INTERVIEW OF TOM CROCKER: APRIL 19, 2018

Kathleen Patterson: This interview of Tom Crocker was recorded on April 19, 2018 by Parishioner Kathleen Patterson in connection with the bicentennial celebration of Christ Church, Georgetown. The interview took place in Tom's home.

Tom, thank you very much for the interview that we're starting today. I'd love to hear about when you first started attending Christ Church.

Tom Crocker: Thanks, Kathleen. I probably started attending Christ Church in the early to mid-1950s, probably closer to the mid-1950s, with my parents. I was actually baptized there, but it was in 1958 when I was baptized, April, 1958. Exactly 60 years ago. I recall very well the baptism Dr. Anschutz did. He took me back to the baptismal font and said, "Look in it. Don't be afraid. There's nothing but water." I actually remember my baptism. I guess you could say I've been a member of the parish certainly since then, but probably since the mid-'50s, I would guess.

Kathleen: I'm curious about the baptism. Did he actually dump a lot of water on you? What did he do?

Tom: No, he didn't. He simply took some water from the font, put it in his hand, and performed the sacrament that way. Back then they did not have oil, and chrisms, and candles, and all the bells and whistles. It was just a water baptism.

Kathleen: Was it a private baptism?

Tom: Yes, it was.

Kathleen: It was not the whole congregation.

Tom: Right. We didn't have congregational baptisms back then. The norm was private, and it was private. My godparents were there, my parents. Maybe, at most, 12 people in the back of the church. I can't remember what day of the week it was. It was probably a Saturday. I think it was April 5th. I have a silver cup with that date on it that my good Catholic godmother gave me.

Kathleen: [laughs] Now, I may be getting this wrong, but you said you maintained your membership here all those years, but I know that you were not attending Christ Church Georgetown for a certain period of time.

Tom: Right. Actually, I probably did not maintain my membership. I left town and went to college in '67, and really dropped out of organized religion at that point, did not come back to it until I was about 35 years old, in the mid-1980s. At that point I was going to
Christ Church, Old Town, Alexandria, where I was a member for a number of years. That's where I met my wife and married her.

Then we re-joined Christ Church, Georgetown, probably about the year 2000 would be my guestimate. I remember being there for the millennium celebration in the year 2000.

**Kathleen:** It's probably rather unusual. You've been a member at Christ Church as a boy, and then as a father and husband, so you've seen it in two very different periods of time. Is there any way you can compare and contrast?

**Tom:** Yes, and, of course, I would add that even during the period when I was away, my parents, and, after my father died, my mother, were members and active in the parish. I would come to it for services at Easter, at Christmas, and whatever, and in between as well, but I was simply not a full-time member at that point.

Contrasting it between the 1950s and '60s and now, it's quite a stark contrast. Under Dr. Anschutz, it was really a -- and this was very typical of the Episcopal Church in general at that time -- it was a low Episcopal service and liturgy.

Three out of the four Sundays in a month we had Morning Prayer. Once a month you'd have communion. It was the old prayer book morning prayer. That was the norm at all the services.

They did have an eight o'clock, a nine o'clock, and 11 o'clock as we do today, but I don't think there was a five o'clock, certainly no evensong. Again, it was typical of that period. It was a very low Episcopal Church. It's gone a lot higher.

I think a lot of that that started under Stuart Kenworthy, coming from Saint Thomas in New York. I think a certain amount of that is now more the norm in the Episcopal Church. It is a contrast.

**Kathleen:** By the time you came back here, were your boys in Sunday school?

**Tom:** Yes, they were. They would have been probably about six to nine years old. They did go to Sunday school all the way through, were very active in it. It was a very strong Sunday school under Stuart Kenworthy's time here.

Our older son, Edward, in particular, had a really great group, the J2A program. They went to France, to Taize. Had a marvelous trip. There must have been about 30 or 40 of them. They made a great CD of it, which shows...Somebody ought to put it in the archives for the bicentennial. We have a copy. I can lend that to be copied if you don't have it.

It was a very positive experience. To this day he remains very close friends with people in that group, even though they are now in their late twenties. It was a smaller group when Thomas was there. He went to England, to Canterbury. It was a nice trip. He enjoyed it.
The good thing for the parents is that we got a nice trip to Paris out of this, then a nice trip to London, to meet them and pick them up.

[laughter]

**Tom:** It was a very, very positive experience for both of them, and I think a real tribute to Christ Church. An example of how it's made a difference in some people's lives.

**Kathleen:** You must have gone to Sunday school here as a boy. I'm just wondering what that was like. Can you compare your experience with that of your boys'.

**Tom:** Interesting. We didn't have quite the numbers that they had, but it was similar. There were a number of people that I knew in the Sunday school who were contemporaries of mine, both boys and girls, who might have gone to NCS or wherever.

I was, of course, confirmed at Christ Church. That would have been probably when I was about 12 or 13. Probably around 1961 or so. I was confirmed by Bishop Angus Dun from the Washington Cathedral. I think I was probably one of the last groups that he confirmed as he retired soon after that.

He was a very formidable character. He was short, of Scottish descent. At the time, we thought he had fought in World War I. He only had about two fingers on his hands. He had a wooden leg. I remember before the confirmation he said, "Now, come on. You can knock on my wooden leg."

If you're 12 years old, you think that's pretty cool. [laughs] It turned out I just looked him up right before this interview. It wasn't World War I. He was actually born with congenital deformations. He suffered with that all his life.

The rumor at the time was that they were war wounds from World War I. I remember when he confirmed me, instead of putting his hand on, he just put these two fingers. They really came down hard on you.

[laughter]

**Tom:** You don't forget it.

[laughter]

**Tom:** He was an old school bishop, very formidable, very intellectual, and somebody you'd have a lot of respect for.

**Kathleen:** When you were confirmed, how old were you at the time? How old when you took First Communion?
Tom: I remember when I was confirmed that was about probably '61, so I was probably 12 I would guess, 12 to 13 in that period. I don't know what age they do it now. Probably younger. I'm not sure.

Kathleen: I think it's moving around all the time. You don't remember how old your boys were when they were confirmed?

Tom: If I guessed, I would probably be wrong. Our older one was confirmed. Our younger one declined it.

Kathleen: What about First Communion?

Tom: I don't remember. Probably after I was confirmed. It was probably right after I was confirmed. You didn't have communion until you had confirmed back then. That's another change. It would've been right after I was confirmed, probably 12, the age of reason age.

Kathleen: Let's see, you've mentioned Dr. Anschutz and you mentioned Stuart Kenworthy. Are there other rectors that you can remember from when you attended?

Tom: Dr. Anschutz, probably not very many people remember him now who are still in the parish. He was a very formidable rector. He had a real presence about him, and he was a great preacher. One of the great preachers of the Episcopal Church. He had a marvelous ability to, when he got in the pulpit, to make you think he was preaching directly to you and to you only. It was almost mesmerizing. As a preacher, his son, Mark Anschutz -- whom you and I both knew -- had some of the same skills and talents.

I remember Anschutz would always preach on the gospel. For example, I recall to this day a sermon he gave on the mustard seed, a famous parable in the Bible. He unpacked and applied it so you felt it applied just to you. They always dimmed the lights for effect during the sermon and there'd be one light on the pulpit where he'd be speaking.

You felt like he was speaking to you and to you only, and that was his real talent. He was a very strong rector, a real presence, and I think respected by all of the Parishioners. I grew up under his domain until I went away to college. He retired not too long after that and moved to Connecticut, and then Sanford Garner was called. (Some years later Dr. Anschutz's funeral was at Christ Church. It was packed. I recall their singing his favorite hymn Aurelia, "The church's one foundation...").

Although I knew Sanford I really didn't go to the church that much when he was there except when I'd go with my mother. He was from the South. He went to Sewanee. He was there for a long time. I think he was very popular with the parishioners, but a man with different talents than Dr. Anschutz.
Then, of course, Stuart Kenworthy was next. I did attend the church for a number of years, since about year 2000, under Stuart. As I said, Stuart was very effective in building the Sunday school. He was a great parish guy, a great pastoral guy.

I think that's where his real strengths lay, although, when he did preach, he did give good sermons, but he didn't preach that often. We went to the nine o'clock service. That may have accounted for some of why we didn't hear that many sermons. Then Tim Cole in the last year-and-a-half. Those are the four rectors that I have known there.

*Kathleen:* You were on the search committee for Tim Cole.

*Tom:* That is correct. We're very glad he's here. [laughs]

*Kathleen:* Let me go back, just for a minute, to Father Anschutz. I'm just curious that...

*Tom:* We always called him Dr. Anschutz.

*Kathleen:* Oh, Dr. Anschutz, OK. You mentioned remembering his sermons. Did children attend the sermons? Do you remember? Were you very young or not?

*Tom:* That's a good question. I think that most of the younger children would leave before the sermon and go to Sunday school, as I recall. I was a precocious kid or pretended to be and so [laughs] I'd stick around for the sermons. I think I was a little older than the younger children, too. I remember that was probably after I was confirmed.

I think, if you were a teenager...It is interesting. I do recall being there listening to the sermons, and, yet, there was Sunday school. I'm not quite sure how that worked. I honestly don't remember logistically. That's a good question.

*Kathleen:* Are there any other members of the clergy, or the staff, or people who worked there that you especially remember?

*Tom:* Yes. There was, of course, a succession of assistants to the rector. Under Anschutz, there was Mr. Wing, who was the assistant for many years. I think he retired to Nantucket and was up in Nantucket at the Episcopal Church there. I ran into him many years later, back in the 1990s. By that time he was probably pretty old. He was probably in his 80s.

There was also a fellow named Terry, who had been a chaplain in the army. He came and was his assistant for a while. Those are the ones I recall under Anschutz. I also recall very well the sexton. His name was Nelson. I can't remember his first name. Everybody just knew him as Nelson.

He was this marvelous older black man who knew everybody's name, had wire-rimmed glasses, always wore a white coat, and was just a real presence around Christ Church. He probably retired about 1960 or so. He was just very kind with all the children and was a real exemplar of Christian love in action, I think.
I don't recall, specifically, the assistants under Sanford Garner, although I know that Bill Hague was one. I've known Bill Hague for a long time, socially and as a friend afterwards. There was also a young clergyman named Pollock, who I think died recently. I couldn't keep up with all the ones under Stuart Kenworthy. There have been a number.

**Kathleen:** What about just week-to-week services? I think you touched on it a little bit earlier, when you said that as a boy, there weren't as many services as there are now. In terms of the service itself, what differences can you point to other than Communion once a month?

**Tom:** Yes, communion once a month. Morning Prayer was the norm. We did have a choir. I think it was a professional choir, even then, although there was a junior choir, which I briefly sang in until they heard how I sang. [laughs] I can't carry a tune.

It was run by a woman named Mrs. Blakeslee. I remember going to rehearsals on Saturday mornings in the parish hall, in Keith Hall. There was a professional choir, but I think the professional choir probably was really for the 11 o'clock service, which is just the main service. They probably had the junior choir at the nine o'clock, which would have been appropriate.

In terms of attendance, it strikes me that, more or less, the same number of people would attend. It'd be pretty full in the main part of the nave, and then partially full in the side aisles. I remember listening to everybody doing the Prayer of Humble Access. It was all in the old prayer book. It was like a bunch of old people just grumbling and mumbling. [laughs] As a kid, I used to laugh at it. Then I'd get very bored. I used to sit, pretty much, where I sit now, which is on the right-hand side. I'd look up. There was a round window above the chancel, which has a dove, or a sheep, or something in it. I remember I used to fantasize about having a machine gun and shooting it out [laughs] when I was bored. Fortunately, I never did.

[laughter]

**Tom:** I was your typical kid.

**Kathleen:** Even though you were very mature and went to sermons, you were not completely mature?

**Tom:** No, and I'm still not, but I enjoyed it. It was a big part of my spiritual formation, of course. I went to St. Albans. I got five days a week of chapel and religion there, which also was a big part of my spiritual formation from an early age. Christ Church played a major role in that, too, to be sure.

I'd feel if I missed going to church on Sunday, and I still feel this way, there's just something not right. I feel out of tune. I've always gone to church every Sunday, as did my parents. It was just the way we were. It was just the top priority.
Even though a lot of my intellectual development at that stage theologically came from St. Albans and being around the Cathedral, it was supplemented by what we had at Christ Church.

In later years, since I've been very active in the adult forum at Christ Church, I find that that now is the major stimulus to me and challenge to me, and former of my growth, such as it is now, in spiritual matters.

**Kathleen:** Let's talk about the adult forum for a minute then. How was that started? Were you involved in getting the program started? No? What drew you to it initially?

**Tom:** There had been a predecessor of it, probably going back some time, maybe even as far back as Anschutz, which my parents attended. I vaguely recall it. It was really for adults and I was not an active participant in that.

It's got a long heritage, if you will. In its current manifestation, it really took off under Stuart Kenworthy. As far as I know, one of our fellow parishioners at the time, David Stein, -- I'm not sure if he still goes to Christ Church -- really formed what we have today.

Some wonderful lecturers, such as Ron Connor, who really made it take off. In fact, Ron was one of the reasons we came back to Christ Church. My mother was a great admirer of him and recommended him in the adult forum. She really enjoyed his talks.

I went to a couple of them and I was just bowled over. "Wow, this guy is fabulous." He was the right-stuff kind of guy. He was a very, very big factor in our coming back to Christ Church, and my sticking with it, and going to the adult forum, and enjoying it.

Unfortunately, he passed away a few years ago, in a very untimely manner. He really set the tone for what was an absolutely a first-rate program, and still is.

**Kathleen:** There are some top-notch lecturers now as well. Do you want to comment on any of them?

**Tom:** Everybody brings their talents, and they're all different talents. I've enjoyed, over the years, Barry Seltzer, who I think is very deep, and provocative, and stimulating in his analysis and presentations. Kathleen Staudt has done a great job, too, and has grown a lot in the role. I've enjoyed Susan Bond in the past as well.

Those would be the ones that would jump out to me. Ron Connor was the...What is the term? He broke the mold. [laughs]

**Kathleen:** Yeah, I would agree with that.

**Tom:** Yeah, I think a lot of people would.

[laughter]
Kathleen: He was a wonderful man. Even though it's not my interview, I'll just say, he's the reason we started going to Christ Church, Georgetown, after he performed the ceremony for our daughter's wedding at the National Cathedral.

Let's shift gears now a little bit, slightly, and talk about big celebrations. Either tragedies or otherwise, that you can remember. You mentioned celebrating the millennium here.

Tom: That's a good one. That was more recent, and I can remember it. We thought, at the time, what better place to be than in church when the millennium changes? There was a midnight service that Stuart put on. It was pretty well attended when we went to it.

Stuart was in a very high Anglican mode at that point, and actually had incense--one of the few times. He had trouble getting it lit. A lot of fumbling with the matches. Young Stuart was there helping him. [laughs] It was wonderful. There was a little incense swinging.

Midnight came and we were all getting ready to go up for communion. It was this very solemn moment. All of a sudden, there is this, "Bang!" We went, "Oh my gosh, we're being attacked". The stained glass windows were shaking.

It turned out to be fireworks that nobody knew about [laughs] they had down on the waterfront or downtown. Everybody jumped out of their skins because we were all lulled into this very religious mode, going up for communion, and all of a sudden this shattering blast. We all laughed, with some relief I remember that.

Really, before that, I don't remember. As now, we tended not to have the external political world intrude upon the church. The church was a sanctuary, a time-out place where you didn't wave in the wind and reflect what was going on politically around us. All the things did happen. Kennedy was assassinated in '63, but I was up at St. Albans when that happened.

We went to the chapel when we heard the bells of the Cathedral tolling--those deep, sonorous bells. That's when I knew he had died. I was not really at Christ Church for that; I was more up there on the Close.

Kathleen: What about 9/11? Do you remember anything?

Tom: I was not going to Christ Church at that time. We were half-in and half-out at that point. That was 2001. We were going temporarily to another Episcopal Church in Alexandria at that point. I really was not in Christ Church at 9/11. I can't say what the reaction was at that point. Although I think shortly after that we became full-time at Christ Church. At that point, we were in and out.

Kathleen: Do you remember anything particular under the various rectors, the feast day celebrations?

Tom: The what?
Kathleen: Feast day celebrations -- Christmas, Easter. Any special kinds of decorations or tradition? Palm Sunday. Anything like that?

Tom: Yeah, sure. Christmas, we used to have a Christmas pageant, back in the '50s, every Christmas. I was a perennial shepherd. I'd always wear my plaid bathrobe, probably not too accurate for a Palestinian shepherd.

[laughter]

Tom: The pageant was there in the chancel at the services, the 9:00 and the 11 o'clock. There were a lot of rehearsals that went into it. It was great for the kids. We really enjoyed it. There was always competition to see who would be Joseph and Mary.

I think I finally got upgraded to Joseph once before I retired. That was the way it was. Then there was, very much as it is now, an earlier service on Christmas Eve, and then a Christmas high mass, or a midnight service, which I'd been to a couple of times when I was in my 20s.I don't stay up that late any longer, so I don't go now. I'm sure it's lovely. It's pretty similar to the way it is now in terms of the Christmas celebrations. The place would be packed.

Same thing at Easter. There'd be all these people taking your seats, and you'd say, "Who are these people? I've never seen them before." What else is new? The church would be adorned with lilies, just as it is now. That really hasn't changed.

Our flower committee has always done a great job, even back then. They still do. I would say that's pretty similar. Palm Sunday would have been the same. They would have had the children parade around with the palms, as they sing the joyful hymns as they go in.

They would read the liturgy for Palm Sunday, just as we do now. I remember participating in that, too, as a reader. I always enjoyed playing Pontius Pilate. I thought I would have probably done exactly the same thing if I were in his shoes, but anyway.

[laughter]

Tom: I think there's a remarkable continuity along those lines. Our choir has gotten better and better. In particular, in the last few years, I think it's really reached heights...It was excellent before, it's reached heights even beyond that recently.

Music has always played an important part in the church. I find it's playing an even more important part and element of our service, and in people's devotion and reactions to the church, now even more than it did before.

Kathleen: Now we're really going to shift gears. Let's talk a little bit about your family. You mentioned coming here as a child with your parents. Tell me a little bit about your parents, and their role in the church, and their experience.
**Tom:** My parents looked around for the right church for a while. They'd lived in Georgetown since the end of World War II. My father wound up at the Pentagon -- he was in the army -- wound up at the Pentagon in '45.

My father's from New England, from a Congregational background. A lot of my forebears were deacons in the Congregational Church. A lot of them came over on the Mayflower and ships right after. They were basically New England Puritans.

My mother's family, even though she was from Arkansas, originally was from Maryland, going back to the 17th Century. They were very much Anglicans. My distant, beyond great-grandfather, was a vestryman at All Saints Church in Fredrick, Maryland in the mid-18th century.

They were from up around that area, Frederick and Cecil Counties, but also some from around here. After the Revolution, the Episcopal Church, or the Anglican Church as it was then, basically folded all over the East Coast, except in Virginia. They had no church to go to, except for Methodist. They went to the Methodist church.

My mother was actually brought up a Methodist but had these Anglican and Episcopal roots. Interestingly, she and a number of her family went back to the Episcopal Church when they were adults. My parents wound up at Christ Church. It was a very happy fit. They were very active.

My father was an usher for many, many years. He ran for the vestry. Back then they had contested vestry elections. Unfortunately, at least in my view, he lost. I must confess it was rather sweet when I got elected to the vestry, [laughs] and was able to do what he had not. In many ways, I felt I was doing it for him, as well as for the parish at large. He died many years ago, in 1971, and his funeral was at the church.

Back then, I would say oftentimes there were a number of famous people who attended Christ Church on occasion. They were the ones who tended to win the elections for vestry because they were well known; they were important political figures. It really may not have been the best reflection of the parish.

But there were certainly some people who were devoted, regularly attending parishioners who did not fit that category, but who were elected to the vestry. My mother was active for many years in the parish.

When they purchased Linthicum Hall in the late '50s, around 1960, she was very active in the designs for renovating that. Even though it looks pretty threadbare now, [laughs] it was really a wreck before they got it. There were substantial renovations done around 1960. She was quite involved in that.

**Kathleen:** She was an artist. I know that was...

**Tom:** She was an artist and designer. She had a studio in Georgetown. She was well known in decorating circles. Then, when the Kenworthy's came, around 1990, she, with
Mary Weinmann, redid the rectory. What you see there now is still pretty much what she put in there, including the wallpaper in the front hall, which you can't get these days, unfortunately. It's very nice.

**Kathleen:** Describe that wallpaper that you can't get anymore.

**Tom:** I'm not sure who manufactured it. It's this French wallpaper. It's a scene of Boston Harbor. It's no longer made. You can't find it.

Other things there, too. It has really reflected her touch and Mary's touch. She was about...

**Kathleen:** Just for the record, your mom's name was Mimi.

**Tom:** Was Miriam or Mimi. Miriam Crocker.

**Kathleen:** Miriam or Mimi Crocker.

**Tom:** She lived to be 97. She was born in 1913 and died in 2010. Her funeral was also at Christ Church. She also was one of the first women on the vestry. Not the first, but one of the first. She was probably the third or fourth. She was elected in 1975.

I was not really attending church at that point, so I actually had to go back through the church records recently to find a record and confirm that she really was on the vestry. I did find it in preparation for this interview.

I know she was active and involved. She enjoyed when Stuart Kenworthy came, working with him and Fran on the rectory. Glenn Metzdorf was also involved. I think they had a good time. They'd go down to the City Tavern after a day of hard work, and pop back a couple of martinis, and talk about the parish. I'll just leave it at that.

[laughter]

**Kathleen:** Speaking about the parish, can you think of any particularly interesting characters that you've met over the years, parishioners, either in a good way or not so good way. Any funny stories?

**Tom:** There are a lot of characters.

[laughter]

**Tom:** There are still a few people who have gone there as long as I have who are my age. I think about Margie Shepherd and Liz Nibley who basically go back to my period there. We grew up there in that parish.
They're not characters, but they were the steady stroke, and have long been here. George Hill as well. He's another one. Boyden Gray, he was a little bit older than I am. He's gone there for a long time as well.

I guess my favorite character story is not so long ago, maybe 10 years ago. This fellow appeared wearing a military uniform. I was watching. He went up to take communion. I was trying to figure him out...He was a middle-aged fellow. I was trying to figure out what Army was he in. It was unclear. Was he German? Was he Dutch? He was blondish.

At the coffee hour afterwards, Allen Foster, a fellow parishioner, and I went up and started talking to him. He said he was an Iraqi general. He was very convincing. He was talking about Baghdad and all of this. We were, "Oh, this is fascinating. This is fascinating."

It turned out he was a total fraud. He was German and he was married to a much older lady who lived up on Q St. Very shortly after that, he murdered her. Stuart had actually banned him from coming to the church, because he figured him out pretty quickly.

He was an impostor and a very bad impostor, too. He certainly fooled me, and I think Allen as well. [laughs] We thought he was really an Iraqi general.

Another interesting thing: When I was looking through the parish records to confirm about my mother's being on the vestry recently, I was reading all the vestry records from 1967 to '75. It's very interesting. Everything that's happening now happened then.

Unfortunately, the place was robbed a couple of times. Once somebody came in -- back then they didn't lock the doors, of course -- somebody came in and pulled over the pulpit, tore up the Bible, pulled down all the statues and wrecked them. I don't think they ever caught him. It was obviously somebody who was mentally disturbed. There was a lot of damage done.

Then, this being the late 1960s, there was an offshoot of the Black Panthers or some such organization that was going to come. They'd been telling every Episcopal Church in town they were going to come and demand reparations. I was reading the preparations and instructions to the ushers and the vestry if they showed up.

If these fellows would have come and disrupted a service, which was illegal under DC law, the ushers were immediately to go back in the parish hall and call the police, but also be polite and say if they wanted to meet with anybody in the parish hall afterwards, we'd be happy to talk, to address their concerns.

They never showed up, fortunately, but there are characters. Those are the ones that pop to mind. There are probably a lot more over the years. This is Georgetown after all.

[laughter]
Kathleen: Were there any, can you think of from your boyhood, any historically significant parishioners whom you met as a boy or...

Tom: I would say this. There probably were some politically prominent people who would make cameo guest appearances there from time to time, but weren't really parishioners. They would just do it to say that they went to the church. I never had a lot of respect for them. Like the Pharisees, they had their reward.

Kathleen: That's an interesting comment. Then tell me what has the parish meant to you over the years? It's obviously meant a lot, based on your last comment, in part.

Tom: As it did with my parents and a lot of their friends...they became best friends with many of their fellow parishioners there. That's still true. A lot of our best friends go to Christ Church. It is a real bond. It is a companionship that has helped us walk through this life. People come and people go in Washington. It's a very transient place.

Some people have gone there longer than others, but we have to realize that it's a snapshot. Every time we go in there, some of us will be there a decade from now, others won't. People come and people go, but it does provide at least some continuity.

I think those people who come in, treat it seriously, are in the mood of spiritual growth and nourishment, and participate in that community are the ones that take so much out of it. It really is not what we give. It's what we take out of it that is the real blessing in terms of deepening spiritual growth and in terms of the companionship and comradeship that we share with these cohorts of people who are going through the same thing, and they're good people. They can be on different sides of the political spectrum. That's another nice thing about Christ Church, which I think distinguishes it.

There's long been a rule about no politics from the pulpit, and that's very wise. As a result, we have parishioners from across the whole spectrum politically. Yet we cooperate, we get along; we work towards the same goal. There are things which are far more important than politics, and that would be building the Kingdom of God here.

I think, while it's not perfect, we have and do achieve a measure of that on a daily basis in our lives at Christ Church. For that, I'm very grateful.

Kathleen: Just a little bit more. You're an historian and have recently done a lot of research and made a wonderful presentation related to the founders of Christ Church. I'm wondering if, in doing the research, was there anything that surprised you about them?

Also, in looking at their vision for this church, how does that compare to your vision? These are two totally different questions.

Tom: That's an excellent question. I struggled with that quite a bit. I was trying to get my hands around this group of founders who were maybe 25 or so people and what
motivated them. It was very difficult because most of them didn't write or leave records about what their views were or about their theology.

One exception being Francis Scott Key who twice considered taking holy orders. He left a voluminous record. He was a very thoughtful and introspective person who wrote a lot about what he thought. I found that they were a very diverse group professionally, from doctors, to lawyers, to bricklayers, to brewers, to whatever, developers, real estate speculators.

They came from St. John's Church and at least the immediate stimulus or impetus for founding Christ Church was that it was overcrowded there. Didn't have room for as many people. Yet, they couldn't raise the money to expand St. John's. This group, seemingly with St. John's blessing, founded Christ Church.

There also was an element of what they called evangelical motivation. In the context of the time, that seemed to mean a placing of centrality for Christ and the role of Christ in your salvation as opposed to the role of bishops and other formalities of the church. It was a different meaning of evangelical than we use today.

There were certainly people who had that motivation, Key being one and the first rector, Reuel Keith, was another. I don't think all the people who founded Christ Church were of that view, but, again, the record is very skimpy. Of course, they did name it Christ Church. There was a reason.

I think that, remarkably so, that is still probably, maybe unconsciously, not consciously, but there's still some allegiance to that concept among the parish, among the people here. It's not spoken. I think we do view Christ as absolutely essential to our worship, to our religious practice, and to our salvation.

The rest of it is fine. We educate ourselves about it, but the centrality of the cross and the Resurrection is very important, I think, to those in the parish who take their religion seriously. I don't know if that's an answer? That's a very good question.

**Kathleen:** That's a good answer, too. Tom, now it's completely open-ended. Do you have any other thoughts or observations related to your...

**Tom:** What's the future going to bring? [laughs]

**Kathleen:** What do you think?

**Tom:** I don't know. [laughs] I think Christ Church has much strength. It should continue to play to its strength -- its liturgy, its music, its good sense, its placing Christ in the fore. As I just said, I think it has offered and can continue to offer wonderful opportunities for younger parents with younger children.

It's just there for the taking. They need to avail themselves of it, and their lives will be immensely enriched. I would like to see our Sunday school grow back into robust
numbers because what we're offering is so much more fulfilling than Sunday morning soccer, or hockey, or the other things that are now competing for time at church. That wouldn't have happened in my generation.

To forgo that, you really miss a very important life-enhancing and absolutely central opportunity for growth as a person and as a human being. I would think that that would be one of my main messages to those who might be considering Christ Church. Give it a try. Come to it and bring your children. Get them in Sunday school, and participate, and be part of it.

That's what I would like to see. That's my vision for the future of Christ Church. It's not building a building or raising money. It's serving the congregation in growing spiritually, and going along the way joyfully, and that we do even more so.

Kathleen: Thank you very much, Tom. This is just been very helpful.