

## A History of The Episcopal Church of the Holy Innocents' 1882 - 2018

410 South Atlantic Avenue  
Beach Haven, New Jersey 08008  
The Episcopal Diocese of New Jersey  
Compiled by the Rev. Daniel W. Hinkle, Interim Rector August 2018

The Episcopal Church of the Holy Innocents was the first Christian Church on Long Beach Island. It began as a summer mission at a time when there were no inhabitants on the island during the winter months save the coast guard and a few members of their families. Before they had a church building, Episcopalians met together for worship in the parlors of the Parry House and Engleside Hotel, two of the earliest grand, seashore hotels on the island during the Victorian Period.

Beach Haven was founded in 1874 as a seashore resort for the wealthy of Philadelphia during a time in our country's history the famous American author Mark Twain called the Gilded Age. The Parry House hotel opened that year and could accommodate 200 guests. It was located at the north east corner of Centre Street and Beach Avenue. Unfortunately, the hotel would burn down just seven years later in 1881. The Methodist Church is now located where the Parry House once stood. The Engleside Hotel opened in 1876 and could accommodate 400 guests. It survived until the early 1940s and was originally located where Veteran's Park is today.

In a pamphlet history of the early development of the Episcopal Mission written by the Rev. Dr. James Hart Lamb (see sources listed below), the first minister-in-charge of the summer mission, Dr. Lamb recalls being asked to read services and preach in one of the hotels on Sunday, August 14, 1881. ("Reading services" probably referred to leading Morning Prayer and preaching.) Accordingly, he booked a room in the Parry House for Thursday evening, August 11th.

That night the Parry House hotel caught fire. By the next morning, Friday, August 12th, it had burned to the ground. This happened just seven years after the hotel had opened in 1874. Fire was a real hazard to those grand, Victorian, wooden hotels. Fortunately, no one was hurt, thanks in large part to the efforts of Dr. Lamb who heard a faint cry of fire and noticed smoke coming from the kitchen. He woke everyone and urged them to leave the burning hotel immediately.

A service of Thanksgiving for the lives saved was held that Friday evening in the parlor of the Engleside Hotel. At Sunday morning worship in the same parlor two days later on August 14th, Dr. Lamb made an appeal to build a church on the island. The balance of the debt on a lot previously purchased for the church was paid off from the offering taken at this service.

The next day Mrs. Martha A. Parry offered to build a church on the lot purchased. This generous benefactress was the second wife of Mr. Charles T. Parry, the principal investor in the Parry House hotel and President of the famous Baldwin Locomotive Manufacturing company in Philadelphia. "This Church was to be given as a Thank Offering for the escape from death of the many who were in the Parry House at the time of the fire, and also given in memory of her daughter, Mrs. Clara Parry Hilger who departed this life at the young age of 19 on February 14, 1881, and of other children in Paradise." (Quoted from Dr. Lamb's "Short History...", ) Clara had probably died in childbirth and her child lost as well. This was common in the days before modern medicine. "the other children in Paradise" refers to "all little ones called as children to God's presence in Paradise." The name of Holy Innocents' Episcopal Church is also a reference to the murder of the innocent children by King Herod found chapter two of the Gospel according to St. Matthew.

The first church building was located on the north east corner of Beach Street and what is now called Engleside Avenue but originally had been called South Street. The church was built during the winter

and spring of 1881 and 1882 on two fifty-foot lots. The building was not heated. The first lot was purchased for \$250, the price of the second was increased to \$350 before it was purchased. Oh, for the good ol' days!

The first worship service in this new church building was held on Sunday, July 9, 1882 at which time the building was consecrated by the Right Reverend John Scarborough, D.D. He served as the fourth Bishop of the Episcopal Diocese of New Jersey from 1875 - 1914. The original church building now houses the Long Beach Island Historical Museum.

The Prayer Book used for the first worship services held in the parlors of the Parry House and Engleside Hotels and the first church would have been the first Book of Common Prayer of the Episcopal Church USA, which was published in 1789. A new Episcopal Hymnal was published in 1871. The scriptures would have been read from the 1611 Kings James Version of the Bible. In 1892 the Episcopal Church published a revision of the Book of Common Prayer and that was used until the 1928 BCP was published. The Hymnal was revised again in 1892, 1916 and 1940. Morning Prayer with sermon would probably have been the worship liturgy on most Sundays and Holy Eucharist celebrated perhaps as often as once a month. It was often the case in many Episcopal Churches of the time that an early Sunday service was said Holy Communion and attended by the domestic help. Morning Prayer was then held at the main service while the help prepared Sunday dinner at home.

For the first fifty years of its existence, Holy Innocents' Episcopal Church functioned as a summer season mission chapel. In the beginning, the mission was only open for worship from Independence Day through Labor Day weekend. It would eventually be open from Memorial Day in May through the end of September.

Unfortunately, there are few records of the many clergy who preached and celebrated communion during this early period from 1882 - 1936, although Dr. Lamb frequently acted as their host. In

1917 he sold his summer home at 110 Amber Street in Beach Haven to the Diocese of New Jersey. It was then used as the first vicarage of Holy Innocents' Church until it was sold in 1941. The Rev. Canon Robert G. Williams was one of the summer clergymen during the early mission period. He wrote that "The compensation we received for our services was the use of the house, and all its appurtenances, on Amber Street." (Quoted from "Date Stone Laying...")

Holy Innocents' Episcopal Church was the first church on the island. In 1885 the church was instrumental in providing the first teacher and schooling for the children of the few families who lived and worked on the island year-round. Classes took place in the parlor of Beach Haven House. A public school was built and opened that fall 1885.

The first Sunday School on the island was provided by Holy Innocents' Church from 1886 - 1888. An average of 30 children attended and many parents accompanied them. The Sunday School moved to the Methodist Church after it was built, the children and parents being mostly Methodists. This may be a reflection of the economic class system of the time.

For forty years, worship services ceased after Holy Innocents' Church was closed up for winter at the end of vacation season. In the off-season after 1924, Sunday services were held in the museum room of second floor of the Public Library on the corner of 3rd Street and Beach Avenue. Later, off-season worship was held in the Church House Chapel at 201 2nd Street. Church House was established by Mrs. Elizabeth B. Pharo, another early member and benefactress of the church. She was very interested in seeing the summer chapel open year-round.

The church provided another first for the island when the first year-round ministry began in the winter of 1929-1930, and she was a woman. Miss Aline Cronshey was employed as the first full-time lay minister for Christian Social Services. Miss Cronshey was a graduate of the New Jersey College for Women in New Brunswick, NJ. She

earned a Master of Arts in Religious Education from Columbia University (in New York?) and had worked five years for the church on an Indian Reservation in North Dakota. Miss Cronshey was a remarkable woman. She ministered forty years before the Episcopal Church began ordaining women to the priesthood.

Mrs. Pharo offered the use of half of her brick cottage known as Church House at 201 2nd Street as a residence for Miss Cronshey. The first floor was converted into a chapel and Miss Cronshey lived on the second floor. She ministered to the year-round island dwellers, who were glad for her presence. They remembered her kindness and the ministries she offered. These included providing glasses for those in need, taking the sick to hospital, offering classes for boys and girls and teaching confirmation classes. Many joined the church as a result of her efforts. The Ladies Guild of the church was instrumental for funding and establishing the Christian Social Services ministry of Miss Cronshey during the difficult years of the Great Depression of the 1930s. Miss Cronshey probably ministered throughout the 1930s.

Holy Innocents' Church became a year-round Mission Church in the mid 1930s. The Rev. George Haley Hann was appointed the first of three successive full-time Vicars. He served for five years from Sept. 1, 1936 through June 30, 1941 just months before the US was attacked by the Japanese, precipitating our entry into WW II. The Rev. Hann lived in the first Vicarage at 110 Amber Street. His responsibilities and Miss Cronshey's included care of St. Stephen's Episcopal Church in Waretown. During the Rev. Hann's tenure, the small, heated chapel was built on the east side of the church for use in the cold winter months. The main church was unheated and only used during the summer season. The cost of this winter chapel was \$5,363.23. It was dedicated by Bishop Gardner on June 6, 1938 and presumably open for worship that summer. It would not be consecrated until three months later on September 3, 1939 after the final balance of \$1,205.58 had been paid. The Winter Chapel was converted into a Parish Hall in 1951.

The second Vicar to serve Holy Innocents' Church was the Rev. L. Russell Clapp. His tenure lasted for eight years from July 1, 1941 until September 1, 1949, from the beginning of our involvement in WW II through the early years of the nuclear age and the beginning of the Cold War. His compensation at the beginning of his ministry included an annual salary of \$1,800, the use of the church automobile and \$240 operating expenses. Miss Cronshey had now concluded her ministry at Holy Innocents' Church and Church House at 201 Second Street became the second Vicarage. Father Clapp lived here throughout his tenure as Vicar. He is the first priest to be called Father in the records.

The Rev. Frederick C. Price was the third Vicar of Holy Innocents' Church. He ministered for four years from December 1, 1949 through November 1953. Because he was married and had a family, Mr. Price refused to live in Church House at 201 Second Street. So the Vestry rented a house at 2210 Atlantic Avenue in Spray Beach for his use until the third Vicarage had been built at 200 South Beach Avenue on the southwest corner of Beach Avenue and Amber Street. During his tenure, the main church was heated for year-round use, the Winter Chapel became the Parish Hall and Sunday School classroom, a Kitchen was added, the whole was attached to the main church, and the new Vicarage was built. This new Vicarage cost \$17,500. How times have changed!

After 72 years of Mission Church status, Holy Innocents' Episcopal Church became a fully self-sustaining Parish Church by decree of the Diocesan Convention of May 4, 1954. It was no longer necessary for the church to accept the services of a Vicar appointed by the Bishop. The Vestry would now call priests to serve as Rector of the Parish. Note that since full parish status was gained in 1954, Holy Innocents' Church has been served by only four full-time Rectors. In addition there have been several priest assistants and deacons and at least two Interim Rectors as well.

On May 3, 1954, the day before Holy Innocents' Church became a Parish, a call was extended to the Rev. Walter Josselyn Reed. Father

Reed served for thirteen years as the first Rector of the Parish from July 1, 1954 until his retirement on December 31, 1967. The Vestry then appointed him the Rector Emeritus.

In 1883 the Baldwin Hotel was built two blocks south of the Engleside Hotel. It occupied the whole block where the present church and rectory are located. The Engleside was owned by Quakers who did not permit alcoholic beverages on the premises. The Baldwin, however, had a bar and did serve alcohol. This magnificent, late Victorian wooden beach resort hotel could accommodate 450 guests. Sadly, its fate would be that of the old Parry House and many other wooden seashore hotels. It was completely destroyed by fire in 1960. As was the custom at that time, the debris was bulldozed into a pit dug on site. This is now causing sinkholes to form in the front property and under the circular driveway off Marine Street.

Since the end of WW II, the island was rapidly being developed and the population was growing. This meant that the church was beginning to outgrow the old building. So, conversations began concerning a larger church building. Of course, these kinds of decisions can be difficult and there were probably many discussions about whether the congregation should move at all. Nevertheless, when the old Baldwin Hotel property became available after it burned in 1960, the church wisely purchased it on May 3, 1961 at a cost of \$70,000. Half the cost of the lot was donated by Mr. H. Howard Colehower, another generous patron of the parish who was a Vestryman at the time. The balance of the mortgage was soon paid off. The parish worked for twelve years to raise the capital required to build a new church building with connecting parish hall.

The fourth and present residence for clergy and their families was built in 1964 on the old Baldwin lot at 410 S. Atlantic Avenue, the southeast corner of Marine Street and S. Atlantic. A marble tablet was set into the outside wall of the entrance doorway which reads "The Elizabeth B. Pharo Memorial Rectory." The tablet has since been removed and is now stored in the Rectory garage. The

memorial acknowledges that the present Rectory was partially purchased from the sale of the Church House at 201 Second Street that Mrs. Pharo had donated to the church in 1929/1930.

The Rev. Canon Gilbert Drew Martin, Jr. became the second Rector of Holy Innocents' Church on February 1, 1968. He served for 18 years. The Rev. Donald Muller was the third Rector. He served for ? years. The Vestry called the Rev. Frank B. Crombaugh III to be the fourth full-time Rector. He would serve for twenty years from 1998 until he retired in February 2018. He gave the church pastoral leadership as it entered the third millennia.

A special parish meeting was held on August 26, 1973 at which plans for the new church building were approved and the congregation authorized the Vestry to proceed with the new building. Ground-Breaking Ceremonies were held on Sunday, September 30, 1973. The new church building was consecrated in 1974 by the Rt. Rev. Albert W. Van Duzer, 8th Bishop of the Diocese of New Jersey.

On August 26, 1979 the Memorial Garden was consecrated by Bishop Van Duzer.

The Bethlehem Chapel is located in the Old Baptistry. The Baptistry was moved to the rear of the church where it is presently located and the chapel was created sometime in the 1980s. It was created in memory of Richard Van Dyke, Warden Emeritus, Usher, benefactor and friend of the parish for many years. The funds for the chapel came from a bequest from Mr. Van Dyke's estate. The Crusaders Cross on the shelf behind the altar was a gift to the parish from the Ladies' Guild in 1956 commemorating the 75th Anniversary of the parish.

Note: The written records of the parish end here.

**Events in the National Episcopal Church since the 1970s**

At the General Convention of the Episcopal Church held in January 1976, two resolutions supporting same-sex relationships and their legal rights were passed. By the end of the 1970s women were being ordained in the Episcopal Church. One of the woman ordained was openly homosexual.

The Episcopal Church revised the Book of Common Prayer again in 1979. A new Episcopal Hymnal was published in 1982. The Revised Standard Version of the Bible had been published in 1952. The New Revised Standard known for its inclusive language was published in 1989 and is now the translation of the scriptures regularly heard in Episcopal worship.

Barbara Harris, a black woman Episcopal priest was ordained the first woman Bishop in the Episcopal church in 1989. In 2003 Gene Robinson was the first openly gay man ordained Bishop in the Episcopal Church. In 2006 Katharine Jefferts Schori became the first woman Presiding Bishop of the Episcopal Church. In 2015 Michael Curry became the first black Presiding Bishop of the Episcopal Church.

## **Storms and Hurricanes**

Hurricane of September 1901 - This storm knocked the steep off the old building and blew it across Beach Avenue onto the property now occupied by the theater. The storm lifted the church off its foundations and moved it to the middle of Beach Avenue where it landed on top the trolley tracks that ran the length of the avenue at that time.

Hurricane Sandy 2012 - This storm caused severe property damage the whole length of Long Beach Island. Fortunately, no damage was done to the either the church building or the rectory.

## **Memorials**

The stained-glass window in the front of the present church was moved from the original building. It was given by Mr. and Mrs. Charles T. Parry in loving memory of their daughter, Clara, and “other children in paradise.”

The ten hanging lamps, the pulpit and the lectern are also from the old church.

See attached notes concerning the present Baptistry and the Bethlehem Chapel

## **Vicarages and Rectories**

1st Residence a Vicarage - 110 Amber Street 1917 - 1941

2nd Residence for the Christian Social Services Minister - 201 Second Street 1929 - 1941

Became 2nd Vicarage 1941 - 1949

3rd Residence a Vicarage - 200 South Beach Avenue 1950 - 1953

Became the 1st Rectory 1954 - 1964

4th Residence a Rectory - 410 South Atlantic Avenue 1964 - Present

## **Women of the Church**

The Ladies Guild

1882 - 1935

Women's Auxiliary 1936 - 1958

Episcopal Church Women (ECW) 1959 - Present

Ministers Served	Title	Dates
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Various Episcopal Clergy	N/A	Beginning - July 1881
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The Rev. Dr. James Hart Lamb 1882 - for several years	Minister-in-Charge	August
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Various Episcopal Clergy 1936	Summer Clergy	1982 -
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The Rev. Canon Robert G. Williams

The Rev. John T. Ward

Miss Aline Cronshey 1930 - 1941?	Christian Social Services Worker	year-round
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The Rev. George Haley Hann September 1, 1936 - June 30, 1941	Vicar	year round
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The Rev. L. Russell Clapp 1941 - September 1, 1949	Vicar	year around July 1,
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The Rev. Frederick C. Price December 1, 1949 - November 1953	Vicar	year around
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The Rev. W. Josselyn Reed 1954 - December 31, 1967	Rector	July 1,
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The Rev. Canon Gilbert Drew Martin, Jr.	Rector	Feb. 1, 1968 - ?
The Rev. Donald Muller	Rector	? - 1997
The Rev. ?	Interim Rector	1997 - 1998
The Rev. Frank B. Crumbaugh, III	Rector	1998 - Feb. 2018
The Rev. Daniel W. Hinkle	Interim Rector	June 1, 2018 - Present

## Sources

Datestone Laying, Dedication and Consecration of Holy Innocents' Episcopal Church Beach Haven, NJ 1974

Images of America: Beach Haven by Gretchen F. Coyle and Deborah C. Whitcraft 2018

"A Short History of Holy Innocents' Episcopal Church" by the Rev. W. Josselyn Reed, Rector at the time of the Diamond Jubilee 1955-1957

The Long Beach Island Museum now located in the old church building at the corner of Engleside and Beach AVenues in Beach Haven