

# *The Friends of Old Saint Thomas* *at Ivy Mills*

Volume 2, No. 1

## Newsletter

April 1994

---

---

### Painting the Old Church Interior

*Trish Glessner*

The work began on Monday, February 21, 1994. The goal was to cosmetically improve the appearance of the church for daily Mass, weddings, funerals, and other weekly services, keeping in mind the intention to fully refurbish the building by its 150th anniversary in 2002.

The paperhangers came the first week. They repaired the open seams and drooping corners of the heavy vinyl covering on the walls and ceiling. While they were working on the ceiling, we asked if they would take some photos of the exposed ceiling before the covering was resealed. They very willingly agreed. The results are some wonderful pictures taken close up for detail and at a distance to show the ceiling as a whole. The pictures show part of an ornate ceiling most likely completed in 1898-1900. Also shown is an area that possibly at one time held a panel depicting one of the evangelists. (These pictures and a panel will be on display for the Historic Churches Tour on April 10.) If one can judge from a small area, the pictures show a ceiling painted in a terracotta-like color with green scrolling and a large golden colored area where the panel of the evangelist may have been. From earlier records, we know that the walls were painted a dark green at this time. Maybe they matched the green of the scrolling.

The second week, the painters began their work: patching, sanding and sealing the areas around the window recesses where moisture had created some problems. Especially in the vestibule they worked wonders with the walls. They spent a week or more doing all the prep work and then covered with plastic everything but the surfaces to be painted.

Though we had hoped one coat would suffice, given the temporary cosmetic improvement we sought, we found that the age and condition of the interior walls required a second coat for a satisfactory finish, hence the job was lengthier and more complicated than anticipated. But the result has been beyond our expectation.

An undertaking of this size involves many people, without whom its completion would not have been possible.

FOST thanks Father Richard Williams for his total cooperation, support, and unfailing availability, and for putting up with the five-week inconvenience of getting to the new church at 6:30 and 8 AM each morning for daily Masses in some of the worst winter weather in years.

FOST thanks the Evans Foundation for our first grant. The Foundation's support enabled us to undertake the exterior painting last Fall, and provided most of the funds for the interior painting.

FOST thanks Pat McFadden, John Stephano and the Sherwin-Williams Company. Pat provided invaluable expertise throughout the process. John worked side-by-side with us, through almost daily phone calls despite his extensive travel schedule. Through John's efforts, the Sherwin-Williams Company donated all the paint for the project and financially supported it for a successful completion. Sherwin-Williams also provided the services of a company historical paint specialist for color selection and of quality specialists who gave advice regarding the second coat.

FOST thanks John Benner & Company, who provided first-class workmanship and attention to detail at a rate surely far below actual value. The painters take great pride in their work and gave us much more than what we paid for.

FOST thanks all those who have supported our efforts through various events and craft classes, donations and membership. The parish community can rejoice at the cooperative spirit of all who have helped.

Especially, FOST thanks the Lord for the special place that is Saint Thomas the Apostle parish.

---

### FOST Brochure

A new brochure has been prepared and is now available thanks to the personal generosity and professional efforts of members of FOST and friends of the Friends.

Terry Squyres' pen and ink rendition of the Old Church was tastefully blended with the editorial talents of Trish Glessner, Kathy McNichol and Marianne Squyres. Pat McFadden of McFadden Architects provided the map. Patricia McGeever located the photo of the Saint Thomas stained glass window, which was taken by Joe Tipping of Tipping School Studios. Brian Saix of the Country Press in Lenni deserves special thanks for his patient but persistent attention to detail through the printing process, and Peg Mulqueen carefully supervised the entire project and supported it financially as well. Father Williams was encouraging throughout.

It is a simple brochure, but it required a great deal of patient cooperation among almost a dozen people. It is our hope that the brochure, which describes the background of FOST, its purposes, goals and programs, will inspire a commitment by new friends of old Saint Thomas to support the efforts of FOST.

---

## Fost Events and Activities

*Kathy McNichol*

### Lecture Series

On a beautiful September evening Dr. Joseph Edgette presented the first in our lecture series on topics relevant to Saint Thomas parish history. Dr. Edgette spoke on Delaware County cemeteries. Religious traditions, underground vaults, family burial plots and unusual grave markers were just a few of the topics he discussed in an interesting, entertaining, and at times humorous way.

The Honorable Karl J. Parrish gave the second lecture in November. His talk on the "Struggle to Plant the Church in the English Colonies" took us back to the founding of the Catholic Church in Maryland. Our parish traces its roots back to the English Jesuit missionaries who came from Maryland to minister to the few Catholics in this area. Judge Parrish is Vice President of the American Catholic Historical Society, founded in Philadelphia in 1884. The ACHS is the oldest Catholic historical organization in the United States.

### Craft Nights

To help raise funds for FOST projects, we held two craft nights: "Ribbons, Wreaths and Wrappings," and "Spring Topiary." Attendance exceeded expectations! We plan to schedule two or more workshops next year. Your suggestions for projects are most welcome. Please send them to FOST at Chester Heights P.O. Box 19.

### Antiques Appraisal Night

Betty Martin and George Wilson were our appraisal experts for the Antique and Collectible Appraisal Night in November. We thank them for generously donating their time to make the evening a success. Many of us discovered that our items were real treasures!

A raffle was also held that evening. Grand Prize winner Jane Kushner took home sterling silver candlesticks (donated by Betty Martin) and a beautiful mahogany table (donated by Jay and Peg Mulqueen). Also on display all evening was a wonderful collection of St. Thomas memorabilia assembled by Fran Ward. Her old photographs and mementos stimulated pleasant memories and enlarged our awareness of the past. If you have any memorabilia to share, please call Fran Ward at 459-3343.

### Cemetery

A group of FOST volunteers is in the process of compiling a comprehensive cemetery history. As we learned from Dr. Edgette, there is a great deal of information in cemeteries and grave markers. The first phase of the project includes documenting and describing all gravesites and grave-stones, measuring headstones, photographing and recording of inscriptions. The cemetery project will resume in the spring. If you would like to help, please return the form below.

### Restoration Education

On occasion, FOST members attend workshops on the various aspects of the historical restoration process. This past October, we were able to participate in the "This Old Garden" seminar sponsored by the Heritage Commission of Delaware County. The workshop traced the evolution and uses of ground and plant materials to help determine the appearance of certain parcels of land at various times throughout history.

### FOST Volunteer Help

Each article in this newsletter makes clear that many individuals have already contributed in recent months in ways large and small to the tasks before FOST. Others are Mary Archer, Ginny DeNenno, Fred Glessner, Steve Lawrey, Rose Ann Mohn, Adam Sawicki, Mike Squyres, and Mark Willcox, who have each given much thought, effort and time in their areas of expertise. We are greatly appreciative of all of those donations of time and effort.

One contribution, which doesn't fall under any of the categories discussed elsewhere in this newsletter, was the straightening of the left side metal railing on the front steps, not an easy task. Our thanks to Sam Ward for accomplishing that feat last Fall.

FOST's concerns range from building care, landscaping and preservation/restoration questions to historical research, education, fund-raising and publicity. If your interests lie in any of those areas, we welcome you on our team. Return the form below to FOST, Box 19, Chester Heights, PA. Regular FOST meetings are held the second Thursday of each month at 7:30 p.m. in the Annex.

---

---

### The Friends of Old Saint Thomas at Ivy Mills

Name \_\_\_\_\_

Address \_\_\_\_\_

Phone \_\_\_\_\_

Particular interest? \_\_\_\_\_

---

---