



A Brief Chronology of St. Columba's Episcopal Church

By The Rev. Margaret Guenther

St. Columba's
EPISCOPAL CHURCH

Rectors Serving the Parish:

William Welton Shearer	1915-1930
Emmanuel A. Lemoine	1931-1941
C. Randolph Mengers	1942-1969
William Edwin Swing	1969-1979
William McDonald Tully	1980-1994
James M. Donald	1995-2005
Stephen Huber (transition)	2004-2006
Janet Vincent	2007-2013
Joe G. Burnett (interim)	2014-2015
Ledlie I. Laughlin	2015-

1874 First services held in "Tenallytown" (named after John Tenally who in 1790 built a tavern at the intersection of River Road and Wisconsin Avenue). Services were held by the Rev. John Chew (rector of St. Alban's Episcopal Church), initially in a Baptist Church, then a hotel, then under the oak tree on current property.

1875 A rough mission chapel is built for services.

1900 A parish house is added and becomes a social center for the neighborhood.

1904 Chapel is named St. Columba, following a tradition of missionary chapels of St. Alban's.

1906 Neilson Barry becomes first vicar.

1907 William Bushby begins service as the first priest in residence, the first of five to serve.

1911 Chapel is enlarged, doubling seating capacity. Bell tower is added.

1915 William Shearer appointed vicar/rector and serves until 1932. The neighborhood experiences a population boom during the 1920s and the congregation fills the building.

1924 St. Columba's becomes an independent parish.

1926 Current worship space built; first services in April 1927.

1932 Emmanuel Lemoine becomes rector and serves until 1942. During the 1930s, the area surrounding church develops as a blue-collar residential neighborhood.

1942 Randy Mengers becomes rector, serving until 1969. Lemoine's tenure produced a dwindling congregation, a huge debt and a dilapidated physical plant. Mengers accepted the position on a meager salary. Under his leadership the parish turned around and flourished. His additional legacy was his strong pastoral relationships in the parish and surrounding community. He died less than a year after retiring in 1969.

1954 Reid Isaac begins to serve as first curate.

1959 Albemarle parish hall wing built; nursery school established. Parishioners mortgage homes to pay for building. The new building becomes a neighborhood gathering space.

1969 Bill Swing becomes rector, serving until 1979 when elected Bishop of California. Liturgical "experimentation" begins. St. Columba's grows to become the largest parish in the diocese. Altar brought out to the Crossing. Healing rite incorporated in Sunday worship. Music program flourishes.

1970 Friendship Terrace, an Episcopal retirement home across the street, opens.

1972 First woman seminarian serves at St. Columba's. Judy Dodge Breneman becomes director of the Boy Choir, marking beginning of current music program. Music and drama groups form in the parish, and the program flourishes.

1974 St. C's Concert Series begins.

1975 Alison Palmer is first female deacon to join staff. Three octaves of handbells are purchased. The Opera, *Amahl and the Night Visitors* is performed by the Boy and Girl Choirs and St. Columba Singers.

1977-8 Noreen Suriner, a deacon on staff, is ordained priest, becoming St. Columba's first female priest. Helen Eisenhart becomes first woman to serve as Senior Warden.

1980 The Boy and Girl Choirs sing in Bach's *St. Matthew Passion* with the Choral Arts Society at the Kennedy Center

1980 Bill Tully is called as rector, serving until 1994. Parish grows exponentially. Outreach Steering Committee is formed to develop and oversee new mission groups and social justice programs.

1981 Church interior repaired and renovated, and the balcony built. Flentrop organ installed. Group forms to begin developing outreach ministry.

1982 The Boy and Girl Choirs perform *Noye's Fludde* at the Washington National Cathedral in cooperation with Queen Anne's School. A musical based on the "Lion, the Witch and the Wardrobe" is performed by the parish, the music and book by

parishioners Mary Hardman, Will Billow and Thaddeus Cavuoti. Queen Beatrix and Prince Claus of the Netherlands attend a special service at St. Columba's honoring the new Dutch pipe organ.

1983 "The Sounds of St. Columba's" cassette tape is produced with anthems by the Boy and Girl Choirs, songs from The Lion, The Witch and the Wardrobe, and virtuoso handbell ringing by The St. Columba Handbell Ringers. Judy Dodge Breneman resigns as director of music.

1984 Stephen Anderson becomes new director of music.

1985 Trevor Ambrister spearheads "Christmas in April" program at St C's. First paid director of children's ministries is hired. Terry Peel and John Pickard write and direct the first of a series of biblical musicals called the Peel-Pickard productions.

1989 Butterworth wing, Great Hall and Common are added, and the Church Nave seating is expanded.

1990 St. Columba's orchestra continues to build under violinist, Peter Clamp.

1992 The "Candlelight Concert" cassette tape is produced by the Boy and Girl Choirs, performed at Bruton Parish, Williamsburg, Virginia.

1993 Judy Dodge Breneman returns to St. C's as director of music/organist.

1994 St. Columba's forms a partnership with Truesdell Elementary School and its three kindergarten classes, calling it STEP (St. Columba's-Truesdell Elementary School Partnership), beginning what would become the largest mission effort ever undertaken by the parish. Bill Tully accepts call as rector of St. Bartholomew's, New York. John Hurd is hired as associate music director.

1995 Jim Donald is called as rector, serving until 2005. First director of youth ministries is hired.

1996 Diane Heath joins music staff as music assistant.

1997 Pattie Ames comes to St. C's as director of children's ministries.

1998 Former parishioner Margaret Guenther returns to St. C's to serve as associate rector.

1999 A second Great Hall Eucharist and 5 pm Eucharist are added on Sundays. Campaign for St. Columba's helps retire 1989 building debt, fund deferred maintenance and create the Columba Fund. The music program grows to 280 participants. A Dowd harpsichord is added to the instrument collection in the Church Nave.

2000 The Haven (formerly Winter Haven) moves into Fletcher House to be run as a year-round transitional shelter through a partnership between St. Columba's and Community Council for the Homeless at Friendship Place. Christmas in April USA becomes Rebuilding Together.

2002 The St. Columba Singers present a *German Requiem* by Johannes Brahms to commemorate the first anniversary of 911.

2003 The Opera, *Amahl and the Night Visitors* is performed by the Boy and Girl Choirs and St. Columba Singers.

2004 Jim Donald suffers and survives a brain aneurysm, which in spite of successful surgeries and miraculous recovery, leads to his retirement in 2005.

2004-06 Steve Huber, associate rector, transitions to priest-in-charge/transition rector. When he leaves to become vicar of Washington National Cathedral, associate rector Margaret Guenther serves briefly as priest-in-charge until a new rector is called.

2006 Julia Berry begins as director of the St. Columba's Nursery School, which now boasts an enrollment of 125 children.

2007 Janet Vincent is called to serve as the seventh and first female rector, serving until 2013. *Noye's Fludde* is performed again with great costumes and pageantry, in cooperation with Revels.

2009 Judy Dodge Breneman retires after 20+ years. John Hurd becomes director of music having served in the music department since 1994 along with Diane Heath.

2010 St. Columba's embarks on the redesign of the church logo and website based on a new mission statement.

2011 The first Live@5 contemporary Eucharist is conducted.

2013 Janet Vincent resigns in July and the Rev. Rose Duncan becomes priest-in-charge. The STEP Program celebrates "Mission: Complete" after a successful 20-year run.

2014 The Right Rev. Joe G. Burnett is called to serve as interim rector in January, and the search for a new rector is launched. Judy Dodge is named director of music emerita of St. Columba's. *Noye's Fludde*, performed again with great costumes and pageantry, is directed by Giselle Becker.

2015 The Rev. Ledlie Laughlin is called to serve as the eighth rector of St. Columba's. Margaret Lefever is honored on Columba Day for 25 years of serving the St. Columba's parish community. A major renovation project is undertaken during the summer months financed by the 2013 Foundation for the Future Capital Campaign.

2016 St. Columba's mourns the passing of the Rev. Margaret Guenther, associate rector.

2017 "New To You," annual yard sale/community building event, returns for its sixth year after a one-year hiatus. Music director John Hurd retires in June, and a special Columba Day celebration is planned in his honor. Anne Timpane comes on board as the new director of music ministries.

Compiled/revised (though 2014) by the Rev. Margaret Guenther, 7/15/14
Updated by Barbara McGowan, 11/11/17