



Saint  Paul's  
EPISCOPAL CHURCH NAPLES, FLORIDA



A HISTORY  
1967-2018





# *Fifty Years* *Five Rectors* *1967 - 2017*



*The Rev.*  
*Karl Edwin Bell*  
*1967-1971*

Thoughts of St. Paul's began in 1965 when the Diocese of South

Florida realized that Naples was about to grow at a very rapid pace and needed another Episcopal church. Two years later, on Dec. 3, 1967, Fr. Bell conducted the first service at the Chlumsky Building at a now-defunct shopping center on the Trail, with 70 people in attendance. It was the beginning of rapid growth, construction of facilities, and a half century of volunteerism.

Bell arrived on Sept. 1, 1967 in response to

a call by the rector of Trinity-by-the-Cove, the Rev. Richard L. Lambert. Lambert was impressed with the young priest who had volunteered to help him at Trinity during Holy Week, while visiting his mother in Naples.

Bell left his position as chaplain of an Episcopal prep school in Minnesota to take on the challenge of founding a new church. He had plenty of help from Trinity's rector and vestry.

While the Diocese of (then) South Florida was the driving force behind the new mission church, Trinity-by-the-Cove folks bought the

## *GraceNOTES*

*Trinity-by-the-Cove gave our church an unimaginable start in life:*

- *They found and bought the land.*
- *Hired the architect to design the worship space.*
- *Paid for the church*
- *Paid for the organ.*
- *Paid the salary of the church secretary.*

land, hired the architect (a parishioner) to create a worship space to be built as an all-purpose fellowship hall, leaving plenty of room on the 10 acres for a "proper" church as the need arose. The Diocese made the down payment on the \$22,985 four-bedroom vicorage. Fr. Bell and his wife, Hiltrude, and their four-year-old daughter, Dianne, moved in Dec. 1, 1967.

A month after the first service Bell suggested it was time the community pledge their finances and work toward self-sufficiency. That task was made a lot easier by the fact the owner of the storefront waived the rent, and so many others—the folks who foretold God's Gardeners—devoted so much time, talent and treasure.

The first worship service in the new facility was celebrated on Sept. 8, 1968. The Advent and Christmas season was full of excitement



*Now the doors to the nave, this was the entrance to the church that is now Trinity Hall. The carvings were started by a couple of wood carvers who offered their work if Fr. Bell could find them a place to live. They fled Naples with only a few panels finished and showed up again when Fr. Larry was rector. They made a lot of progress but again left town before the job was done. Some time later Emilio Galagarza learned to adapt to their style, and finished the job. More about Emilio, and the doors, inside back cover.*



*Worship service at what is now Trinity Hall and special meaning in the growing mission.*

On Nov. 15, 1970, with 160 in attendance, St. Paul's was consecrated by Bishop Hargrave and Vicar Bell was installed as rector. St. Paul's is now a parish, a status meaning self-sufficiency, attained in blazing-fast time.

Much to the surprise of the growing congregation, Fr. Bell resigned on June 24, 1971, to become dean of the cathedral in Caracas, Venezuela. He left a growing, vibrant Church, saddened, but prepared for the future. St. Paul's had grown to over 205 baptized members and Easter attendance of over 280 worshippers in less than four years.

Fr. Bell died in April 2017 after many years of priestly service at home and abroad.

### *GraceNOTES*

*We Gather Together* was the opening hymn at the first service ever at St. Paul's, on the first Sunday of Advent, Dec. 3, '67.

The first service on the Davis Blvd. grounds was an Ash Wednesday open air Eucharist, Feb. 28, a few weeks after groundbreaking.

*"Come pioneer with us"* was Bell's invitation as he recruited in East Naples. Fr. Bell preached at our 10th anniversary.



At least one active parishioner worshipped with all five of our rectors (plus an interim). Nancy Conner visited her mother-in-law while Bell was rector, and she and Jack joined while Fr. Smellie held the reins.



*The Rev.  
Larry G. Smellie  
1971-1999*

Replying to an ad for "Positions Available" section of *The Living Church-*

*man*, Fr. Larry was invited to Naples for a face-to-face. Before returning to Ft. Wayne, Indiana, three days later, Fr. Larry was chosen to lead St. Paul's. Little did he or anyone else envision a relationship that would continue for 28 fruitful years. But it did.

Almost immediately a need for additional space to accommodate Christian education, an office, library and youth groups was identified. Studies were undertaken, plans drawn, revisions made, finances determined, and finally on Jan. 25, 1977 what is now known as Serson Hall was dedicated to meet the growing needs of St. Paul's. Significant changes were also incorporated into Trinity Hall.

Untold numbers of volunteers joined in building Serson and renovating Trinity. It was another foretaste of God's Gardeners.

Membership continued to grow, reaching nearly 400 and the need for more space soon was apparent.

After years of intense planning, on Saturday, Nov. 10, 1990, the church building we now call St. Paul's was dedicated.

Membership growth over the years can be attributed to the influx of retirees and to the snowbirds who graced us each winter and to

*GraceNOTES*

*Fr Larry and the vestry "unanimously and emphatically" named the new building after the Rev. Charles Serson, in recognition of his dedicated service to St. Paul's from its beginning, when he moved his snowbird affiliation from Trinity-by-the-Cove to the mission church.*

*That dedicated service continued to March 3, 1991. Health prevented his annual migration from Canada, where he was born in 1899. He was a highly spiritual person and well loved for his five-minute sermons.*



the Youth Program which flourished under Fr. Larry's leadership. In the Fall of 1993 Sunday School consisted of thirty students and nineteen adult teachers.

Fr. Larry was instrumental in founding St. Matthew's House, with a simple pantry in Serson Hall. The people of St. Paul's and friends kept the pantry stocked for the benefit of the poor and homeless.

In 1992 an



*After raising the funds for a few years, a bell tower was erected in 1982. These two sketches by parishioners depict different times. The one on the left is pre-bell tower. Dismantled in the early '90s, the tower had become rotted and dangerous. The bells are still on the property.*





*Easter egg hunt, 1974*

anonymous donor gave \$10,000 to the Endowment Fund (SOSP) with the stipulation that only the interest, not the principal, could be used. Today SOSP totals over \$310,000.

After all the growth, building and renovations, St. Paul's was in significant debt, owing money to the banks, and to the parishioners who had advanced amounts of money.

Fr. Larry, with leadership of Sherwood Szen, in 1997 mounted the "Moving Forward" campaign to raise \$500,000.

When Fr. Larry retired in 1999, he left a growing church, debt free, with a growing endowment poised to meet the demands of the twenty-first century.

In retirement Fr. Larry became Canon Larry and worked for the diocese as pastor of priests until his death in 2014.

## GraceNOTES

*That there is a shelter for homeless families in Collier County is due in no small measure to the selection of an assistant priest by Fr. Larry.*

*The Rev. Dr. John Lindell was fresh from serving the poor in Kentucky and the hobos on skid row in his native Chicago when he arrived in tony Naples.*



*City of Naples officials were sending homeless men to the county border. County deputies were ordered to send them to the Broward line. The topic came up at a Naples Ministerial Association meeting, and Fr. John and two other clergymen stayed behind and gave life to the Task-force on the Homeless. Funds were raised and an old firehouse became the first shelter under the name, St. Matthew's House. Fr. John resigned his position at St. Paul's to take day-to-day charge of the ministry. Others heavily involved included Susan Joy, Larry's wife; Sharon Lewis, a layperson who is now a retired priest; and Bill Humphrey, a retired dentist from Denver.*



*Left: Sunday School celebration, Below that: Church-in-making, 1990, Below: Fr. Larry and his wife, Susan Joy, at a Holiday Bazaar*



### *Early Timeline*

**1967** Vicorage built on ten acres for future St. Paul's; Fr. Bell begins building a church. First storefront worship, Dec. 3. Bell family occupies rectory late December

**1968** Jan. 27 Two baptisms, four confirmations by bishop.

Feb. 12: Groundbreaking for new church.

Sept. 8: First service in church.

**1971** Fr. Bell resigns, Fr. Larry accepts call.

**1975** Contract let for new building for classrooms and offices.

**1977** New building dedicated, "Serson Hall."

**1988** Plans made for new church.

**1990** New church consecrated.





**GraceNOTES**



Volunteerism, the hallmark of St. Paul's, spans the ages. Peg Anson, top, 94, still tends to Altar Guild duties, and Sabine Rivera, 10, has raised funds for books for poor kids, and for diabetes awareness.





*The Rev.  
Thomas H.  
Damrosch  
2001-2005*

Fr. Damrosch came to St. Paul's after serving churches in the New England area and enjoyed a relatively quiet period as St. Paul's moved from a growing church with a vibrant youth program to a church dedicated to serving an older retired population consisting of many snowbirds. Fr. Tom and the vestry were deeply engaged in assessing its new role and planning its next steps as St. Paul's deep-rooted tradition of volunteerism continued to flourish.

Fr. Tom joined three other priests and several lay persons of the Naples Deanery in an exploratory mission to the Dominican Republic. They wished to find an activity or ministry that would involve Naples in a meaningful way and thereby expand on the concept of "companion" dioceses.

The team found several possibilities, but stopped when they all agreed on the infantil albergue el Buen Samaritano, or children's shelter of the Good Samaritan.

*Fr. Charles Kettlewell, a teddy bear who wore symbols on his stole of where he'd served in his long career in his specialty of "interim," served St. Paul's for 15 months, between Fr. Larry and the call of Fr. Tom*



Fr. Tom revisited the albergue several times during his tenure, and sent high-school-aged parishioners on mission trips there. Our youth group went on five such trips, joined by youth from other churches in the deanery.

The albergue is still the premier outreach program of the Naples Deanery, 17 years after that first visit.

Fr. Tom engineered a very notable feat when St. Paul's sold a strip of land on the northeast corner of our property to the Collier County Board of Education to expand its much-needed parking at the middle school.

With great foresight, Fr. Tom obtained the right forever to use the school parking area on Saturdays for entering, parking and egress. Little did anyone envision how important that agreement would be to the huge success of our Farmers' Market years later. Without this flexibility the Farmers' Market would be a limited operation.

New England called Fr. Tom "home" in 2005.



*Above, Fr. Tom on a visit to the DR. Right: Joined by a teen from Trinity-by-the-Cove, the St. Paul's youth are off to the DR.*







*The Rev.  
Tara McGraw  
2006 – 2015*

**F**r. McGraw was vicar of the mission Church of the

Resurrection, which met in a storefront just east of Route 41 on St. Andrews Blvd. Hurricane Wilma destroyed their meeting place and CORE was invited to use St. Paul's to worship. Fr. Tara became assistant rector of St. Paul's, later priest-in-charge and then rector.

Fr. Tara began the integration of CORE into St. Paul's, a slow deliberate process which was accomplished in 2017. In 2013, under Fr. Tara's leadership another young startup, The Holy Name of Jesus, also became part of St. Paul's.

Fr. Tara renovated the worship space in 2008, reconfiguring the sanctuary and installing Italian porcelain floor tile throughout and refurbishing the lavatories.

Fr. Tara was instrumental in starting the St. Paul's Farmers' Market, an extremely successful outreach endeavor designed to aid the less fortunate members of Collier County in marketing their fresh produce. Ten years later, this outreach flourishes with some



*Farmers' Market in full tilt (top) as ladies find great bargains at Unique Boutique (middle) and the two men who started it, Alan Cragg and Roger Conant.*

eighty vendors and literally thousands of customers each Saturday from November through April, all assisted by some fifty St. Paul's people who perpetuate its long tradition of volunteerism.

Fr. Tara retired in 2015.



Alan Cragg and Burton Tucker, God's Gardeners, prepare cross left, for flowers on Easter, right



*The Rev. Dr.  
D. William  
Faupel  
2015- 2018*

**F**r. Faupel joined St. Paul's in 2013 as associate rector/parish administrator and was appointed Priest-in-Charge on Oct. 15, 2015. He has been the right man for the job at the right time.

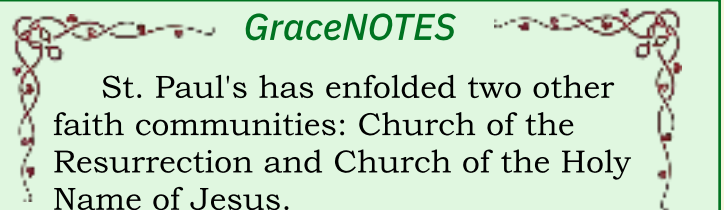
Fr. Bill brings a serene, calming, academic influence to St. Paul's and especially to the vestry and its working.

Fr. Bill determined not to chair the vestry, but rather to act as counselor to its deliberation. As a result, each vestry person assumes liaison responsibility for one or more of the missions of St. Paul's and acts as a communications link to assure that all facets are up to date and all parties are pulling in the same direction as we move forward.

CORE began using St. Paul's as worship space after Wilma. After ten years, Fr. Bill undertook the arduous task of integrating CORE into St. Paul's. Working diligently with

an integrated worship committee over many months, full integration was completed in the fall of 2017.

Fr. Bill, in addition to his regular duties as our "preacher," works closely with our Jubilee Committee dedicated to celebrating our 50th Anniversary in style and has also been of significant assistance as we begin the process of seeking a new rector. Fr. Bill and the vestry are dedicated to having a rapid and smooth transition and a clean slate for the man or woman who succeeds him.



St. Paul's has enfolded two other faith communities: Church of the Resurrection and Church of the Holy Name of Jesus.

CORE started worship services in an elementary school in 1999, led by the energetic Rev. Mary Ann Dorner. Holy Name of Jesus was a Haitian community that worshiped at CORE facilities. Both are now part of St. Paul's, CORE having been fully integrated and Holy Name worshipping in the Creole language in separate services led the Rev. Panel Marc Guerrier, right.



## GraceNOTES

Fr. Tad Meyer joined Fr. Bill as assisting priest in 2017. Together they ramped up our adult Christian education opportunities with a series on relationships, and more recently, church history.



*Pancakes Ladies! (top), Louise with children of Farmers' Market vendors, The Silvers promoting USO at annual bazaar*



Much of the atmosphere of St. Paul's can be attributed to the artisanship of Emilio Galagarza, especially his altar cross, a unique expression of theological symbolism. "Fishers of men" comes to mind.

Emilio, born in Peru, moved to Naples in 1965 and in due course opened a furniture making business on 10th Street North. A brand new mission church needed the 47-year old wood carver.



Fr. Bell, as reported in the May 1, 1969 edition of the *Naples Star*, made many trips to Emilio's workshop.

Emilio created the altar table, communion railings, candle holders, lectern and the eight-ft. altar cross.

All these items, including the large cross, were in what is now Trinity Hall before being moved into the new church in 1990.

Finally, as a gift to the church he became a member of, he studied the unique style of the artisans who left the area before finishing a beautiful set of doors (photo Pg 3). Emilio finished them, in 1974, without a trace of evidence of where his work begins.

The doors were first carved by John Kendall and Charles McLeod who spent time in Naples and in their studio in Ipswich, Mass. Their work is to be found on altars and doors from St. John the Divine Episcopal Church, New York City, to Dove of Peace Lutheran Church in Tucson.

McLeod attended the Shattuck Episcopal boarding preparatory school at the time Fr. Bell was chaplain there, though neither recalled meeting. Coincidentally, it was yet another Shattuck alum, an airline pilot, that drew McLeod and his partner to Naples.



### Thank You

We are forever grateful for our friends at Trinity-by-the-Cove for their kind generosity and leadership.

Thanks also to the men and woman of God's Gardeners, who, in addition to the work they perform every day, raised funds for the publication of this booklet.

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