INTERVIEW WITH

CLARK HOOPER

AUGUST 6, 2018

Kathleen Patterson: This interview of Clark Hooper was recorded on August 6th, 2018, by parishioner, Kathleen Patterson, in connection with the bicentennial celebration of Christ Church Georgetown. The interview took place by telephone.

Clark, you told me that you lived in Washington for some time when you attended Christ Church. This is really what the interview is about. I just want to note that you're now living close to Philadelphia, in the Bryn Mawr area and that you told me that you still have strong memories of Christ Church.

Let me start out and just ask you. When, more or less, did you start attending Christ Church and what drew you there?

Clark Hooper: I lived in Washington for 33 years. I was just reflecting on that when you asked this question about when I first started attending Christ Church. In fact, it was definitely in the late '70s or, at the latest, 1980. I moved away in 2002, 2003. It was a great part of my life for almost 25 years.

I started attending there because at the time, Sanford Garner was the rector. I had some friends from Tennessee who knew Sanford. I had been going to a separate parish in the Georgetown area. I determined that Christ Church, after my exposure and after meeting Sanford, was the right place for me.

I had certainly reinforced that over a number of years. It still is. It holds a most special place in my heart.

Kathleen: Were you living in Georgetown and looking for a Georgetown parish?

Clark: I was living in Georgetown. While I don't think that I would have precluded going to any other parish, and I certainly visited others with friends or went to weddings or, sadly, other occasions.

Because of the introduction to Sanford is the reason that I was first drawn there. Really, I didn't have to go but once to feel that I was wrapped up in the church. Literally. I've always felt that when you walked into the church it was like somebody was putting their arms around you.
It's always been that way for me, and I just think it's the most comforting and special place of worship that I've ever found.

Kathleen: When you started going there, did you start getting involved in different parish ministries right away, or did you slowly work your way in? How did that go?

Clark: Well, we're drawing on a long memory here and an old one.

Obviously, when I first joined, no. I think I did do a couple of volunteer things, but nothing was any more than "Raise your hand. I'll be happy to help with that." As I was working full time, I really wasn't available to do many things.

I do remember a time, and I must have been on the vestry at this point, because I can't understand why I would have been at the meeting otherwise. I'm jumping around now. I hope that's not a problem.

Kathleen: That's fine.

Clark: I remember, it must have been when Stuart was there. I can't remember under whose tenure I was first elected for the vestry.

I do remember at the time, it was not at all like it's done now. It was a runoff. It was terrible, in a sense, because anybody who goes to church, and is there, and is willing to give of their time should be considered, and it was kind of an election. It really was an election.

Thankfully, we changed that so that while it's still an election, it's a slate, as opposed to a group of people. Three get on and three don't or something like that.

I do remember going to this meeting and, it must have been Stuart, was asking each committee chair to explain a little bit about the committees and how they were run. I remember whomever was chairing the women of Christ Church, when he asked about people joining and how they joined, she just said, "We'll let them know." [laughs]

I think it was more you were tapped to get in rather than being able to volunteer. It was really funny to me. I think that's changed a lot. I mean, obviously, everything changed from that. I remember volunteering to read scripture as a lay reader.

Kathleen: Was there a particular service that you attended, do you recall?

Clark: Generally, I attended 11 o'clock. I started going more to the nine o'clock just because of the timing of it. I went to whatever I could go to. If I had other things going on, I would try to attend when I could.

I'm trying to recall this, Kathleen. At the time there was an organization called the Episcopal Home for the Elderly, Episcopal Church Home for the Elderly and it was right across from Tudor Place.
Kathleen: On 31st Street, I think.

Clark: Exactly. It was literally a place where elderly Episcopalians could go. It's like assisted living. I'm just drawing a blank on the name. I want to say Siemens, but that's not it. I'll think of it. Anyway, different people from different Episcopal parishes would serve on the board. Sanford, I think it was, had asked me I know that's correct to initially serve on the board.

That was one of the first things that I did of any real substance for the church. It was an education, I must say. I learned quite a bit during the course of that because we had a couple of facilities.

Just to recognize the importance of what a place to live for these elderly Episcopalians who had grown up in Georgetown and wanted to keep it as their home. It was really quite moving for me, too. I'd go up there and visit them.

In fact, Sanford Garner's mother, Elizabeth, lived there for a while until it closed. It was a great opportunity for me and a great exposure so I appreciated that from the church.

Then I was on the vestry. We had some interesting issues that came up. It was a very different church when I first joined it because there were very few children. I mean, there were some, but there wasn't the vibrant youth ministry that there certainly was when I left. I'm assuming that there still is.

Kathleen: Yes. There definitely is.

Clark: I assume that when Stuart came, his wife, Fran, was pregnant with their youngest, with Margaret. They had young children, children who are in school.

I felt like our children's program and young people's program just blossomed during that time, because so many people began to come to the church. At the time, a lot of people with children would move out of Georgetown. They might start their young married life off, but they would move out of Georgetown to have their children and to raise their children.

We really had a dearth. I do believe because of Stuart and Fran and their having children who were in school and had friends. Anyway, the whole program, it was marvelous, to need, to find more space for Sunday School classes, etc.

Kathleen: You said there were several issues for the vestry. It sounds like one was to try to have a younger congregation or to add a younger group.

Clark: Always a goal. It seems to come more readily when we had young children there. I think a lot of people who probably stayed in Georgetown with their young children began to gravitate more towards the church. It was wonderful in that regard.

Kathleen: Were there other issues of note that you recall at that time?
Clark: Not really. If I can think of any, I'll call you back.

Kathleen: [laughs] That's great.

Clark: For the most part I felt like everything really did go rather quite smoothly because it was just a good church to belong to.

Kathleen: Now am I correct that you were the first woman senior warden?

Clark: That's right. I had served on the vestry. To be perfectly honest, I cannot recall whether this was a second term on the vestry, a successive term or whether or not I went off the vestry and then came back on, which makes more sense in a way.

I was senior warden under Stuart. I was the first woman senior warden, and that was a great privilege for me. I do recall, however, I think we were having a fundraising campaign. [laughs] Quite a big story of being the senior warden to start with Stuart.

[laughter]

Clark: To visit people, to ask for money which I never thought was going to a strength of mine or anything I wanted to do. Of course, you did whatever you had to do.

Kathleen: You're in finance, I believe. [laughs]

Clark: I was not in the area of development. Yet, ever since that first foray it seemed to me every time I'm on a board or do anything, the first thing people ask me to do I'm still the chair of development at Hollins. It's like it was meant to be my calling, but I didn't want to be called.

Kathleen: [laughs] Good for Stuart for seeing that. It's interesting. You were there while Sanford was rector and while Stuart was rector. Is there anything you recall, any differences in style or any differences that emerged in the way services were conducted or anything like that?

Clark: Of course, there were huge differences. First of all, when Sanford was there, we were still using the '28 prayer book, certainly for the 8:00 AM service. If I'm not mistaken, we didn't do a morning prayer service.

I'm trying to remember, but it was quite a change. We always used Rite I. Of course, the prayer book, it had just being revised. I think it's '76 isn't it when it was revised again?

Kathleen: I think so.

Clark: After '28, I've got one around here somewhere.

Kathleen: I don't remember exactly. I remember still having to get used to it by 1980, still trying to get used to it.
Clark: I am still trying to get used to it. When I would just in the mountains in North Carolina and went to the little Episcopal Church in Linville, they used Rite I.

Kathleen: [laughs] All those prayers we grew up with saying by heart.

Clark: The vowels, the 'thys instead of the 'you's. [laughs]

It was the old version. It was just so special to have that again. Anyway, so there was a lot of change. One of the things that I loved about Christ Church that I don't think people recognized and this was even under Sanford, but we really encouraged diversity.

We had such an incredible music for a group under Michael. Yes, I've not been there since he left. I'm sure that music program is still as strong as ever and glorious.

Kathleen: Yes, it's just wonderful.

Clark: We started the evening song services. I can't remember whether that was at the end of Sanford's tenure or the beginning of Stuart's when that all started. I do know that when Stuart came in, I felt that he added so many more services. He just said, "This church needs to be open and available for people at all times."

We started having evening prayer and morning prayer. These were not things that we had had before. Really and truly, even if there was just one person. If it was just one person, I can guarantee it would have been Glenn Metzdorf.

Kathleen: What do you remember about Glenn? He's just retiring right now.

Clark: I've got to get down there. I've got to call him.

Glenn became a very good friend of mine. At the time, there were some older couples that he was so good to and very good friends with Mary...

Kathleen: Weinmann?

Clark: Yes, Mary Weinmann. I'm trying to remember her dear husband, Eric. Mary and Eric, and Mimi Crocker. He was always so wonderful. He would have us all fix dinner and buy first. We would all entertain each other back and forth. Now I'm not talking about every week, but just occasionally.

He was a good friend and a good man, and always there. You could always turn to him if you needed help. Even if it was just in figuring out something, [laughs] he could figure it out for you.

Kathleen: Was Mimi on the vestry with you?

Clark: Mimi Crocker?

Kathleen: Yes.
Clark: No, she never was on the vestry with me. Whether she ever served on it, I doubt because when I left, my husband and I did go by to see her a few times before I moved up here because I'd stayed down for a short period after we were married.

He knew her before we were married, but she was not really able to get out by then. She was a [inaudible 16:54] . She told me a story. One time, she was getting a cab. When she got in the cab, the cab driver locked all the doors. She said she knew she was in trouble.

She started talking, "Where are you taking me? He told me to shut up and this, that, and the other." She said her window was cracked. She had a white handkerchief, and she stuck her hand out the window to do it enough to flutter that white handkerchief for help. Would you have thought?

Kathleen: Oh my goodness. [laughs]

Clark: I just found it phenomenal.

Kathleen: That's amazing.

Clark: Exactly. She was just talking to him. She said, "I never could figure out whether somebody started following us because I had my handkerchief out the window or what, but finally he pulls over and put me out."

Kathleen: Oh my goodness. Wow. That's incredible.

Clark: Can you imagine?

Mary was such a lovely person.

Kathleen: She gave us a written interview. When Ingola Hodges asked her a few questions and wrote down her answers, we have a little bit from her.

Clark: Glenn is probably the very best person to interview for anything because he's been there forever.

Kathleen: There is definitely an interview of Glenn as well, because he's so interesting and has the dual role of parishioner and staff person.

Clark: He was just a phenomenal person. It's interesting. One other thing I'm remembering but someone should check my details. I cannot swear to this, but I feel like our outreach was so dramatically...after Stuart was there.

That's not to say we didn't have outreach under Sanford. That's when we started having the homeless come to the church and spend the night. I don't know if we still do that.

Kathleen: Yes, we do.
Clark: That started then. I did do that occasionally. I did not ever spend the night in that college but I did go help prepare the meals for food. That was back in the day when I could get the food. We had a carry out in the building that I worked in on K Street. At the end of the week, I'd ask them to give me all of the leftovers bread, tuna salad, whatever.

Kathleen: You're not allowed to do that anymore.

Clark: No, of course not. They had to stop doing that for me while I was still in Washington. It was such a gift [laughs] to the church to be able to have all these breads, loaf bread, and rolls and all that food that was just going to have to be thrown out. Anyway, we did start doing a lot of hands on outreach I thought. We always gave money to support different parishes that were in areas that needed that kind of support. Maybe, I wasn't cognizant that we had parishioners going, helping and doing things.

Kathleen: Do you remember any other members of the clergy, in particular, any of the assistants? Were there any women when you first got there?

Clark: Not when I first came. Was Ludson Abshear there with Sanford or Stuart? I'm sorry, but it all muddied together.

Kathleen: Of course.

Clark: Ludson was great. His wife I believe her name was Diana was such a lovely woman. [laughs] I had an umbrella with a dog head on the end of it. When I'd bring it to church, I'd hang it on the pew. Their little boy would always come by in the morning and pat it on the head like it was a dog.

[laughter]

Clark: They were just a great family, but, of course, they left. We did have turnover because we were a good launching pad for these assistant rectors to go on. Rita Henninger was there for quite some time when I was there. Actually, I had come up here when she was pregnant with her second child, Cuddy. I don't know that you would've been there then, you wouldn't have.

Kathleen: No, I was not.

Clark: He had a terrible condition. She was in utero. It's called an omphalocele, a giant omphalocele where his organs was developing outside of the abdominal cavity. I had just gone on the board up here at Children's Hospital of Philadelphia. When I heard about it, I called her and I said, "Please come up here and get a second opinion."

Fortunately, her daughter's godmother lived in this area at Swarthmore. She came and ultimately was here for the baby's birth. I'll never forget it. I came over to the hospital
right after the board meeting ended. It was the same day they were going to do the surgery. That was the most moving moment. The Lord does provide. [laughs]

**Kathleen:** Was the surgery successful?

**Clark:** It was hugely successful.

**Kathleen:** That's wonderful. What a wonderful story.

**Clark:** They had to stay at the hospital. They stayed in the Ronald McDonald House, but because Cuddy had to stay his name was Cuthbert. I nearly fainted when they named him Cuthbert. [laughs] His nickname was Cuddy. What an adorable little boy, still is. I hear from them annually.

He had to stay in the hospital because they had to put a net around the organs. I'm going to call it a sac, but because they were developing outside of the abdomen, it wasn't large enough to just be able to put them back in there. It had to be done very gradually.

Every couple days, they would have to have another little surgery where they would tighten this net, to bring the organs in gradually...just a miracle. I remember her really well, [laughs] Kathleen, and her husband, Eric.

**Kathleen:** You've mentioned several members of the clergy, as well as Glenn, Mimi, and Mary Weinmann. Were there any other interesting or even well known characters that you remember?

**Clark:** Another person that belonged at Christ Church who was just a phenomenal woman. She was a very good friend of mine as well. Katrina Brothers. Katrina had a stroke when she was in her late 30s. It's ridiculous. She was just the most cheerful and wonderful sort. She rode a golf cart, and it had a little flag on it, [laughs] so that people could see her coming.

She lived over on 28th Street. But at first, when her husband Eric was still alive...what was his first name? I'll think of it in a minute. It wasn't Eric but anyway, she would come from there on O Street. Then she moved down to Olive, I guess it's still on 28th after he died. She'd still drive her little golf cart right up. She was one of the many artists that we had at Christ Church.

We still have the art fair but Mimi Crocker was a great artist. I still have one of her paintings, I've got two of her paintings.

**Kathleen:** Judy Davis is the one who organizes it every year now, and I think she has been for a long time. I don't know if you remember her.

**Clark:** Mimi was an artist. Katrina was an artist. Even Diana, the secretary, put some pieces in. She was a photographer. Do you remember, Diana?
Kathleen: I do. She's not there anymore.

Clark: I keep up. I still get the newsletter. Sidney did the sketch for the bicentennial. I still have one of his pieces. That was it. There were so many wonderful things that we did and continue to do at Christ Church. I think it's an integral part of the community there. It's fabulous.

Kathleen: Clark, when was the last time you came down and visited Christ Church?

Clark: I tried while Stuart was still the rector. I came down. Howard Smith had a party for all of the previous senior wardens when Stuart retired. We went to the [inaudible 27:08] Club. I remember that when Stuart retired. About four years ago?

That would have probably been the last time. I've not been there since our new rector is there. When Stewart was up here, one summer, he had a sabbatical but he spent it up here in Philadelphia. He stayed at St. Mark's Church down in the city while the rector there was on his sabbatical. It's kind of interesting.

My husband, Dick, and I went there a couple of times and then we took whoever was in tow, whether it was the children or I think, Fran was never there when we were able to be in town. We would go to lunch after the service and it was a great way to have a visit with someone. I attend one of his churches again, but I don't think I've be in Christ Church in probably three years.

I used to get down there a lot because I lived in Washington for such a long time that we go down and visit friends on the weekend and I'd always go to church then. I just don't seem to get down as frequently as I used to, which is my loss. I'll do that. Of course, this bicentennial year every time I thought I would be able to come, it just didn't work out. My husband died last year.

Kathleen: Oh. I'm very sorry.

Clark: I've always been out of town when there's been a special weekend and I think even this September there's the homecoming weekend. Isn't there something for the bicentennial then? I believe I'm out of the country then.

Kathleen: Oh my.

Clark: I don't know when it is, but I'm leaving on the 11th of September. Maybe, it's the 8th or 9th. I can't remember.

Kathleen: I hope you can come soon and meet Tim Cole. I think you will find he's very much in the tradition of wonderful rectors at Christ Church.

Clark: I always enjoy reading his letters.

Kathleen: You can listen to his sermons online as well.
Clark: Oh really. Well, I'll have to try that.

Kathleen: He's very talented, and quite delightful, and very much a man of God.

Clark: I knew when we were willing to wait for him that he must be very special, so I'm thrilled.

Kathleen: Clark, let me just ask you. Are there any other thoughts that you've had in preparing for this interview that you'd like to share?

Clark: I was talking about how things had changed so much from when I first started volunteering to today. Of course, one of the largest I shouldn't say large because everyone, it's what we all do, but we never used to exchange the peace.

We always would say, "Peace of the Lord be always with you and also with you," but we never shook hands or touch. As that began to change, there was one of our older parishioners. Kitty Dayr. What was her last name? I can't remember. She was older and she really did not id not like the change, not one bit.

She said, "Wouldn't you know, there I was sitting in front of Hillary and Bill Clinton when he was president. Now, what was I going do, not exchange the peace?" Kitty Dayr Millard, that was her name.

Kathleen: That's a good story.

Clark: It was just hysterical. She was not happy about it, but she did it. Of course, Donald Rumsfeld and his precious wife would come to church every Sunday, and there was never any fanfare. I know there had to have been Secret Service out there, but they were determined to be a part of the parish and not be about themselves, if that makes sense.

Kathleen: Yes, it does.

Clark: Somehow, they managed to tell the powers that be that they were not going come into the church. Because one time Kofi Annan was giving the sermon. He was godfather to one of our parishioners. It was marvelous, just a marvelous moment, but there were Secret Service and people at every door. It just gives you a little different sense.

That's one thing I always admired about the Rumsfelds. We had a lot of very special people in our parish, and I know we still do.

Kathleen: Yes, we do.

Clark: I'm not that special. I'm not suggesting you have to be famous to be special.

Kathleen: I know. We have all sorts of people. As you said earlier, it really is a diverse group.
Clark: I've loved that. I loved going to adult forum, as you, and seeing the diversity of the attendants and knowing that each person was there for their own special reasons. It makes you feel good that you're able to be part of a church that offers that, that wide a view.

Kathleen: Clark, thank you very much.

Clark: Absolutely. I've enjoyed talking with you, Kathleen.

Kathleen: Enjoyed talking to you.