



**The  
First Fifty Years  
1951 - 2001**

**CELEBRATION  
OF  
ST. MARK'S**

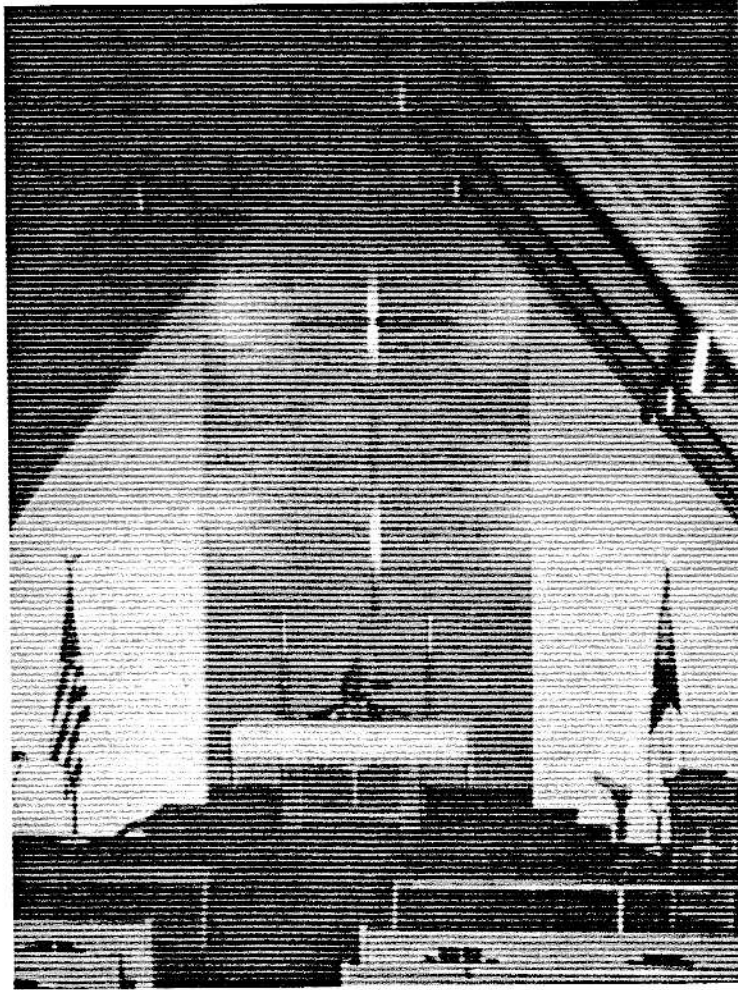
**The  
Congregation**

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

# The 1970s

You are God: We praise you;  
You are the Lord: We acclaim you;  
You are the Eternal Father all creation worships you.  
Canticle 21

## 1970 Church refurbishes Chancel.



Chancel of St. Mark's in 1970, showing new carpet.

New blue green carpet for the Chancel and the wrought iron candlesticks were donated by the Goss family. This is our current carpet and the candlesticks are now in use in the lounge. Sidney Zanker had previously made the large gold cross. The walls were newly painted. These renovations were completed by May 31<sup>st</sup>.

*(Sandy MacDuffee)*

*The most important thing that happened in 1970 was that Don and Sandy MacDuffee were married on 3/14/1970. Before we could be married at St. Mark's, Don and I had to attend several counseling sessions with Pete Speer and also take several personality tests to see if we were suited to be mates. After comparing our test, Pete said, "I have to tell you that you really aren't compatible and I don't feel this is a good match". I reminded him of this statement many times in the years to come. We are still together after 31 years. So much for testing!*

## 1970 Continued

Memories of clam chowder:

The Church continued a long-standing tradition of selling clam chowder during Lent. In 1970, it went for \$.95 a quart.

(Judy Kessler)

*The church always smelled of onions and celery during Lent.*

(Peg Prentice)

*I helped to make that clam chowder. Dorothy Ramage taught me how to dice the celery and onions to put in it.*

(Elsie Ingraham)

*We would cut vegetables on Friday and cook it early Saturday morning and start selling it at 1:00 pm. Dot Ramage, who was the head of cafeterias for the Binghamton schools, came in and taught us how to cut vegetables. Some of the women and men who worked on it were Olive Miller, Kathryn Van Kuren, Kit Read, Peg Prentice, Marion Shoop, Joan and Ralph Moore, Ruth Pierce, Jan Thompson, Myra English, June MacDuffee, Dot Johnson, Ruth Wilmarth, Barbara and Bob Davis, Marilyn Ough, Helen Crichton, Jan Kloda, Jo Doolittle, Jeannie Powell and Elsie Ingraham.*

A New Jerusalem Bible, which at that time was a new translation, was given by the Link Division of Singer in the memory of August Boehmke, the father of William Boehmke.

St. Mark's participated in the Chenango Bridge Civic Association field days.

(Brian Kessler)

*Bob Thompson and I made funnel cakes at the St. Mark's booth. We also made them for church bazaars. It was a recipe from my Mother and we fried them in an electric frying pan. A funnel cake mixing party in the church basement preceded funnel cake making. I think the ladies were more careful in their mixing than the men, because their batches gave more consistent results, but the whole process was a lot of fun.*

The church sponsored a family of 8 at Christmas time, providing Christmas dinner, clothes, toys and furnace repair.

## 1971

A trial version of the New Book of Common Prayer is introduced, which contains a new version of Holy Communion, Morning Prayer, Evening Prayer and the sacrament of Marriage.

The area Episcopal Churches now hold group confirmations. On April 25, 1971, the confirmation was held at All Saints in Johnson City.

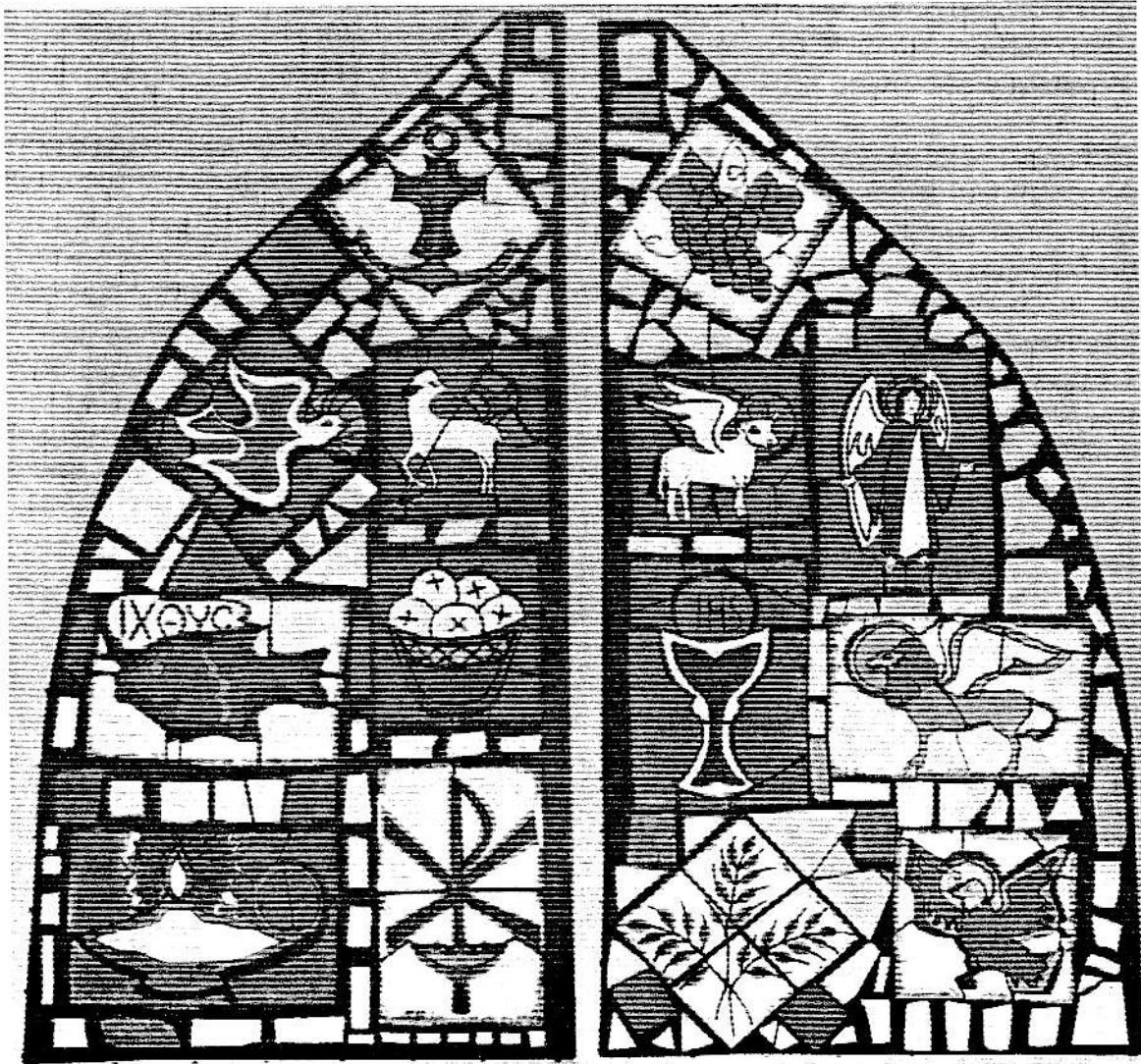
*(Val Young)*

*It was about this time that my husband, Joseph Young, became one of the first Lay Readers. He also organized the first Acolytes. Previously there had been no Acolytes. Father Speer was very "low" church and thought acolytes were too fancy.*

*(Barbara Davis)*

*Our daughter Luanne was one of the first girl acolytes. As she came in, for Christmas Eve service, someone said in disgust, "Look at that boy with the long hair!" Then Luanne turned around and they exclaimed even louder, "It's a girl!" This was also the first time my husband, Bob Davis, served as Lay Reader.*

## 1972 Plaques are added to the front of the church



Father Speer asked Jean Rosenthal to create plaques for each side of the altar from designs created by a member who had moved from the area.

Each separate picture on the plaques is a Christian symbol.  
The Anchor Cross is an early Christian symbol used in the Catacombs.  
The Lamb with the Banner of victory, is Christ's victory over death  
The loaves of bread are the body of Christ in the Eucharist.  
The Fish was a secret sign used by Christians. The first letters in the Greek words for "Jesus Christ, God's Son, Savior" spell the Greek word for fish.  
The Chi Rho are the first two letters Chi (X) and Rho (P) of the Greek word for Christ.

## 1972 (continued)

The dove signifies the Holy Spirit

The grapes signify the wine in the Eucharist

The Winged Ox stands for the Gospel of St. Luke.

The Cup and the Paten stand for the Eucharist.

The Olive branches are symbols of peace, harmony and healing.

The angel stands for the Gospel of St. Matthew.

The Winged Lion stands for the Gospel of St. Mark and is also our symbol of St. Mark's Church.

The eagle stands for the Gospel of St. John.

*(Jean Rosenthal on making the plaques)*

*An announcement of making the plaques was made at church and a request for parishioners to help in making them. Several people responded, including Father Speer (Pete), Jean Speer and their daughter Elizabeth. Each plaque is 6 feet at the highest point. They are beautifully shaped to conform to the structure of the space they occupy. The colors were chosen to compliment the surrounding décor. They are framed in an everlasting gold plastic material, chosen for its simplicity, so it would not detract from the pieces themselves.*

*It is a joy to remember the reaction of the workers when they first entered "The Atelier", which was in the attic of a turn of the century carriage house in back of the current River Mede Manor at 159 Front Street. The door they had to enter was 3/4 size of a regular door and it was necessary to duck the head and then be prepared to step down a full step to get in. Once inside it was a treat for all as they studied the rustic interior of the art studio with its high pitched ceiling, exposed beams and hay chute. There were two large tables for the volunteers to work on in another area. We rolled raw clay and cut it in the specified forms. They were then bisque fired in a kiln at my home. It was a worry that the pieces, being rather large, might warp in the firing, but they did not. The next step was to stain the pieces in the planned colors and to glue them to the backboards.*

*Because of the size and shape of the two pieces, it was difficult to hang them. It took several of the men of St. Mark's who had volunteered to do the job. In the 1980s, Esther Sabol and I picked out the gold flecked wallpaper to cover the walls that housed the plaques, which were not removed, but lifted slightly from the walls and the paper was then laid a short distance behind them. In 1974, designs were drawn for the altar chairs, that would match with the symbols on the plaques. These were done in needle point by the ladies of the Altar Guild to complete the overall look.*

## 1972 (Continued)

*(Sandy MacDuffee)*

*Pete Speer asked my husband Don to help him pick up the finished plaques and bring them back to St. Mark's. What Donny remembered most vividly, was that they were very heavy.*

On March 6, 1972, the Vestry decided to withdraw St. Mark's participation from the Chenango Bridge Field Days, since beer would be served.

*(Loren Guy)*

*In May, 1972 Rosa Prentice, a member of the congregation gave St. Mark's a 30 acre parcel of vacant land on Nolan Road. Efforts to use this land for church purposes were unsuccessful and the property was sold.*

In September, 1972, Mrs. Windus gave 17 shares of IBM stock toward the purchase of an new organ. The organ was ordered at a cost of \$6,665. In December, the organ was installed. John Pepernik, Harry Shoop and Tod Saito, who was a McIntosh Design Engineer, removed the speakers from the organ and installed them into a speaker housing which was designed by McIntosh Engineering and built by John Pepernik. The new speaker housing was installed in the attic area above the choir loft. Ted Saito also repaired several defective printed circuit boards in the organ.

## 1973

St. Mark's Vestry planned for two coffee hours a month to encourage contact between the Vestry and the congregation.

## 1974 Our active Women's Group



Women's Group holds a June Picnic.

The Sewing Group (Our current Women's Group) held a June Picnic at Delia Ford's home on the crest of Kattelville hill. Included in the group were Delia Ford, Kit Read, Judy Kessler, Elsie Ingraham, Marion Shoop, Louise Goss, Jane Sweet, and Jean Speer. This group also proudly represented St. Mark's at the World Community Day held by the National Council of Churches at the First Congregational Church in Binghamton and contributed the following articles for Church World Services: 28 knit baby afghans, 2 quilts, a baby sweater set and some children's clothes and school bags. All these donations had been made from scrap yarn and cloth. Along with the Altar Guild and Youth Group, they also made chrismons, Christian symbols worked in gold and white for decorating the Christmas tree.

In December 1974 the Altar Guild contributed 6 needlepoint cushions and a wedding pillow to the church. The designs for the cushions were drawn by Judy Kessler and were taken from the symbols on the plaques and were color coordinated with the plaques and the new carpet. The ladies who worked on these included Jean and Elizabeth Speer, Elsie Ingraham, Barbara Davis, Jan Thompson, Esther Sabol and Jane Sweet.

The Youth Group had a Halloween party, collected canned goods for the needy, made Christmas wreaths, helped with the children's Christmas Party and went caroling.

In June 1974 liturgical dancing was introduced as a part of the service.

By October 1974, the loan on the rectory was paid off.

## 1974 The Thrift Shop



The Thrift Shop located in the Parish House

A Thrift Shop was opened by St. Mark's in the current Parish House and was run beginning in 1974 through 1976 by Marjorie Cross and Nancy Thomas and other volunteers. The shop's purpose was to raise money for the church and to help the community by providing a source for low cost used clothing in good condition.

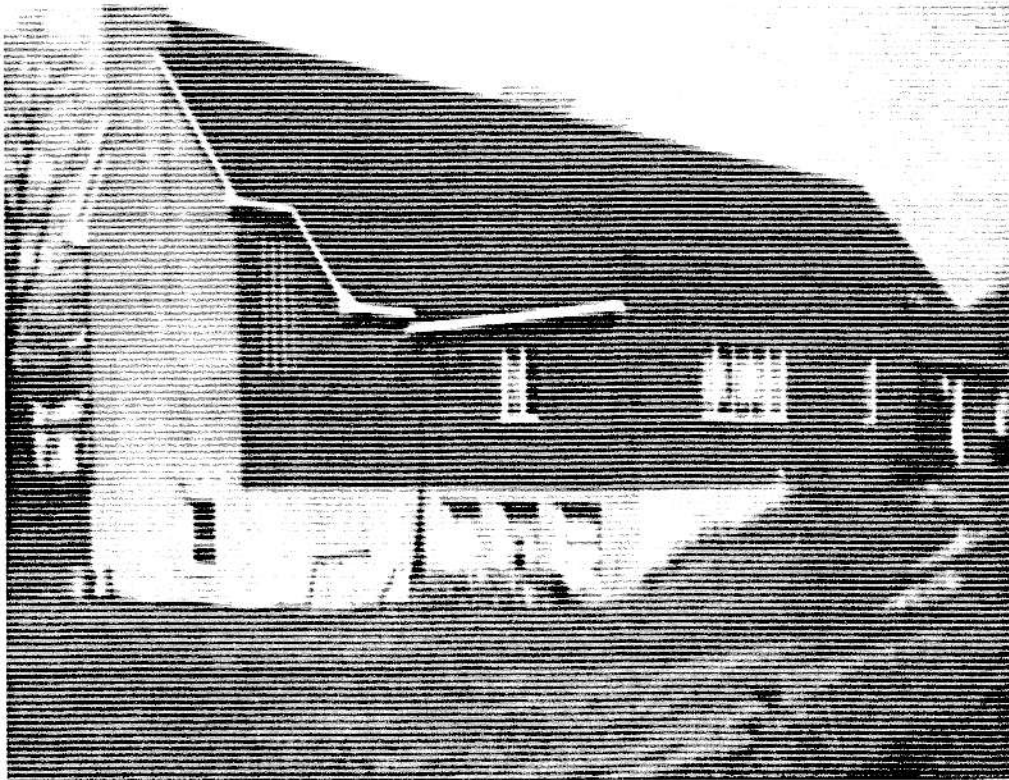
*(Marion Shoop)*

*The shop was a fundraiser. In one year, they cleared \$202, which was used for landscaping.*

An inheritance makes a new addition possible.

Mrs. Frank Windus, who died in June of 1973, left \$76,000 to St. Mark's in her will. These funds, added to the balance of \$28,000 already in the building fund, enabled the church to plan the long delayed addition to the Church. In November of 1974 Brian Kessler was selected to chair the building committee. It was decided that two young people would also be allowed to join the building committee.

## 1975 The New Addition



Spring of 1975 – View of Back of Church Building before the addition



June 22, 1975 Building committee with Father Speer prepares to break ground.

Brian Kessler, Margo Kessler, Bob Davis, Barrie Sweet, Father Speer, Jim Statts, Ed Sarzynski, Gene Stanton, Bruce Tayler

## 1975 The New Addition

In 1975, the long awaited new addition was finally underway. The Building Committee, chaired by Brian Kessler included John Bensley, Bob Davis, Fred Doolittle, Linda Perrin, Kit Read, Marion Shoop, Peter Smith, Jim Statts, Don Stanton, Gene Stanton, Bruce Tayler, and John Thomas. The committee hired the company of Cummings and Pash to design the addition; George Pash was the architect. After many debates it was decided that the new addition would include 6 classrooms, a secretary's office, a Rector's office, a sacristy, a lounge and 3 restrooms.

*(Marion Shoop)*

*The building committee reluctantly omitted a fireplace for the lounge, opting instead for a set of front stairs to the undercroft. The decision was prompted by a lack of funds.*

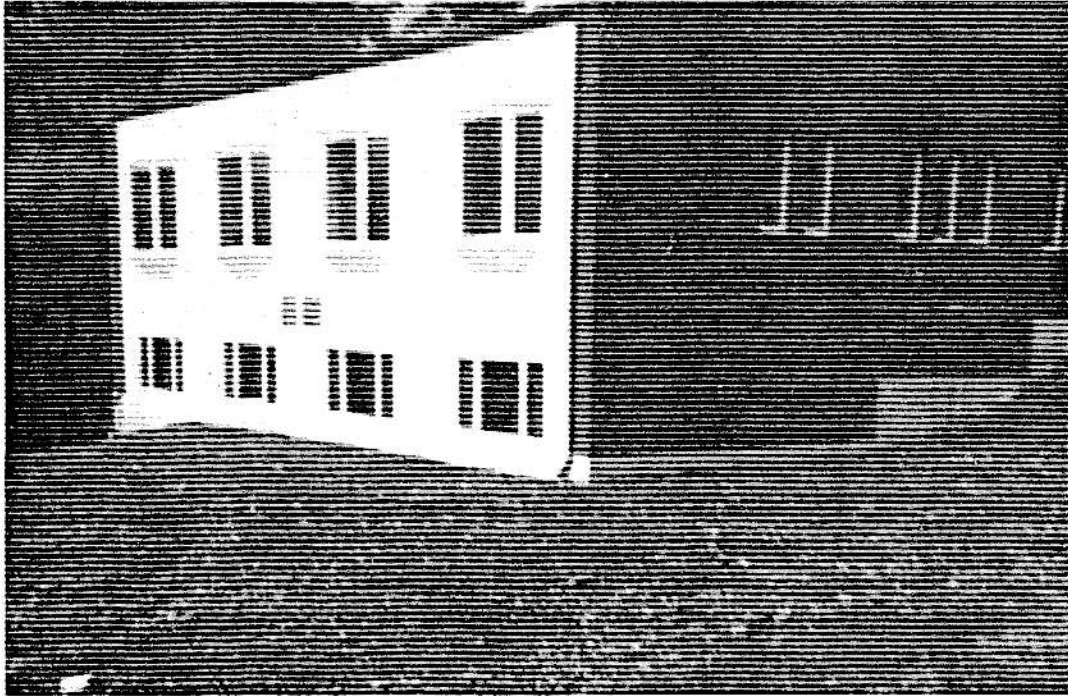
On June 22, 1977 the groundbreaking took place. Father Speer was presented with a hard hat and took the first shovel full of dirt. The Rector's office was moved to the parish house and the construction equipment came in. By October, the new addition was in place along with a new side entrance to the church.

The Committee appointed to select furnishings and decoration for the addition included Marge Walling, Diane Walling, Barb Davis, Judy Kessler, Kit Read, Marion Shoop, Jean Speer and Bobbie Steflik.

In October 1975, Episcopal Marriage Encounter began with the purpose of deepening the marriage relationship by strengthening the bonds with one another and with God. The representatives from St. Mark's were Louise and William Boehmke.

St. Mark's published a recipe book entitled Loaves and Fishes. It was sold for \$1.50 a copy.

## 1976 Our 25<sup>th</sup> Anniversary and Our Parish House



Outside of the New Addition, now called the Parish House



Back wall of newly completed and furnished Lounge in New Parish House

## 1976 Continued

By 1976 the new addition was completed and furnished and was officially called the Parish House. The committee selected the Lounge furniture; much of it is still in use. Judy Kessler created the hanging of the lion, which represents St. Mark's, and Roy Jones donated the ship's wheel clock.

The year 1976 was our nation's bicentennial and also St. Mark's 25<sup>th</sup> birthday. This was celebrated on May 26 with Eucharist, a dedication of the new Parish House and a party for the congregation. The party was attended by a number of former members who had since left the area including Roy and Kay Jones, Blinn and Jean Spohn, William Bramley and Dorothy and Raymond Ramage. The Rev. Clayton Melling, who helped to found St. Mark's as a mission and the Rev. George Detor, our first priest, could not attend but wrote letters of congratulation.

*(Excerpt from letter by the Rev. Clayton Melling to Olive Weatherby)*  
*There is a something about the immediate and personal responsibility of everyone involved in founding a mission that can never be quite duplicated by the church, which gets so big for its boots that one family can stay away and not be terribly missed.*

*Thank God for Pete Speer, whose total dedication and selfless pastoral concern has brought that mission to such a strong parish today.*

*(Excerpt from letter by the Rev. George Detor)*  
*I can remember the mud hole while they were building the church...I know ...our modest little cinder block building had matured into something of beauty...I remember that the undercroft of the church was utter bedlam at Sunday school time, as there was no way to separate the classes.*

Ironically, by the time the church finally had its new Parish House, the baby boom in Chenango Bridge had passed and the size of the congregation had begun to dwindle. The current Sunday school enrollment was 61 students with 8 teachers.

*(Father Pete Speer as quoted in an interview in the Binghamton Press on the subject of decreasing church population)*

*The area really boomed in the 1960s, he says. They had a tremendous population increase...that was our strong time. Now we are taking a lot of new members from outlying areas.*

## 1977



Women's Group who ran Bingo games for Willow Point Nursing Home  
Louise Goss, Kit Read, Jo Doolittle, Kay Harrison, Barbara Davis (Marion Shoop Took the Picture)

The Women's group continued their dedication to helping at Willow Point Nursing Home by running a Bingo game for the residents. This activity continued from 1973 through to 1979.

Mr. and Mrs. Gevert moved into the old parish house and became responsible for its upkeep and for the grounds.

New Lay Readers were Bruce Tayler, Robert Davis, Kit Read and Judy Kessler.

An Interfaith Action committee was chaired by Kit Read in connection with the Council of Churches and worked to support a shelter for runaway girls.

## 1978

The congregation joined the Rev. and Mrs. Speer in mourning the death of their daughter Elizabeth on 1/13/1978.

## 1978(Continued)

*(Sandy MacDuffee)*

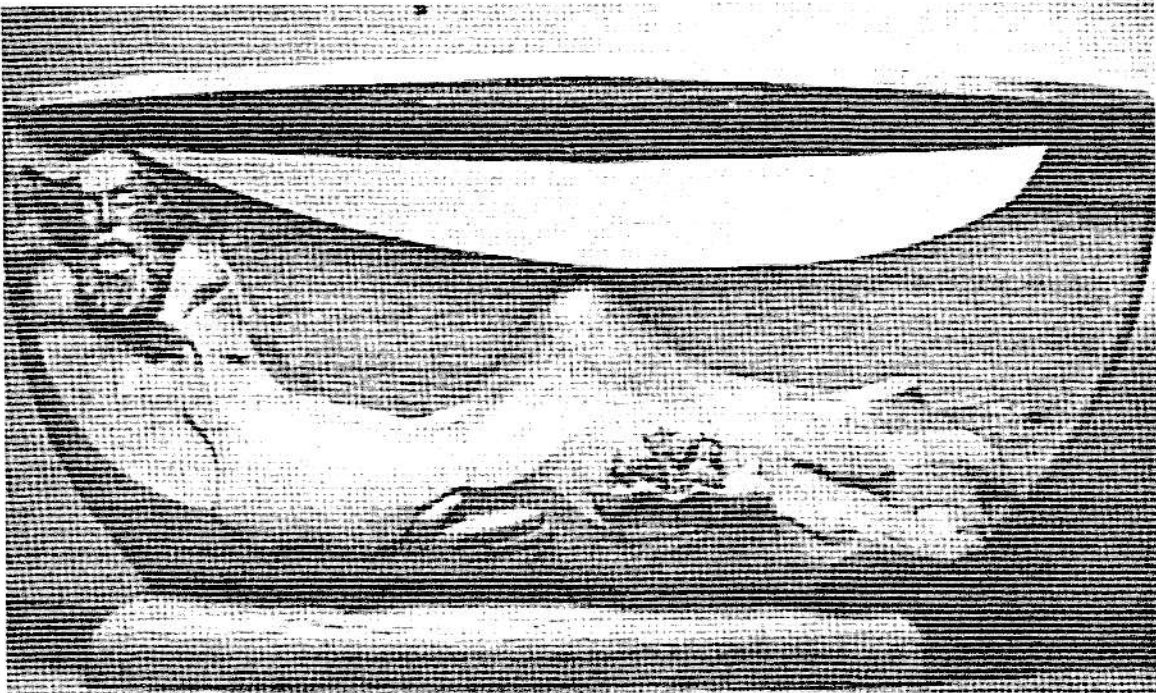
*Don and Sandy MacDuffee became Sextons and moved into the old Parish House in February, 1978. The day we moved into the house, the front yard had well over a foot of snow and we couldn't get near the house. Donny borrowed his Dad's snow blower and cleared a wide path. We lived in this house on River Road until November 1990 when we moved to our own home. Our years at River Road were for the most part ones of joy and good times. We have many wonderful memories of that little house.*

*Besides having someone to look after the church and the grounds, the Vestry felt that having someone live next door to the Church would hopefully help us to avoid further vandalism. We had very few problems while we lived there.*

*The vestry contracted with Sister Paula Matthew Brown, CJS, a Roman Catholic Sister of the Sisters of St. Joseph of Carondelet, to create a new altar.*

*A new canopy was put over the side entrance and the parking lot was resurfaced.*

## 1979 New Altar



New Altar dedicated in 1979

In 1978 Sister Paula Matthew Brown began work on an altar, which was dedicated by Bishop Ned Cole on October 14, 1979.

*(Excerpt from article in Binghamton Press by Robert Chantland)*  
Sister Paula Matthew Browne, CSH of the Sisters of St. Joseph of Carondelet, met the Rev. Charles R. Speer...on the education committee of the Broome County Council of Churches. They shared an interest in Christian art, and in ecumenism...She completed a large inspirational panel for St. Andrew's Episcopal Church in Conklin in 1974. Sister Paula said, "Art breaks the barriers of dogma and doctrine."...Quoting Pope Pius XII, she added, "Religious art provides a window on the infinite for the hungry soul of man."

*(Judy Kessler)*

When Sister Paula was introducing the idea of the new altar to the Vestry, there was uproar. When asked for her design, she said she had none but waited for the Holy Spirit to speak to her through the wood. She hadn't found the right piece of wood as yet. The Vestry wanted something more tangible. She had a close relationship with her own father, who joined her in searching for wood and who did much of the carpentry for her projects. She and her father found the right pieces of wood while walking together on a farm.

## 1979 (Continued)

The symbolism of the altar is based on text of Mark, chapter 4, verse 38, in which Christ is asleep in a wave tossed boat and his fearful disciples cry out, "Teacher do you not care if we perish?" In the carving of the altar, Christ is not just sleeping in the boat; he is the boat and he is also the waves. Three distraught people arranged in a circle, a mandala, represent the disciples, faced with the fear of death. One person is turning to Christ, but only half way. One is turning away, looking for outside rescue. One is reaching upwards to God with a frantic gesture, proclaiming his faith, but at the same time full of fear. The grain of the wood itself is part of the design. The grain forms concentric circles on Christ's forehead. The grain of the small fearful apostles is all vertical.

At the dedication ceremony, Sister Paula gave the homily. *She likened humans to the sculptor's tools, suggesting that we are tools in the hands of God. She ended her talk by imploring the worshippers to love one another.*

*(Elsie Ingraham)*

*I sewed the altar cloth for the new altar. We had agreed that it must be all natural fibers, not synthetic material. Bob and Barbara Davis provided a piece of linen. It had to be evenly pieced to exactly fit the top of the altar. Since I couldn't find pure linen thread, I pulled threads from the cloth itself to do the sewing.*