, but his most lasting legacy is this land, which he donated to St. Paul's in 1696. The Miller family replaced his tombstone a few years ago and replaced it with one in better condition. They also corrected the spelling. "Donor" in 1699 was spelled, "Doner."

And lastly we come to Simon Wilmer, born in England in 1656 and the first generation of his family in America, where he arrived in 1680. When Cromwell became Lord Protector of England, he joined the Cavalier emigration in order to escape the Puritan intolerance. He was given more than 2500 acres by his in-laws, the Tilghmans, and much of this land eventually became Chestertown. White House Farm was built in 1659 and Stepne Manor came much later. He served in many of the same public capacities as the others, but he was also Surveyor and Clerk for the County. At the headwaters of Radcliffe Creek, he owned a water-

powered grist mill, which was eventually willed to his slave, and he also kept a ferry going over the Chester River for the convenience of people going to and coming from Court.

Thanks to the faith and diligence of these men, by 1713, this church would stand on this very spot and for 325 years it has opened its doors on Sunday to share the word of God.

Researched and written by Betsy Butler

APPENDICIES

CHRONOLOGY

- 1608 John Smith makes two 6-week voyages throughout the Chesapeake Bay. He subsequently publishes journals and maps that become invaluable resources for further exploration and inspiration for new settlement.
- 1631 William Claiborne (c1600-c1679) establishes profitable trading post on Kent Island, then part of Virginia.
- 1632 Province of Maryland established as haven for persecuted Catholics. Charter received by second Lord Baltimore (Cecilius Calvert) from King Charles I (1600-1649) of England. It decrees that the new colony is to be named after King Charles's wife Queen Henrietta Maria (1609-1669.)
- 1637 Maryland has control of Kent Island. (In 1695 Kent Island becomes part of Talbot County and in 1706 part of Queen Anne's County.)
- 1642 Kent County established. Final boundaries not settled until after Chestertown established in 1707.
- 1649 The Maryland Toleration Act, Lord Baltimore's solution to promote protection for Catholics in Maryland, is passed.
- 1652 St. Peter's church is established at head of Church Creek. This first location of the Church (before the settlement of New Yarmouth) was about two miles from the future town.
- 1650-1660 Large numbers of settlers emigrate from England, Kent Island and Virginia.
- 1658-1680 Joseph Wickes and partner Thomas Hynson acquire tracts of land on Eastern Neck Island until they own it all.
- 1675 James Ringgold and Samuel Tovey lay out and sell plots of land in the planned town of New Yarmouth.
- 1679 The Courthouse in New Yarmouth is functioning.
- 1689 "William Smyth signed a petition to then current monarchs William and Mary for the establishment of the Protestant church in Maryland. When

the Anglican church was subsequently established as the only state-recognized church in the colony (in 1692,) Smyth was elected as one of St. Paul's original vestrymen." (Report from University of Delaware, Dept. of Anthropology, Center for Archeological Research. Prepared for St. Paul's Tricentennial. 1992.)

1692 The Church of England becomes the established church of the Province of Maryland through an Act of the General Assembly. Ten counties had been created in Maryland. These counties are divided into 30 parishes. Six prominent freeholders are elected to be the first vestrymen of St. Parish, Kent:

Thomas Smythe ("Trumpington")	William Frisby ("Hinchingham")
Charles Tilden ("The Reward")	Michael Miller ("Godlington Manor")
Hans Hanson ("Kimbolton")	Simon Wilmer ("Stepne")

This momentous electoral occasion actually takes place in New Yarmouth While services are still held at St. Peter's. It is not until the next year that There is a usable building on the site of the new St. Paul's.

1695 St. Paul's Parish Church opens its doors and New Yarmouth declines.

1697 Kent County Court is moved from New Yarmouth to first courthouse, now completed in New Town (later Chestertown.)

1706/1707 Chestertown becomes the County Seat and is also named as one of six Royal Ports of Entry in in Maryland. Final boundaries of Kent County established.

**PURSUANT TO AN ACT OF ASSEMBLY, ENTITLED AN ACT
FOR THE SERVICE OF ALMIGHTY GOD, AND THE
ESTABLISHMENT OF THE PROTESTANT RELIGION IN THIS
PROVINCE, WHEREIN IT IS ORDERED THAT ITS COUNTIES
WITHIN THE PROVINCE OF MARYLAND SHALL BE
DIVIDED INTO PARISHES AND LIKEWISE, BY THE SAME
LAW, IT IS ORDERED THAT THE JUSTICES OF THE
COUNTY, WITH THE FREEHOLDERS, SHALL CHOSE SIX
VESTRYMEN OF EACH RESPECTIVE PARISH, WHICH
ACCORDINGLY WAS DONE AND PERFORMED THE
TWENTY-FOURTH DAY OF JANUARY, ANNOQUE DOMINI
1693.**

WHOSE NAMES ARE HEREUNDER INSERTED, VIZ,

JAN'Y 30,	{MR. THOS.SMITH	MR. CHAS.TILDEN
1693	{MR. WM. FRISBY	MR. MICHAEL MILLER
	{MR. HANS HANSON	MR. SIMON WILMER

Excerpts from
THE PROCEEDINGS AND ACTS OF THE ASSEMBLY OF MARYLAND

Wednesday October the Tenth 1683

The house mett and Called all p'sent as Yesterday

Then was read what was done Yesterday

Then came Major Joseph Weekes a Delegate for the County of Kent and desires to be excused for not Attending this house sooner, Vyolent sickness having been the Occasion thereof;

Which Excuse being Admitted he Takes his place.

An Act for Advancement of Trade. Lib. WH. Fol. 250.

N. B. This being the first Attempt to establish Towns, Ports, and Places of Trade, within this Province; and the Property gained under this and the supplementary, and other subsequent Acts to the same End (though repealed or diffented to) being confirmed by the Act of 1715, ch. 32, the following Abstract of it is given.

(I.) From and after the 8th August 1685, the Towns, Ports and Places hereafter mentioned, shall be the Ports and Places where all Ships and Vessels, trading into this Province, shall unlade, and put on Shore, and sell, barter and traffic away, all G____s, etc. imported into this Province. And all tobacco, Goods, etc. of the Growth, Production or Manufacture of this Province, intended to be sold here, or exported, shall be for that Intent brought to the said Ports and Places, viz.

St. Mary's County, at	The City of St. Mary's
	Britton's Bay, at John Bailey's, or Taunt's
	The Indian Town
	Choptico, his Lordship's Manor
Kent County, at	Shipping, alias Coxe's Creek
	New-Yarmouth, in Grey's-Inn-Creek





THE PRE-REVOLUTIONARY CLERGY OF ST. PAUL'S, KENT 1694-1777

The following are some brief sketches about the six men known to have served St. Paul's during its first century.

For most of the clergy of this period, little is known beyond recorded facts in registers and vestry books. This is not the case, however, when it comes to the first cleric to lead St. Paul's. We might wish it were.

To set the stage, the Colonies were considered, for ecclesiastical purposes, an extension of the Diocese of London. That there was no bishop in America was due to opposition from the colonial governments. In England, bishops exercised civil authority and sat in the Lords. While many colonies (those of New England, Pennsylvania) were ruled by non-Anglicans, even those where Anglicans were established (New York, Virginia, the Carolinas) were not keen to share their political monopoly.

Also, at this time, France was in religious turmoil after Louis XIV's 1681 policy ending toleration for the Huguenots – French Protestants. Thousands fled to Holland, England, and America. In a politico-ecumenical gesture (it would annoy the Catholic Roi Soleil), the Church of England ordained some clergy for these refugee congregations, thus granting them legal "Establishment" status and differentiating them from English Dissenters (Congregationalists, Baptists, Presbyterians, etc.).

Into this mix comes a gentleman whose name has been rendered variously as Laurent duBois, Laurentius Van den Bosch, and Lawrence Vanderbush, among other variations, spelling being somewhat free-form in those days.

He appears to have graduated from the University of Leyden in the Netherlands in 1679 and was ordained by the Bishop of London on August 1st, 1682 to serve the Huguenots in Charleston, South Carolina. He only stayed two years, though, complaining to the Bishop that his income was too small, and migrated north to Boston, Massachusetts.

His activities in that city attracted unfavourable attention which is best expressed in a contemporary quote from the prominent Puritan leader, Increase Mather: "*a Debauched Priest has appeared amongst them; particularly one Vardenbosch, who, besides the good work of Baptizing a noted Whore or two of his acquaintance, made private Marriages, without any previous publication of Banns (which is a nuisance to all human Society).*"

By 1687, he had given up on Boston and arrived in New York. While there, he created a division in the French congregation (already led by the Revd. Pierre Daille) and set himself up with his followers on Staten Island, but another move came the next year when he relocated up the Hudson to the Dutch Reformed congregation in Esopus (Kingston).

Matters went from bad to worse. On August 30th, 1690, the Kingston congregation wrote to the Classis (Reformed Church authorities) in Amsterdam that: *"to our very great grief, we must say that he has, by his bad behavior, caused more wickedness than edification. It would be too tedious to go into details.... There is a great breach in our church, and only God knows how it is to be healed."*

The situation was of such gravity that, not waiting for the response from Holland, the local clergy took matters into their own hands and wrote the Classis on September 14th: *"Laurentius Van den Bosch, who was called from Staten Island to the Esopus, we found it necessary to suspend from the ministry for drunkenness and incivility; but he still continues to preach and to drink."*

Under censure, and unlikely to secure another appointment with the Reformed, or anybody else in New York, our veritable Vicar of Bray "turned the cat in pan" and by October of 1692 made his entrance into Maryland.

In June of that year, the Church of England had been officially established in the Province and the thirty newly constituted parishes were in need of clergy in Anglican Orders. These were not in great supply so his credentials were timely. He seems to have begun by serving North Sasfras (today, St. Stephen's, Earleville) and South Sasfras (today, Shrewsbury).

Some extracts have been published from the "Church Record of St. Paul's Parish, from 30th Jan'y 1693 to 11th April 1726" and, from these, we see that on July 24th, 1693, vestry members Thomas Smith and Michael Miller were sent to St. Mary's City (the capital at the time) to enquire of the Governor regarding a clergyman for the parish. It is recorded that the vestry provided 450 lbs. of tobacco (the currency of the Province) for their expenses. — not paid until 17 months later

One can only wonder who they saw and what they were told, but, on Sept. 15th, 1694, it is recorded that the vestry engaged Mr. Lawrence Vanderbush for 8,000 lbs. of tobacco a year.

History seems to have drawn a veil of discretion at this point and we can only speculate. Did he reform his ways and prove an able pastor, or did his conduct continue in its previous course to the embarrassment of all concerned?

There is no record as to the actual date of the death of our first clergyman, but on Aug. 31st, 1696, he is referred to as the "late Minister."

EARLY BURIALS AT ST. PAUL'S

1693 SARAH HANSEN – DAUGHTER OF HANS HANSEN
1698 MARTHA HANSEN – WIFE OF HANS HANSEN
1698 ANN MILLER – DAUGHTER OF MICHAEL MILLER
1699 MARY FRISBY – WILLIAM FRISBY'S FIRST WIFE
1699 MICHAEL MILLER*
1699 SARAH RINGGOLD – THOMAS RINGGOLD'S FIRST WIFE
1699 TILGHMAN WILMER – SIMON WILMER'S SON
1703 HANS HANSEN*
1703 RACHEL FRISBY – WILLIAM FRISBY'S SECOND WIFE
1703 RICHARD FRISBY – WILLIAM FRISBY'S SON
1705 JOHN HYNSON*
1708 JOHN HYNSON – SON OF JOHN HYNSON
1711 THOMAS RINGGOLD II*
1712 STEPHEN FRISBY, SON OF WILLIAM FRISBY
1713 WILLIAM FRISBY*
1719 THOMAS SMYTH*

*VESTRYMAN

WALK THE WALK!

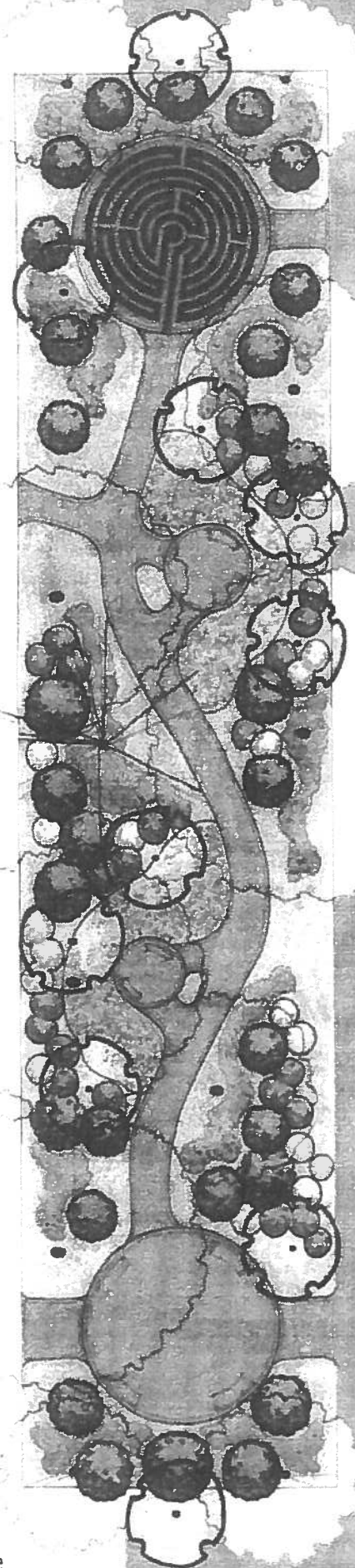
A Welcome To St. Paul's Labyrinth
By Jean Austin and Pete Dillingham

St. Paul's is blessed and most fortunate to have one of only two known labyrinths on the Eastern Shore. The other is a transportable and much larger layout and belongs to the Diocese of Easton. While both are based on medieval designs, the larger of the two is an eleven circuit labyrinth circa 1220 CE and based on the one at Chartres Cathedral, just north of Paris. Our labyrinth is smaller, being a seven circuit design circa 1540 CE, and taken from the one in the Basilica di San Vitale, in Ravenna, Italy. However, size matters little; what matters is the frame of mind of the individual who will walk the circuits. As you examine the diagram, you will note that there is only one path in to the center. There are no tricks or dead ends; a labyrinth is not a maze which might give rise to anxiety. A labyrinth helps to calm fears and anxieties and opens us to new possibilities and solutions to problems we might be experiencing. The labyrinth is a symbol of our spiritual journey and the winding path becomes a mirror of where we are in our lives, touching our sorrows as well as releasing our joys.

Although there is no right or wrong way to walk a labyrinth and as one gains experience and confidence in walking it, individual preferences will arise. However, the following guidelines might be helpful and are offered to get started:

1. Before getting started—REMEMBER
After entering the Memorial Garden and while standing before the entrance to the labyrinth, take a few moments to reflect on where you are in life. Recall that all that you are and all that you have is a blessing from God. Take a deep breath and then ask yourself what it is that you seek during the walk: healing for self or someone else, comfort, peace or guidance on an issue of importance. Ask in a way that avoids a yes or no response.
2. Enter the labyrinth and began the walk to the center—RELEASE
Let yourself go, relax, shed the details of the outside world and leave expectations behind.
3. At the center—RECEIVE
Pause for prayer and meditation. You may stand, kneel, or sit as long as it feels right to you.
4. As you retrace the return path from the center—RESOLVE
Bring what you have received which you might bring back out into the world. You may have found resolution to a problem; resolve to take a new step in your life feeling strengthened or rejuvenated. You may feel nothing at all. The power of the labyrinth often shows up later as a creative idea, a special insight to a challenge you're facing, or in a dream. May you depart the labyrinth with comfort, peace and a sense of healing.

The four R's are simply a guide. You can stop at any point along the path. You may read scripture, recite poetry, or say a prayer as you walk. For formal reading, we refer you to *The Sacred Path Companion: A guide to Walking the*



The Memorial Garden at St. Paul's

By Pete Dillingham

St. Paul's recently recognized the 10th anniversary of the Memorial Garden, which was blessed on site with a service of The Holy Eucharist on August 7, 2005. This beautiful resource is located in the middle of the New Cemetery, north of the Parish Hall. While its origins are relatively recent, we are beholden to the prescient planners of the 1950's who when laying out the plan for additional cemetery space, reserved a 40 x 200 foot area in its center which would remain undeveloped, i.e., without planned burial lots. However, they did wish it to be used and landscaped the periphery with now majestic oaks and well-developed English boxwood. In late 2002, then Rector, the Reverend Robert K. Gieselmann, called an ad hoc committee to convert the space to a more organized form suitable for spiritual meditation and perhaps the interment of ashes of those persons who wished their remains to be returned directly to the good earth. After several months of discussion of the elements conducive to meditation and working with a local landscape architect, the attached design was approved in October 2003, and construction started.

The plan consists of two large courtyards anchoring each end of the Memorial Garden's east-west axis. The east end being a teaching area or perhaps an area for groups to meet. The west end was designed to accommodate a labyrinth, which has been used for centuries for increased focus during spiritual meditation. The design selected for the seven circuit labyrinth is that taken from the Basilica di San Vitale in Ravenna, Italy (see accompanying article and diagram). Between the courtyards are two smaller alcoves for additional privacy during meditation. One will note that inside the MG, there are no corners and the only sharp edges are at the entrances to the MG. This design feature is intended to separate the sharpness of the outside world from the inside peacefulness of the MG. Furthermore, this particular feature of separation is emphasized by the plantings which consist of three levels of growth; the tall oaks, the midsized dogwoods and shrubs, and the groundcover. While one can't very well see in, the perspective to the outside is softened by the vegetation, i.e., while there is a sense of solitude, there is no sense of isolation. The curving pathway adds to the sense of peacefulness.

The MG is equipped with its own well and irrigation system. Watering of the plants occurs when the moisture content of the air is sensed to be low and the irrigation system turns on and waters the garden. There are four memorial chairs in the MG in the alcoves and two long benches in the east courtyard. There have been eight interments of the ashes of Parishioners and of Friends of St. Paul's. The general location of several of the interments are indicated with the installation of memorial bricks inserted in the edging of the pathway. The MG is one of St. Paul's treasured assets and readers are urged to visit and linger a while.

The design architect was Amber D. Jensen, of Halcyon, LLC (formerly of Chestertown, Maryland) and the builders were Unity Landscape, Design/Build, Inc. of Church Hill, Maryland."

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