

St. John's Centennial

1923-1929

Ted Ederer and Anna Aubry

As the year, 1923, began, St. John's was making progress but was still missing two very vital components. Those components were formal consent to organize a mission and a church building.

The formal consent to organize a mission was granted on February 1, 1923, by the Rt. Reverend F. W. Keator, the first bishop of Olympia. Bishop Keator had actually made two visitations to Kirkland the previous year and was well-acquainted with St. John's. The new mission of St. John's was admitted to the Diocesan Convention in 1923.

Now it was time to address the issue of an actual building for the church. The Building Committee met on September 13, 1923, to consider the bids it had received for the construction of a church building. The low bid of \$528 was accepted for materials, and a contractor was hired. (The building fund at that time totaled \$1,288.82.) And, the new building was ready for occupancy by December!

Here's an excerpt from The Journal of the Diocesan Convention:

At Kirkland also a beautiful little church has been completed with comparatively little help from outside. The Reverend H. J. Hennessey has held services at Kirkland regularly on Sunday afternoons and has accepted nothing for his services, giving back into the building fund the amount he received from the mission. This church promises to be the center of church life for a rapidly growing and important district extending along the east side of Lake Washington.

Mr. Hennessey not only presided at services at St. John's but also provided leadership during construction of the church building and attended many guild activities. Unfortunately, he was unable to continue carrying this heavy work load and had to leave in January 1925. He was followed by The Reverend Thomas Hilton from All Saint's, Seattle, who also served Emmanuel parish on Mercer Island. Mr. Hilton frequently attended building meetings and advised paying off the \$180.38 remaining on the church land.

Then in September, 1925, State Street was regraded, the church lost land, and found it would now need steps. Mr. Nettleton, the owner of the home currently at the corner of State Street South and 3rd Lane South, offered to match money raised by the church: his \$30.00 to their \$10.00.

Then in 1926, the St. John's Guild ladies, with approval by the Bishop's Committee, raised funds for a parish hall. They hired carpenters, shopped for lumber, paid plumbers, bought dishes, and accepted donations of a sink and range. And, St. John's had a Parish Hall!

During this decade St. John's continued to grow and prosper. The number of communicants typically averaged 30 to 35; the first baptisms were celebrated in 1925; four church school teachers worked with 30 to 39 youngsters. Here are the names of many of the people who deserve recognition as being instrumental in St. John's inception and growth: the Baxters, the Heaths, the Caldwells, the Pratts, the Stalhammers, the McPhails, the Gillilands, the McIlhargys, Lucille Nelson, and Frances Gordenier. The Reverend Cyril Boddington conducted some services at St. John's from 1929 to 1931 in addition to serving St. Luke's in Seattle.

The decade of the 1920s saw the birth and growth of a mission church in Kirkland, and the future looked bright. Then came 1929, and life changed for folks throughout the world.