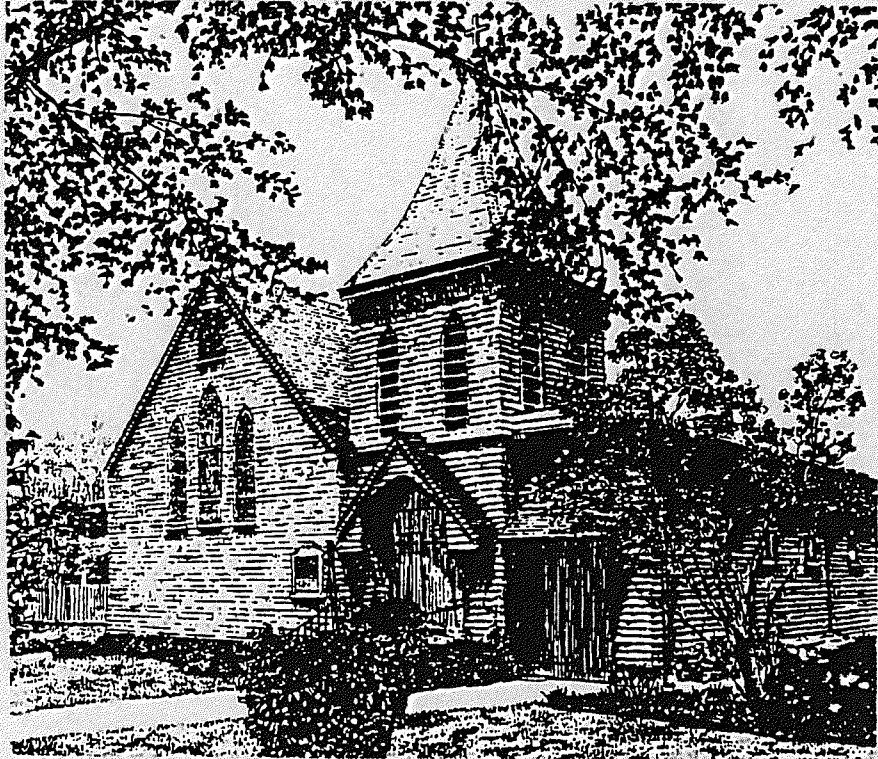


SAINT JOHN'S CHURCH



A HISTORY OF SAINT JOHN'S CHURCH

The Sandwich Village Episcopal Church, Inc.

SANDWICH, MASSACHUSETTS

1854 - 1995

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Gail C. Fryer
Parish Historian

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Acknowledgements

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G C F

Dedication

To the Rev. Dr. John H. Thomas

and to all the parishioners who have given
their time, talent, and treasure to the
life of St. John's of Sandwich

1. Beginnings

*Ah, but a man's reach should exceed his grasp,
Or what's a heaven for?* - Robert Browning

On Monday, the 4th day of December, 1854, at "7 1/2 o'clock" nine citizens of the town of Sandwich gathered for the first time as a religious Society to be known as Saint John's Episcopal Church. By virtue of authority vested in Charles B. Hall, Justice of the Peace, the meeting was called to choose a clerk and a moderator, to record proceedings, and "to enact by-laws and do such other business as may be needful to promote the objects of said Church." John W. Jarves, having been chosen as clerk, recorded the 60 minutes of that auspicious meeting. The Reverend Thomas Brinton Flowers was chosen as moderator. It was then resolved:

*that we here assembled do form ourselves into a Parish or church
[called Saint John's] of the Protestant Episcopal Church, & do
agree to conform to the general rules and regulations of the Diocese
of the State of Mass., & also to the canons of the Church.
Resolved that we hire Montezuma Hall & fit it for a place of
worship until we are able to build or buy a more suitable place.
The following persons were chosen as a vestry. John W. Jarves,
Geo. W. S. Hatch, Wm. McCarthy, Marshall C. Hamblin &
Charles P. Baker.
The vestry chose for Wardens John W. Jarves & G. W. S. Hatch &
J. W. Jarves for Treasurer. Rev. Thos. B. Flowers, Rector of the
Church of the Messiah at Woods Hole generously offered to give us his
services by preaching for us the first Sunday evening in every month
until, by the blessings of God, we can have a resident pastor.
(with Mr. Jarves' corrections)*

The meeting was adjourned at "8 1/2 o'clock" and the minutes signed "John W. Jarves, Clerck." In the original document we can disregard his several spelling corrections while we admire his graceful script and his acceptance, at the ripening age of 19, of so many duties. Mr. Jarves, son of

the founder of the Boston and Sandwich Glass Company, was a natural leader for Saint John's inception.

Of the others who helped form the Society, Marshall Childs Hamblin, William McCarthy, and Joseph Harrison were glasscutters, and James Creech was a glassblower. Otis Freeman, who eventually fathered ten children, was an engineer. George W. S. Hatch owned a planing mill and was a housewright. James P. Mc Kenna was a laborer from Ireland, and of Charles P. Baker, though he was held in high enough esteem to be elected to the Vestry, we know nothing.

All but three of the founders' ages are known and they range from 19 to 39. Perhaps it was a new generation trying its spiritual wings, but the Society of 1854 was not the first Episcopal gathering in Sandwich. Otis Freeman's father, the Reverend Frederick Freeman, an Episcopal minister who conducted services in his own chapel prior to 1850, said in his history, "An unadvised attempt was made..., to organize a society for the purpose of sustaining services of the Protestant Episcopal Church; but such as might naturally from their position have been supposed the strongest friends of Episcopacy were neither advising nor consulted in regard to the movement." Unadvised as it may have seemed to some, the Society commenced with the able ministry of the Reverend Mr. Flowers at Montezuma Hall. This hall, at 10 Jarves Street, was originally built as a Puritan Church, and was variously known as Jarves Chapel, Father Clinton Hall, and is now the Madden Country Store.

This resolute group, though small, managed to keep up its fellowship by attracting new members as others left (McCarthy became a Methodist), died or moved away. And there was always a seasonal increase in attendance as faithful summer residents returned to the Cape. However, the Society continued to meet in public halls and private homes for the next forty-five years.

In the 1850s Sandwich was on a railroad line to Boston. The glass factory and related works provided regular incomes, and small businesses along

Old Main and Jarves Streets flourished. But the small congregation was unable to attain its own church or a full time rector. During this period the Society also met in the Miller Block (which stood on the corner of Willow and Jarves Streets), and in the anteroom of the old Masonic Hall (which was in the Boyden Block, about where the Town Hall Annex is now). Paying rent for these modest quarters was a constant challenge. When the arrears at the Miller Hall had reached nearly thirty dollars, the Vestry hoped this could be paid off by private subscription among the members of the congregation. On more than one occasion individual members offered to pay for the use of the Hall for a service. In the late 1860s the family home of the Reverend Hiram Carleton, and in the early 1890s, "the Lindens," home of Dr. Roberts, the minister-in-charge, were used for services. These services may have been as few as twice a month.

As difficult as it was to raise rent payments it was a formidable task to compensate the clergy who served the small congregation. Mr. Flowers' visits ended after three months when the Reverend Winslow W. Sever came to take services for two years. A silver ewer in the possession of the Parish is engraved with the name of Mr. Sever as "First Rector of the Parish." In those days there was no careful differentiation between the term "mission" and the term "parish." Clergy who came to serve Saint John's regularly were called "rectors" despite the fact the Saint John's was listed in the Diocese of Massachusetts as a "mission" and, therefore, the early clergy should have been known as "vicars" or "ministers-in-charge."

In the period prior to the building of Saint John's Church on Main Street in 1899, the Reverend Mr. Sever was succeeded by a number of ministers, some of whom served for a few months, others for several years. The Reverends John A. Beavington, James A. Wickes, John J. Roberts, Francis S. Foxcroft, and Ernest N. Bullock are prominent names in the original Church register.

Financial support from the Diocese seems to have been minimal since many other missions were also struggling for existence. Nevertheless, the Convention of the Diocese was not unaware of the plight of Sandwich. Acting

Archdeacon C. W. Duffield wrote the Vestry "that the question had been raised whether Sandwich and Barnstable could be united in one 'cure'." Early minutes of Saint John's Vestry also reveal that considerable time was spent studying ways in which Cape parishes could work out plans for sharing the expenses of having a minister for regularly scheduled services. In its history Saint John's was involved in such arrangements with the Church of the Good Shepherd in Wareham, Saint Mary's in Barnstable, and Saint Peter's-on-the-Canal in Buzzards Bay.

The 1880s was a difficult period for the congregation and for the town of Sandwich. The six villages of Bourne, Buzzard's Bay, Pocasset, Cataumet, Monument Beach, and Sagamore successfully petitioned for separation from Sandwich, due to their distance from the courthouse. The resulting loss of revenues became a real hardship for the town especially when the glass factory closed in 1888. The congregation had managed to purchase a piece of property on Tupper Road from James B. Wesson and plans had been prepared for a brick church. The economic crisis through which Sandwich was moving severely affected the raising of funds for building the church. At a Vestry meeting on November 4, 1889, the Reverend Mr. Wickes told the gathered churchmen that he felt it advisable to sell the lot back to Mr. Wesson since the parish was not prepared to build at that time. Moreover, he did not think the location was desirable. He added that he would try to obtain an appropriation from the Women's Auxiliary which would go toward defraying the rent of a hall for the winter months. The offerings were understandably meager. Indeed, a notation in one record lists the total offering on January 1, 1889 as \$1.74.

By 1890 the congregation was faced with "having regular services adjourned at present but [decided] to maintain an organization." The group then voted the "receiving and depositing for safe keeping the funds of the parish," which included several hundred dollars subscribed for the building of the Tupper Road Church. A poignant note, revealing the straits of the congregation, is found in the clerk's minutes for June 4, 1890, in which he states "the secretary shall have full power to engage parties to remove furnishings and to sell any part of the same... and Mrs. Samuel Rockwood be allowed free use of the organ for safe keeping until the services are

resumed."

2. Construction

*Surely your goodness and mercy shall follow me all the days of my life,
and I will dwell in the house of the Lord for ever.*

Psalm 23

The organization was maintained and a committee was formed to ascertain what funds were available and what church could be constructed. In 1896 a lot was purchased from James Crocker on Old Main Street. It was considered a prime location and measured 60 by 123 feet. Pledges were sought and many ways of raising money were undertaken, especially by the Women's Guild. Three of the most unique ways of raising money seem worthy of recounting. Mayflowers were plentiful in those days and these lovely fragrant flowers were picked by young and old members of the congregation to be sold through a Boston florist. The second way had to do with the Lake House, an early boarding house which stood near the Hoxie House, and was popular with Episcopalians who summered here. A plan was devised whereby any guest at the Lake House who soiled the table cloth would have to cover the spot with a coin. The money collected was turned over to the building fund of Saint John's. And last, but not least, was the making of little boys trousers for 30 cents a pair! There was considerable interest when it was learned that the noted actor, Joseph Jefferson, who summered here, had pledged \$25.00 to the fund. This was regarded as a most generous gift. Another supporter of the congregation's efforts was the former President's wife, Frances F. Cleveland, who wrote from Grey Gables. She responded to a note from Ambrose Pratt, Junior Warden, by sending \$5.00 for "the little church." She apologized that the sum was "more to show my good wish than as any substantial aid."

We who live in the twentieth century sometimes fail to realize how much one dollar meant in what are now indulgently called "the good old days." Nor do we remember how much work went into earning one dollar. Records dealing

with the building of the church reveal that a workman received four dollars for cleaning 2,000 bricks; that a man received \$1.50 for a full working day grading the church property; that the bill for sixty-eight and three-quarter hours work on the church was \$11.51.

Finally, with pledges of \$1,219.75 in hand, the Vestry felt it could meet the estimate of \$1,600.00 submitted by the carpenter. Mr. Robert H. Slack of New Bedford, who was experienced in building small churches, was engaged as the architect. The church would stand on posts with a partially excavated cellar, a nave to seat 100 persons, a tiny sacristy, and a bell tower. Expenses had to be kept under tight control. The Bishop of Massachusetts, William Lawrence, evidently felt that local people could contribute more. He wrote that \$300.00 would be forthcoming from a small fund but that "the church building fund moneys ought to go to poor parishes."

Minor problems arose between architect, builder, and the Parish for whom the building was being constructed. Mr. Slack thought the builder was making changes without consulting him. And the Vicar, the Reverend Mr. Bullock, had a slight misunderstanding with the architect about the kind of cross the church should have on its tower. The Vicar thought it was to be of wood, whereas the Architect had envisioned a hammered metal one. Happily, the various differences were resolved. A news story in The Boston Globe, dated March 13, 1899, reported that, "Work on the church for Saint John's Parish has begun.... the church will stand on the lot fronting on Main Street just back of the Post Office. A memorial altar will be erected in the church and F. Edwin Elwell, the well-known artist, will present the parish with a stone font. The church will be a handsome edifice, a pride to the parish and an ornament to the town." Another memorial gift to the church was a pulpit, which was given in memory of Dr. Abel F. Price, who was surgeon to Admiral Dewey at the Battle of Manila. It was Mr. Slack, in response to the Wardens' inquiry about painting the interior of the church, who suggested leaving most of the woodwork natural but painting the ceiling a robin's egg blue as it would be attractive and soothing! And so it remains.

The wait of nearly half a century had ended! The faithful group which

had moved from hall to hall and had met in private homes was to have a church of its own. The Reverend John J. Roberts, who gave the large stained glass windows on the south wall in memory of his granddaughter, officiated at the first regular service in the church on June 11, 1899. On June 24th (Saint John the Baptist Day), the new church was consecrated with the Right Reverend William Lawrence officiating, and Archdeacon Samuel G. Babcock, the Reverend John J. Roberts, the Reverend Samuel B. Foxcroft, and the Reverend Ernest N. Bullock sharing in the joyful and momentous occasion. The ceremony was attended by 140 persons, 51 of whom were communicants, and \$17.05 was collected at the offering. The Reverend Mr. Bullock was then priest-in-charge; John F. Carleton was Senior Warden, and Ambrose Pratt was Junior Warden. W. H. Fish, Clerk of the Vestry, wrote that the Episcopal congregation of Sandwich had been waiting "as long for a satisfactory place to worship as did the infirm man wait at the pool of Bethesda!"

To paraphrase a portion of a prayer from the Service of Consecration found in the Book of Common Prayer, the congregation of Saint John's appropriated and devoted this building to the honor of God, and all who benefit from it show their thankfulness by making a right use of it, to the glory of Christ's blessed Name.

3. The Next Sixty Years

*Oh, how good and pleasant it is
when brethren live together in unity*

Psalm 133

Clergy of several other congregations assisted the Reverend Ernest Bullock in the duties of Vicar. Among these was Frances Foxcroft, grandfather of Augusta Carleton Jillson and great-grandfather of our current Senior Warden, Jack Jillson. Also assisting were the Reverends Roberts and Dr. Joseph Cullen Ayre, Jr. In 1904 the Reverend Mr. Hawkes became Minister-in-Charge. The Reverend Mr. Hawkes was also the minister of the Church of the

Good Shepherd in Wareham. Saint John's continued to share ministers with other congregations until 1959.

The Reverend Mr. Hawkes died in office in 1913, and the Reverend Mr. Love came to finish out the year. Augusta Jillson remembers that the Reverend Mr. Love made a very favorable impression on her sister Amy. Then in 1914 the Reverend Arthur Fenderson came and served the churches in both Wareham and Sandwich for fifteen years. That same year Sandwich celebrated its 75th anniversary and Assistant Secretary of the Navy, Franklin Delano Roosevelt was on the destroyer McDougall, which was part of the naval procession that opened the Cape Cod Canal.

During Mr. Fenderson's tenure the issue of women serving on the Vestry was raised. In 1916 Everard Pratt (son of Ambrose) corresponded with the Diocese on this matter. Bishop Samuel Babcock reminded him that an amendment to Saint John's Constitution would be required since that document referred only to "vestrymen". Such a novel development, he said, would also require the approval of the New Bedford Archdeaconry. However, at a special meeting called to amend Article 3 so as to include women on the vestry, the motion lost. In spite of that, Mrs. Bertrand French (Hazel) was appointed Clerk Pro tem for her husband who was elected Clerk while he was away fighting in World War I from August 1917 to March 1919.

In 1919 Mr. Fenderson oversaw the installation of our present organ, which was given by Louis A. Warren in memory of his wife, Harriet W. The first to play the new organ were Mrs. Doowden and Mrs. Crane who shared the duties of organist for several years. Lucy French Morrison (daughter of Bertrand and Hazel French) and Eleanor Harrison played the organ for services in the late 1920s and early 1930s. Stowell Pratt (son of Everard Pratt) occasionally played and incorporated very intricate pieces for the prelude and postlude. Other organists, such as Carolyn Greeley, Ann Atwood, Claire Morse, and Janet Dunbar filled in from time to time. Ruth Heuss was organist from 1957 to 1975. Elizabeth Stommel, who was to become a chaplain, played from 1975 to 1980. In 1975 the organ was tonally revised and enlarged to include a total of 640 pipes.

In 1925 St. John's expenditures totaled only \$900.00 for the year, and that included our share of the clergy's compensation. In 1928 the Henry T. Wing School was built and Jack Jillson entered first grade there.

From 1930 to 1944 the Reverend Sumner J. Brown, Rector of Saint Mary's in Barnstable, was also the Priest-in-Charge of Saint John's. Among the various clergy, Augusta especially liked Mr. Brown. Jack Jillson recalls that Mr. Brown was very good with children - most of the time. His day to visit Saint John's parishioners was Wednesday, but he would always find time to organize outings and play games, especially tennis, with Saint John's youth. On one excursion Mr. Brown had tried, unsuccessfully, to get the older boys to allow young Jack to tag along. So Mr. Brown gave Jack a brush and black paint to freshen the hinges of the church's front door. Even at a tender age Jack exhibited a will and mind of his own. Painting hinges was not a fair exchange for being cut from the outing! As soon as the group drove off, Jack put down his brush and headed for home!

Lucy French Morrison recalls that there were often parties where the youths of Saint Mary's and Saint John's intermingled. Some romances blossomed, as did that of her brother Bertrand, Jr. and his future wife. The festivities included halloween parties, where Mr. Brown would tell the most hair-raising stories and scare everyone! At Christmas the children would go caroling, return to the Parish Hall for refreshments, and then go to the midnight service with their families. Marjorie Lane remembers one caroling party when Augusta worried that the cider had turned and would get the children drunk!

In 1930 the estimated population of Sandwich was 1,437, slightly less than in 1900. The year 1933 saw the beginning of the Craft Guild, which functioned until 1941. The Guild taught crafts to young people who then sold their products to benefit the church. Hazel French taught jewelry making with scraps from the glass factory. Other crafts taught were woodworking, bookbinding, needlework, and basket weaving. The church amended Article 3 and in 1937 Mrs. William Harrison (Edith) became the first woman elected to the

Vestry. She held the office of Clerk for the next four years.

In 1938 Camp Edwards was dedicated as a Massachusetts National Guard Camp. As a part of the ceremony on that occasion the entire World War I Yankee Division of Major General Clarence R. Edwards formed a twelve-mile-long parade. In 1939 Sandwich held a three-day celebration of its tricentennial. The Federal Government took control of Camp Edwards in 1940 to build Otis Air Force Base. In 1941 the Parish Hall was made into a canteen for the servicemen at the Base.

In that same year the Altar Guild was organized. Lucy Morrison said her Grandmother, Ida May French, was in charge of the linens and hangings for many years prior to the institution of the Guild. "I can remember she was a little pint of peanuts, hardly five feet tall, and would get up on a ladder and climb on the altar to care for the hangings." Jeanne Hebert, the current Directress of the Altar Guild, describes the work of the Guild as "preparing and making ready the Lord's Table each week. One learns as one attends to each and every detail. There is no rigorous training, just a love of flowers, fine linens, quiet solitude and reverence. There's the excitement of being a part of your church in a different and fulfilling way." Shirley Cross is one whose love of flowers and whose reverence has brought visual beauty to Saint John's. Every Sunday she decorates the font with a large display of seasonal flowers from her garden, and, since 1959, at Easter she masses huge boughs of forsythia in the Chancel that remind us of nature's resurrection as well as that of Jesus.

The Reverend J. Samuel Stephenson was the minister at Saint Peter's-on-the-Canal in Buzzard's Bay and the Vicar of Saint John's from 1945 to 1951. The Reverend Ernest H. McDonald replaced him at both churches in 1952. He served at Saint John's Centennial service in 1954 with Bishop Henry S. Nash officiating. Mr. MacDonald found a "challenging opportunity" both in Bourne and in Sandwich. At Saint John's he noted the lack of adequate space for church activities and for the clergy at a time when the congregation was growing "including the families of well-established farmers." He saw that "it was a worthwhile task to pour into the mold of the impressionable years of

the youth reared [in rural areas] something of the life and teaching of the Lord." The 1953 budget of \$2,710,00, including \$1,500.00 for clergy compensation, left little room for needed church expansion. Mr. MacDonald left his position due to ill health but remained in the area and filled in as guest minister on occasion.

For a short time, expansion was accomplished by the women of St. John's. St. Elizabeth's Guild was organized in January, 1953 to accomodate those young women who, because of work or children, could not attend day-time meetings of the Women's Guild. Their first year they worked on quilt pieces which they sent to the Indian Mission in South Dakota and on items for the summer fair. They had a slide presentation on Scandinavia as well as a talk by a member of the Diocesan Board of Missions. The group had advisors from the Women's Guild and had hoped to be able to assist that guild in its work for the church. Peg Pola, President of St. Elizabeth's Guild for 1954, wrote in the Annual report, "because it is a small group, and its members have little or no time for day activities, St. Elizabeth's is limited in what it can do, but the spirit is willing, and with guidance, we hope to do our part as well as possible." However, then as now, young women with the demands of work, family, and home found it difficult to create time for regular meetings and the group lapsed in a few years.

The Reverend Mr. Littlewood and his wife came from England and served here for two years from 1957 to 1959. Carol Jillson (wife of Jack Jillson), remembered them as diplomats to whom everyone warmed, and that they were good for the church. After many years of service, in 1957 Bertram C. French was elected "Senior Warden Emeritus." He was first elected to the Vestry as Clerk in 1911, then as Junior Warden from 1925 to 1935, and as Senior Warden from 1935 to 1957, a total of 46 years serving St. John's in leadership positions!

4. Rapid Growth

Hosanna, Lord, hosanna!

Lord, send us now success

Psalm 118

Because the congregation and the population of Sandwich were growing at this time (2,082 in 1960), the Vestry felt it was time to call a minister who would live in Sandwich and be more available to the members of the Congregation than past ministers had been. At the same time the Reverend William Workman of Saint Barnabas Memorial Church in Falmouth was experiencing growth in his own congregation, thus limiting his time to serve the military families at Otis Air Force Base. He suggested that area churches might contribute to support a minister at the Base. Saint Peter's in Osterville and Saint Mary's in Barnstable each contributed \$600.00. Saint Barnabas contributed over \$600.00 and the Diocese granted \$1,000.00. Under Diocesan leadership, and with the understanding that the new minister would serve as civilian chaplain to the Episcopal families at Otis, who might attend Saint John's, the Vestry voted unanimously on February 10th to call John H. Thomas to be Vicar of Saint John's. Carol Jillson saw this call as "the beginning of continuity within the established fabric of the church," rather than a change. In preparation for a new minister who would live in Sandwich, Saint John's purchased the Edith C. Deering property at 178 Main Street as the rectory. The Diocese contributed \$3,000.00 and a loan of \$12,500.00 was secured. Mr. Thomas had just graduated from the Episcopal Theological School (now the Episcopal Divinity School), in Cambridge. When they moved their family into the rectory in June, John and Frances had three children: John, David, and Peter. Mr. Thomas chaired his first Vestry meeting on June 19th. Everard S. Pratt (son of Ambrose), was Senior Warden and John F. Carleton (Augusta's brother), was Junior Warden. William A. Heuss was Treasurer and Chester Nickerson was Clerk.

At this time Mr. Thomas was 31 years old. With a degree in Mechanical Engineering from the University of Maine in 1950, he had not intended to be a minister. He was raised a Baptist, Congregationalist, and Methodist, but had

come to the Episcopal Church through the influence of many friends and especially his wife, Fran, whom he had met while she was studying nursing at Colby College. While they lived and worked in the Boston area as a young married couple, they attended Saint Andrew's in Belmont, where John sang in the choir and served on the Vestry. There was a general call for new ministers then, as Episcopal churches were growing in number. After a weekend visit to the Episcopal Theological School and with the influence of a variety of people, especially his rector, Robert Derr, John decided to enter the seminary.

When the Thomases arrived in Sandwich, one of John's first tasks was to oversee completion of the work begun on the renovation of the Parish Hall. As suggested by the Reverend Mr. McDonald, the church's growth required more space for offices and Sunday School. The Vestry had previously decided to enlarge the Parish Hall by digging under it, creating a basement, and by extending the Hall behind the church to create a new kitchen. The work was contracted with Louie Masachi for \$9,500.00. He dug out a ramp to drive a bulldozer down to excavate underneath. Supports were placed but, Jack Jillson recalls, "the building shivered and shook, and sagged in the middle," and everyone was a little frightened for the Hall. However, Mr. Masachi completed the excavation without incident. It attracted a number of townspeople during the three days of work.

On January 17, 1960, John Thomas was ordained to the Priesthood at Saint John's with Bishop Frederick Lawrence officiating, and with the Reverend Dr. Charles W. F. Smith as preacher, both of whom were mentors of the new Vicar. Mr. Thomas fondly remembers a jam-packed church and the thrill of now being able to officiate at the Holy Eucharist.

In 1961 Florence "Gram" Staats inherited \$1,000.00. She donated it to Saint John's to enlarge the Chancel, particularly to seat the choir, which had been seated in the first few pews. She had long been an energetic and welcoming force at Saint John's. She started a weekly mailing called Home Prayers, including the weekly bulletin and prayerful notes to those unable to attend church. She was the first to coordinate the Bloodmobile in Sandwich,

which was held at Saint John's for a number of years. She made dinners for the nurses in the Hall kitchen. Florence conducted the "little church" with Harriet Clark for pre-schoolers and young children using Mae Foster's little altar. Florence was the first parish secretary, a volunteer, from 1965 to 1975, when she retired at the age of 80. When anyone needed help, the answer was usually, "Go ask Gram!" When new people came to the church they were apt to be greeted with a warm and memorable welcome by "Gram."

In the early 1960s, with the congregation still growing, it was decided to build a chapel with a basement and to enlarge the Sacristy at a cost of \$24,000.00. The architect was Howard H. Barton. While digging the foundation for the Chapel, some original foundation stones for the church on Tupper Road were found. They are now located on either side of the lower front entrance. Having made this great financial commitment, the Vestry was tempted by the availability of the Mary Baker property (161 Main Street), and so purchased it for \$12,000.00. The courage to add to the debt burden came with Mrs. Gertrude Hill's donation of \$2,000.00 for the down payment. This house would help with future needs for more space for Sunday School and offices, and in the meantime, would provide income through rental of its two apartments. Around this time the Vestry bought the land to the left of the church from the Giovoni family for a parking lot.

5. Community Service

*Be strong and let your heart take courage,
all you who wait for the Lord.*

Psalm 31

Saint John's became a center for community service. The new spaces allowed greater use by groups such as the Scouts, Alcoholics Anonymous, youth groups, a nursing agency, the Red Cross and Bloodmobile, and the Cape Cod Extension. One gesture considered by Fr. John as among our more important was the welcoming of Alcoholics Anonymous programs. Fr. John had invited

David Works, a recovering alcoholic priest, to preach at St. John's. Rev. Works called for the Church to improve its ministry to alcoholics and their families. From this, and with others who were interested in the success of the program on the Cape, Fr. John was involved in the start of the Cape Cod Committee on Alcoholism in 1964.

Another area that was considered by Fr. John to be "the Church at work" was in counseling. He was part of a pastoral counseling group and ministry of the Cape Cod Council of Churches. Each clergy member was asked to take four cases. Gradually social workers and other groups took over these kinds of counseling responsibilities.

Father John was also involved with public housing. In the 1980s he was appointed to fill out an unexpired term and then later elected to the Sandwich Housing Authority. SHOP (Sandwich Homeowner's Opportunity Program), was a town committee formed with several members of Saint John's on the board: Father John, Stan and Dorothy Torrey, and Bill Hansen. Meetings of these groups were held at Saint John's. Also active at town meetings, Father John has supported such issues as recreation, human services and affordable housing.

Father John is a charter member of the Sandwich Clergy Group (begun with the encouragement of Father Ted Yardley), which still holds weekly luncheon meetings on a rotating basis among the various churches. This group develops a sense of community responsibility among the clergy. Included are local retired clergy who contribute their experience and wisdom. They receive spiritual nourishment and intellectual stimulation by exploring scripture readings which are common to several church lectionaries. They also support the Food Pantry and conduct a joint Good Friday service.

On July 4th, 1989, the March for Racial Harmony took place as a response to racial harassment of a Wampanoag family in Sandwich. A parishioner organized the march and obtained support from the religious community through the Clergy Group. Father John also helped to plan and officiate in the service at Saint John's which followed the march.

In the early 1960s Saint John's became the sponsor of Boy Scout Troop 47, which had previously been sponsored by the Fire Department. Among other field trips, Father John hiked with this group in the mountains of New Hampshire. He was also involved with scouting in the "High Adventure" program where the participants learned to help and take responsibility for each other. Girl Scouts and Brownies have also met at Saint John's.

Father John also helped to sponsor a Coffee House in the old railroad station in the late 1960s, where the Community Youth Program met. Here there were music and discussion - an outlet for the frustrations and angst of the era. Father John also grew an unpopular beard and was criticized for his anti-war position. At the same time the Episcopal Church, as a whole, was in conflict over such issues as the changing of the liturgy and the role of women in the church. However, Saint John's, often praised as having the warmth and acceptance of family, behaved as a real family in that it did not always agree, but it did always stay together.

6. The First Rector

*I will declare your name to my brethren;
in the midst of the congregation I will praise you.*
Psalm 22

By 1968, with average attendance at 100, and a yearly budget of around \$10,000.00, Saint John's decided it could be self-sufficient and support its own minister. In 1969 the church became the "Sandwich Village Episcopal Church, Inc." and Father John became its first full-time Rector.

By 1970 Sandwich's population had risen to 3,634. That was the year that President Nixon closed Otis Air Force Base. Saint John's was fortunate that the base families who had become members, left the area gradually so that the congregation could adjust to the loss of both friends and income.

In 1975, the year that Sandwich High School was completed, Father John

received the Henry S. Nash Fellowship of \$2,500.00 to continue his education. This Fellowship is given to a minister with 15 or more years of ministry. With the generous support of the congregation, father John was able to attend the Virginia Theological Seminary for refresher courses that he turned into a Doctor of Ministry degree over the next eleven years. While on sabbatical, Father John recalls that he began to wrestle with new theological issues through dialogues with, and the contemporary writings of, his colleagues. It was a growing as well as a learning time for him. It was also a growth opportunity for the congregation. During his periodic absences for course work, a favorite Sunday replacement was the Reverend William C. Wrenn, who was considered very inspirational by most of the congregation.

At this time women, too, assumed an increasingly significant portion of the leadership. In 1976, Gail Alcorn became the first woman to be elected Senior Warden. Nell Harper was on the Vestry and in charge of the Thrift Shop. Louise Velsor had served over a decade as Treasurer.

In 1976 St. John's participated in Sandwich's celebration of the nation's Bicentennial. The church placed in the town's Time Capsule, which will be opened in 2076, newspaper articles that focused on St. John's life over the years, and a statement of purpose that proclaimed "ministry and worship is intended to be a joint effort of people and minister to care for one another within the parish community and to seek to widen that community; to minister to the wider community through Christian outreach and fellowship." This purpose has been a driving force throughout the life of St. John's especially under Fr. John's ministry.

In the 1970s and early 1980s Father John served as supervisor for several seminarians whose field work in Sandwich allowed them to get acquainted with the tasks of a minister. Coming from the Boston Theological Institute in Cambridge, they also gained experience in a small town church. Edward "Beau" Chapman, Mike Morgan, Warren Soule, and Richard Smith became "members" of the Thomas family, which had increased with the birth of Jane in 1960 and Andrew in 1962. The seminarians were housed at 161 Main Street, but often fed at the rectory which the Thomases bought from the church in 1972.

The students did youth work, visitation, and counselling, as well as assisting at Sunday services. These young men were the forerunners of team ministry that has benefitted Saint John's since the arrival of Allen Swain.

Father John embraced the concept of shared leadership when the Reverend Mr. Swain began attending Saint John's in 1980. Mr Swain came to the Cape as Priest-in-charge of the Briarwood Conference and Retreat Center in Bourne, and Camp Dennen, a family camp ground in Cedarsville. This combination was a half-time position. He recalls that Father John and Saint John's became an anchor for him, and he is grateful that his need was fulfilled for an altar from which he could celebrate the Eucharist. His volunteer services grew into a part-time position at Saint John's. Not only did he assist at Sunday services, he made hospital calls and officiated at funerals. He also led Vestry retreats once a year for new Vestry members. This was an evaluation process to learn what work had been done and what issues were facing them - a pulse-taking time for the whole Vestrey and an opportunity for members to connect with one another.

The Reverend Mr. Swain also remembers how hard the women of the Thrift Shop worked to decorate and furnish Briarwood, and the help given by parishioners who painted the building. They made it possible for what had been a summer program, to become a year-round center. He doesn't feel he would have been able to do it without Saint John's help. In return he brought a fresh perspective to Saint John's that inspired growth. He began the annual luncheon at Briarwood for the Episcopal Church Women, many of whom believed that this event rejuvenated the group.

The Reverend Theodore Yardley and his wife Barbara moved to the Cape in 1982. He had been chaplain and head of the religion department at Saint Paul's School in Concord, New Hampshire. They began attending Saint John's on a regular basis and found the congregation to be a warmly welcoming one. In 1984, when Mr. Swain's position at Briarwood became full-time and the drive on Sundays more difficult, Father Ted became part-time assistant to Father John. When Father John retired, Father Ted continued to serve the Parish on a part-time basis. He preached thought-provoking sermons with humor and insight,

officiated at funerals and baptisms, and made home communion visits, first with Virginia Lucas, and then with Bettie Soule.

Father Ted brought his own perspective and wealth of experience. He introduced, as a Sunday service, the Stations of the Cross, for those who could not share the experience on Good Friday. He has officiated at mid-week Eucharists, that included Thrift Shop workers, and then stayed to share food and fellowship with them. He also contributes his voice to the choir. Once he was asked to do a solo for a Christmas pageant. It terrified him, and he notes, with humor, that he has never been asked to do a solo again!

The Reverend Roderic H. Pierce, former Seminary Professor and retired Rector of Saint Andrew's Church in Elyria, Ohio, moved to the Cape in July, 1988. He and his wife Margi, with sons Eric and Evan, had summered here since 1957, and worshipped at Saint John's whenever they were on the Cape. From time to time Father John asked Rod to officiate and preach. Father Rod recalls a gracious and kind Augusta Jillson who remembered them from summer to summer, and made them feel right at home at Saint John's. When the Pierces became year-round members of the congregation, Margi and Rod participated more fully in the life of the Parish. Beginning with Father John's retirement in July, 1993, Father Rod began to take some of the services on a regular basis. Margi was Parish Secretary in 1989-1990, and again from 1994 to 1995. She was Vestry Clerk in 1991-1992, President of the Episcopal Church Women, head of its Hospitality Committee and Vice President for Ways and Means. Margi also chaired Christmas and Summer Fairs, and started the greeting card rack which brings in about \$300.00 per year for ECW outreach. Together Margi and Rod started a prayer and Bible study group which has been meeting monthly since 1991. Margi is also a lector, an occasional choir member, and a helper at the Thrift Shop.

When Father John proposed moving the Altar forward in 1992, so that the priest could celebrate the Eucharist in a closer association with the people, Father Rod conducted small groups to help the congregation understand the significance and larger context of this change. He also headed the maintenance crew which accomplished the task. The floor of the Chancel had to

be extended, the communion rail moved, and the floor carpeted. It was an extensive project completed quickly so as not to interrupt Sunday worship and to minimize the distress felt by some parishioners. Once the Altar was in place, people realized that the stairs had been eliminated and that the Altar was more visible throughout the church. Almost everyone thought it was a significant improvement.

In 1984, one week before Christmas, Fran Thomas had a car accident that left her with broken legs and shoulder. She was hospitalized for two months and confined at home nearly two additional months. She remembers with gratitude the "incredible outpouring of care and concern." Members of the congregation immediately took on the task of providing dinners five days a week, and Dot Kreutel kept their house clean. This was a period when both the Thomases and the congregation learned important lessons about themselves and the strengths of which each was capable. Fran, who never considered herself a "professional" minister's wife, had her own career in nursing. She started part-time at Tobey Hospital and rose to the position of supervisor. Fran did her own personal outreach by keeping tabs on patients who came from Saint John's. She also worked tirelessly on the greens sale at Christmas and still makes kissing balls for the Christmas Fair. She also has helped in the Sunday School and nursery, on bake sales, and many other fund-raising activities over the years. Most important, Fran has been a major source of support and inspiration for Father John, and all the while raising five children!

7. Music and Drama

*Sing to the Lord a new song;
Sing his praises in the congregation of the faithful.*
Psalm 149

The creative and imaginative side of Father John found outlets in the choir and the Glasstown Players. Saint John's choir vested in the bellfry (which never had a bell), prior to the addition of the Chapel. When Father

John came to Saint John's he acted as the director of the choir. In the early 1980s Bruce Graham, director of the high school chorale, came to help with the choir while Saint John's searched for an organist. Geraldine Boles had come to share the job with Joan McNaughton, who wanted to get back to her own church. A musical relationship was born between Geraldine, Bruce and Father John that produced the Cape Cod Chorale, of which the Saint John's choir was the nucleus. In 1984 the Chorale had the opportunity to tour Germany and Austria, and since Father John was a member, singing tenor, he wanted to go. The congregation generously gave the trip to Father John and Fran as a gift in recognition of his 25 years of ministry to the Parish. It is an experience they still remember with great fondness.

Since 1981 Geraldine has served as organist and more recently as "Musical Director". She organized not only the choir but also various performances by soloists, instrumental musicians and members of the Cape Cod Chorale. Since their high school years the Thomas sons have played in a ~~brass ensemble for special occasions, particularly Christmas, Easter and Saint John's Day.~~ David Thomas recalls that his youth at Saint John's was a mixture of church, family and music that are hard for him to separate. Carrying on the musical tradition, David's son James, at the age of 10, in 1990, played a solo on the organ and then was to accompany his father and uncles. James did such a fine job, that when he began the piece which was to be with the brass ensemble, the adults forgot to play their instruments. All had to begin again. These musical interludes were most enjoyable for Father John.

Geraldine agreed to stay as the permanent organist because "the people were so welcoming and warm, and because of Father John." And Geraldine proved to be a "blessing" for St. John's. Not only could she organize and direct the music, but she could maintain the organ in a pinch. She recalls one 8:00 am service when a particular note played sourly. It was an important, often used note, so between the services she pulled out the offending pipe and saw a complex and thick web inside. When she dribbled water through it, it only came out very slowly. After she finally broke up the web, hard white-shelled egg cases came rattling out along with a very angry spider!

Geraldine, who was born in Ireland, says Handel's Hallelujah Chorus is her favorite piece and she traditionally plays it at all three Christmas Eve services as a postlude. She heard the Chorus for the first time at the age of ten when her oldest brother took her to a Cathedral in Dublin for the Christmas Day Mass. She thought that it was the most beautiful music she had ever heard, and she made up her mind that one day she too would play Handel's music.

Geraldine retired as organist and music director in June, 1995. Her style and grace will be missed. Geraldine has given us an appreciation of the many ways music enhances our participation in the Liturgy.

A member of the congregation who also shares her talents with Saint John's is Eva "Pip" Broderson, who comes from England. She was in the Royal Air Force during World War Two. During her service she was in a theater group that put on performances at hospitals and other places after her working hours. She and Father John were charter members of Glasstown Players, which evolved from the Town's Recreation Committee putting on plays every summer. The young people wanted to start a year-round theater group in 1975. From this came the "Evening of Entertainment." Father John was interested in producing plays at the church and even using drama as part of the Sunday service. Traditionally at Christmas the "Beggars of Bordeaux" was put on at the Church.

8. The Food Pantry

*Happy are they who consider the poor and needy!
The Lord will deliver them in the time of trouble.*
Psalm 41

In 1984 Father John, always aware of the needs of both the community and the congregation, was a principal in calling together a general meeting of the leaders from Corpus Christi, Covenant Baptist, First Church and the Quakers.

From this meeting the Food Pantry emerged, which today provides groceries for about 120 families each month. However, both those in need and those who could donate to fill those needs were slow to come forward. At first, the Pantry, located in the American Legion Hall, tried to cover Sandwich, Bourne, Mashpee, and Sagamore. But after a two-year campaign, Bourne and Mashpee started their own pantries.

By 1988 Joe Chaisson, chairman of the committee, recalled that occasionally, "the shelves were bare and the treasury was empty." A letter to the editor of the Broadsider and reminders in the church bulletins brought a quick response. Each parish now collects food donations in its own manner and brings them to the Pantry on Wednesdays. Since there is a menu of certain staple products worth about \$60.00 for a family of four, the Pantry depends on monetary donations too. Families who do need food and reside in the Sandwich and Sagamore (to the bridge) area, can come once a month for staples and also pick from a table of donated food items.

In 1993, 230 families were helped. Some only need assistance once or twice but about 70 families have long-term need. Most are young, single mothers. Joe felt the Pantry was not getting the number of elderly it should, because of pride. But once they come and see that they are treated with warmth and respect, they do come again.

9. Episcopal Church Women

*Almighty God, . . . give us the grace to know your will,
the courage to accept it and the strength to accomplish it.*

- from the "Prayer for the Women of the Episcopal Church"

The Women's Guild was officially organized on August 5, 1897 "to promote the interest of the Church and thereby advancing the cause of piety and good works." "We do hereby form a society," they wrote, "pledging ourselves to work and pray for the prosperity of our Parish and Church." And the women did

work! They raised over \$800.00 to build the Parish Hall in 1906. They did this through a fair, a dinner-dance at the Casino each summer, bake sales and rummage sales. The Guild was responsible for all the fund raising activities of Saint John's until the 1970s. These included craft fairs, United Thank Offering, Church World Service, the Thrift Shop and greens sales. Those greens sales were a major effort for the church at Christmas, selling as many as 80 to 100 wreaths, plus centerpieces, swags and kissing balls. These holiday decorations were purchased by banks, the library, the Glass Museum, local merchants and individuals. Before professional decorators took over the market, the women made from \$3,000.00 to \$4,000.00 each year! The effort included the young people and men in collecting the greens and was very labor intensive for several weeks before the holidays. By the early 1970s a gift table had been added to the greens sales.

A Spring greens sale was held for a number of years. These were plants for gardens and homes. In August of 1971 the first "Summerthing" was held with craft tables and Thrift Shop items, as well as baked goods. That year the Fair was held in late August, the traditional beginning of the hurricane season. The day started threateningly but cleared nicely and the Fair was a success. However, in the annual report it was suggested that the fair be held earlier in August in future years. The "Summerthing" has evolved into our current Summer Faire which includes children's games of chance, a white elephant table, hot dogs and drinks, plant and craft tables, baked goods and Thrift Shop sales.

By 1971 the women's group no longer met on a monthly basis as a formal Guild but, under the title "Women of Saint John's", planned a few interesting meetings during the year. They continued to hold fairs, and were involved in projects such as the United Thank Offering, Shrove Tuesday Breakfast, Church World Service, Church Women United, World Day of Prayer, Church Periodical Club, and various Diocesan programs.

In the 1980s the Women of Saint John's adopted the title "Episcopal Church Women." The Christmas and Summer Fairs fell under a separate committee, and the ECW returned to planning monthly meetings with lunch and

guest speakers. The purpose of the ECW of Saint John's, embraced in 1993, "is to unite the women of this Parish in a program of worship, stewardship, and fellowship, which will deepen and strengthen our spiritual lives and lead us into service for the Church in the Parish, the Community, the Diocese, the Nation, and the World." All women of Saint John's are automatically members of the ECW and are invited to participate in its functions.

10. The Thrift Shop

Gather up the fragments that remain, that nothing be lost.
John 6:1

It was through the Women's Guild that the Thrift Shop evolved. Mae Tievialis brought the idea up as she had been running a thrift shop for the Eastern Star in Sagamore. Since she was ready to give it up she suggested that Saint John's try its hand at running a shop. Nell Harper, Bertha MacAusland, Carol Jillson, Barbara Slade, Louise Velsor, Peg Burke, Carol MacLean, Clara Taber, and Elizabeth Currier were among the dynamic women who started what has become both an outreach to the community and a major source of income for Saint John's.

At first the Thrift Shop was open in the Parish Hall only in the summer months because the Sunday School met there during the school year. In 1968 the old garage was remodeled so that it could be used year-round as the shop, but it proved inadequate during the winter. Finally in the Spring of 1971 the basement under the Parish Hall was remodeled and painted. The Thrift Shop, in its present location, was officially opened to function year-round, on June 1, 1971.

When the Shop operated only in the summer time it was open five days a week. Now it is open on Tuesdays, Thursdays, and Saturdays from 10:00 to 2:00. It is currently staffed by members of Saint John's and the community who believe the Shop provides a worthwhile service to the Upper Cape.

Nell Harper, a volunteer for 35 years, remembers finding that some donations had real value. One was a punch bowl identified as being made of Sandwich glass. Another was an old trunk left out for trash pick-up. An antique dealer wanted to buy it to refinish and sell in his shop. She said antique dealers often drop in to see what is offered.

While the shop has received donations of small appliances, jewelry, books and household goods, it is clothing that is the largest part of the shop's business. The shop donates clothing (and household goods) to local families in need as well as to Rosie's Place in Boston, and provides costumes for children's pageants and the Glasstown Players. What does not sell or can not be used locally, is given to Morgan Memorial for their outreach in Honduras.

Since the stock is always changing it takes a number of volunteers to keep it sorted. Ruth Horne, who had worked in the shop for over five years, enjoyed the solitary work of sorting clothes and took charge of off-season clothing that was stored in the attic. She could be seen, according to Al Ridgely, running up and down the ladder to the attic "in a flash" with an arm load of clothes. Her task, as she saw it, was "protecting clothing from rats, mice, and moths," a chore she had well in hand. In the very beginning five to thirty women a year helped to keep the Thrift Shop going. Now several retired men have joined in contributing their time and energy to keeping the Thrift Shop operations running smoothly.

Along with the Day Care Center, the Thrift Shop is part of Saint John's ongoing connection and outreach to the community. The Thrift Shop's philosophy as of January 18, 1993 has been "to accept graciously what is donated and to sort donations to the best of our ability, for the objective of making money for Saint John's."

11. Sunday School

*Let them give thanks to the Lord for his mercy,
and the wonders he does for his children.*

Psalm 107

The functioning of Saint John's Sunday School over the years has been erratic and dependent upon the number of children who attend church and upon the adults willing to give of their time to teach the Word of the Lord. For some the task ran in the family as with Ida May French and her daughter-in-law, Hazel. Ida was also a Sandwich English teacher of whom Thornton Burgess said she was the reason he was able to write. Sometimes there were very few children. Louise Velsor recalls Gram Staats (mother of Peg Pola) revitalizing the Sunday School with mostly Velsor, Pola and Thomas children. Soon other children were attracted and the school was going again.

The Reverend MacDonald credited Harriet Clark's committee, in the late 1940s, with bringing back families with children who had gone to the Federated Church because it had a Sunday School while Saint John's had none. Once Harriet had our school opened it "brought children and new families and some former members. The congregation [was] swelling, and [in] the new year, one of the vestrymen told [MacDonald] that he had never seen so many in a winter congregation."

Mae Foster, who began to teach about this time and continued for close to 25 years, remembers that she also stayed in the Parish Hall with the pre-schoolers during the service. She would conduct a little service for them at a small altar built by her father. The wood for this altar came from the salvaged parts of an altar destroyed in a fire at Saint Paul's in Brockton, where Mae's parents were active members. Hazel French and Harriet Clark sewed various altar cloths in the liturgical colors so the children could experience the changing of the church seasons. They also sang simple hymns, such as "Jesus Loves Me", and had prayers. They knew they were having a service like the others in the "big" church which they would someday attend.

Helen Jillson (wife of Bruce) was a volunteer for many years before she became our first paid Sunday School Director in 1989. She says that every year now Saint John's brings in more and more children. Every year she worries about organizing the school, and every year she reminds herself that God will provide, and He does. A thought will strike her to call someone and that person will seem to have been waiting to be called. Partnering seems to work for those with a busy schedule or who prefer not to handle a class alone. Some will alternate Sundays while others will work together. The curriculum is "Living the Good News" which goes along with the Lectionary of the Sunday service. But some teachers improvise their own teaching such as reading Bible stories and then encouraging the children to draw the pictures suggested to them by these stories.

While 125 students were enrolled in 1993, about 88 attend on an average Sunday. In 1994 the enrollment increased to 150. The children like to be involved in special occasions and are community-minded. The Christmas Pageant and annual Blessing of the Animals are favorite events. Father John's retirement service held a special meaning for older students who had grown up at Saint John's. The children have also learned about effective outreach through such services as Harvest Home Sunday when they present groceries to the Food Pantry which they have purchased with their own money. At Christmas they also wrap and give presents to be distributed in the community.

The operation of a youth fellowship has also been sporadic. Marjorie Lane remembers Mr. Brown taking the youth group to Emmanuel Church for a pre-Lenten service in Boston with other youth groups. It was the only time some of these young people left the Cape.

Louise Velsor recalls in the late 1950s, that Father John encouraged the youths of the whole town to drop in at 161 Main Street as a center for afterschool relaxation. Older children respected younger ones, everyone knew everyone, and there were dancing and games. Father John was also instrumental in organizing dances at Town Neck Beach.

Mae and Bill Foster, along with Clyde and Barbara Gill of the Congregational Church brought the youths of all the churches together in a group of twelve to eighteen year olds in the late 1950s and early 1960s. They met twice a month at the Congregational Church which is now the Doll Museum. Their group met with other youth fellowships on the Cape for "spring clean-up." The minister of each group would explain about his church. They would also have potluck suppers and go to Boston once a year to see a play. Bruce Jillson (son of Jack and Carol) was acolyte at Father John's first service. He also recalls suppers at Carol MacLean's home. She started the Community Thanksgiving Dinners at Saint John's. These are now continued by her daughter, Janet Richards, in the Sandwich Human Services Building. The youth also went ice skating on Peter's Pond. Bruce says that all these events made them all feel like one big family.

Father John, Clyde, Barbara and Ruth Weaver led the Young People's Fellowship in the 1960s. Father John started a "supper club" with the families on the base where the youths got an opportunity to learn about being in the military during the controversial Viet Nam War. He would also take them to Boston to meet with other fellowship groups. In the 1970s Dorothy Gibbs, Betty Sweeney and the Reverend Warren Freeman led a structured youth group in which the young people experienced working on outreach projects. In the 1980s Doug and Cathy Harper led a more casual group that designed its own programs.

12. The Day Care Center

*Children are a heritage of the Lord,
and the fruit of the womb is a gift.*

Psalm 127

In the late 1970s and early 1980s Father John and some of the parishioners began to see a need for child care in Sandwich which had none available that went beyond babysitting. In the Fall of 1982, while he was teaching at Head Start, David Thomas began after-school day care in the Parish

Hall two afternoons a week. Then in January the property at 163 Main Street became available. It was an ideal acquisition for Saint John's because its L-shaped parcel behind 161 would give Saint John's land that abutted Corpus Christi as well as eventual space for an updated septic system. The building also provided rooms for the growing Sunday School. A Day Care Center was proposed with the expectation that it would pay the mortgage, as well as be a service to the community. The property was purchased with a \$50,000.00 legacy as down payment toward the price of \$103,000.00. This came only after much debate over whether it was a wise purchase for Saint John's to make. The Sandwich Day Care Center opened in late April of 1983. The first months were slow because parents had already lined up babysitting for the school year. Most parents who inquired about the day care program were reluctant to leave their child unless they knew there would be another child with whom their's could play. David could promise them there would always be a child at the center because his own son, James, was a preschooler. When David left in December of 1984, the school was functioning with a full house.

In 1986 Louise Pola was made Director of the Center. She recalls, in the beginning of her tenure, that parents were involved as volunteers, but now that the school is doing so well, and has national accreditation, it does not need the parents' help so much, except with fund-raising activities. The money from these efforts goes to buy equipment and a percentage is put aside to provide scholarships. The center has good equipment that teaches and trains with creative play. It also has musical instruments and even a small computer. The children range in age from two years & nine months old to six years old. A consistent and stable staff has evolved who not only care for and teach the young children, but also counsel parents and help with some of the maintenance projects on the interior of the building. Louise feels that the school is an easy environment to run because everyone gets along and everyone pitches in to help.

13. Tributes to Father John Thomas

Over the years every decision to make a change brought some controversy, whether it was to move the altar forward, to start a day care center, to enlarge the church "campus", or to vest lay readers and train lay chalcists (the first were Lois Alcorn and William Willets). However, as Lucy Morrison put it, "Saint John's is always a loving, caring family. They have disagreement, but it is put aside and everyone works for the good of the whole church."

When Father John announced his decision to retire, that too was an unpopular decision. But one and all, from the Diocese, the Parish and the community, with tears in their eyes, joined to thank both John and Frances Thomas and to wish them well. On Sunday, June 7, 1993, there were special services and then a gathering at the Dan'l Webster Inn where friends, colleagues and parishioners paid tribute to Father John's 34 years as the first permanent Rector of Saint John's. The Vestry elected John "Rector Emeritus", and the Board of Selectmen declared it the "Reverend John H. Thomas Day". Laura Carlyle, parish secretary during John's final three years as Rector, and chair of the retirement committee, announced the creation of the John and Frances Thomas Scholarship Fund to be awarded annually to an outstanding musician from the graduating class of Sandwich High School.

The Right Reverend David Johnson, Bishop of Massachusetts, spoke of John's "34 years of very effective, significant, compassionate and loving ministry". He also praised Frances Thomas for her support of her husband and her community.

The Reverend William Geertz of the First Church of Christ, thanked John "for his being there at the vital turning points of our lives, and for being a point of spiritual continuity in our rapidly changing community." The Reverend Richard Crowell, retired Rector of Saint Barnabas in Falmouth, remarked that "Saint John's and John clearly heard a call . . . to be a Parish that is at work in the community, in the Diocese, and in the world . . . But

there is a much quieter ministry that goes on here . . . The Parish reached out beyond just holding services, reached out to build real community."

Father John's parishioners have said of him:

"Of anyone I can remember in the town of Sandwich, he has had more effect on more people in the community than anyone I know. He has done a lot for a lot of people in a very nice way. He's always been there when people needed him." - Mae Foster

"I'll love him till the day I die. I don't see him often now but I know I could call him at 3 am and he'd come." - Adrienne Huff

"Saint John's is a friendly and welcoming church because of Father John. He stuck his neck out to do innovative things, otherwise the church might be fuddy-duddy." - Eva Broderson

"Your needing help is all he has to know, people don't have to be members of Saint John's for him to be interested in them." - Al Ridgley

"He was always very determined when he saw a need he thought required our attention, but he was pliable too. He would listen to the other side." - Peggy Wilson

And from a sermon preached by Father Ted Yardley in the summer of 1993:

"We have our own kind of steadfastness. Thirty four years of a kind and attentive ministry of Father John - his being there for the Gospel, as the scene changed, the institutional church has changed, the issues have changed. Our past gives us strength.

We have our own kind of power. Whatever ministry, whatever the changes, we have the Gospel and we have Jesus in the Blessed Sacrament. Power for our lives - what we sing about when we sing 'Amazing Grace.'

And our own kind of joy. I am here mostly because when I retired . . . [parishioners] welcomed us at the door, and made us feel wanted. The services were upbeat and helpful, and the teaching wise, and so we found joy in becoming parishioners. It has been a joyful place to worship, a joyful group to worship with, giving a joy to take the rest of the week."

- Father Ted

As Cindy Roy wrote in her column in the Broadsider, "The work [John and Frances] have done in the name of Saint John's, solely driven by the goodness overflowing from their hearts, will continue to be the very soul of that church. That is, and will continue to be, their everlasting gift. And the community is indeed richer for [their] presence and their unselfish offering."

*Give thanks to the Lord for He is good,
And His mercy endures for ever.*

Psalm 107

14. The Interim

During the year and a half after Father John's retirement, competent and responsible lay leadership continued to emerge. Both Frs. Ted and Rod, as well as other clergy, took on ministerial duties. Beginning in January, 1994, the Reverend William H. Eddy came to St. John's to serve as Interim Rector. Father Bill worked as a "bridge" between the ministries of Fr. John and the rector yet to come. He taught us new ways of joining together in fellowship and in giving to make St. John's "a wing on our home just as it is a frontier outpost of the kingdom of God." Father Bill also wrote in his final newsletter article, "We drew heavily on the ministries of Ted, Rod, and John. We encouraged the exercise of their priesthood....It has been an honor to work with [John]; he never, never got in my way.

"We built a new organization and maintained much of the old...The new rector will value, I hope, these efforts to keep our parish loose, involved, decentralized, and diversified." Father Bill celebrates with joy the successful calling of our new rector.

Parishioners found Father Bill did an excellent job as interim. He added a lot to what could have been a dull time between ministries. His sermons never failed to enlighten, amuse and instruct. The active members of the congregation found it pleasant to share the responsibilities of parish functions with Father Bill. He was a dynamic force in the life of St. John's. He got the most out of the lay people, he kept us together, and he got us organized as well as used to changes in preparation for our new rector.

15. New Beginning

And thanks to our able Search Committee, chaired by Jack Huber, and with the support of the Vestry, we receive our new rector in October, 1995. He is the Reverend John Edward McGinn. He comes with his wife, Marion, from St. Paul's Church in Southington, Connecticut. They have two grown children. Rev. McGinn is 48 years old and has been a cleric for 15 years. Prior to entering the Episcopal Divinity School in Cambridge, Massachusetts he served in the Army and worked for a multinational corporation. We look forward to his ministry with us.

Almighty Father, we thank you for raising up among us faithful servants for the ministry of your Word and Sacraments. We pray that John McGinn may be to us an effective example in word and action, in love and patience, and in holiness of life. Grant that we, with him, may serve you, and always rejoice in your glory; through Jesus Christ your Son our Lord, who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and for ever.

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Amen!

