

# Bicentennial Bulletin

## Events

**Sunday, November 12, 2017**  
10:00 a.m. A combined celebration of the Holy Eucharist, followed by a Founders Festival in Keith Hall and the Chapel Garden.

**Sunday, May 13, 2018**  
10:00 a.m. A combined celebration of the Holy Eucharist, followed by a garden party and picnic at Georgetown's historic Tudor Place.

**Sunday, January 6, 2019**  
4:00 p.m. Service of Lessons and Carols for the Feast of the Epiphany, followed by a festive reception in the Parish Hall Auditorium.

## Fun Fact

The organizational meeting that led to the establishment of Christ Church, Georgetown, was held on November 10, 1817, in the Bridge Street home of Thomas Corcoran, Sr. That house remained standing well into the 20th century, when it was torn down to make way for the building that currently houses the Urban Outfitters store on what is now M Street.



Christ Church  
Georgetown  
200 years

## The Founding of Christ Church, Georgetown

Imagine thousands of cattle, sheep and turkeys being driven down P Street, and your next-door neighbors keeping cows, chickens, and slaves. This was Georgetown in 1817. No longer a part of Maryland, it had become an incorporated town, not yet a quaint neighborhood of Washington, DC. In fact, undeveloped forests and swamps lay between Georgetown and Washington.

Yet according to the 1820 census, Georgetown was the 19th largest city in the U.S. (Seattle would be today's equivalent), and the principal exporting center for tobacco grown on the great plantations of Southern Maryland.

According to one account, Georgetown was a thriving town "where as much wealth, intellect, and refinement are collected together as any place of the same population in the U.S."

Amid this lively commercial and social scene, a group of Episcopalians decided to found a new church in 1817. Many were parishioners from Georgetown's St. John's Church, which may have outgrown its capacity. Others were low churchmen or evangelicals. Whatever their reasons, 35 people agreed to pay for shares ranging in value from \$25 to \$1,000 to build the church. They were a diverse group professionally, politically, and economically ranging in age from 17 to 87.

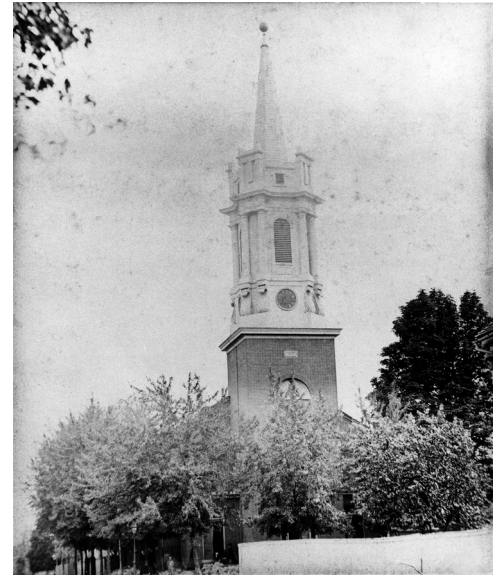
"A Committee of Eight" (acting as an early Vestry) was one of several formed to plan the church and members were selected not only based on their contributions but on their standing in the community, piety, and skills. The building was completed by Christmas 1818, and a core group of parishioners committed themselves either to purchasing or renting pews.

Similar to today, the church in 1817 was made up of persons on their own spiritual journeys. Their defining characteristic was not being low church or high church, but rather piety and Christ-centeredness in a personal and private way.

For the complete article, visit the Bicentennial page of the parish website: [www.christchurchgeorgetown.org/bicentennial](http://www.christchurchgeorgetown.org/bicentennial).

## Clement Smith: Christ Church's Financial Angel

Fortunately, Clement Smith—one of Christ Church's founders—had "deep pockets," and his generosity played a large part in keeping the fledgling congregation alive. When subscriptions to finance the new structure's construc-



Exterior of the original 1818 church with the steeple added in 1835, before the building reconstruction in 1868.

tion in 1818 fell short of the \$15,952 needed, he and others dug deep and helped fill the gap.

A Georgetown by birth (in 1776), Smith was the son of Revolutionary War Surgeon Walter Smith, Georgetown's first doctor. The Smiths, like many early parishioners, had deep and ecumenical roots in Maryland, as descendants from Cavaliers and pro-Stuart Catholic supporters who emigrated from England in 1649. Other early Smiths attended Quaker meetings and were active in the Anglican All Saints Church and Christ Church in Calvert County.

Clement Smith married Margaret Clare Brice of Annapolis, had eight children and at one point commanded the Independent Grays, a Georgetown militia company. With his brother Walter, he had a flourishing career in the mercantile and shipping business, and was an active financier of and shareholder in the C&O Canal. The brothers were among the earliest Georgetown property developers. Prudent businessmen, they engaged in many real estate ventures and investments, and were responsible for many of Georgetown's finest homes, some of which stand today.

In 1817, Clement became cashier of the Farmers & Mechanics Bank, a predecessor of Riggs Bank (now PNC Bank), and in 1821 became president, a position he held until his death. He and Walter were active parishioners at St. John's in Georgetown, but in 1817 Clement joined a group of parishioners who were organizing Christ Church. As the "money man" of the project, Clement's experience building homes in Georgetown served the church well and he effectively became the first financier and chief executive of the undertaking. He was the largest investor, having purchased 40 shares, valued at \$1,000, to underwrite and sustain the project and later purchased a pew.

As his business allowed, Clement was an active Christ Church parishioner until he died in 1839. He rests in Oak Hill Cemetery. The church's debt to him was not fully repaid until 1836, but it stands today as a living monument to his faith and devotion.

*For the complete article, visit the Bicentennial page of the parish website: [www.christchurchgeorgetown.org/bicentennial](http://www.christchurchgeorgetown.org/bicentennial).*

## KIDS' CORNER

Attention all kids! Do you know Christ Church, Georgetown, is about to turn 200 years old? When something is 200 years old, the celebration that takes place is called a bicentennial. Since kids are such an important part of the Christ Church community, this section of the Bicentennial Bulletin is just for you! We hope you enjoy these Eyes on 200 activities while you learn more about the history of Christ Church and what life was like 200 years ago.

### Eyes on 200 Word Search

**Find these words:**

Bicentennial  
Church  
Founders  
Community  
Cross  
Jesus  
History

Y L V O X S L Q D Y C R Q Z M  
A T Y K I E O S R O K R H O B  
Y W I E K S J O Q F U W O D P  
L A I N N E T N E C I B T S J  
T Z Q U U S D C H U R C H T S  
T C B J I M D I E U X J I N E  
F X P H W V M L L S H S L L G  
C T J G Z R F O C R P U I O C  
V S K S J Q P V C E P X H R P  
L F M V E I H H N D Y L B N I  
P C J Y S L W J K N C Z E U L  
K J X E U E Q A Q U W N P I W  
O P J O S D X L V O J S U R K  
S M P S B G M Z T F Y I V J Y  
Z H Y H B B A H I H D M F L L

*The answer to this month's puzzle is available on the Bicentennial page of the parish website: [www.christchurchgeorgetown.org/bicentennial](http://www.christchurchgeorgetown.org/bicentennial).*