



*Historic St. George's  
United Methodist Church*

# Messenger



MARCH 2009, VOL. 28, No. 1

235 North Fourth Street • Philadelphia, Pennsylvania 19106 • 215-925-7788 • www.historicstgeorges.org

## THE BISHOP & THE BRIDGE

*Portrait of Bishop Neely Uncovered*

Rummaging through the museum's third floor storage area, Eastern Pennsylvania Conference Historical Society president Rev. Joe DiPaolo found a portrait of the bishop who moved the Ben Franklin Bridge. The portrait, hidden away for years, will be hung in the museum in April.

This fine portrayal of Thomas Benjamin Neely is of particular interest to visitors because the Bishop's efforts stopped the proposed demolition of St. George's to make way for the bridge.

Completed on July 1, 1926, the bridge's 533-meter span made it the world's longest suspension span at that time. The original blueprints (copies are housed in the museum) show the bridge going right through where our sanctuary sits.

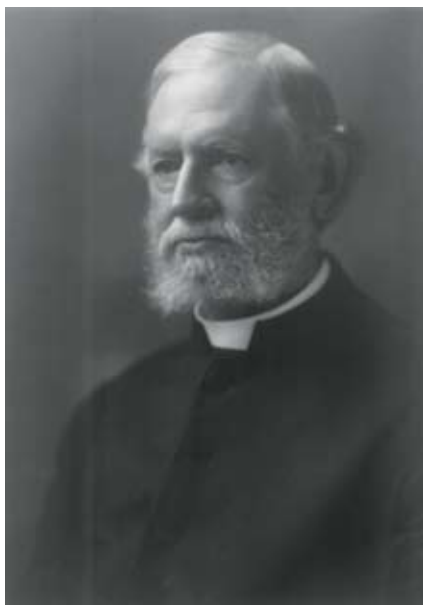
Neely's case against the Delaware River Port Authority's (DRPA) led a judge to rule in St. George's favor. The bridge builders had to alter their plans, leaving St. George's intact. Anyone sitting in the sanctuary as the PATCO hi-speed line rumbles by knows how close we came to oblivion.

In addition to saving historic buildings, Bishop Neely had a long and very public career in the Methodist Church. According to the Joyner

Library of East Carolina University:

"Thomas Benjamin Neely (1841-1925) of Philadelphia was a prominent bishop of the Methodist Episcopal Church, a traveling missionary, and a noted author and editor of religious books. For many years he labored as a missionary and church organizer in Western Europe and South America. During his travels, Neely corresponded with his family in Philadelphia, giving extensive descriptions of places and people he visited. It was his hope that the letters would later serve as a memoir for his journeys."

The letters are stored at the East Carolina library, and we also have selected volumes of his published works at St. George's.



The handsome portrait of the bewhiskered Neely was painted by W. L. Antrim. Thanks to Evan Towle, a librarian at the Philadelphia Museum of Art, we have the artist's obituary from *Art News* v.40 (Sept. 1941):24:

William L. Antrim, portraitist, died in Philadelphia on August 2 at the age of seventy-five. A native of Pemberton, N.J., he came to Philadelphia as a boy and was graduated in 1880 from the Pennsylvania Academy of the Fine Arts, after which he studied in Rome and

*Bishop Neely, cont'd from page 1*

Brussels. Although ill, he completed his last work ten days before his death. It is a likeness of Civil War General George Meade which will be hung at Fort Meade, Md.

Mr. Towle tells us that on page 410 of Henry Adams's book *Eakins Revealed: The Secret Life of an American Artist*, Antrim is mentioned as being commissioned to redo a portrait of the Superior of the Order of the Sisters of Mercy because she was dissatisfied with the one Eakins painted. Antrim also had the dubious distinction of having his name used as one of the aliases of the outlaw Billy the Kid!

One can never tell where a little research on a signature will lead. Mary Susan Barkley, Public Relations Officer for the US Army, was helping us find the fate of the Gen. Meade portrait at the Maryland fort, but was deployed to Iraq with her unit and had to suspend her search. So, curiosity about the portrait of a Civil War general brings us right into the present. We told Mary Susan that we would keep her and everyone touched by the conflict in our prayers.

## Opening the Vault:

*What's Up at the Museum & Archives*

**Mother Bethel AME's new pastor, the Rev. Dr. Mark Kelly Tyler**, visited with church archivist Wilson Crawford and found the marriage certificate of Richard Allen to Sarah Bass in 1800. The marriage record is in our ledger book because the then Bethel Chapel was under the supervision of St. George's.

**Nancy Heinzen** called on the eve of the publication of her new book *A Perfect Square: A History of Rittenhouse Square* to say thanks for help in the research. She uncovered records of the Brickman Methodist Protestant Church (1857) that existed right on the square.

**Dr. J. Dennis Williams** needed to research 19th century conference journals in writing a history of **Cornwall Manor**. Church Administrator Donna Miller and Intern Dan Lebo found just what he needed.



We found an old 45rpm recording featuring the **Rev. Dr. Robert L. Curry's** speech *Historic St. George's, Cradle of Methodism* and were able to put it on the church web site. Check it out at [www.historicstgeorges.org/history/overview/](http://www.historicstgeorges.org/history/overview/). It's great to hear Bob again!

**Cheryl Baisden**, creating a photo history of the Delaware River Port Authority, requested a photo of St. George's for the book, since St. George's fought and won a legal challenge to the Delaware Port Authority, preserving the church from demolition at the construction of the Ben Franklin Bridge.

**Boston University PhD student Carolynne Brown** sent us the chapters of her dissertation which included research done at St. George's related to the history of Mother Zoar ME Church. Her overall work concerns "Music as a Bridge to Cultural Understanding".

**University of Pennsylvania Student, Ho-Kyung (Kiki) Whang** arrived to research United Methodist attitudes towards divorce throughout our history; she also gathered membership statistics and background on our structure, as well.

As always, we cared for dozens of routine calls and visits for baptismal, wedding, funeral records, and other ancestral research inquiries from information contained in the ledgers of closed Eastern PA Conference churches.

# We're Still Making History

*What's Happening in the Congregation*

Things have been so busy around here we skipped the Winter Issue. Here are some bits to get us caught up... A group of us enjoyed an amazing Epiphany attending the **12th Night Festival** at Christ Hamilton Lutheran Church in Allentown. We were joined by friends from last year's study group with **Gloria Dei/Old Swedes Episcopal Church...** The **Wednesday Night Group** is about finished with its two year *Five Faiths, One Community* study. The group wrapped up Hinduism just before Ash Wednesday. Now, onward to Christianity, finishing in June. Dr. Luke Timothy Johnson, Emory U., is the recorded lecturer. Special thanks to attendee **Vashti Culleton** who guided the group, sharing life experience along this eastern path to God....Seminary intern **Dan Lebo** sure packs the place when he preaches. Great job, Dan; we're proud of you. Dan is with us through May (see his *Intern Insights* on the next page)... **Church Stats:** 2009 is off to a great start: there hasn't been a Sunday with fewer than 30 in attendance and we're actually getting closer to 40. Commitments for giving came in higher than the previous year. 2008 finished strong, with year-end giving totals better than expected; the challenge is to sustain the trend in these tough economic times. *God can do anything, you know—far more than you could ever imagine or guess or request in your wildest dreams! The Lord does it not by pushing us around, but by working within us, his Spirit deeply and gently within us* (Ephesians 3:30-21 *The Message*) ....**Speaking of Challenge,** Pastor Day put out a **Lenten Challenge** for everyone to bring at least one new person to church during Lent, so that on **Easter Sunday we'll hit 100 or more.** *We can do it!!!* Philadelphia Area UM **Bishop Peggy Johnson** will visit on April 4 as part of this year's *Time Traveler* mass confirmation class event. 200+ from EPA, Greater NJ and Peninsula DE have made reservations. We'll do it again May 4 with just as many, and our friend **Chuck Otto** helped by encouraging the Plains/

Bennett-Derr Confirmation Classes to make the long road trip from the Scranton area that day... **Mother's Day, May 10** will again honor **Anna Reeves Jarvis**, the St. George's saint who established the national holiday in 1912. The guest preacher on that day is **Dr. Angele Parker** from Methodist Children's Services (formerly Methodist Home for Children)... **We've started a Sunday School for children!** 5 preschoolers are enjoying the time with teachers **Carly and Claire Day.** We haven't had a Sunday School for years!!! **On the MISSION FRONT,** we continue as monthly hosts at Arch St. UMC's Grace Café, cooking dinner for homeless guests. Kudos to **Evelyn Leidy** and **Janet MacMurray** for leading us... Despite budget cuts and downsizing, our Charge Conference was steady in its resolve to continue our \$1,000 effort to **support the homeless shelter at neighboring Old First Reformed Church.** So far, we've raised more than half through special offerings; if you want to help, send your offering to the church earmarked for Old First Shelter... Friend and frequent guest soloist **John Easterlin** won a Grammy Award for his part in the recording of the opera *The Rise and Fall of the City of Mahagonny.* We offered our congratulations in person when he sang here the Sunday following the award ceremony. **More next quarter — see you at church!**

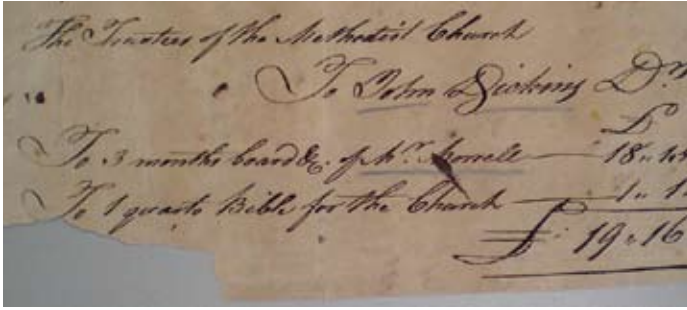
In the meantime, please remember these folk in your prayers: **Martha Kolody**, who had a recent hospital stay... **Gladys Chambers**, recuperating from a fall, **Mary Powell**, who had knee surgery (and wants to dance at her daughter's wedding in May!) and the family of **Joan Boyle**, grieving her loss.



**GUIDES NEEDED** Are you in the area? Consider being a tour guide at Historic St. George's. We'll train you to share the stories of this Cradle of American Methodism.

## Bound to Discover ...

*Items from the Scrapbook of Rev. Dr. Francis Tees,  
(Pastor of St. George's (1931 - 47))*



Each newsletter will highlight an item from the extensive collection in Dr. Tees's scrapbook of St. George's colonial artifacts. For our inaugural presentation, we've chosen a receipt showing a payment to Rev. John Dickins for room and board, as well as a Bible, in 1794.

John Dickins, considered by many to be alongside Francis Asbury as architects of American Methodism, was the first superintendent of the Methodist Book Concern (1789) which eventually became Cokesbury Press. The first site of the fledgling Methodist publication enterprise was here at St. George's. A fine new print of Charles Hargens' painting of Dickins hangs our social hall, sharing a wall with a portrait of Ezekiel Cooper, who took over for Dickins' after he died during Philadelphia's third yellow fever epidemic.

## Intern Insights

*from Dan Lebo, Palmer Theological Seminary Student*

**What is ministry?** Is it worship services and Bible studies, or is there something more to it? While most of my fellow seminarians fulfill their field education requirements as youth pastors or campus ministers, I spend my time polishing silver, cataloging and organizing the library, and photocopying old conference journals. Does this make my experience any less ministerial than theirs?

Working in the library has been very spiritual enriching. By working with my hands, my mind is free to think. Isn't that the purpose of ministry? To have people think about God, life, and how they work together? Organizing the library has been as much ministry as assisting with worship services. It can bring people closer to God and provides a valuable service to the church.

It has been great to participate in Sunday services. Whether preaching, reading Scriptures, helping with the Eucharist, or giving the Benediction, I have grown in my ministry identity while providing a needed service to the congregation. The best part about participating on Sundays is providing a youthful presence at the pulpit. This is appreciated by other young adults in the congregation, spoken and unspoken, because it provides an additional point of connection between the leadership and the laity. I have learned that ministry comes in all shapes and sizes. Service to the body comes from the library as well as the pulpit.

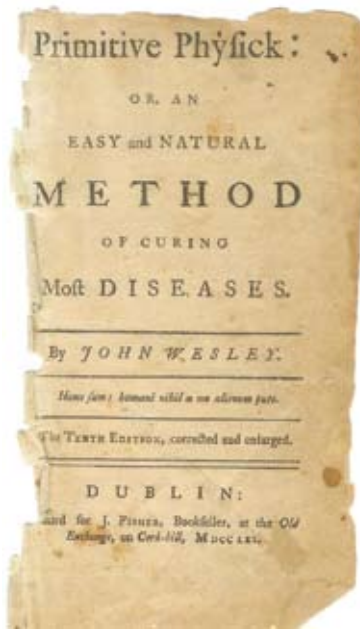
---

## Yes, I would like to make a gift to St. George's ...

Level:  \$25     \$50     \$75     \$100     \$150     \$500     Other

|                                  |
|----------------------------------|
| Name _____                       |
| Street Address _____             |
| City _____ State _____ Zip _____ |
| E-Mail _____                     |

# Head Cold Got You Down?



Everyone knows John Wesley was concerned with people’s spiritual well being. But physical health? In our museum, there’s a copy of the 10th printing of Father John’s *Primitive Physic* (1761, or MDCCLXI for you purists), his collection of remedies for common ills. Visitors are amused by Wesley’s recommendation for baldness, “rub the

area morning and night with onions til it is red, and afterwards with honey.” And for that pesky head cold? “Pare very thin the yellow rind of an orange, roll it up inside out, and thrust a roll into each nostril.” Ears, Nose and Throat docs take heed!

Questions from folks who drop by the museum lead us to wonderful discoveries. Rob Fairly, President of the United Methodist Foundation of

Louisiana, expressed interest in getting a printed copy of the remedies. Later that week, Dale Glacken from New Cumberland, PA, happened by and mentioned he had just been to the Wesley Chapel in England where they carry the reprint. A few emails later, and with a little conversion of US dollars to pounds, we were able to stock the shelves of our gift shop with the 24th edition from the Epworth House museum. Mr. Fairly now owns his very own copy, and Dale and his wife came back to help us usher at the Christmas Musical, so everyone was happy! Ah, the Methodist connection at work! If you would like a copy of *Primitive Physic*, the cost is \$28.00 including shipping.



## Something Sprouting?

When the folks from Epworth wrote to us about their museum, they mentioned they had just installed a garden of the healing herbs mentioned in Wesley’s writings. We took a look at our little courtyard and thought we might have a replica stateside. Our next newsletter will contain some drawings of the plan and information on how you can be part of this project.



# Wish List

## Special Gift or Memorial Opportunities

Thanks for your generous responses for the projects that keep St. George’s in tip-top shape. Gifts can be designated for all or part of items having significance to you.

**Front Doors.** (\$5,000). Over two hundred years of wear and tear are showing on our front doors. They are in need of repair and fresh paint to provide an inviting entrance for our visitors.

**Journal for Guest signatures.** (\$75) A local bookbinder would like to make us a handmade journal to match our beautiful narthex. See her work at [www.bridgetbullen.com](http://www.bridgetbullen.com)

**Portrait Restoration: Charles Pitman**(\$950) and **Joseph Rusling** (\$500). Gerald Hoepfner, restoration expert, has examined these treasures and is eager to get to work.

**Converting VHS** of *The Story of Old St. George’s and Early American Methodism* by Frederick Maser (\$400). This tape,

originally produced in 1965, would be reengineered and brought to new life as a DVD and also a segment engineered to play online on our web site. We think this would be a wonderful way to let folks around the world know about our history.

## PARISH REGISTER

### *Weddings*

Amy Sinclair & Dario Mescia, August 29  
Lizbeth Henshaw & Tom Miskelly, September 5;  
Houston, TX

### *In Loving Memory*

Joan Boyle, March 1, 1945 – March 17, 2009  
*Memorial gifts in honor of Joan may be sent to St. George’s*

## Who the Wind Blew -in:

### *Visitors to Church, Museum and Library*

Among the hundreds of visitors from around the country and world who came to this touchstone place of Methodist history and tradition in this last quarter, here are some who stand out:

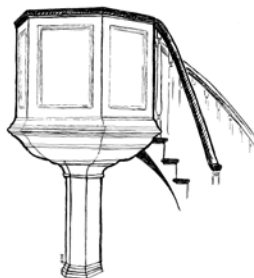
**Cathedral Village, Roxborough.** "Thanks for the hospitality. Your museum. Your presentation about the church and its place in Methodist and African American history was well done, and your church is beautiful" And another group of seniors from **Chandler Hall in Newtown, Pa.**

A class from **Princeton Theological Seminary** studying worship in the Methodist tradition.

**The Rev. Irving Cotto**, Director of Congregational Development for the Eastern PA Conference. Irving was most complimentary about his experience in worship and was excited that St. George's is a church celebrating Holy Communion weekly at Sunday services.

**Col. David Eberly**, USAF, (Ret) of Williamsburg Va. David worshipped with us on several occasions while working in Philadelphia this winter. One Sunday he presented us with a copy of a book he's written, *Faith Beyond Belief*. The book is David's testimony of faith through his ordeal after being shot down over Baghdad and held as the senior allied prisoner of war of the Gulf War – 43 days and nights of isolation, starvation, and psychological torment. It is his story of literally walking through the valley of the shadow of death before making his way to freedom. We're honored to place the book in the church library! Col. Eberly was joined one Sunday by **Brig. Gen. Ed Kelley**, USMC (Ret).

**The Rev. Dr. Robert Williams**, General Sec'y of the United Methodist General Commission on Archives and History preached from the tub pulpit at St. George's in February.



*line drawings by Sandy Clay Bauer*

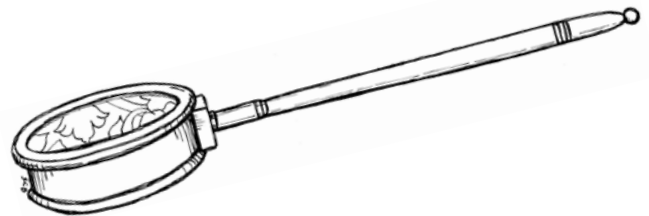
## IRA Rollover Provision Reinstated Through 2009

(Oct. 3, 2008) President Bush has signed into law the \$700 billion economic bailout bill (H.R. 1424, Financial Rescue Package), which includes a two-year extension of the IRA Rollover provision as well as other charitable giving provisions.

The provision had expired at the end of 2007; the new provision will be made retroactive to Jan. 1, 2008, and will apply to gifts made from that date through Dec. 31, 2009.

The provision exempts from taxable income any funds transferred ("rolled over") from an Individual Retirement Account (IRA) to a charitable organization. The following limitations apply:

- The donor must be age 70½ or older.
- The cap on annual IRA rollovers is \$100,000.
- The contribution must be a direct gift to a charity (no planned gifts).



## Planned Giving

Historic St George's is blessed by members and friends who include this great church in their estate planning. These gifts are instrumental in helping us accomplish our mission of historic preservation, education, archival and museum development.

We can assist you in developing a bequest to reflect your interests and desires about the work here, and of course there are tax benefits to your estate.

Contact Pastor Day at 215-925-7788 or e-mail him at:

[pastor@historicstgeorges.org](mailto:pastor@historicstgeorges.org)