Lord, Make Us One …

OUR CUPS RUNNETH OVER

One of St. George’s most prized artifacts is the so-called “Wesley Chalice,” a communion cup, purportedly sent to St. George’s by Methodism’s founder, John Wesley, at a time when the fledgling American Methodists transformed scores of Wesleyan societies into the Methodist Episcopal Church (1784).

This chalice is one of the pieces in our museum collection people travel to St. George’s to see. It is the “good china” we break-out for special occasions, such as the United Methodist General Commission on Archives and History’s fall 2012 visit, or St. George’s 2009 “Great Gathering” with Mother Bethel AME Church. Beyond these walls, the Wesley Chalice travels to Annual, Jurisdictional and General Conferences around the Delaware Valley and across the USA.

But just now, it’s NOT the Wesley Chalice in the limelight. About a dozen other chalices are.

St. George’s plays home to the archives of the Eastern Pa Conference, UMC, nearly 500 churches from the Poconos to the Mason-Dixon Line, the Delaware River to Hershey. These archives, more than just paper, include communion ware from closed churches. Like the objects in the china closet in your home, it’s not long before old treasures become dusty, tarnished white elephants.

Until someone had an idea. Why keep this retired communion ware on the shelf? Why not return chalices and communion plates to service? Near simultaneous inquiries from Pastor Blake Diebler (Quarryville UMC) and Philadelphia area Bishop Peggy Johnson stoked the inspiration: Blake, thinking about how new communion ware might enhance their growing congregation’s move into a new sanctuary and Bishop Johnson responding to African bishops requesting chalices for new churches in Mozambique. Revs. Kevin Readman (Conference Commission on Archives and History) and Joe DiPaolo (Conference Historical Society) gave their blessings to the projects.

Continued on next page
Historic St. George’s was privileged to receive a Keystone Historic Preservation Project Grant from the Pennsylvania Historical and Museum Commission. St. George’s was one of 25 grants statewide selected from 86 eligible applications.

The matching grant of $25,000 (a total of $50K with our contribution) was awarded for the renovation and — where necessary — rebuilding of ten windows on the north side of the sanctuary. Your donations are needed to offset our required match.

Interested in making a special gift to this project? Please earmark it WINDOWS. Donations can be in a variety of ways: by check, online via the “donate” button at www.historicstgeorges.org or by transfer of stocks (please call the office at 215-925-7788 to arrange gifts of stock).

The project is one part of a larger work caring for much needed renovation and rebuilding all 44 windows in the church building. The estimated total cost is $230,000. The work will be done in phases as financial resources become available.

Window frames dating back to colonial times, (the church building was erected beginning 1763) have deteriorated to the point of being porous and drafty at best, completely inoperable at worst. Some original colonial glass is still in place and will be preserved.

Windows will be removed in pairs, and plywood will hold their place until they return in all their restored glory. Watch for scaffolding to go-up sometime soon. It is estimated the work will take three months in this first phase.

The ability to undertake other phases and thus complete the window restoration project for the entire church building is under consideration by St. George’s Trustees and will depend on additional grants, bequests and special gifts from church members and friends.

We are grateful to the team of Frank Renshaw, Gay Walling, Donna Miller and Pastor Day for their work in securing this grant.

— The Church Board of Trustees

St. George’s also congratulates fellow recipient Camp Curtin Memorial Methodist Episcopal Church, Dauphin County.

We are proud to be in the company of other Philadelphia recipients: the Friends of Old Pine Street, the Friends of the Japanese House and Garden, and Eastern State Penitentiary Historic Site, Inc.

Photos by Dick McCreight © www.bluestemlight.com
**CHRISTMAS MUSICAL**
**Join us Sunday, December 2nd**

Prelude: 3:00 p.m. Concert Begins: 3:30 p.m.
This year we are thrilled to offer the talents of Organist Dominic Silla, joined by the Hickory Brass Quartet. The Gospel Choir of the African Episcopal Church of St. Thomas directed by Walter Blocker, The Temple University Singers, with new director Mitos Andaya, John Lionarons on dulcimer, The Choir from Glassboro First United Methodist under the direction of William Mitchell and a special appearance by Philadelphia singer songwriter John Francis.
FREE PARKING! Ample free parking right next to the church under the Ben Franklin Bridge.

**UNIQUE GIFTS**
**See Our Expanded Gift Shop**

Christmas ornaments, original photos, newly published books ... we have it all. You are bound to find something special in our offerings: a bust of John Wesley to overlook your study, a CD of his brother’s music, a T-shirt declaring “I found my Methodist DNA at Historic St. George’s”. Shop is open during the week, and following services on Sunday. Give us a call at 215-925-7788 if you would like us to ship you items (maybe you saw that teacup when you visited and wish you had bought it then).

**REMEMBER ST. GEORGE’S IN YOUR ESTATE PLANNING**

Ask us about how your will, estate gifts, charitable annuities and stock gifts can be a living legacy. Consult your financial advisor before making a gift of cash or stock; tax laws shift and change, and you want to make the best decision for the current climate. St. George’s has opened a brokerage account allowing stock gifts instead of cash. Contact Church Administrator, Donna Miller, (office@historicstgeorges.org or 215-925-7788) for details.
Our Cups Runneth Over continued

So, we’re packing. After careful scrutiny about what to keep for the museum’s collection, chalices and patens from the former Bustleton UMC (NE Philadelphia, 1833-2012), Sara Cooper UMC (West Philadelphia, 1830-1979, NOTE: Hollywood star Nelson Eddy once sang in the church choir!), 43rd St. UMC (West Philadelphia, 1874-1949), and un-inscribed pieces from closed churches have headed off to Lancaster County and this Fall’s Council of Bishops meeting, the first stop before crossing the Atlantic.


Here at Historic St. George’s, World Communion Sunday was extra special this year. We gathered all the chalices and patens destined for new life, placed them on the altar and blessed them before shipment. Words we pray each Sunday invoking the Spirit’s “real presence” to come upon the broken bread and cup never meant more:

Lord,
make us ONE with Christ
ONE with each other
and ONE in ministry and service to all the world
until Christ comes in final victory
and WE feast at the heavenly banquet.

Here’s what puts the “Holy” in Holy Communion; that it’s about more than ME and God and God and ME. Holy Communion is about US. The Sunday School song rings in my ear: “I am the church, you are the church, we are the church together. ALL who follow Jesus, ALL around the world, yes we’re the church TOGETHER."

Unity is hard work. It is not something we do alone. It is not so much a product of or reward for earnest intentions, but a gift of the Spirit. Sometimes we receive it poorly or not at all. Nonetheless, it is not our own creation. And if unity is the gift the Spirit stirs in Christ’s worldwide body then, every Lord’s Day is World Communion Sunday. There is no time the church gathers when we are not constituted as the body of Christ — empowered for his work and witness in the world.

Once again, St. George’s Church is blessed to be the launch point for powerful inspiration. With God, new life is always rising — even from dead churches, dusty chalices and tarnished plates; hope is always rising above despair and transformation comes through the challenges we thought might shut us down.

May the Spirit stir your communion cups to run over, too. “This cup of blessing which we bless, is it not our SHARING in the body of Christ.”

We’re so much better together than we are alone.

— Pastor Day

INTERFAITH GROUP

Insightful interfaith dialogues Wednesdays in the Hopkins Fellowship Hall. Open and welcoming to all. Meetings begin with a simple shared meal at 6:30. DVD viewing, dialogue and discussion begin by 7:15, ending 8:45. Free of charge. Cash donation for meals appreciated but not required. Enter at side door, 326 New St, just around the corner from the main church entrance on N. 4th.

October 31
The Monsters We Love: TV’s Pop Culture Theodicy
November 14
Desmond Tutu’s God of Surprises
November 20, A TUESDAY
Understanding Happiness
with the Dali Lama, a British Rabbi, an Episcopal Bishop and a Muslim Scholar
December 5
The Prophetic Imagination of Walter Brueggemann
December 12
Shane Claiborne and the monastic Revolution among Young Adults
December 19
Celebrating the Season of Light: Christmas & Hannukah Traditions
Lots to catch up on since last Spring’s Messenger… Summer drew 25 of us to United Methodist Night at the Phillies. The Phils played the S.F. Giants and won the game, but…all our best cheering couldn’t get the Fightin’s into the postseason. Wait til next year.

Homecoming Sunday welcomed 4 new church members with two more joining in October; 15 new church members so far this year!). A 2012-13 Pictorial Directory is underway. Don’t miss out. Next photo dates are November 4 and 18.

Our application with the US Department of Interior for recognition as National Historic Landmark was delivered by summer’s end. Thanks and Kudos to Historian Jean Wolf for her extensive efforts. The 200+ page application added new insights to our understanding of St. George’s rich history, documenting things only speculated previously. We’re hoping for approval by Spring 2013. Followed by a p-a-r-t-y!!

Speaking of history, St. George’s and Mother Bethel AME Church were honored to receive the United Methodist General Commission on Archives and History’s 1012 Distinguished Service Award at the Commission’s banquet held at the Arch St. Quaker Meeting. United Methodists from around the world along with 25 members of St. George’s and Mother Bethel joined the celebration. Philadelphia Area Bishop Peggy Johnson expressed her pride and joy in our accomplishment.

St. George’s emerging group of young adults enjoyed outings to the American Jewish Museum and the Dead Sea Scrolls exhibit at the Franklin Institute. They are hooked into Philly Young Methodists (www.facebook.com/PhillyYoungMethodists), a group in the Philadelphia area “meeting in fellowship, bible study, volunteering, having fun and growing God’s kingdom in our city.” St. George’s hosted one of their study group meetings.

We made a new friend – folk artist John Francis, guitarist and song writer, who performed pieces from his “Better Angels” CD at a September concert in the sanctuary. John is the music minister for Broad St. ministry. He’ll make a special appearance on Sunday, November 18 and the Christmas Musical, December 2nd.

St. George’s Annual Charge Conference is set for Sunday, November 18. Central District Superintendent Dr. Anita Powell will preside at the election of officers and adoption of the 2013 budget.

On the Mission Front: A group of church faithful are cooking and serving meals at Arch St. UMC’s Grace Café in October, November and several dates in the new year… We also met and exceeded the Central District’s asking for the UMC’s Nothing But Nets campaign ($300+). Thanks to all who got us to the goal. Next on the mission agenda, our raising $1,000 to support the work of the shelter for homeless men at Old First Reformed Church, 4th & Race.

There was a Weekly Pool Party in St. George’s Courtyard all summer long. The swimmers were among the infants we’ve baptized in 2012.

**IMPORTANT DATES**

Time Traveler in 2013

Confirmation classes make your reservations now for the popular history exploration day.

Select the **Time Traveler** button online at www.historicstgeorges.org. Sign up for either **Saturday, March 9, Saturday, April 20** or **Saturday, May 11, 2013**
Baptisms
All Saints Sunday, November 4, 2012
Hannah Tracey
Daughter of Sherry and Michael, sister to Jackson.

New Members
September 16
Sara Foster & Jody Suetter
Sean Mulune
Kallie Turner
Katie & Michael Barbato

Godspeed
David, Mindi and Bennett Beahm – relocating to Kansas City
Joseph Van Hoesen – by request

Weddings
Rebecca Anzel to Dan Lebo, June 16th at Trinity UMC, Hackettstown, NJ
Kari L. Swenson to Paul C. Scheck, October 6
Francesca Lavelle to Russ Kalbach, November 17
Kristen Lloyd to Fred Runge, December 1

Buried Between the Walls!
A RESEARCHER DIGS DEEP

Prominently stationed behind the desk of St. George’s archivist Donna Miller is the 10 volume set titled, “A Journal of the Travels of William Colbert, Methodist Preacher thro’ Parts of Maryland, Pennsylvania, New York, Delaware and Virginia in 1790 to 1833.” Colbert (1764-1833) was one of the pioneer itinerants of the Methodist Episcopal Church and was reported by his peers to be a fearless missionary and powerful preacher. His daily record of events, aspirations and soul searching is only rivaled by that of Bishop Asbury’s.

Colbert was a close friend of Rev. Richard Allen and his wife Sarah. When in Philadelphia, he often dined and took respite at the Allen’s Spruce Street home. As part of his duties, he would often preach at Bethel Church at Sixth and Lombard Streets. He expressed his happiness in the enthusiasm and devotion of the Bethel congregants and was in attendance for the raising of the new church on Saturday, October 2, 1805 and afterwards at an elegant dinner at the home of the Allens.

Sadly, one of Colbert’s duties at Bethel church was to co-officiate at a funeral service on December 19, 1805 for Charles Boston, a black man who he had comforted during his last days. He wrote in his journal:

In the afternoon attended the funeral of Charles Boston a Black man, who was interred between the old and new walls of Bethel Church [emphasis added]. A great multitude attended the funeral, which was conducted with a great degree of solemnity. Absalom Jones, Richard Allen, and James Champion walked before, James Smith, Jeffry Bula and myself followed . . . .

Wait. Did Rev. Colbert just state that the body was buried between the walls of the church? Could the new “rough-cast” 1805 building have been built like a shell around the wooden structure that was originally

Continued on page 7

THE PASTOR’S CIRCUIT

• Host United Methodist Gen. Commission on Archives & History, Sept. 13-15 at Historic St. George’s
• Presentation to a meeting of the Retired Clergy Assn of the E Pa Conference – Sept. 27, Cornwall Manor, Cornwall Pa.
• Host E Pa Conf Historical Society – Oct. 20, Historic St. George’s
• Attend (w/Wesley Chalice) the Installation of Bishop John Schol to the GNJC, Oct. 27, Princeton University Chapel
• Attend the Fall Session of the E Pa. Conference, Hempfield UMC, Lancaster Pa., Nov. 10
• Attend Bishop’s Dialogue on Homosexuality (Not Debate!) Nov. 17, Solebury UMC
From our Museum & Archives …

OPENING THE VAULT

Treasure Trove in a Writing Desk: the Life of a 19th Century Preacher

Working on a digital catalogue of our vault, volunteer Tom Bartlow discovered a plain wooden writing desk. Opening it, he found certificates and objects that give a glimpse into the life of a late 19th century preacher, church official and historian.

John Storah Janes McConnell (named after Bishop Janes, who baptized him as an infant and later ordained him as a Deacon) lived from 1839 to 1903 and is buried in Philadelphia’s Laurel Hill cemetery. His career with the church ran the gamut from Junior Preacher (1860), through being received on trial in the Philadelphia Conference (1863), ordained as a Deacon (1865) and Elder (1867). Rev. McConnell served many churches in Pennsylvania, ranging from Philadelphia to Mahanoy City in the coal region.

In addition to parish ministry, Rev. McConnell served a multitude of Conference positions: Secretary, Trustee of Methodist Hospital, Commissioner on the Bicentennial of the birth of John Wesley, correspondent for the Christian Advocate, President of Chester Heights Camp Meeting Association. With all this, he somehow found time to be President of the Commission on Conference Entertainment and contributed to the care of conference records as Manager of the Historical Society.

His writing desk contains a few personal items: daguerreotypes of McConnell in his youth and a long letter to his wife with the salutation “Dear Madame,” jokingly telling her he’s been away on Conference business for so long she’ll have forgotten who he is. He strikes a more serious tone when he discusses difficulties he is having with Bishop Neely. Although the details of the disagreement are not included, he seems to have prevailed in a contentious matter.

Also preserved are a series of licenses that track his path through the ministerial process, such as the license for Local Preacher shown on the left. These items will become part of a display in our museum.

Two other certificates in the desk reflect an issue that is still being discussed today: temperance. A current exhibit at the Constitution Center in Philadelphia features this topic, and a recent PBS series looked at the issues surrounding the country’s attempt to regulate alcohol consumption. Rev. McConnell kept two documents showing his membership in the Temperance Movement of the Methodist church.

Researching Rev. McConnell points out the funny twists such work can take: one of his sons also had the initials J. S. In the son’s lifetime, another J. S. McConnell, living on the West Coast, wrote many hymns, one which became an uncredited hit for the Sons of the Pioneers: The Heavenly Aeroplane! And yet another John McConnell, this one in Iowa, was the inspiration for the celebration that has become Earth Day. These men might not share genetics, but they share the spirit of creativity and productive work of their common name. Rev. McConnell’s son served as a missionary for a while in Puerto Rico, work certainly inspired by his father.

— Donna Miller, Administrator/Archivist
St. George’s begins its second year of the Cultural Fieldwork Initiative, an exciting brainchild of the National History Day and the National Archives. The program takes students from Temple University who are studying to become history teachers and pairs them with local museums offering hands-on experience in creating lesson plans from original sources. The students complete a project designed by their sponsoring museum, so everyone benefits.

This Fall we are blessed with three talented interns: Leigh Buzzard, Sam Beatrice and Nick Varallo. Leigh is making an electronic record of the first accounting book from St. George’s, a volume rich in detail about Colonial life. The excerpt above shows timeless charges still faced today: washing the house, cleaning the cellar … but then comes “shaving Mr. Boardman”. An examination of Pastor Day’s recent expense reports shows no such charges! As Leigh makes her way through the 18th century handwriting, she is bringing to light many unexpected ways early Methodists supported the economy of the day.

Leigh found multiple entries for the purchase of beer and wine for ministers, not to mention spirits for workmen. Though somewhat surprising to traditionally temperance-minded Methodists, 18th century Philadelphia water made other liquid alternatives necessary. Once Leigh’s project is complete, the account book entries will be online as a resource for all to explore. Leigh is grateful for the work done by Laura Leibman, a Reed College professor who created an Study Guide for Colonial Handwriting. Check out our web site Archives/Researcher Tools page for a link to the guide.

Sam Beatrice, an Eagle Scout and Assistant Scoutmaster, is working off site, scanning in slides depicting a multitude of Eastern Pennsylvania Conference churches. These photos will be made available on our web site, evolving into a rich resource for researchers. Thanks to the crew at Drew for steering us to ThumbsPlus; this program will help Sam create a catalogue of the images, many of churches that are no longer standing.

Nick Varallo, keenly interested in “visual learning”, is working on a project he explains as “creating an interactive map/database which shows Methodist churches in the Philadelphia area in the 1890s, some still active today. The map will eventually include photos when available to go along with the short description that accompanies each entry.” He will then be analyzing the trends of church placement. Some questions he’ll address are: what areas had the most concentration of churches? Which areas feature churches that are still in operation today? Why did so many churches close or merge? Nick’s work will also be featured on our web site.

We are grateful to Temple University and the National Archives for organizing this valuable initiative. Explore results from last year’s projects at www.historicstgeorges.weebly.com, organized to help students learn about Methodist History. Alex Fegely, intern, also made the collage of St. George’s icons gracing the top of the page. Laura Deets designed a take-home packet for youth group leaders to generate conversations about our Time Traveler programs.

— Donna Miller, Administrator/Archivist

Introducing Teens to History… Summer Intern Demetrius Smith, a sophomore at Philadelphia’s Germantown High, took on a variety of tasks, including dusting our library collection.
Two of the slides digitized by our intern. Left, Cressona UMC; Right, St. Johns, Tamaqua. These two churches were discontinued in 2011, so the “ministry of memory” at the Archives is fortunate to have visual records to augment the written files.

A partial list of the Philadelphia churches that will appear on our intern’s online map. Taken from an 1877 issue of “The Monthly Messenger” the list gives a good overview of the properties, including the then-current value. The complete list appears in the Research Tools tab on the Archives page of our web site.

A Researcher’s Tale continued from page 4

a blacksmith shop? Bethel did not own a cemetery until April of 1810 and had very little ground around the edges of the church for burials. Interestingly, the City of Philadelphia’s Department of Health did not start collecting “Cemetery Returns” until 1806, and between then and April of 1810 the records show that at least 88 individuals were buried at Bethel. Where were they buried? Could they have been buried between the walls like the observant Rev. Colbert recorded?

Author, historic preservationist and founder of Wolf Historic Preservation, Jean K. Wolf believes it is possible. Ms. Wolf is also the coauthor of a 2006 land use study that looked at the historical records of the adjacent land to the south of the church.

We have no clear description of the inside of Mother Bethel church. The northern exterior, from an illustration of 1829 has windows on two stories, a door, and two chimneys. This means the space between the windows that is solid masonry was for fireplaces and flues. This wall on the inside had to be more or less as we see it on the outside. A wooden interior wall left over from the old church at the north seems unlikely. We don’t have a similar view for the south side. Could it be that in 1805 they realized there were southern graves adjoining the blacksmith shop and they left remnants of the old wooden wall in place as a divider for the church, but built the stone wall farther south, covering as much of the burial ground as they could?

Colbert describes the space as a grave. That usually is a place in the ground, not in a mausoleum or crypt. Based on Bethel’s plot of land, estimated dimensions of the church and the size of a coffin, it appears that 88 bodies could have been buried in the ground between the two walls. Some may have remained in the ground south of the wall. This thus accounts for no other burial ground before the 1810 accession of the one on Queen Street.

For historians there is nothing more important than a reliable witness to an event. Without one, the researcher is left trying to connect dots that may or may not be all there. Nestled behind archivist Miller’s chair is a treasure trove of dots waiting to be connected!

Tony Buckalew,
M.A. Research Historian
Penn State and American Public Universities
Among the hundreds of visitors seeking a touchstone for Methodist history and colonial American religious tradition, St. George's welcomed these special guests from around the neighborhood, nation and world:

A group of 13 students from Garrett Evangelical Theological Seminary used St. George's as home base for a nine-day intensive course in early Methodist History in July. The Midwesterners lived at the Holiday Inn down the street, held sessions in Hopkins Fellowship Hall, and visited significant colonial Methodist historic sites: Mother Bethel AME church, Christ Church, Lancaster First UMC, Old Otterbein Church, Boehm's Chapel and Long's Barn (see the photo above). In Maryland: Lovely Lane and Otterbein Churches, Francis Asbury’s grave and the village of Abingdon, original site of Cokesbury College. The group enjoyed a visit from the then Baltimore-Washington Conference Bishop John School. In addition, members of the class preached their way through some of John Wesley’s most famous sermons, putting Father John’s homiletics into contemporary context. Dr. Mark Fowler taught the class with assistance from Pastor Day.

Members of the United Methodist General Commission on Archives and History used St. George’s to host their 2012 annual meeting, convened by the Rev. Dr. Bob Williams, General Sec’ty and Bishops Violet Fisher (retired) and Jeremiah Park (Harrisburg area). Commission members from Europe, Africa and across the USA attended and worshipped here, communing using the Wesley Chalice. The group also visited Philadelphia’s most historic Methodist churches: Arch St., Tindley Temple and Mother African Zoar; and Mother Bethel AME. The congregations of St. George’s and Mother Bethel were honored to receive the Commission’s 2102 Distinguished Service Award.

Visitors from area genealogical societies were pleased that church administrator/archivist “blew” their way. Donna met them at the National Archives Philadelphia location as featured speaker at a luncheon. The group heard about the treasure trove of material at St. George’s. In addition to regular membership books, the researchers are also interested in our collection of Philadelphia Conference Journals, memoirs, and correspondence.

The Rev. Jeff Procter-Murphy, Scottsdale Arizona, one author of the popular Living the Questions church study group series, visited St. George’s Sunday services this summer. Jeff presented us with an autographed copy of his book: Living the Questions: The Wisdom of Progressive Christianity. We have used Murphy’s LTQ curriculum several times.

A recent drop-in from Auburn, Oregon expressed interest in a Rev. Chew who had been a minister at the now-closed 20th Street M. E. church. We were able to produce Chew's Conference Memoir (thank you Drew UM Archives & History Center for that great index!) and also share some newspaper articles about 20th Street in its heyday. Rev. Chew’s descendant will be sending us a photo of the commemorative platter the congregation gave their minister in appreciation.

A visitor from Florida was excited to find his G-G-G grandfather, Henry Garlanger, listed among our founding members, while the Willow Grove UMC completed its search for photos of past ministers for an anniversary booklet. We hope they will send us a copy for their file!

Tour groups continue to make pilgrimages to our site, including 20 servicemen and women from Ft. Mead, MD. Claire and John Byers from the Wesley Family Rectory in Epworth, UK. Other pilgrims include the Youtheology group from St. Paul’s Seminary; Professor David Krueger’s American Religion class from Temple University and a group of students from Philadelphia Community College. We are excited about the trend in our institutions of learning that gets students out of the classroom and into the places they are studying.

The Clark Atlanta University Choir performed at St. George’s this summer.