



**The
First Fifty Years
1951 - 2001**

**CELEBRATION
OF
ST. MARK'S**

**The
Congregation**

**St. Mark's Episcopal Church
Chenango Bridge, New York**

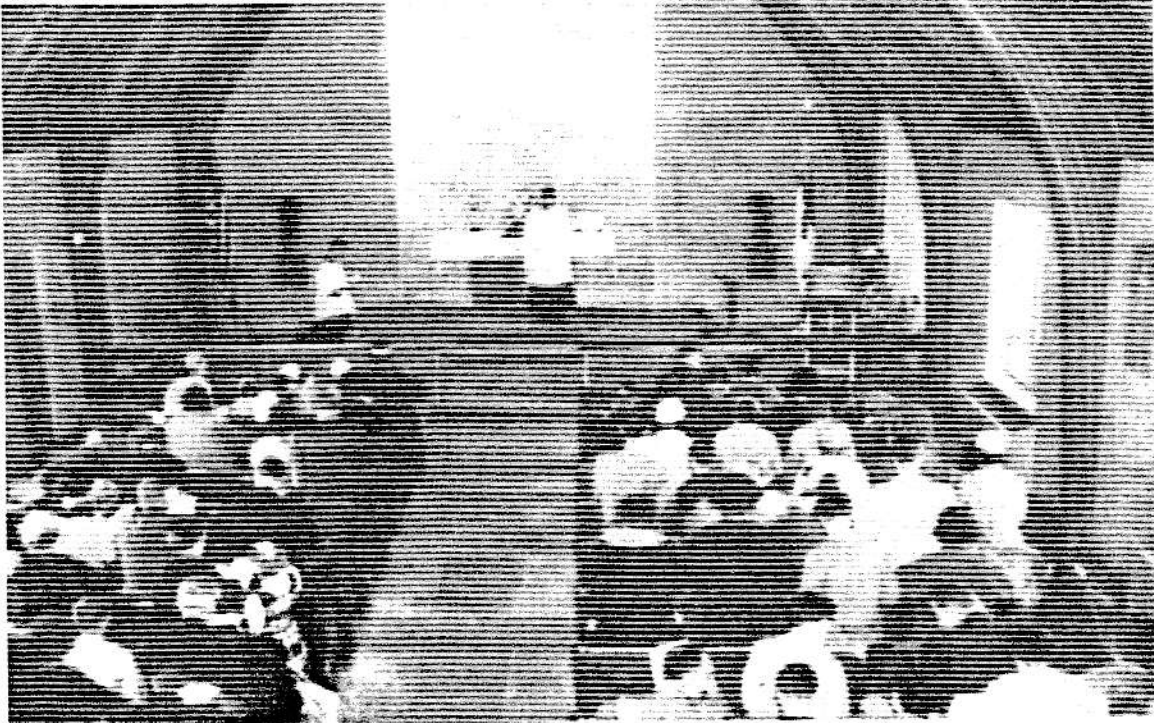
The 1960s

The Lord of Hosts is with us, the God of Jacob is our stronghold.

Psalm 46:7

1960 Bursting at the seams

St. Mark's, Chenango Bridge



Picture of St. Mark's in 1960 copy of The Messenger.

With a Church building of less than 5 years old, St. Mark's was already bursting at the seams. We were in the midst of the baby boom with a Sunday school enrollment of 189 pupils, taught by 17 teachers. To ease the congestion, St. Mark's rented the house that is the current Parish House. By using the house for the church school and for social activities, the congregation hoped to lessen the confusion in the undercroft.

As a result of becoming financially independent from the diocese, St. Mark's was eligible to become incorporated by the State of New York. By December 1960, St. Mark's changed from being a mission to a full-fledged church. As a result, the church replaced the executive committee, which had served the mission, with a vestry of 6 vestrymen and 2 wardens. The church lost Dot Johnson from the executive board as a potential vestry member, because women could not vote or hold office in the church. The first vestry members were Leiper Reed, Henry English, Barrie Sweet, Loren Guy, Warren MacDuffee and William Boehmke. The first senior warden was Clude Gruver Sr., and the first Junior Warden was Charles Goss.

1960 We sponsor a refugee couple.



Gerda and Harry Richter (center) are welcomed by Father Speer and Louise Boehmke

In January of 1960, Gerda and Harry Richter, a refugee couple from East Germany who came to this country under the sponsorship of St. Mark's.

(Father Speer, quoted from a letter)

The wife of Bishop Peabody tried to interest the Women of St. Mark's and me in sponsoring a refugee family. I think it frightened us to think of the responsibility this would mean. Mrs. Peabody had with her two dossiers of families and with all the charm she possessed asked me to look them over. I kept the one concerning Harry and Gerda Richter because they have no children and because Harry was an electrician. We have an apartment for them, which has been redecorated by the Krouses. The Women of St. Mark's held a party at which they collected kitchen utensils. A lot of furniture has been promised.

1960 (Continued)

(Nancy Bolender)

My services as Church Secretary were strictly voluntary. I did the bulletin, the newsletters and Pete's correspondence. In response to all other demands, I'd say, "I'm just a volunteer."

(Nancy Bolender, confessions of a Volunteer Church Secretary)

One time I printed the bulletin on the wrong pages, so the service was on the wrong page. It was one of those times when the Bishop was visiting and I thought Pete would die.

Pete and I would occasionally pick up litter on the riverbank. Kids used to go there to drink. Once in a while we'd find a full unopened beer can. When we found one of those, we'd put in the church's refrigerator. Some people objected to that, but Pete and I decided our motto was "Waste not, want not".

(Jean Speer)

Pete was also the Priest for St. Luke's in Harpursville. We had service at St. Mark's at 9 am and then he traveled to Harpursville to hold an 11 o'clock service for them.

1961

Women are allowed to serve on Vestry.

In the Vestry meeting of January 13, 1961, Loren Guy made the motion and the resolution was passed to change the qualification for voters, wardens, and vestry people to permit:

- A. Women having like qualification as men to vote at the annual election and meetings.
- B. Women having like qualification as men to be eligible for election as churchwardens and vestry.

A list of workers was posted, assigning men of the congregation to various handyman tasks. Some of the list included:

Charles Goss	Maintain Organ
Clyde Gruver	Heating and Plumbing
Orrin Ingraham	Landscaping and Painting

1961 (Continued)

Henry English	General
Warren MacDuffee	General
Don Johnson	Carpentry and Electric
Barrie Sweet	General
Brenton Ingraham	Grounds

(Note: Women managed to stay off this list.)

Fellowship and outreach in the 1960's:

The Men of St. Mark's was organized for "light talk or serious discussion." (No one will tell us what they talked about!)

The Adult Fellowship committee sponsored a Hawaiian Luau party and an Annual Yuletide Dance.

The Adult Fellowship Group sponsored square dances, with square dance lessons taught by Vivian Orr, who was also the gym teacher at Chenango Valley.

(Marion Shoop)

There were lots of fellowship activities. Harry and I had attended a dance held at the church. We were invited by the Bolenders.

The current Ladies Guild was started as a group that sewed cancer dressings, using old bed sheets as material. According to Ruth "Stretch" Pierce, they called themselves the Hookers, since they also hooked rugs.

The Senior High Youth Group collected and repaired toys to give away at Christmas. They also helped the Women of St. Mark's with activities at the Broome County Infirmary by running a Bingo game for the residents.

(Marion Shoop on work at the Broome County Infirmary)

The building was on Front Street near the jail. It's been torn down. There were big wards with lots of people in them, no private rooms. The function of the Infirmary was taken over by Willow Point Nursing Home, which is a big improvement. At Christmas we trimmed trees for them. One year, I played Santa Claus. We took the young people with us to visit, because they loved to see kids. About once a month we ran Bingo games and gave prizes.

The Women of St. Mark's gathered, cleaned and mended clothes for the camp of migrant workers located near Norwich. They also purchased 20 folding chairs for the church, because there was no money for them in the budget.

1961 (Continued)

Note:

By helping with the migrant worker's camp and the Broome County Infirmary, the Women of St. Mark's and the Youth Group had identified two very pressing social needs. The conditions in migrant camps were deplorable. The Broome County Infirmary was colloquially called the "Poor House".

1962

(Loren Guy)

In August 1962, St. Marks purchased the vacant land on the east side of the church to provide additional parking for the cost of \$2,100. This debt was paid off by 1967.

1963

The Thornfield Conference Center was built and was made available for use by everyone in the diocese and everyone was asked to pledge towards its support.

The rectory at 5 Lolita Street was purchased for \$24,000 with a loan from the Foundation of the Diocese of Southern New York.

Because the combined mortgages for church and for the rectory came to \$38,000, the congregation found itself in a financial crunch. The solution was to hire a professional canvasser, whose goal was to raise pledges from the congregation. Fund raising for 1963 was called the Every Member Canvass.

Memories of the Every Member Canvass:

(Ruth Pierce)

We were organized as couples. I remember that Bill and I went out together. The object was to try to get others to raise their pledge.

(Harry Shoop)

We only hired a professional canvasser once. Once was enough! After that we decided that we could do it better.

1963 (Continued)

The Young Episcopal Churchmen put on a play entitled "The Boy Next Door" for the congregation. The proceeds from the tickets sold were used to send the young people to a summer youth conference.

Men and boys of the Congregation held a "painting party" to spruce up the church, with the Women of St. Mark's providing lunch.

Walter Rose provided the fill and grading for the new part of the parking lot; he also paved the sidewalks.

The congregation with the Young Churchmen "adopted" a family with 6 children for Christmas. The Young Churchmen provided the toys, the Women of St. Mark's provided the meat for their dinner, and the congregation was asked to supply canned goods.

(Ruth Pierce)

My son Scott Pierce was one of those who delivered the toys and dinner to this family. He came away shocked that he could see their lights through the cracks in the siding.

1964 Saint Mark's Largest Confirmation Class



Confirmation Class of 1964

First Row: Mark Rosenthal, Robert Speer, Peter Bolender, Mary Johnson, Patty Scrivner, Karen Kelly

Second Row: Father Speer, David Thayer, Bill Moore, Mike Myers, Linda Mott, Faith Prentice, Kristin Bergman, Dorothy Vail, and Bishop Higley

Third row: Jeff Mangan, David Horvath, Webb Sisson, Viviene Gorman, Roxanne Kessler, Joanne Guy, Arthur Coffman

Fourth Row: William Taylor, Calvin Thayer, Mary Thayer, Carol Thayer, Nancy Focardi, Paul Focardi

In terms of growth the church was probably near or at its peak, as evidenced by this confirmation class of 26. Several proud parents offered pictures of this class with all the participants correctly identified. When the historian asked why this class was so well documented, the reply came back, "Maybe, because somebody was there with a camera." The Sunday school had a registration of 187 pupils; there were 299 communicants. Every report of the vestry included complaints about lack of space and pleas for a solution. As a result, the Vestry hired James Mowry, an architect, to design an addition to the building.

Boy Scout Troop 155 was started at St. Mark's. Bob Smith was the Troop Leader.

1964 Fall Festival



Fall Festival Country Store with clerks Mary Thayer and Marion Shoop

Fall Festivals were combined fellowship and fundraising activities that were held in the mid 1960's. In October 1964, the Women of St. Mark's sponsored the entire event which included a country store with booths for flowers, baked goods, gourmet food, crafts, and toys. Entertainment for the festival featured a puppet show, a movie and games for the children.

Another Fellowship activity that is very fondly remembered was the series of Progressive Dinners, which were sponsored by the Adult Fellowship Committee. These dinners started with soup at one person's house, followed by salad at a second house and progressed to a third home for the entrée. Afterwards the group having dinner would come to the church for dessert and fellowship.

The Cancer Dressing Group (The Ladies Guild) produced 70 dozen cancer dressings!

1965 Purchase of Parish House



In June 1965, St. Mark's was approved for a loan of \$10,000 from the Diocesan Foundation. The loan enabled us to purchase the house we had been renting for use as a church school.

(An article from the church newsletter for September, 1965)

The Episcopal Young Churchmen are cleaning and painting the basement for their future use as a den and schoolroom. Our thanks to Harry and Evelyn Smith for the space heater, to Don Johnson for the carpentry work and for installing the heater, and to Marion Shoop for painting and decorating the upstairs.

Bishop Peabody dedicated the house for use as a church school.

(Quote from the dedication service)

With gratitude for the building of the Parish House of St. Mark's Church, we are now gathered to dedicate it in God's Name.

1966



Children's choir December 1966, photograph in Binghamton Press

Front row: Charles Hutchinson and Martin Guy

Back row: Elizabeth Speer, James Smith, Leslie Young, Lynne Howsberger and Kathi Eldredge

Exchanging the Peace

Exchange of "The Peace" was evidently a new part of the service this year. Many church bulletins contained the following instructions:

"During the Peace this morning, a handshake and any phrase such as 'Peace be with you' may be used. It is especially appropriate to use the Christian name of the person...If you don't know your neighbor's name, simply ask."

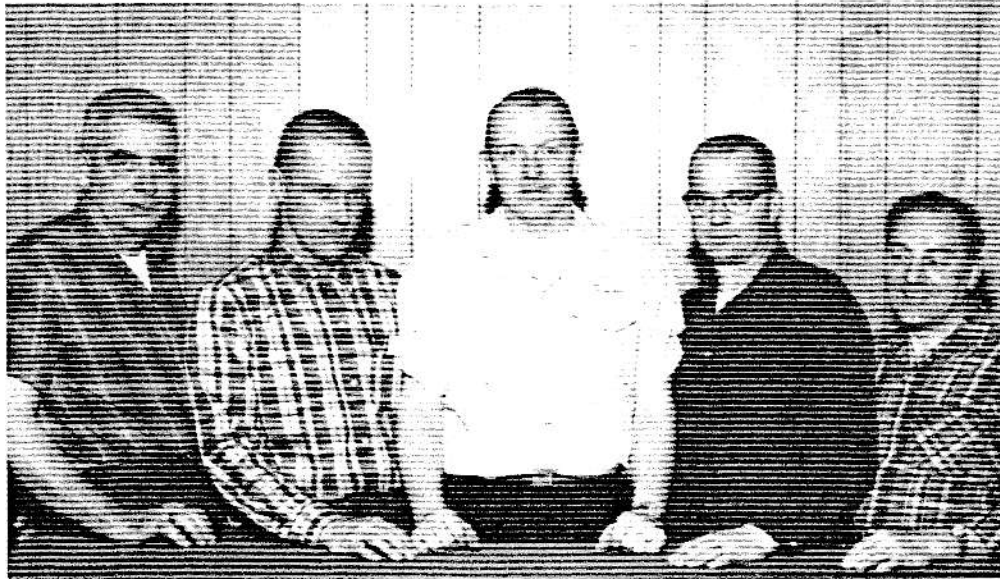
In the spirit of the Ecumenical movement of the 1960s the Rev. Samuel Little, Pastor of the Chenango Street Methodist Church was invited to deliver the sermon on April 24, 1966.

The Young Episcopal Churchmen throughout the 1960s marked Epiphany, the manifestation of Christ to the Gentiles, with a Feast of Lights.

Episcopal and Methodist Churches are vandalized.

Both St. Mark's and the Chenango Bridge Methodist Church were vandalized. The vandals tried to burn the altar cloth, the hymnbooks and some papers. They broke into Father Speer's office. The candlesticks from the altar were also stolen, and were later found in the river.

1967



St. Mark's Men's Bowling Team
Ken Powell, Louis Ough, Bob Thompson, Harry Eldredge, John Pepernik



St. Mark's Women's Bowling Team
Della Pepernik, Maxine Bronson, Evelyn Smith, June MacDuffee, Myra English

Church Bowling teams were prevalent in the 1960's. St. Mark's had teams for both men and women.

The Women of St. Mark's made bibs for the bed-ridden patients of the Broome County Infirmary.

1967(Continued)

The church was saddened by the deaths of Charlie Goss (age 67) who had been the church's first organist and director of the adult choir and of Dolly Murray who had designed the covers for many church bulletins and had created stationery featuring a picture of St. Mark's.

New pews were purchased and installed in August 1967. They were paid for from the Memorial Fund.

A four part series of sex education classes called "Fit to be Tied" was aimed at answering teenager's questions "concerning the physical, psychological, ethical and moral aspects of sex."

1968 Consecration of the Church

CONSECRATION OF SAINT MARK'S CHURCH CHENANGO BRIDGE, NEW YORK SEPTEMBER 18, 1968			Page	Position
			The portion of Scripture appointed for the Epistle PB 567	Sitting
			Gradual Hymn 492 (1st verse)	Standing
			Gospel PR 567-568	Standing
			Sermon	Sitting
			Creed	12-15 Standing
			Peace	15 Standing
			Prayer of Intercession	13-15 Kneeling
THE CONSECRATION OF A CHURCH <i>According to the Book of Common Prayer</i>				
Psalm	563-564	Standing		
Exhortation	564	Standing		
Prayers	564-566	Kneeling		
Sentence of Consecration		Kneeling		
Thanksgiving for Consecration	566	Kneeling		
THE OFFERTORY				
			Offertory: Sentences	16-17 Standing
			Anthem	Sitting
			Procession and Presentation	17 Standing
THE LITURGY OF THE LORD'S SUPPER <i>According to the New Liturgy as contained in pamphlets</i>				
INTRODUCTION				
Doxology	7	Standing		
Collect for Purity	7	Standing		
Summary of the Law	7-8	Standing		
Kyrie Eleison	8	Standing		
MINISTRY OF THE WORD				
Salutation	10	Standing		
Collect of the Day	PB 567	Kneeling		
THE CONSECRATION				
			Sursum Corda: Preface and Sanctus	18 Standing
			Prayer of Consecration	18-20 Kneeling
			Lord's Prayer	20 Kneeling
THE ADMINISTRATION				
			The Breaking of the Bread	20 Kneeling
			The Communion	21 Kneeling
			The Thanksgiving	21 Kneeling
			Prayer and Blessing	PB 568 Kneeling
			Recessional Hymn 396	Standing

Church Bulletin for the Consecration of the Church

In September, the Church building was free of debt and the mortgage was burned. At this time, this was a necessary precursor for church consecration.

(A quote from paper titled "Consecration of St. Mark's Church")
By Canon Law no church can be consecrated until it is unmortgaged and otherwise unencumbered and thus secure from the possibility of alienation to secular use.

The consecration service was performed by Bishop Walter Higley, assisted by Bishop Coadjutor Ned Cole and by the Rev. Charles Speer.