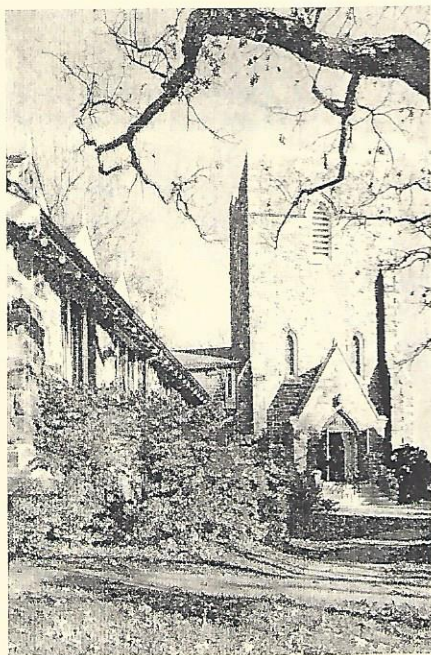




St. Alban's Parish
Timeline



*This chronology was compiled and written
by Francine Morris Swift
with additions by Jennifer Rulli
April 21, 2002.*

St. Alban's Parish Timeline

- 1754 Joseph Nourse is born in London on July 16.
- 1769 Nourse family emigrates to Virginia.
- 1789 After serving in the Continental Army, Joseph is appointed Registrar of the Treasury where he is closely associated with Alexander Hamilton. He follows the mobile government to New York and Philadelphia, then to Washington, D.C.

The northern boundary of Georgetown was about where Q Street crosses what is now Wisconsin Avenue. The first northbound stagecoach stop to change horses was at Tennallytown¹, about where the former Sears store stood.

- 1813 Joseph sells his farm north of Georgetown to Charles Carroll and bought another at the junction of Woodley Road and Tennallytown Road (Wisconsin Avenue). His purchase included the present Cathedral close and the Beauvoir estate. He renames the estate Mt. Alban. It is described as a hospitable place where guests included "Mr. J. Q. Adams and lady".
- 1817 Joseph buys about a hundred acres north of his property for his son, Charles, who had resigned his Army commission to become chief clerk of the War Department.
- 1827 Charles finishes a house with stone from a nearby quarry. "The Highlands" is the present site of Sidwell Friends School.
- 1841 Joseph dies, his Christian devotion remarked in his obituaries and diaries of the day. "Mt. Alban" is purchased by the Rev. Dr. Spencer and a group of "Baltimore gentlemen" as the site for a school. The school failed and the building was rented by the Rev. Mr. Anthony Ten Broeck who moved his school from New Jersey. He fitted a room as a chapel and the Nourse family attended services regularly, especially Charles' daughter, Phoebe, who was a near-invalid. She earned small sums doing fine needlework when bedridden.

¹ *The settlement was named for John Tennally, who owned a tavern where River Road forked to the west of the "Road to Fredericktown" in 1791. He was illiterate and other spellings vary, but the three syllable spelling is the most common until well into the twentieth century; The Post Office rejected the name of the area in favor of "Friendship" for the new station in 1929. A citizens' group persuaded Metro to retain the name, albeit with "simplified" spelling. I have used contemporary spelling. FMS*

- 1850 Miss Phoebe dies, leaving \$40.00 in gold "To be given to the Rev. Mr. Ten Broeck as the beginning of a fund for a free church at Mt. Alban."
- 1851 On March 13, the first anniversary of Miss Phoebe's death, her family joins Mr. Ten Broeck in breaking ground for a small wooden church on the half acre her \$40.00 helped buy.
- 1853 The wooden building is entirely enclosed, but Mr. Ten Broeck's trustees fail to redeem the mortgage and the rest of Mt. Alban was sold. His faithful little congregation found a new shepherd when the Rev. Mr. Wentworth L. Child took missionary charge of the parish.
- 1854 The first Vestry met on Easter Monday and formally elected Mr. Child the first rector. The parish was organized according to the laws of the Diocese of Maryland and offered free of debt to that diocese the following May. In that first year, there were thirteen baptisms.

The "old wooden church" is still with us. It was entered through what was to become the baptistery (now St. John's chapel), and extended forward to the long pews. The old school building became the rectory. St. Alban's was the only church north of Georgetown. The original parish boundaries encompassed everything west of Rock Creek, north of Georgetown, and north to the boundaries of Norwood Parish, Bethesda (approximately Wisconsin Avenue and Bradley Boulevard). On May 24, 1855 the building was consecrated.



Circa 1896, The "Old Wooden Church," before the first enlargement in 1900.

- 1855 Mr. and Mrs. W. D. C. Murdock present a pipe organ.
- 1856 The first communion silver is given as a memorial to Mrs. James H. Causten.
- c. 1857 Miss Rosa Nourse builds a small parochial school across Tenallytown Road from the church where she will teach neighborhood children for nearly 30 years.
- 1860 Mr. Child dies.

- 1861 The Rev. Mr. William Christian is called to St. Alban's five days before the Civil War begins.

The Civil War is barely mentioned in parish records. A string of fortifications was built around the city, many within the parish boundaries--Battery Kimball, Fort Sumner, Fort Bayard, Fort Reno, and Fort Stevens are most notable. St. Alban's was the only church in the area; the parish noted with pleasure that the soldiers who attended services were well-behaved. Only once was there trouble. One morning, the altar was found pushed forward against the chancel rail. Some soldiers had thought the church silver was hidden under the altar. It wasn't, and they were arrested. In 1864, Mr. Christian resigned because of ill health.

- 1865 The Rev. Mr. John H. Chew is called to St. Alban's. During his 16 year tenure, a new rectory is built and Miss Rosa's brave little school teaches neighborhood children in the morning and "young ladies" two afternoons a week. She was the first and only usher, rang the service bell, and was sometimes the only person attending service.

- 1874 The "urban center" of the parish is Tenleytown. Services were held in the open air, a hotel, and a Baptist church. The first St. Columba's Chapel was built in 1875. It was served by St. Alban's rectors for 30 years. At about the same time, the Fort Reno-Mission was founded to serve the considerable black community that had sought the shelter of the fort during the war. In just 20 years, the little wooden church was enriched by two missions.

- 1880-81 Mr. Chew resigns because of ill health and the Rev. Mr. Neilson Falls takes his place. He had a large family and was obliged to take a government job to make ends meet. He organized the first vested choir of boys.

- 1885 Mrs. Grover Cleveland attends St. Alban's when living in the "summer cottage" that gave Cleveland Park its name. A contemporary description notes the modest nature of the little wooden church, its interior chiefly distinguished by a gigantic stove with a meandering pipe. That stove remained a feature of parish life for years.

- 1895 Mr. Falls resigns, feeling that the parish and its two missions needs more energy than he is able to give. The Rev. Mr. Philip M. Rhinelanders is called. During his seven month tenure, he organized a Chancel Guild, reorganized the boy choir, and introduced a sense of order and discipline to the easy-going country church.

- 1896 The first bishop of the new Diocese of Washington transfers the energetic Mr. Rhinelander to the Pro-Cathedral and nominates the Rev. Mr. G. C. F. Bratenahl in his place
- 1897 The National Cathedral Foundation buys the old Nourse estate and plans for the cathedral were under way.
- 1898 The Peace Cross is unveiled by Senior Warden James B. Nourse. The remains of the Rt. Rev. Thomas John Claggett, first bishop of Maryland and the first bishop consecrated on American soil and his wife were brought to St. Alban's and rested in a temporary vault until the cathedral could receive them.
- 1900 "Temperance Hall", a ramshackle building on Conduit Road (MacArthur Boulevard), is rented for services and as a church school. The parish later bought the building, then moved it to a church-owned lot 200 yards away and a third mission, St. David's Chapel, was born. Dr. Bratenahl took a great interest in the Fort Reno Mission. There is a great emphasis on education and self-help, both day-and evening schools, and a library, opened in 1901. There are plans to extend and renovate St. Alban's itself, including replacing the coal stove with a furnace. The north and south transepts are added.
- 1901 St. Columba's is authorized to elect an auxiliary vestry or "Board of Sidesmen" to conduct their own affairs and a curate is assigned full time. St. Alban's Lych Gate is built as a shelter for those riding the new Wisconsin Avenue trolley cars. "The Chronicle" begins publication.
- 1902 New pipe organ is installed. Mrs. Bratenahl organizes the Women's Auxiliary to make layettes to give to poor mothers.
- 1903 Land for a permanent Fort Reno building is bought and a simple but adequate building went up. A deaconess is assigned to the mission, now called St. George's Mission.
- 1906 St. Columba's gets its own vicar. The first automobile is seen on semi-paved Wisconsin Avenue, stuck.
- 1911 Two more missions are established. All Souls' (Woodley Road) and St. Patrick's. All Souls' became independent in the same year, the result of a generous endowment. St. Alban's Guild Hall built in memory of Misses Mary and Rosa Nourse. Dr. Bratenahl resigns.

- 1912 Dr. Charles T. Warner, vicar of St. Columba's is called to be rector of the mother parish. Work begins on enlarging the church and encasing it in stone in memory of Mrs. Bratenahl after her sudden death.
- 1913 St. Alban's begins supporting a missionary in Alaska.
- 1917 St. Alban's extends its ministry to the young men stationed at the Army Engineer detachment at American University. James Nourse, Senior Warden since 1877, dies. The St. Patrick window is installed.
- 1919 The church extension, interrupted by the war, resumes.



Dr. Charles Warner, Rector of St. Alban's Church for almost 37 years, one of the longest rectorships in the Episcopal Church. His term was marked by great parish growth.

"The Warner Years" saw St. Alban's grow to nearly its present physical form. The simple country church of Mrs. Cleveland's day has evolved into a small town church whose rector will be three times president of the Rotary Club. The only thing missing from a 1929 photograph taken from across the street is the bus shelter. The interior of the church and many familiar furnishings date from the Bratenahl memorial, completed and dedicated in 1924. The Skinner Organ was with us until 1987, sometimes more in spirit than in voice. "Parson Warner", as he was known to most of the city, was a legendary pastoral figure.

- 1924 St. George's Mission is transferred to St. Columba's when that parish becomes independent.
- 1927 Rector's Aid Society is founded.
- 1928 The first stage of Satterlee Hall is built (hall, kitchen, basement gymnasium, lounge).
- 1941 U.S. enters into WWII. Sears Roebuck opens Tenleytown store. Stained glass windows installed above the altar.
- 1942 U.S. Navy takes over Mount Vernon Seminary. St. Alban's ministries reach out to servicemen and women.
- 1943 The McLean Gardens complex opens, giving St. Alban's 3500 more souls to reach.

- 1946 St. Patrick's becomes independent.
- 1948 "Parson Warner" retires. Dr. E. Felix Kloman called from Old Christ Church, Philadelphia. St. Alban's now the largest parish in the diocese. Alcoholics Anonymous begins to meet at St. Alban's, eventually becoming the longest continuous AA group in the country.
- 1949 St. David's becomes independent. Women of St. Alban's group is founded (later WSA becomes Workers of St. Alban's). Mr. Nash, St. Alban's organist and choirmaster retires. His choir gives him a live pig.
- 1952 Dr. Kloman reluctantly agrees to a limited term as Dean of Virginia Theological Seminary. The Rev. Robert Trenbath is called to St. Alban's. Plans are finalized to complete Satterlee Hall. Emily Pearse becomes organist and choirmaster.
- 1953 The Warner Memorial Rectory replaces the 90-year-old wooden rectory.
- 1954 St. Alban's 100th anniversary is celebrated with an "Old Timers Dinner". The Senior Choir commissions a celebratory anthem by Richard Wayne Dirksen.
- 1956 Mr. Trenbath dies suddenly on January 1. Felix Kloman returns to St. Alban's when his term at the seminary ended.
- 1957 Satterlee Hall extension is completed.
- 1958 After Dr. Kloman undergoes surgery for cancer of the larynx, St. Alban's acquires a sound system. In his two terms as rector, he placed strong emphasis on Christian education and encouraged every member of a family to pledge.
- 1960 Norman Scribner becomes organist and choirmaster.
- 1966 Under Norman Scribner, the Choral Arts Society of Washington is founded. It continues its connection with St. Alban's through the present day.



October 27, 1957, Ribbon cutting ceremony to open Satterlee Hall.

- 1968 Pipeline Community Center begins as a small coffeehouse typical of outreach programs during the period. Activities include pottery classes, drama, and folk dancing.
- 1969 Dr. Kroman retires. The Rev. Robert Estill succeeds him.
- 1972 St. Alban's Day Care, a non-profit corporation, opens.
- 1973 Mr. Estill accepts an offer from the Virginia Seminary and is succeeded by A. Theodore Eastman. Mr. Estill is later elected Bishop of North Carolina.
- 1974 "Super Sixties" begins to meet in Satterlee Hall and continues their partnership with St. Alban's through the present day.
- 1979 St. Alban's celebrates its 125th anniversary. The great needlepoint banner designed by Conkling Needlepoint Studio, Baltimore, and worked by parishioner Helen Hagemeyer is dedicated.
- 1980 St. Alban's sponsors a Vietnamese refugee family. The Flower Guild is organized.
- 1982 At a special parish meeting during a January snowstorm, Mr. Eastman asks approval to launch the Fund for the Future, \$850,000 to include urgent repairs to the church, replacement of the "Rube Goldberg" device that redirected Cathedral steam to parish radiators (c. 1924), complete the organ replacement, replenish the Growth Fund, and endow outreach programs. On March 21, Mr. Eastman startles the congregation by announcing his election as Bishop Coadjutor of the Diocese of Maryland.
- 1983 The Rev. Dr. Francis H. Wade is installed as rector.
- 1987 Construction begins on the columbarium. The new organ is installed and dedicated.
- 1988 The "year without a kitchen" as many Satterlee Hall facilities are brought up to code, and other projects funded by the Growth Fund and Special Appeal get underway.
- 1989 Bishop Walker dies. Remodeling continues on the lower levels of Satterlee Hall and Guild Hall.
- 1990 Norman Scribner celebrates 30 years as St. Alban's organist and choirmaster. The Baer window is installed in Guild Hall.

- 1993 The Celebration Campaign makes it possible for the rector to move into a private home, allowing the Warner Memorial Rectory to be used for parish activities.
- 1994 Margaret McNaughton announces that she has accepted a call to a deanship at Virginia Theological Seminary. Hon. Associate Senator John Danforth will not seek re-election, so will leave in the new year.
- 1995 Dr. Ruth Ann McDonald resigns to join the Indiana University music faculty. Sonya Vastek (later Sutton) joins the music staff.
- 1996 The Year of the Blizzards. David Wolf called to be Assistant Rector.

- 1997 David Wolf is ordained to the priesthood. Rector's Aid celebrates its 70th anniversary. A half million dollar anonymous gift helps in the chancel and organ space renovations. Caroline Pyle called to be Rector of Grace Church, The Plains, VA. Carlyle Gill called to be Associate Rector, leaving her position as Rector of Stephen's and the Incarnation.



Carlyle Gill celebrates Palm Sunday.

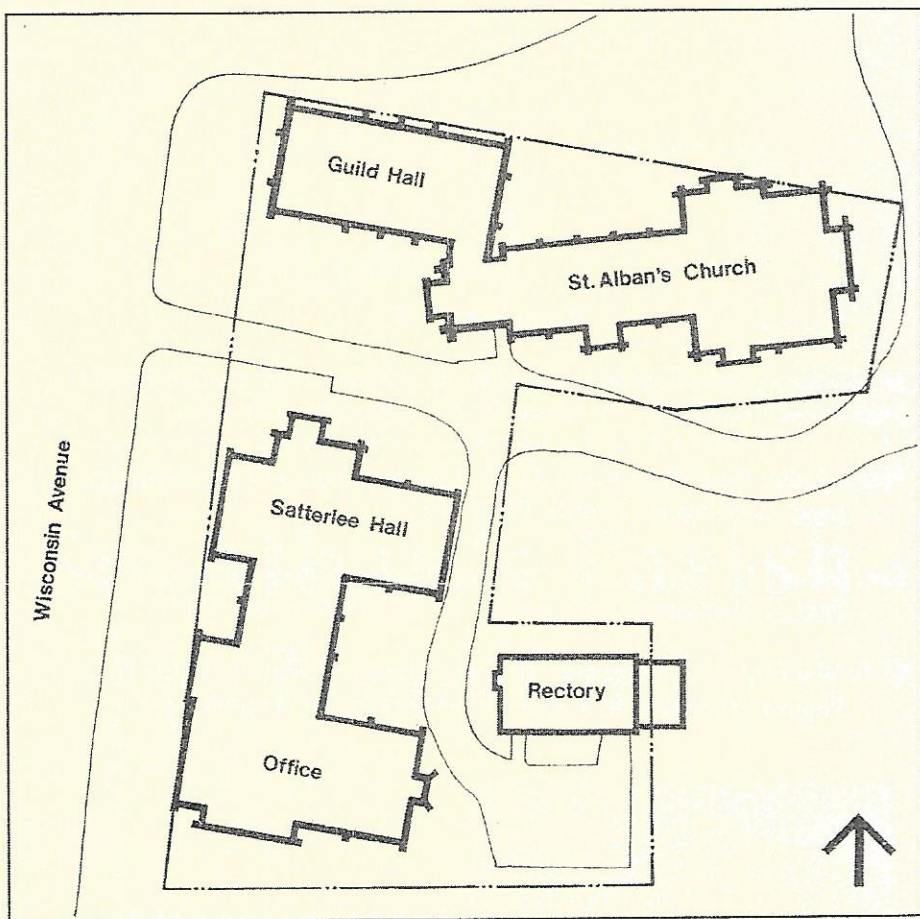
- 1998 The organ is completed and is celebrated with dedicatory concerts.
- 1999 Jimmie Russel retires as sexton. St. Alban's begins its partnership with St. Philip the Evangelist in Anacostia.
- 2000 Douglas Greenaway ordained to the priesthood. Bishop Haines retires, leaving Jane Dixon to preside as Bishop Pro Tempore until a new bishop is elected.
- 2001 David Wolf leaves St. Alban's to become Rector of St. Paul's, Paterson, NJ. Margot D. Critchfield is called as Assistant Rector.



February 9, 2002, Margot Critchfield, Bishop Dixon, and Frank Wade on the occasion of Margot's ordination.

The Annual Parish meeting sees plans for the new West End.

2002 Margot Critchfield and Sabina Alkire ordained to the priesthood. The Right Rev. John Bryson Chane elected 8th Bishop of Washington. Carlyle Gill celebrates 25 years as an ordained priest. The St. Alban's Capital Campaign has its official kick-off.



The St. Alban's Property Line is a mighty tight fit. It was established in 1898 in an agreement with the National Cathedral Foundation after the Foundation purchased the old Nourse estate as the site for our next door neighbor.

Works Consulted

In addition to parish histories compiled for the 75th and 125th anniversary celebrations and back files of "The Chronicle", the works below were useful.

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