



Historic St. George's
United Methodist Church

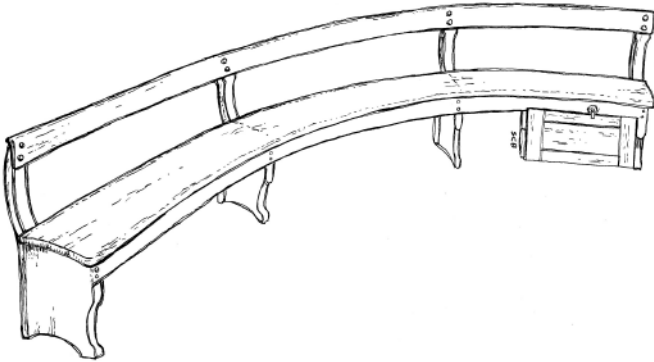
MESSENGER



AUTUMN 2007; Vol. 26, No. 5

“Come Ye Thankful People, Come”

*Anniversary Sunday & Walking Tour of
Neighborhood Churches*



November 18

All members, associates and friends are invited to join us on this day of thanksgiving. St. George's has been a center of Methodist meeting and worship since 1769. We will be mark the occasion at the 11 am worship, gathering folks from across the Delaware Valley for a homecoming to remember. There will be special music that day along with other surprises, all followed by a luncheon in the Social Hall.

After lunch, join a **Walking Tour** through the sanctuaries of Old First Reformed and St. Augustine's. The day ends at with a reception at St. George's. Folks from neighboring congregations will share in this unique chance to experience the powerful spirit and stories of the three locations led by the pastors and historians at each stop. The tour begins at 1 pm; mark your calendar and be part of this progressive discovery adventure. We understand there are some unusual photos of the early 4th Street neighborhood in the St. Augustine Fellowship Hall, just part of the treasures we'll see.

What the Wind Blew In ...

Visitors to Our Museum & Archives

Since our last newsletter, we have opened our door to visitors from as far away as **Queensland, Australia** and **Seoul, Korea**. Each new person we meet stirs the spirit and message that St. George is privileged to present. Sharing our story, and hearing the tales of churches from far and wide, we rejoice in the opportunity to connect with all those who come to this church. **Rev. Brian Shearingham** and his wife, **Audrey**, came to us from England's **Solebury Circuit**, where Brian serves as General Superintendent. This circuit was once presided by Francis Asbury.

One day, the ringing bell announced a throng of teenagers and their chaperones. On their way to Puerto Rico and stranded by a storm, the **Strangely Warm Players** from Ann Arbor, Michigan, had found their way to the home of Methodism. These creative, active teenagers now hope to find a way to perform their modern dramas in our colonial setting one day. Remember: if you are stranded at Philadelphia International, we are nearby!

Sometimes it is not a new friend, but a long-time Associate Member who appears. In September **Jean Rouse Spell** and her husband **Pete**, joined us for worship on a visit from South Carolina. As much as we enjoyed meeting them, we decided that next time we'd like to encounter them at *their* home, the beautiful **Two Meeting Street B&B** in Charleston. If you have the luck to be traveling through that city, stop and say hello: www.twomeetingstreet.com.

Elaine and Albert Wong of California joined us in worship one Sunday in July. They were marking their 25th Anniversary, which began with their wedding at St. George's celebrated by Rev. Bob Curry.

continued on next page

We have also been blessed with meeting the descendants of TWO of the early Methodists whose names appear on our preacher's plaques.. **Jean Stapleton** and **William Farran** stopped by one day to look into Jean's relative, **Robert R. Roberts**. After finding his name on the plaque, we went upstairs to the library and spent the day researching this remarkable man who was one of two bishops who took the place of Francis Asbury. He also started DePauw University, among his many accomplishments. His descendant Jean is a writer, so we are going to let her tell her reaction to St. George's:

"It's great to visit Constitution Hall, but you have to move along and not touch anything. At St. George's you can sit where they sat, pray where they prayed and really feel as if history is all around you. And your library is just wonderful. I've checked on Bishop Roberts before but got only the bare outline that he was an early Methodist bishop. Now I feel I know him as a human being."

A few weeks later, two delightful sisters, **Sylvia Cookman Hnat** and **Marilyn Barrow**, made their way here from their homes in Florida and Virginia to visit the place where their great-great-grandfather preached. **George G. Cookman** is just a little further down the second plaque from Robert R. Roberts, and his is quite a story as well. An active abolitionist, he is the only Methodist preacher mentioned favorably by Frederick R. Douglass in his memoirs. Cookman decided at one point to return to visit his home in England, but his wife chose to remain stateside with their young son. The boat that the father sailed on sunk, but the son, Alfred, went



Jean Stapleton and William Farran discover Robert R. Roberts's Legacy

on in his father's footsteps and became an influential Methodist minister in this area. The Cookman Methodist Church in Philadelphia was named after Alfred.

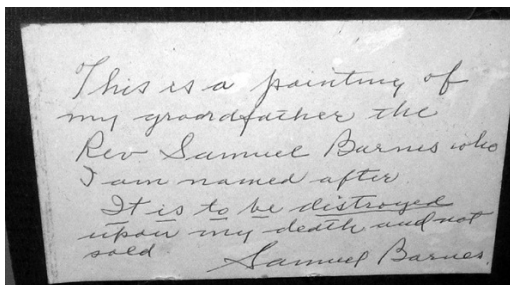
An idea for the future: Plan a visit to St. George's with your UMW or other church group. We'll give you a tour geared to your interests and even help you arrange lunch on site. Call the office at 215-925-7788/

One Mystery Solved, One Still Pending: *The Whitecar Doll & the Barnes Portrait*

Your editor's face is a little red. Immediately after publishing the last newsletter with the picture of the little doll who returned to us from its owner, I turned my attention to rearranging a display in one of our museum rooms. In the case I found a black bonnet, just like our doll was wearing, labeled "bonnet of **Sally Whitecar**" ... I realized that the label on the doll's dress was being misread. She represents Sally, the wife of an early member of St. George's. In that picture

you will note that her hair can be seen peeking out under her bonnet – the original Sally would not have permitted that. The director of the Philadelphia Doll Museum identified the doll as a Nancy Ann Storybook type from the 1950s, so all questions have been cleared up. If you are ever in Philadelphia, you might want to see that museum’s collection, one of the nation’s few of black dolls. A set of dolls designed to teach history includes a figure of Richard Allen at the pulpit of Mother Bethel.

Sally aside, History Detectives can still uncover plenty of mysteries at St. George’s. Perhaps you have read about the ongoing controversy in Philadelphia about moving the Barnes art collection from its home in Merion to a new location in center city? The original collector had stated many restrictions in his will regarding the moving of the works, which include some fine Impressionist work. Well, St. George’s may have its very own Barnes art brouhaha. We have a portrait on our walls that once belonged to **Samuel Barnes**, pastor here from 1883 to 1886. In his long service, his ministry was performed in four conferences: Baltimore, West Virginia, Central Pennsylvania and Philadelphia. Hanging on our wall, we have a portrait of his grandfather, also a Rev. Samuel Barnes. The odd message on the back in the grandson’s handwriting says: “This is a painting of my grandfather, the Rev. Samuel Barnes who I am named after. It is to be destroyed upon my death and not sold.” Obviously his wishes for destruction were not followed. Perhaps he left the portrait here in the basement when he lived on New Street and forgot



about it in later years. He lived to be 85 and by the time of his passing may have mellowed about the fate of the picture. We are glad to have it, as it is a handsome painting and the label makes for a good conversation piece.

Events Past and into the Future

Outreach to Our Old City Neighbors

St. George’s recently celebrated two events that welcome the larger community of Old City and fellow Methodists to our church. In the first week of October, we went to the dogs... and the cats, iguanas and parakeets. October 6th saw our first Blessing of the Animals. Events such as the Blessing are held to open our doors wider to our neighbors. And we are grateful to **Debra Farrington**, who

made the train trip from Hershey, PA to assist. Debra is the author of *Animal Blessings*, published by Paraclete Press (www.debrafarrington.com). We also teamed up with a local anthropologist who used the burgeoning popularity of “dog parks” to study the interaction of the humans at the other end of the leash. **Lisa Jane Hardy** chose St. George’s as the spot to preview and discuss her work on the Tuesday following the Blessing.

Smithsonian Museum Day

St. George’s was proud to be one of the 10 Pennsylvania museums highlighted in this national event on September 29th. Over a dozen folks found their way to the museum that day and were treated to a tour by Pastor Day.

Interfaith Study Group

Old City and Society Hill members from Old St. Joe’s, Old Pine, and Society Hill Synagogue have joined an ongoing group from St. George’s to study the major religions. Last year the group concluded its sessions on Judaism with a visit to the Society Hill Synagogue with Rabbi Avi Winkour. This year, the focus is on Islam. We are enjoying getting to know our neighboring congregations.

Making Books Come Alive

Not resting on our laurels, we have two events planned for November and December that will continue to showcase our beautiful sanctuary and our Methodist roots. **November 17**, we are inviting students from local seminaries: Palmer, Lutheran, Drew, and

Princeton, to compete in a **History Detective Storytelling Contest**. We will provide books that have been culled from our library shelves and the students will be challenged to dig through them to find quirky details, then devise and present a story using the facts they uncovered. The winners get bragging rights and the first choice of volumes for their personal libraries. We will hold a team open for non-seminarians for anyone who thinks they are a better story-teller than a preacher! All participants get some coaching in storytelling and a free lunch. We'll report on the winners in the Christmas newsletter.



Know a Good Source for Magnolia Leaves?

For our Christmas Concert, we would like to deck our halls in Colonial-style holiday charm. If you have any economical ideas for creating beauty on a shoestring, please contact us: ever mindful of being good stewards of our funds, we'd like to achieve the splendor without being a big spender. **Join us to deck the halls on December 1st**. Contact the church office or check the web site for times.

27th Annual Christmas Musical

December 2nd is reserved for our **27th Annual Christmas Musical**, an Old City tradition started by Brian McCloskey. We hope that

Brian will be our guest of honor at this year's event, which will include the **Conservatory Brass** from **Curtis Institute**, a children's choir from Bryn Mawr's **Church of the Redeemer, Episcopal**, the **Select Ensemble** from **Germantown Academy**, the **Covenant Ringers** bell choir from Covenant United Methodist Church, Springfield, PA and the **North Penn High School Chamber Singers** from Lansdale, PA. Also joining us this year will be representatives of the **Seven Sisters**, a group of African American women who combine stories, music and quilts to show how Christmas was celebrated by their forbearers. Our organist, **Dominic Silla**, will assume the direction of this esteemed event. If you are in the area we hope you will join us. Be here by 3:00 pm to get a good seat.

Wish List: the Opportunity for a Memorial

The **Reverend Charles Otto** and his wife, **Margaret (Peg) Gorman**, have kicked off the project of restoring the wrought iron handrail at our museum entrance with a generous gift in memory of his parents, **Mr. & Mrs. Charles Elmer Otto**, and their cousin, **Lilian Gardiner**. We rejoice with Rev. Otto in his recent June ordination and send prayers for the prison ministry that the couple provides in the Pittston, PA area.

Another item on the list that is receiving attention is the restoration of the Pilmoor and Asbury portraits. **The General Council on Archives and History** approved a grant to address that important work, and we are interviewing restoration experts.

Gifts that Keep on Giving

St. George's has been blessed in the past by faithful supporters who have included this institution in their estate planning. These gifts have been instrumental in helping us accomplish our mission of historic preservation, education, and vital community development. If you would like to join these gracious and generous folks, we will work with you to help develop your bequest to reflect your wishes (there are also tax advantages for your estate). Please contact Pastor Day at (215) 925-7788 or e-mail him at pastor@historicstgeorges.org.

New IRA Tax-Free Gift Provision Remains in Effect Until December 31, 2007

If you are 70½ years or older, the government is allowing charitable gifts up to \$100,000 directly from your IRA to St. George's with no Federal income tax if the gift is arranged through your IRA Administrator as an outright gift. Your tax advisor can provide information on specific state requirements. If you want help with researching this avenue, please contact Pastor Day at (215) 925-7788 or e-mail him at pastor@historicstgeorges.org.

The ongoing support of our Associates and organizations such as GCAH allows us to keep the spirit of this shrine visible to all.

Here are two new items that have made it on to our list of wishes:

A wooden Noah's Ark for our Classroom. We are working on refurbishing this area and would love to add this touch. We found a delightful one by artist Ted Nichols in Maryland in the \$750 range.

A new portrait frame for **Anna Jarvis's** picture. Anna hangs on our wall next to her mother in a failing wooden frame. Our friend **Scott Friedgen-Veitch**, pastor in Honey Brook, PA is on the lookout for a suitable frame to give Anna the look she deserves.

St. George's Favorite Tenor

First Stop: The Windy City

For our Associate members in the Chicago area, you will have the opportunity to hear our frequent soloist, Metropolitan Opera tenor **John Easterlin**, as the Hunchback Brother in the Richard Strauss opera, *Die Frau ohne Schatten*, in a new production at the Lyric Opera of Chicago, November 16, 20, 26 and 30 and December 4, 8, 12, 16 and 20. Under the baton of Sir Andrew Davis, Mr. Easterlin will star opposite the renowned Deborah Voight and Christine Brewer in this new Paul Curran production.

Can't Get to Chicago?

In November and December, you can catch Mr. Easterlin as Jack O'Brien on *PBS Great Performances'* nationwide airing of the new Los Angeles Opera production of Weill's *Rise and Fall of the City of*

Mahagonny, opposite Patti LuPone, Audra McDonald, and Anthony Dean Griffey.

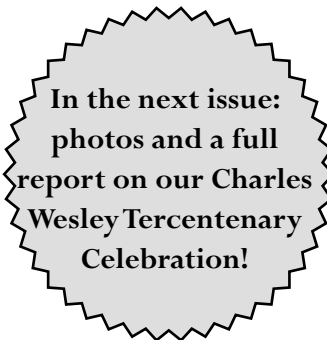
You can find out more about Mr. Easterlin on two new web sites:

www.myspace.com/johneasterlin
and

www.youtube.com/johneasterlin .

And Full Circle, Back to St. George's!

We celebrate John's success and look forward to his return to St. George's next March for our special services on Palm Sunday and Easter.



Uncovering Treasure

John Harris, D.C., an Associate Member from Concordville, PA likes to use a metal detector at historical sites when he's not readjusting someone's spine. John had some luck in our side yard and turned up the bottom portion of an antique tea strainer that is now on display with our Wedgewood teapot. We are holding a Mother's Day Tea in honor of Anna Jarvis next May, but we'll probably use tea bags. Josiah Wedgewood's teapot has been reissued more than once since he designed a gallon version to honor his friend, John Wesley. The *Christian Advocate* of 1938 advertises one for the princely sum of \$1.50. We carry the current version in our gift shop, but inflation has come even to teapots.

By Design

A Banner Day

On Homecoming Sunday, the congregation was greeted by a banner displaying the new logo. Recently, the designer, Greg Paone, met with the talented craftsperson who turned his idea into reality. Wendy Anderson, an instructor at Philadelphia University, worked closely with Greg to create a piece that has added beauty and meaning to our entrance. See photo on last page.

Drawing the Line

Scattered throughout the newsletter, you will see the charming line drawings of Sandy Clay Bauer, who with her husband Robert recently celebrated 38 years as a design and illustration team and as a married couple. They are both graduates of Philadelphia College of Art (now part of the University of the Arts) and life-long Philadelphia area residents. Members of The First United Methodist Church of Germantown, Bob & Sandy were active in establishing and nurturing The Drama Group, a community theatre group which has been producing shows at the church for more than 27 years.



Out With the Old, In With the... Sometimes Even Older!

With the invaluable assistance of retired Drew University Librarian, **Dr. Kenneth Rowe**, we have been hard at work organizing our library to make it a more useful research tool. Ken has helped us to weed out unneeded volumes and through his guidance, we have added 29 new titles courtesy of Ohio Wesleyan, as well as a few hand-picked gems such as Frank Baker's hard-to-find *Wesley and the Church of England*. During the time Ken has spent with us, we've developed a reference shelf to help answer questions that arise. The very next day, the shelf was put to the test when a college student came in to explore the life of Charles Pitman. We knew we had pulled it off when he said to this novice, "I can't believe how much you know about him!"

Ken also identified a very important work on our shelves: *An Apology of African Methodism* by Benjamin Tanner. Tanner (1835-1923) had a long influential career in the African Methodist Episcopal (A.M.E.) Church, including time as bishop. For those of you who like to dig online, you can read a digitized



Greg Paone and Wendy Anderson Examine their Creation

version of this work at <http://docsouth.unc.edu/church/tanner/menu.html>.

One of the books we found a new home for was a 1858 Reunion Book from **Connecticut Wesleyan University**, which included photos of the classmates and biographies. The university was happy to give it a home and wrote us to say they had never seen one like it before and were enjoying examining it.

**Congratulations to
Terry & Judy Bowman
of Denton, NC for giving
us our newsletter name!
We appreciated all your
fine suggestions.**

Historic St. George's United Methodist Church
235 North Fourth Street
Philadelphia, PA 19106
215-925-7788
E-mail: office@historicstgeorges.org
Online at www.historicstgeorges.org
Alfred T. Day III, Pastor
Donna Miller, Administrator
Lorenzo Crew, Sexton

Associate Members

St. George's relies on the support of our Associate Members. We are grateful for your continuing dedication to the mission of our historical church and its ministry in today's world. Twice a year, an envelope is included with your newsletter to facilitate giving; the next issue will include the last for 2007. While not "membership" in the official sense, these gifts allow us to keep our doors open to the public during the week. To help our new administrator keep good records, please let us know when you move. If there is an error on your address label, we apologize (especially to Geraldine Miller, whom we tried to rename Delphine!).

We would love to keep in touch with our Associate members via e-mail. If you have an e-mail account and would like to share your address with us at office@historicstgeorges.org. We pledge to respect your privacy; our records are not shared with any other organization.