This interview of Glenn Metzdorf was recorded on May 15, 2018, by parishioner Ann Haas in connection with the Bicentennial Celebration of Christ Church.

Ann Haas: Glenn, what are your first memories of Christ Church and what brought you to the parish?

Glenn Metzdorf: I'd say that first memory was probably walking by it in Georgetown. This would be in the mid-70s, early '70s probably. I was attracted to the building.

I first came to Christ Church to services in about 1979. I had been attending regularly at the Washington National Cathedral, and, for various reasons, was looking for a different place to worship. I thought a parish church would probably be more satisfactory.

I knew of then Rector Sanford Garner and thought highly of his reputation. I came to church here one day. As is often the case with people who come through the door once, I didn't ever feel like I wanted to go anyplace else. So I stayed.

My first year or so, I stayed without introducing myself to anybody, avoiding the clergy as much as possible, in fact, entirely. I was gradually drawn into the life with the parish by the rector, by Sanford Garner.

Ann: What are your fondest memories?

Glenn: I suppose most people would say always that in the end, the people that you've known are your fondest memories. Of course, having been here for quite a long time, it's an awful lot of people that I have known over the years. Many of whom are now dead. That's probably the fondest part of it.

There's so much about the place that really calls up very affectionate feelings. It's the place itself. The liturgical style, the music, lots of things about it, but I'd say the most important are the people.

Ann: You mentioned Sanford Garner, was it his sermons that especially impressed you or was it his personality?

Glenn: He was what would probably by most people now be called a southern gentleman. He was from Tennessee, very nice calming manner, courteous, and somebody who you felt good to be around. His preaching was perfectly good. It wasn't great, but I've never been with somebody whose preaching had to be terribly great in order to be passably good, and his was more than that. It was good. It was thoughtful, considerate, and very knowledgeable.

I didn't know at the time when I first met him but he was something of Angolophile as I am. We shared affection for England. In fact, he had spent a good deal time there.
Ann: Is that what got you started on your pilgrimages?

Glenn: No, my interest in England started as a child. The first thing I really remember watching on television was the coronation of the present Queen in 1953. That's what really hooked me on England, and English history and literature and the English Church for that matter.

Ann: What particular activities of the church have meant the most to you, mission or outreach, stewardship or fellowship?

Glenn: I've been involved in a lot of activities here since the mid 80's when I began to be really active. For me the most important thing here has always been the worship itself.

The most important thing about the worship itself for me has always been two things, the traditional style of worship, which has been in place all the time I've been here, and the music, which is remarkably good and has only become better over the years.

The first thing I was actively involved in was the ushering which is an easy way for people to get involved. That's the first thing I was asked to do and was happy to do it.

At that time, the two head ushers were two elderly gentlemen named Henry Jenkins and Glenn Blaugh, both of whom are now dead.

Ann: I remember them both.

Glenn: They were delightful men, another world in a lot of ways, but a very nice one. In those days the ushers were all men and that's the way Henry and Glenn wanted it.

They eventually yielded to the vestry's growing interest in not having groups that were just exclusively for men or women as much as possible. They began to welcome women into the ushering group as well. This would probably be in the later '80s.

Ushering was the first thing. I became pretty early involved in stewardship and the annual fundraising with which I've been involved ever since.

The other things that I've been involved in have been less active. I've done some things with mission. I've worked some with the soup kitchen. Mostly, my support of the rest of the parish activities has been since I've been working at Christ Church, which began in about 1993, after I retired from the Postal Service.

As the Director of Administration here, I effectively provide support to virtually everything that goes on within the parish. I've become aware of or active with in some ways almost every group that has anything to do here.

Ann: The Web describes your responsibilities as including financial accounting, contributions, payroll, and accounts payable, support for parish communications, oversees maintenance of the buildings and grounds. You do all those?

Glenn: Yes, I do actually. [laughs] It's a lot. I don't know whether my successor will do all of those things in the same degree that I have. It's been a very full time.
Ann: Yes. It does not mention that you were also the parish archivist.

Glenn: That's right.

Ann: The author of its only history, at least, as far as I know. Is that true?

Glenn: It's the only fairly complete history that exists as far as I know, too. There are historical documents, sketches, beginning in the late 19th century that are also available, and have higher or lower degrees of accuracy depending on who wrote them and under what circumstances.

One of the first things with which I became engaged with Sanford Garner was the history. I like history. I've always been interested in it. One of my majors in college was history.

Local history is particularly interesting, I think, because it's all stories. Most history is stories, but these are ones you can relate to because they are stories of apparently insignificant people who aren't necessarily moving the world in particularly notable ways.

One of my earliest questions with respect to Christ Church was why did it break away from St. John's in the first place? They're within three or four blocks of each other and it seemed an odd thing to have happened even then in the early 19th century.

For that matter, I wondered where did Grace Church come from? It's the third Episcopal Church in Georgetown, which is a very small area. I asked Sanford why Christ Church broke away from St. John's. He said he didn't really know either and if I wanted to look into the history, he'd be very happy. We had a lot of original sources in the vault and I should feel free to take a look at them. I started to do that and became very engrossed in the history, particularly the early history.

I found lots of tantalizing little phrases here and there in the records and the accounts that existed. One of them being an early reference in the Christ Church vestry records to St. John's being "incompatible with ---" that wasn't the word, but the idea was, it wasn't quite suiting people. It didn't say that, but it said something like that. You began to follow-up things like that and I tried to figure out what was really happening.

In the case of Christ Church and St. John's, the people who broke away and formed Christ Church did so, because there was an assisting clergyman at St. John's at the time, Reuel Keith, who was quite remarkably Evangelical in his views and I think was appealing to that aspect of many of the parishioners at St. John's.

They simply decided they'd rather have him as a rector in his own church, than continue to have conflicts within St. John's Church with the then rector there, Walter Delany Addison.

You can tease these things out and they're theories really because there's nobody who's ever written it down as a living record -- that this is why I did this, and this is why we did it -- but you can draw some conclusions. That's what's really interesting especially about local history. You just have to follow-up on these little leads.

I spent many years on the history of Christ Church. I found it fascinating, began to feel like I almost knew the people who started it off in 1817, looked especially closely at all of the rectors
and began to feel I almost knew them, particularly in the earlier part of this time up to the early 1900s or so.

You're almost always dealing with handwritten records. One difficult thing is it can be hard to read. The nice thing about it is once you do it, once you've stayed with a particular person for fairly a short time, a few days, you really feel like you got them or their personality just from their handwriting style, of the way they form it, their phraseology, the way they phrase their sentences.

This has been a very interesting time for me, as far as the history goes. It's something that I should, and probably will, try to finish now that I'm retiring from working here because I'll have more time to do that.

I have a short history that's about 30, 35 pages dealing mostly with the early period and mostly with the personalities of the rectors. I think the subject deserves a lot more than that. It's an important church in the Diocese of Washington. It has a rich history. It has a bigger story to tell than I've, so far, done. If I don't do it, I hope somebody eventually will because it does need to be done.

**Ann:** I think we've all loved that history. How's the Church changed in the way services are conducted or in composition or the size of the congregation?

**Glenn:** Happily, the feel of the place hasn't changed much at all from the time I've been here. It's still a traditional church, which has traditional values. Essentially, its values are orthodox in terms of Christian teaching. It's not going out on limbs anywhere.

Of course, it does change a lot. It's changed a lot over the years. When I first came, it was Sanford Garner who used the "'28 Prayer Book," the old prayer book, at eight o'clock until about five minutes before he left here, when he took it out of the pews because he thought it would be difficult for his successor to deal with that, and it would have been.

He conducted the liturgies in the current prayer book, using rubrics from the "'28" Prayer Book. You almost couldn't tell the difference between them and "Rite One." At the time I came to Christ Church, Rite One was really the only style used. "Rite Two" was almost not used at all.

That has changed over the years. Sanford himself used Rite Two more as he got into the later '80s, particularly at the nine o'clock so-called family service -- although it's not really called that because it's supposed to be open to everyone -- the service which most young families attend.

Sanford's successor was Stuart Kenworthy, who came here in 1991, I believe it was. Stuart came from St. Thomas Church in New York, which is a church of remarkably fine liturgy, more Anglo-Catholic than Christ Church ever has been, but still very well delivered. He was well trained in that.

He brought a lot of more formal liturgical style to Christ Church, still using Rite One largely, particularly at 8:00 and 11:00 but using Rite Two more vigorously, as it were, at 9:00 and then the other 5:00 p.m. Eucharist on Sundays as well. There's more of a balance between traditional and contemporary liturgy now than there was when I first came here.
There really is something for everyone. Christ Church, when I came, was a church that still did Morning Prayer. Many people remember Morning Prayer as the normal service on Sunday mornings.

That changed with the current prayer book so that the Eucharist was intended to be the Sunday morning service generally. At Christ Church, Morning Prayer survived on second and fourth Sundays under Sanford Garner. It continued to survive in that way under Stuart Kenworthy. It's highly valued by a lot of people.

**Ann:** What about personnel? I remember when Mr. Garner was here he had a woman assistant to the rector, which was the first time I had seen a woman in that role.

**Glenn:** She wasn't actually intended to be an assistant to the rector in the sense of preaching or conducting liturgy. The person you're speaking of was Timmy Shanahan. Timmy Shanahan was hired by Sanford as the education person.

At the time, Zac Fleetwood was Sanford's last assistant. Sanford announced his retirement. The vestry was able to get the bishop to say, "Zac Fleetwood can stay on as the Priest-in-Charge," which in fact was against the bishop's inclination but Bishop Haines was willing to do that. That's what the vestry was expecting.

Then, all of a sudden, Zac Fleetwood accepted a call to another parish as rector in The Plains, Virginia. Christ Church was left without a priest-in-charge and without an assistant and Sanford was about to retire. People scurried around quickly and Dr. Edward Kreider...

**Ann:** Kreider.

**Glenn:** ...came in as the Priest-in-Charge. He was an adjunct professor at the Virginia Seminary. He was a very talented man, a good preacher. He did shake things up. He felt that was his duty. It created a lot tensions within the congregation. He took a lot of abuse, really. It's one of the least attractive things that I've experienced at Christ Church. There were people who just couldn't stand him and made that pretty clear. He really was a very nice person.

**Ann:** And very bright.

**Glenn:** Very bright.

**Ann:** An intellectual.

**Glenn:** Timmy was here at that point. She was a deacon then. He thought, "Well, why isn't she functioning as an ordained person?" She started to, as a deacon. Of course, nobody here had ever heard of deacons and...

**Ann:** [laughs]

**Glenn:** ...that was alarming to people. She began to officiate and to preach and was soon ordained a priest. Then she could celebrate the Eucharist. Although there were people in those days, this would be early '90s, there were older people who wouldn't take Communion from her. She had the right personality to be the first woman here because she wasn't assertive especially.
She didn't ever take offense at people who didn't want to take Communion from her. I'm sure that was hurtful to her. She took it well. Gradually, of course, people did become accustomed to a woman priest. Stuart inherited her when he came and Dr. Kreider ceased being Priest-in-Charge. At St. Thomas, they never had women assistants. He wasn't used to working with women.

He quickly came to think that it was better for the staff to have a mix of men and women among the clergy and always had both men and women assistants. He moved to having two assistants. He usually had one woman and one man.

**Ann:** I thought that was a nice thing that Sanford did in terms of traditional versus new.

**Glenn:** Sanford didn't really employ Timmy as somebody who was going to have anything to do liturgically. She was strictly going to be educational.

**Ann:** Oh, really?

**Glenn:** She was ordained. She was a deacon. It was Dr. Kreider who brought her in as a functioning ...

**Ann:** Full-fledged.

**Glenn:** ...member of the clergy staff. Stuart kept her on in that capacity, and then Stuart decided that, as long as he was rector, we would have both men and women assistants. The clergy staff would be both men and women. He thought it created a better balance. They spoke and their voices had different appeals. They were able to minister to different kinds of people in different ways. It has worked out better, there's no question about it.

My traditional inclinations, initially, were to think, "Well, why should women be priests or bishops because they never have been." That's not a very convincing reason for anything. There's no Biblical reason why they shouldn't be. They do serve in ordained capacities in ways that men can't in many situations.

We went from that resistance to Timmy at the time Stuart Kenworthy was coming into the parish to the time after Stuart retired. We had another interim at that point, Bishop Peter Lee of Virginia. There were two women assistants, Elizabeth Keeler and Kristen Hawley.

They, basically, held the place together. Bishop Lee was a very good figurehead and a very good preacher. He wasn't terribly actively involved with the ordinary functioning of the congregation or the parish. It was Elizabeth and Kristen who kept things going. They endeared themselves greatly to the congregation generally. They were regarded as indispensable, really, at the time that the current rector, Tim Cole, came into the parish. He kept them both. Actually, when Kristen was called to a parish in North West, Saint David's, as rector, Tim hired another woman. There are still two assisting women priests for the rector now, Elizabeth Keeler and Elizabeth Gardner.

From having a real resistance to women in the early '90s to having them embraced as priests in the 2015, '16, '17, '18 timeframe, you see a big change in what people are prepared to accept as the norm. That's been true in many ways. When I first came to Christ Church, the term Ms. would not have been used, ever. You were either Mrs. or Miss.
Ann: [laughs]

Glenn: There was no exception to that. Same-sex couples wouldn't have been acknowledged as a possibility. Of course, all of that has changed, but the place hasn't changed. Its traditional orientation, the general feel of the place hasn't changed. It's just society changes. The norms change. Eventually, if you can't deal with that, you're probably not going to be able to survive.

Ann: What about the parish itself physically? I know Stuart oversaw a renovation. Would you like to talk about that?

Glenn: Yes, the church has always looked good. In fact, it was getting a little, I don't know, worn out inside the church, which was built in 1885. This is the third church on this site. It was begun in 1885 and finished in 1886. It's a beautiful little Victorian, Gothic building. Over the years, things were added to it.

It needed all kinds of attention. The windows needed to be restored. The windows are lovely. They were all provided by Meyer and Company of Munich, Germany. They all came in at one time. It's a wonderful set of windows, a very unusual thing for any church to have a single set of windows by the same maker.

Ann: Beautiful.

Glenn: They are lovely. Stuart decided with support from a number of people from the parish that we needed to do a restoration of the interior of the church. I was part of that.

I was on the committee. It was chaired by Guy Martin, who is an architect, and had people on the committee who had long ties to the church in one way or another. I'm thinking of Mary Weinmann and Mimi Crocker, among others.

Ann: Was that when the chapel was added?

Glenn: Mary Weinmann added the chapel as a gift in memory of her mother in the '60s. That was already here.

Ann: OK, earlier.

Glenn: Yes, earlier. That was a great addition to the church. We proceeded to go about the restoration in an interesting way. In that, we were mostly informed by a photograph that was taken of the inside of the church as it was completed in 1886. What we were trying to do in the restoration was to bring the appearance of the church back as closely as possible to that.

There were no hanging lights then. There were gaslights, but you couldn't see them in the picture. The hanging lights, which many people loved, were taken out. We told everybody, "Well, we can bring them back if we want to at some point. We're going to leave them out for a while." Of course, people eventually forgot about them. They are now gone.

The area in front of the altar was much more open in the 1886 photograph. Before restoration, it was all filled in with pews. There was just a very narrow way you could get to the altar rail. That was opened up again and now looks much more like it did in 1886.
There had been lots of organ pipes that had been put in place in various ways that went back near
the big windows on the north wall that projected out over one of those.

There was another set of pipes that projected out over another window where the organ is, the
window that has the Virgin Mary and the child, Jesus. It's based on the Raphael painting. That
window is an important window. It was partially obstructed by these organ pipes they put in. All
of that stuff got moved out.

The church was returned very much to its original appearance. We replaced the floor, which had
been covered with the tiles which you see in a lot of Victorian buildings and had been, I believe,
manufactured in England.

Ann: Right, Minton, I think they were.

Glenn: Yes, I think so. We replaced them with exactly the same tiles, which are still available in
England. They have exactly the same patterns that had been placed in 1886 when the building
was completed.

The pattern of the floor becomes more elaborate as you get closer to the altar. The nave aisles are
one pattern. The choir area has another pattern. The sanctuary up by the altar has another pattern.

You become aware of the liturgical importance of the space that you're moving towards.
Likewise, we were able to ascertain the color scheme of the original church and went back to
that. The walls are a yellowish color, fairly pale, rather attractive.

The sanctuary is almost white and apparently, we are supposing that the original architect was
trying to create maximum sense of light in that sanctuary area around the altar, which is why it's
a lighter color.

That was an important thing that Stuart did. He did this about the same time as 9/11 came along.
We were planning it, then. There was some thought that we probably would not be able to raise
the money to do it, during the uncertainty that followed that, in fact, both financially, in terms of
the stock markets and how they reacted to it. Just the way people felt about life in general.

Ann: Did the congregation change through the years or not?

Glenn: Is this a new question? Has the congregation changed?

Ann: Yes.

Glenn: The congregation has not changed much, I don't think. It's become much younger. I'd
say the average age when I came here was probably 65, or 70, maybe not quite that much. Of
course, now, I'm over 70, myself. It doesn't seem that's so terrible. But it was an aging
congregation.

In fact, in John Anschutz's latter years, he was Sanford Garner’s predecessor; there was some
concern that the church just would cease to exist because it was so much populated by older
people. There were just no younger people.
The congregation at that time began to figure out what, if anything, they might be able to do about this. They did make some effort to attract younger people. What happened was Sanford Garner came along. He was a much younger man than John Anschutz, with children and a young family. That attracts other young people.

Exactly the same thing happened when Sanford left and Stuart Kenworthy came, who was 40 years old when he came. He had two young children. A third one was born within a year of the Kenworhtys coming here. He had a young family and a very winning wife, who was extremely well liked in the congregation.

His children went to the same schools that the parishioner children were going to, and other children from those schools who knew the Kenworthy children would bring their friends to church here and their parents with them. You had this almost explosive growth in the congregation in Stuart's first 10 years.

Most of those people went to the nine o'clock service, but they were young families. Many of them lived in Georgetown. There was a big infusion of young families in Georgetown in those days, and I think still is really.

I think what you've tended to have here is younger people who, in a lot of ways, are just younger versions of the older people. Not that you could carry that too far, but they tend to be prosperous, they tend to be well connected, they tend to have some degree of social prominence in the community in general.

The difference in age is less striking than what you might think, because they're basically very similar, whether they're 75 or 80 years old or 35 or 40.

**Ann:** You mentioned 9/11. Earlier in preparing these questions, we did a little research and found that this parish had been draped in black when Abraham Lincoln was assassinated. Is there anything that the parish did at the time of 9/11 that was peculiar to this church?

**Glenn:** Not really. If you may remember after 9/11, everywhere you went there were American flags. We didn't put out an American flag anywhere. We may have tolled bells once or twice.

We did have a service after 9/11. One of the few churches actually that did, and we were quite astonished at the response to that, because it brought in huge quantities of people who had some ties, who knew people who had been killed in New York, or who had some personal connection with what had happened there.

That was remarkable at that time. When the church was draped in black after President Lincoln was shot, I think everybody in the church, everybody probably in the country, was shocked at the Lincoln assassination.

I'm sure you know the sympathies here tended not to be with the North nor with Lincoln, and the rector at the time of Lincoln's coming in while the Civil War was starting, William Norwood, left the parish, because he wouldn't pray for the President or Union victory, which was required of the clergy in the Diocese of Maryland which included Washington DC then.
He left. Nobody replaced him. The vestry didn't replace him. I think they hoped he would just come back sooner or later, but he didn't. Eventually, he was replaced.

His replacement was somebody named John Bonte, who was a northerner, and a pretty aggressive northerner. He just didn't get along very well with the congregation, who eventually asked him to leave. He was in place at the time President Lincoln was assassinated. I imagine the draping in black had more to do with the rector than it had to do with the congregation.

**Ann:** The vestry records were interesting. They mentioned that in 1874, the District of Columbia provided $2,000 as compensation for damage to the church resulting from road re-grading. By 1885, the women of the church had raised $30,000 for the new building. Are there any parallels to that that you can recall or are those one-and-only?

**Glenn:** They account for why the current church building was built, at least, principally account for it. The first church building was built in 1818. The congregation that broke away from St. John's started to meet and worship together in November of 1817.

Among the first things that they did was to find a lot on which to build a church. They found the lot that we currently have the church built on, which was then at the corner of Congress and Beall Streets and now at the corner of 31st and “O” Streets, because the streets were renamed eventually to coincide with the Washington grid from the original Georgetown names.

The 1818 church was a typical Federal style church that was enlarged and gothicized, although it's more Romanesque, in 1865. Then you had Governor Alexander Robey Shepherd, who was governor of the District of Columbia, who undertook massive public works all over the city.

One of those was re-grading all the streets. He re-graded the Georgetown streets so that some of them were lowered and others were raised. The ones around Christ Church were lowered, leaving the church roughly a floor above the new street level.

You had to walk up a flight of stairs to get to the church, and then walk up more stairs to get into the worship space, which was in that building on the second floor of the church.

In the process of re-grading the streets, the building itself was structurally weakened so that it had to be almost held together with iron bars, which you can see in the picture that was taken of that interior just before it was torn down.

The vestry decided that they would rebuild, re-grade the site to the new street level, and rebuild the church in 1885. The then rector was Albert Rhett Stuart. I think he probably saw this as a great opportunity, because I think what you've got in Christ Church as it currently exists is the kind of church that would've thrilled, people who were drawn to the Oxford Movement, which the congregation here was not.

The rector, I think, to some extent, was drawn by the Oxford Movement, although probably not very overtly because I don't think it would've been a popular position to have with the congregation. What he created was this little miniature cathedral, as it's sometimes called, in which you've got all the elements of a traditional European Gothic church.
You've got a nave, you've got aisles, you've got at least suggested transepts, you've got a sanctuary, you've got all these windows that are filled with images. The second church had stained glass windows but they were just geometrical shapes, there was no imagery at all in them.

Anyway, you ended up with a church full of imagery and symbols and a church that has worn well. It was very well done, very well thought through, and it's served its purposes admirably ever since and adapted to all the changes that have come about.

**Ann:** Maybe we should just move on to your vision for the church or thoughts for the future or if you have other reminiscences that you'd like to recall.

**Glenn:** I don't know. I think the way Christ Church has evolved, if you will, gives me every reason to think that it will continue to have a stable future, which will be based on a pretty solid traditional read of church and society, basically.

I think that will be fine, I think that it will do very well. There's a lot of inherent strength in the community, and of course, it's partially the people that are in it, but it's partially the community itself. I think that they've built this up in new groups of people as they've come along.

They accept the values, accept the responsibility for carrying them on. It seems to me like that's what's going to continue to happen here.

**Ann:** This is one I should've asked you earlier. Do you have reflections on your unique position as a parishioner and a staff person?

**Glenn:** It's a dual role that I think is ill-advised.

**Ann:** [laughs]

**Glenn:** I would never suggest that anybody try to combine the two. I think it creates problems potentially for both other parishioners and the staff person.

I hope I haven't caused such problems. I hope that's not been much of an issue with me. But I think it's not a particularly good model. It's hard to relate to a place in both ways. You can do it, but it's...

**Ann:** You made it look easy, Glenn.

**Glenn:** They're two very different roles and it's not a natural development to have that going on with lay staff. It's not dissimilar to clergy, I suppose, because clergy have to be both part of the congregation, in a way, while they're also employed by the congregation, in a way.

There's that tension with clergy but they're trained for it. That's what they do, and they're also accustomed to being able to cut the ties very quickly. Not necessarily easily, but when a priest goes on from one place to another, that priest will cherish memories of their former place probably, hopefully, but they'll be able to move into a new place in the same way, because that's what they're trained to do.
It's a little different if you're a lay employee of the parish, working for the parish, and doing certain things in that undertaking, but also trying to draw some kind of spiritual life, as it were, and nurture from the place. It's been fine. I have no complaints about it.

**Ann:** Dichotomy?

**Glenn:** Yes. No complaints at all. I just think it's not a natural role.

**Ann:** All right. Glenn Metzdorf, archivist, historian, parishioner at Christ Church Georgetown. Thank you so much.

**Glenn:** Thank you.

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