

Chapter 6

The Challenges of Change

St. Luke's sixth decade was a period of great change. We celebrated two new ministries (just as we grieved at three clerical departures), but at the same time we developed a strong lay ministry program and grew and developed in other unanticipated directions.

Golden Anniversary

As the decade began, St. Luke's celebrated its fiftieth anniversary with many events planned by Ed Morgan with the very able assistance of Connie Wilmot and Harrie White, Jr., and Jonathan Bryan.

On the first Sunday of 1979 a prayer was read that had been transcribed from the prayer book of Aggie Finks, one of the earliest leaders of Snowden Mission. A column headlined "Fifty Years Ago Today..." began appearing in the Evangel.

St. Luke's scarves, designed by Frankie Welch, were sold throughout the year. The parish produced its first color pictorial directory in honor of the jubilee. This project was such a success that it was followed by two more before the decade ended.

The jubilee culminated in the events of November 3-4, celebrating our past and present ministry and inspiring our future ministry. A dinner dance on Saturday night, catered by Wanda and Fritz Behrens and Sarah and Jim Lofton, was attended by about 200 people. The focal point of the year's activities was a jubilee Eucharist on Sunday. In attendance at the

service were Bishops John Baden and Samuel Chilton; present and former rectors and assistants Ed Morgan, Alexander Robertson, Stuart Henderson, and Lynda Stevenson; and other clergy and former seminarians Richard Reid, Warren Klam, Howard Hanchey, Edward Martin, Hume Cox, Gene Patton, Richard Corkran, Charles Johnson, Charles Stein, and Lowell Harlan.

A jubilee kneeler was designed and executed in needlepoint by Adelaide Bolte, and a set of five banners were designed by Anne Banks and realized by Longina Flakowicz and Debbie Styles.

Clerical Ministries

During its sixth decade St. Luke's witnessed the ordination of Mary Brake, Elly Murphy, and Lynda Stevenson and dispatched into the ordained ministry two members of its own congregation, Jonathan Bryan and Alison Barfoot. We also celebrated the beginning of two new ministries, those of Roger Tilden and Myles Edwards. Seminarians included Jim Wallace, Darlene Tittle, Jonathan Bryan, Lowell Harlan, Mike Moss, Harry Read, Steve Steele, Elly Murphy, Beth McNamara, Chip Brown, Elizabeth Bryan, and (from Wesley Seminary) Betty Dunlop.

In September, 1979, Ed Morgan was one of three nominees for Suffragan Bishop of the Diocese of Virginia. Ed commented that his nomination was "...as much an honor for St.

Luke's as for me. Whatever I am, this church has shaped me."

Lay Ministry

Recognizing its increasing interest and involvement in lay ministry, in May 1980 the parish organized a Ministry Commission to study the ways in which all baptized Christians serve in their daily lives. The commission's deliberations resulted in two proposals in 1981: a caring bank, which would comprise a file of parish resources—parishioners who would make themselves available to help other parishioners with specific needs; and groups in which to reflect on personal issues confronted by members of the group in their daily life as ministry.

Another expression of this interest was the establishment, also in 1980, of the first Education for Ministry study group. Its purpose was "to provide lay persons with education for ministry to which every baptized Christian is called." Members studied the Judeo-Christian tradition through special texts that they read at home and discussed in weekly meetings over a period of four years.

Estelle Warren, a retired DCE, was the EFM trained leader. Group members were Mary Lawrence Aitken, Gay Davis, John and Sharon Ewing, Bob and Judy Lovegren, Carl Parker, Kay Schiefelbein, Mary Jane Smith, and Jim Wallace. All graduated except Jim Wallace, who died in 1981.

And in 1981, Ed Morgan completed his Doctor of Ministry degree at Howard University Divinity School. His dissertation, "A Lay Pastoral Ministry in Congregation and Community," reflected his deep commitment to this subject.

The Minister's Lay Associates decided to maintain a program of pastoral visiting after Ed Morgan's departure. The vestry approved an MLA proposal to this effect, and the group

elected its first officers – Tom Stallman, director; Sharon Ewing, assistant director in charge of assignments; and Connie Wilmot, assistant director, training coordinator. Before the decade was over, this fledgling independent group would train four additional "classes" of associates under the capable leadership of Connie, Tom, and Marge Stallman.

In 1984 MLA decided to change its formal name from Minister's Lay Associates to Ministers, Lay Associates, believing that the new name better defined the group and its activities in partnership with the clergy, in shared ministry to the congregation of St. Luke's Church. MLA training and experience propelled Connie Wilmot toward further training and education and to a professional career as a family counselor.

Another Anniversary

On May 4, 1980, we celebrated the twentieth anniversary of Ed Morgan's service as rector of St. Luke's. A Living Memorial Fund was established to honor this event. At his request, the fund is used "to facilitate or enable the proclamation of the Word of God, either within St. Luke's Church or beyond."

In June 1981, Ed announced his departure from St. Luke's to accept a position as professor at Virginia Theological Seminary. The congregation, with great sadness at losing a rector who had become so deeply embedded in the fabric of the parish but with best wishes for him in his new position, sent the Morgans off on July 12 with a luncheon and presented Ed with four stoles made by members of the congregation, church sketches autographed by members of the congregation, and the promise of a portrait of Ed by Cay Chapman. (Cay did complete the portrait. It hangs in our library; one woman in the congregation remarked that it is so lifelike she no longer feels comfortable ducking into the room to hitch up a slip that's

showing.) The family left in a car filled with balloons.

The Reverend Dr. Morgan served St. Luke's with great energy, devotion, and determination. While guiding the congregation through such changes as the adoption of the 1979 prayer book, he provided a wide variety of services and strove to meet the needs of all.

The First Interim

Lynda Stevenson, who had served her diaconate at St. Luke's and was ordained to the priesthood here in 1980, became the priest in charge during the interim period after Ed Morgan's departure. (Lynda married Charlie Hergenrather, a well-loved, long-time St. Luker whose activities included being Senior Warden and Church Treasurer, and a member of MLA, on March 23, 1985. Charlie died on August 1, 1987. A tremendous crowd of St. Lukers attended his funeral at the church.)

The vestry hired a consultant, John W. Martin, from St. George's, Arlington, and appointed a search committee. Members of the committee were: John Smith, chairman; Karol Flakowicz, vice chairman; Sally Hurme, recording secretary; Sue Wanner, corresponding secretary; Alison Barfoot; John Bouldin; Cay Chapman; Jim Clark; Muriel Drake; John Ewing; Catesby Jones; Carlos Martinez; Helen Mayers; and Richard Stephens. The committee organized several congregational meetings aimed toward preparing a parish profile—who we are, what we do, and where we want to go.

The Rev. Roger Tilden

After many months of intensive effort, the search committee proposed Roger Tilden, and he accepted the call, beginning his service January 23, 1983. He and his wife Payson and sons Jamie and Paul moved into a home in Collingwood Springs.

Dr. Tilden, who had completed work on his Doctor of Ministry degree just prior to accepting our call, came to us from St. Paul's Church in Petersburg, Virginia. He had served earlier as Canon in Residence of Holy Trinity Cathedral in Paris.

To get to know the congregation, Roger -- with the cooperation and support of the vestry and staff -- called at the homes of all parishioners. It took him a year to complete the visits, but the congregation loved it!

Liturgy

January 1, 1980, marked the establishment of the new prayer book as official. Some approved and some disapproved, but in general we accepted, and we began getting used to it by alternating between Rites I and II as well as between Morning Prayer and Holy Eucharist.

Roger Tilden proposed initiating a healing service, to be held on the first Tuesday of every month, in the evening. The service began in December 1984.

(The healing service is still being held, conducted during the last three years by the Reverend Elly Sparks Murphy, who has been praised by many for her gifts of sensitivity and articulation. Elly came to St. Luke's in July, 1984, as an assistant to Roger Tilden.)

The new hymnal was adopted in 1986, with some of the usual grumbling about changes and some of the usual enthusiasm for changes. The choir, under the guidance of organist and choir director Jane Bourdow, forged the way down some new musical paths, with a definite trend toward the use of more music in the 10:00 service.

Education

As the decade began, the Education Committee was investigating a new Sunday

School curriculum, which it purchased and began using. Within a few years, however, the curriculum was being developed by clergy Roger Tilden and Elly Murphy, with the aim of providing an integrated approach. Education for all ages, from preschool to adult, followed a thematic approach—all classes, for instance, would pursue a unit on Baptism, or on Liturgy and the Word, or on the Family.

St. Luke's first parish family retreat was held at Shrine Mont in September 1979, with 60 happy participants. Education programs for adults were provided by a retreat leader; activities for the children, generally following a related theme, were led by high school or college students hired for the weekend (usually SYC members or alums). This, too, was a great success, and it has continued with the enthusiastic participation of St. Lukers young and old.

The Day School continued to flourish. Gay Davis was followed as director by Gail Crawford, who resigned in 1984; she was replaced by Susan Fitzgerald, our current director. The school served a group of 92 two, three, and four year olds in 1988-89, Co-chairs of the Board of Directors were Jeanie Fleming and Joann Kinney.

Community Service

Community service continued to be an important part of St. Luke's outreach. Groups using the parish facilities included The Pastoral Counseling Center, the YWCA, St. Luke's Day School, Alcoholics Anonymous, and Boy Scout Troop #654. Other groups renting space in the building included the Mt. Vernon Women's Club, Parents Without Partners, the Mt. Vernon Hospital Auxiliary, an aerobics class, and a square dance group.

St. Luke's outreach program expanded in 1984 when we joined with several other area

churches to provide temporary shelter and food to the homeless during the winter months. The shelter rotated on a weekly basis among the three participating churches, and dozens of people came forth to help with food preparation, supervision, laundry, and all the other arrangements necessary to keep the program going. After Fairfax County opened South County Shelter to serve the needs in this area, St. Luke's no longer needed to house people. However, we have continued our support; some members volunteer at the shelter and St. Luke's provides money for lunches at the shelter on a rotating basis with other area churches. In 1989 we participated with Alexandria churches in staffing and cooking food for the Carpenter's Shelter on Duke Street. Our ongoing commitment to United Community Ministries (UCM) expressed itself in increasing donations of food brought by parishioners every Sunday to supply the UCM food closet. The parish also helped to support Mondloch House

Music Ministry

While the Search Committee was looking for a new rector, the Worship Committee was looking for a new organist and choir director to replace Robin Barrow, who resigned in January 1982. Its efforts were well rewarded when Jane Bourdow accepted an offer and officially began work the Sunday after Easter. We had a "preview" of her talent because she had agreed to present an organ recital on Palm Sunday and to play the organ and conduct the choir for the bishop's visit for confirmation on March 30.

In 1982 St. Luke's became amplified, thanks to a sound system donated by Nick and Ginny Carter. The nave, always a wonderful place to listen to music, was thus improved for the spoken word. Two donations for the organ made possible the addition of a trompette en chamade (1981) and a cymbelstern (1983).

The choir also began an informal tradition of Christmas caroling at Mt. Vernon Hospital.

Fellowship

The church published its first cookbook, "Potomac Paths", with recipes from many members of the congregation.

Another innovation early in the decade was Fish Groups, intended to enhance the possibilities for fellowship. The first meeting, a dinner, was held in the parish hall on October 4, 1980, and the participants agreed to divide into four smaller groups, each comprising about 15-16 people and each meeting monthly (approximately) for dinner or brunch, usually in the home of one of the members of the group. FISH is alive and well in 1989!

A new fellowship program for a group that represents a large proportion of our congregation—those near or past retirement age—had its inception in 1985. The seeds for this idea were planted a year earlier, when the Community Relations Committee asked Thelma Clark to represent the parish at a meeting of the Diocesan Commission on Aging. Following her enthusiastic report on the commission's deliberations, a group gathered at Thelma's home to explore this ministry. Elly Murphy and Martha Barfoot attended three training sessions sponsored by Catholic University's Center for Aging. With this motivation, and with leadership from John and Mary Jane Smith and others, the first meeting was planned. A contest to name the group produced "OYC—Older Young Churchmen" (the entry submitted by Roger and Marie Hombs), a reminder that members may be gray-haired, but they are nonetheless young at heart.

And Parents Support Groups began in 1986, spurred by the increasing number of little folk among us. The participants proposed meetings that would include family gatherings, guest

speakers, informal group discussions, parents' nights out—meetings that would give parents an opportunity to discuss their common goals and the problems and joys of raising children. The group tries to meet monthly at the homes of members.

St. Catherine's Guild has been a strong organization during this decade. It has provided fellowship for a group of about 50 women (all women of the congregation are invited to join!) and has had some outstanding educational programs as well. Our own clergy and lay members of the congregation, along with outside authorities from various fields of ministry and theology, have been speakers.

St. Catherine's supports the United Thank Offering, Meals on Wheels, and UCM.

A special and very lovely outreach effort of St. Catherine's was the English tea given in the spring of 1989. It was an elegant affair and netted almost \$1000, which the Guild contributed to the Northern Virginia AIDS Ministry.

The Second Interim

Roger Tilden resigned as rector in August 1986 to take a church in Birmingham, Michigan. St. Luke's said good-bye to a rector whose enthusiasm had been contagious. During his tenure, the congregation greatly enlarged the scope of its lay ministry. There was much more activity than in the past. Someone commented: "Roger really knows how to start things!"

The vestry organized a new search committee comprising Susan Ashton (chairman), Bill Bennett, Doug Binney, Mary Lee Bolte, David Cureton, Joan Flippen, Jackie Geiss, Dixie Hougen, Don Reynolds, Tom Stallman, and Ben Wilmot. The committee, advised again by John Martin, began work on revising and updating the church profile. The vestry hired The Reverend Michael O. Moore to serve as interim rector for

one year, his last Sunday being September 6, 1987.

The Rev. Myles W. Edwards

In the fall of 1987 the vestry issued a call to The Reverend Myles W. Edwards, rector of Immanuel Church, New Castle, Delaware. He accepted, and began his service at St. Luke's on St. Luke's Day, October 18, 1987. Myles, his wife Brenda and children Megan and Judson, rented a house for a few months before buying one in Sulgrave Manor.

The Reverend Mr. Edwards is a talented harpsichordist; he brought his harpsichord into church on one occasion, and he and organist Jane Bourdow presented an outstanding concert.

One of Mr. Edwards's special concerns was beautification. With his encouragement, a group headed by Bobbie Bruce bought a new sofa, arranged chairs in conversational groupings, and brought in floral arrangements to greatly enhance the appearance of the library, narthex, and the Fort Hunt entrance.

At the Present

As our sixth decade ends, we are reminded that life is filled with the unexpected. Because of Virginia law, we had to spend a considerable sum during the summer of 1989 to remove all the asbestos insulation in the building. Thanks to the hard work of the Administration Committee and "Special Shepherd" Gene Butler, the work was done in a week. Gene was on site every day, both to oversee and to keep people from wandering into places where it would be dangerous to go.

Myles Edwards resigned on September 30, 1989. As we celebrate our sixty years as a congregation, we are once again in the search process. The Rev. Wesley Smith is serving as our

Interim Rector; The Rev. Elly Sparks Murphy is Assistant to the Rector.

In working to find a new rector, we feel that the efforts of the 1988-89 Evangelism Sub-Committee have been of great assistance. This committee sent out a comprehensive survey and discovered – to the amazement of almost no one – that we are a diverse and active group! Our prayer is that this diversity and energy can be channeled constructively so that our next 10 years are rich, joyful, and Christ-centered.

