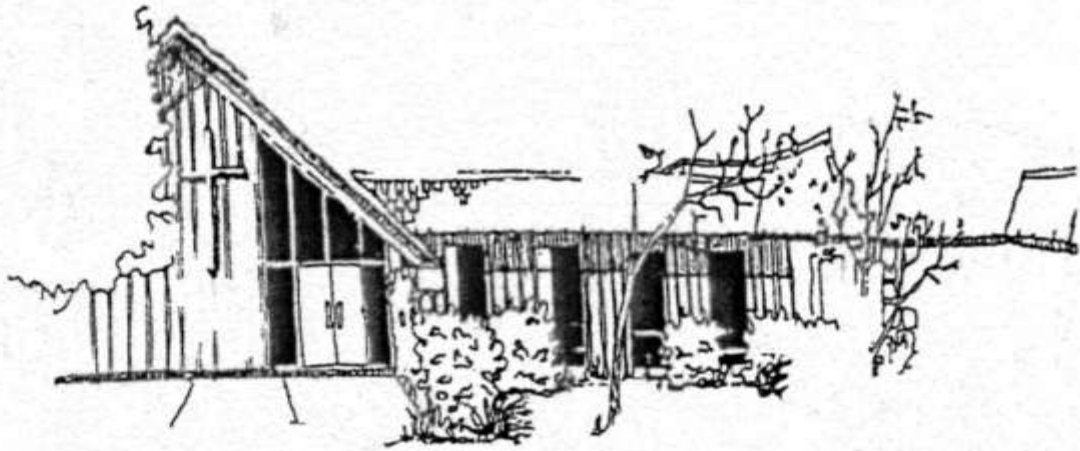


A History of St. Timothy's Episcopal Church

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contributors*



Littleton

The first Episcopal church services were held in Littleton, Colorado in 1863. The Reverend Father Vincent drove out from Denver by buggy every other Sunday to conduct these services.

In 1871, under the direction of Bishop George M. Randall, St. Paul's church was built at 385 Rapp Street, and was consecrated on Palm Sunday, 1872. Richard Sullivan Little, the founder of Littleton, was a member of the parish, and it was largely through his efforts that the church and, in 1875, the rectory were built. The church was constructed of white clapboard with a steep roof and belfry. St. Paul's was credited with being the second Episcopal church to be built in Colorado. Through the years the church flourished and was the center of community life. In the 1910's there was shift in population and the attendance diminished so that in 1917 Bishop Olmsted decided St. Paul's should be closed. After St. Paul's parish was disbanded, members attended church in Englewood and Denver.

St. Timothy's church dates from 1951. An organizational meeting was held that year for the purpose of establishing a new church in Littleton. Among those present were the Reverend M. Lewis Marsh, the Reverend Fred Fay King, Mrs. Florence Wright (in whose home the meeting was held), Mr. and Mrs. Harry Bowles, Mrs. Margaret Marquis, and a number of other people. The Bishop of Colorado approved the establishment of St. Timothy's mission under the auspices of St. George's of Englewood. Mrs. Wright offered the use of her home at 140 East Alamo Street as a chapel. Upon her death, the property was willed to the diocese.

Father King served as vicar of St. Timothy's, holding the first service on Easter Sunday, 1951. In 1952 the Women's Guild was organized. In 1953 a Sunday School was organized. Mrs.

Margery Nevels was the first superintendent. The first two teachers were Mrs. Eleanor Fry and Mrs. Margaret Marquis.

Father King left in June 1952 to become rector of St. Andrew's in Manitou Springs, Colorado and the Reverend Ward E. Gongoll succeeded him at St. Timothy's. The congregation continued to increase. The house, given by Mrs. Wright, was remodeled by the parishioners by removing partitions to make a chapel out of the parlor and two bedrooms, a chimney was removed, and the interior painted.

Another chapter in the history was written the night of January 13, 1953 when an oil heater ignited the walls and roof of the building. Several walls, ceilings and portions of the roof were destroyed by the fire. Most of the altar vestments, all of the Sunday School material, the kneeling cushions, and Prayer Books were also destroyed. The following Sunday a committee was appointed by Rev. Ward Gongoll to consider plans for rebuilding. During this period both church school and services were held at the home of Ms. Robert Atkin, 1011 South Prince Street.

Due to ill health, Father Gongoll was relieved of his responsibilities at St. Timothy's, and the services and administration of business were under the direction and supervision of Rev. Leon King and Rev. William Shattuck of St. Michael and All Angels, Denver. Eventually property was donated for a church just off Littleton Boulevard.

On August 19, 1956, two events of particular significance occurred. The cement block structure at Hickory and High Streets (now West Littleton Blvd.) was opened for services, and Rev. Eldon A. Bayard came to be the vicar of the Mission. Under his direction, St. Timothy's became a parish on May 17, 1957, and from the 35 families on the church mailing list when he arrived, the list grew to over 300; the church school had an enrollment of

about 200; and on May 8, 1960, the cornerstone of the new building seating 300 was laid.

Father Bayard was a man of unique background, having served in both the Merchant Marine and Navy; he put himself through school as a roustabout, salesman and special agent for the government. He mined for gold and for six years sang grand opera. He had been a priest four years before coming to Littleton with his wife and four children. During the seven years he served as rector, St. Timothy's gained a reputation as a strong Anglo-Catholic parish. Personal problems brought about his resignation as rector, and in 1964 he was succeeded by Rev. Cyril F. Coverley.

Father Coverley was also a man of unique background, bringing with him expertise in administration. He had served 20 years in the military as a navigator, Air Transport command pilot, and chaplain. He was a librarian, having graduated from both college and seminary after the age of 30. He had spent 10 years in the priesthood before coming to St. Timothy's with his wife and three children. His stay can be described as a time of organization and building. Under his leadership, the congregation grew in numbers and in involvement in the diocese.

In an effort to interest the greatest number of Episcopalians in the community, Coverley instituted a moderate service schedule which included weekly early morning masses and Morning Prayer as well as three services on Sunday; the two main ones alternating weekly between Holy Communion and Morning Prayer. An historian, his sermons and lectures were very popular and it was not long before the parish numbered close to 400 communicants. In 1968, following the death of his wife, Father Coverley resigned from the priesthood and St. Timothy's to return to work in the library field.

Rev. R. Michael Darrow was elected Rector in March of 1968 after serving the parish as curate since the preceding September. A native of Denver, Father Darrow had previously served as Vicar of two missions in Indiana and as Curate of St. Luke's, Fort Collins, and was in the fifth year of his ministry. Father Darrow emphasized a return to a Eucharistic centered church, initiating four Sunday services as well as continuing the daily mass schedule. Children were encouraged to worship with their families, so Church school was planned between the two major services. The adults convened in the parish hall for a coffee hour discussion period during this time.

Under Father Darrow's guidance, the emphasis at St. Timothy's turned to Outreach, hands-on work and financial support outside the parish. One of the first programs to reach out into the community was a parish sponsored cooperative preschool. Meeting in the church basement daily, the school enjoyed a steady growth, serving the needs of families in the entire Littleton area. The church supplied a board member to act as a liaison between the school and the parish and, when the need arose, gave scholarships to children who could not otherwise attend.

Parishioners became quite active in Inter-Faith Task Force, an agency set up to help the disadvantaged of Arapahoe County; a vestryman at St. Timothy's was eventually elected to its board of directors. A regular program of sewing and singing was carried out by women of the church at the nearby Cherrelyn Nursing home. The Cherrelyn ladies supplied centerpieces and decorations for parish functions and even won first prize in a Christmas tree decorating contest sponsored by a local bank.

St. Timothy's served all Episcopalians hospitalized at Swedish Hospital and had, in addition to clergy visitations, an active lay ministry to the patients at Porters and Craig Rehabilitation Center

as well. Members of the group received the names of patients and called upon them to offer support and friendship at a critical time.

The parish also supplied members to the Diocesan Standing Committee, Stewardship Committee, the Executive Council, the Joint Budget Commission of the National Church, and the Trinity Ranch Board. Darrow was Dean of the first conference held at Trinity Ranch.

The young people of St. Timothy's comprised a small but active group who presented the musical "Godspell" to a Diocesan convention, as well as three performances in the parish. The proceeds were sent to the church in Damarland, South Africa, as their contribution to the parish outreach.

The ultimate in the parish dream of Outreach was accomplished when it was decided to sponsor a mission in the southwest part of the Littleton area. A good deal of planning, arguing, and door knocking brought the mission into being in three years time, under the guidance of the rector and Father Jack Knight, the curate of St. Timothy's at that time. An agreement was made with the Roman Catholic church of Columbine to share common ground and some facilities and St. Gregory's Mission became a reality. When the mission built a church building and became in parish in 1975, St. Timothy's rechanneled its financial support to aid in the forming of a diocesan mission to the Southeast, contributing a pledge as well as many of its parishioners to the Church of the Good Shepherd.

St. Timothy's was often referred to as "Nashotah House, West", as the Rector and several Curates were all graduates of that seminary. The parish sponsored seven seminarians at the school, while two others prepared at the Bishop's School of Theology in Denver. A continuing program of seminary financial aid was an important part of parish outreach.

Father Donald N. Warner, a graduate of Nashotah House, arrived with his wife Anne and two sons on July 1, 1973 as deacon and music director. In September of 1973, he was ordained to the priesthood and became associate rector when Father Knight left to become vicar of St. Gregory's. He composed two masses for St. Timothy's, which were later adopted as official masses for the diocese. In 1977 Father Warner left to become rector of St. Mark's Church in Durango, Colorado. Father Jerry B. McKenzie served as Supply Priest for the summer of 1977.

In the fall of 1976, the parish accepted the responsibility of sponsoring a Vietnamese family of eight. The Troung family was accepted into the church body with open arms. A special dinner was held in celebration of their first Thanksgiving and the family played an active part in the parish. Mr. Truong served as sexton in addition to other employment.

An important part of St. Timothy's personality was shown in its musical life. The choir, which prided itself in being totally unprofessional in both attitude and ability, provided the main service with traditional and contemporary music, strictly adhering to the liturgical practices of the church. Under Warner's leadership, the choir grew to 36 members, and they acquired a varied musical library and new insight into the beautiful music in the new hymnal. The choir presented many musical dinner shows over the years, using the proceeds to buy music, hymn books, vestments, and spearheading a drive to give Father Warner a piano as his parting gift. These shows uncovered the comic talents of here-to-fore staid vestry persons, clergy, and even Bishop Frey. They became one of the most popular events of the church family.

After St. Gregory's and Good Shepherd were established, annual parish planning sessions, often held in a mountain setting, enabled the entire church body to have a say in the aims and

goals of the parish. From these informal seminars grew an emphasis on community service, seminary support, diocesan projects, fellowship programs for new and older members of the parish, plans to enlarge the classroom and parish hall facility, and parish-wide involvement in the Bethel Bible study program. A very active Boy Scout troop was established in the 1970's, organized and led by members of the congregation.

Rev. Carl Andrews, also from Nashotah House, became curate in 1977 and emphasized an evangelical approach to his ministry. According to June Hahl, "He was definitely a 'people person.' His loving ministry brought us new awareness of one another and of Jesus Christ in our lives." Father Andrews left in 1979 to become vicar of St. Mark's Church in Craig, Colorado and later re-entered the Air force as a chaplain.

During Father Darrow's period as rector, the original cinder block building was renovated and additions were made to it twice. These included an extensive addition on the north end of the building which gained a common room, more bathrooms and a new Sunday school area, as well as extending the basement. A new and enlarged meeting hall and vestibule area were added to the front of the building. The family of Edwin (Ned) Grant provided as a memorial the moss rock used to cover the cinder block, matching it to the beautiful 1960 building housing the main sanctuary.

After serving the parish for eleven years, Darrow left in 1979 to become rector of St. James' Church in West Bend, Wisconsin. To honor his service, the vestry dedicated the parish hall in his name. After retirement, Father Darrow returned to assist at St. Timothy's and continued to be active in the diocese.

Rev. David Bergesen, a graduate of Virginia Seminary, succeeded Darrow in September, 1979. He was accompanied by his wife Vicki and their two sons. By this time, St. Timothy's did not own a rectory,

and the Bergesens purchased the house on South Cherokee Street from Father Darrow. Bergesen's background and great interest was in missionary work. He had been a missionary priest in Mexico and Central America. While he served St. Timothy's, he was also Canon Theologian for the Diocese of Colorado and headed the Bishop's School of Theology. The parish welcomed a rector with his obvious qualifications as an educator. While at St. Timothy's, he taught classes to laypeople as well as those preparing for Seminary. The emphasis was on study and prayer.

In November, 1980, a Memorial Columbarium was established in the church courtyard. In this serene setting the ashes of loved ones were interred and small brass plaques were mounted on the walls bearing their names. A Christus Rex was commissioned by congregation members and dedicated by Bishop Wolfrum.

On September 18th 1985, St. Timothy's was consecrated, on the occasion of the 25th anniversary of the building's dedication in 1960. Father Bergesen told the parish that "...According to the customs (and laws) of the Church, a building cannot technically be consecrated until it is completely paid for, the idea being that a consecrated building should not be subjected to repossession." The mortgage on the Church building itself had been paid off. Bishop William C. Frey came on that day and consecrated the church. Following the service, the mortgage was sent up in flames.

Bergesen and his wife left St. Timothy's Church in 1987 to return to mission work, this time in South America. They served three years in Quito, Ecuador, where he headed a program for local theological education, and she helped develop Christian education materials in Spanish. They later retired in Tucson, Arizona.

Rev. Cunningham served as curate from 1980 – 1981 and Rev. Gary Goldacker served part-time until 1983. Dr. Allen Crawford-Price, who was the first president of Arapahoe Community College,

served as a non-stipendiary priest from 1983 – 1986. Following Father Bergesen, there were 3 Interim rectors; Rev. Clark M. Crain, Rev. Robert Royster, and Rev. Vernon Myers.

In January 1988, Father Warner was called to return from Durango to serve as rector. Rev. Thomas Long assisted at Sunday services and preached sermons. Rev. Dr. Cecil L. Franklin, a retired professor of Religion at the University of Denver, brought communion to shut-ins and helped with Sunday services. He continued assisting through 2009.

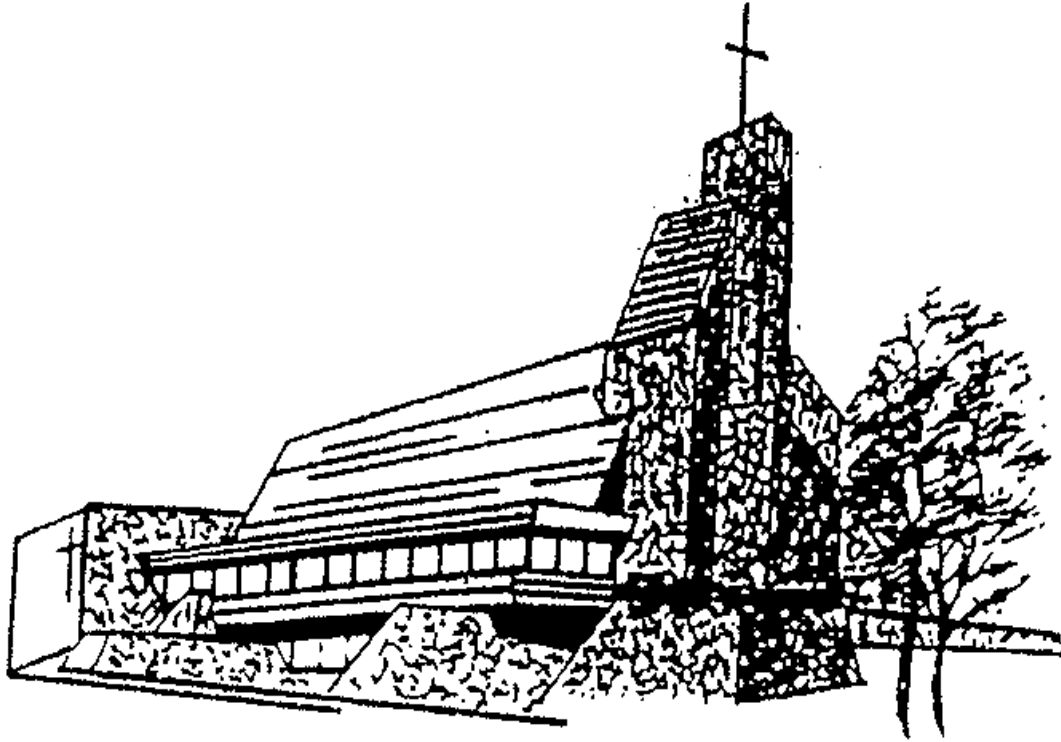
Music had always been the main attraction to St. Timothy's, and Father Warner's return reinforced this. A Bell choir was added, "Praise and Worship" became a standard offering at the main Sunday Service, and a new three-manual custom Allen organ was commissioned. Beginning with Holy Week in 1994, Joyce and Gene Culwell serving as Music Director and Organist, built up the choir, founded a drum group, and made the church's festival services well-known in the community.

In July 1998, Rev. William G. Reidell and his wife Barbara visited St. Timothy's, having recently arrived from California. Father Warner asked him that day if he would work for St. Timothy's and he immediately agreed. "Deacon Bill," as he was referred to, was in the Air force for twenty years, finishing as a Chief Master Sergeant. He studied for the Diaconate while working in the communication industry and was ordained as a permanent deacon in 1981. While at St. Timothy's, he was responsible for visiting parishioners in hospitals, nursing homes and in their own homes. He also assisted at virtually every Eucharist service through 2009.

The Youth Program developed into one of the most important youth activities in the Diocese. Dr. Dana Max and his wife, Carla, who came to the church in 1990, deserve much of the credit for revitalizing the Youth Group. Dana was the first Youth Director as a

volunteer. As the position grew, Eli Shafer was hired and when Eli left to get married, Shanda Velisek was called to this position in September, 1997.

From a very modest beginning, annual spiritual retreats for youth came to attract over 75 participants. Large groups of high school students have traveled all over the country on mission trips, and a junior high mission trip was added to serve people in need in the local community. Under Shanda's guidance a variety of special activities throughout the year have attracted young people with no previous connection to the church, making it the pre-eminent Episcopal youth program in the state and beyond.



Centennial

In the late 1990's, it became apparent that St. Timothy's needed more space. Parking facilities were shared with Drinkwine Mortuary, so that was adequate. The problem was with Sunday School and Youth Group space, as well as office needs. These needs collided head on with the City of Littleton, which would not allow a greater "footprint". There were discussions about adding a second story to the original cinder-block building, but more and more, it began to look as though a move might be a better choice.

Under the guidance of Father Don Warner and the Vestry, things began to happen. Two key events came together: The first was the availability of a property at the intersection of Dry Creek Road

and Clarkson. Word of Life Church was leaving Dry Creek for a larger facility they were building near Park Meadows Mall. The second event was the Archdiocese of Denver's interest in a facility for a Latin Mass congregation. And so, the beloved facility on Hickory Street became Our Lady of Mount Carmel Catholic Church, and St. Timothy's moved to a much larger facility in Centennial, with room to grow! It was a stunning occurrence; the Holy Spirit's fingerprints were all over it!

The first service in the new space was held on the first Sunday in Advent, 2000. Word of Life had left a stage sporting a large hot-tub-kind-of-baptismal-pool, but really nice pews—enough to seat over 400 people (The old building could only seat about 300 or so). A soaring ceiling and windows opening to the west gave the new sanctuary a light and airy feeling. Warner and Organist Gene Culwell knew immediately that the acoustics of the new space would show off St. Timothy's wonderful Allen organ to its best advantage.

After Easter, 2001, the congregation moved downstairs to Darrow Hall (a "walk-out" basement) for about six months while renovations were completed upstairs. All in all, the members could not believe their good fortune—public "exposure" increased ten-fold, now that the church was on a main street instead of behind the mortuary. A beautiful sacramental space was created, with a new marble pulpit to match the altar brought from Hickory Street, and custom seats for clergy and servers. Construction of a new sacristy, flower and vesting rooms made the space practical as well as attractive. The presence of the familiar altar and the Crucifix above it made a heart-felt connection with the past.

On Dry Creek, the congregation's makeup began to change, with new families and individuals arriving, while others left for various reasons, including the location and some national church controversies. In November 2001, Rev. Nina Churchman became

the first woman priest at St. Timothy's, serving as Associate Rector. This was ground-breaking and there were some concerns; but Pastor Nina, as she was known, won over the congregation with her caring attitude for people. She left in October, 2007 and later became Priest-in-Charge at St. Laurence's Mission in Conifer, Colorado.

Father Don Warner retired in October, 2003, and Interim Rector Garry Horle guided the parish until September, 2006. St. Timothy's still offered the only relatively formal service south of St. John's Cathedral, and its strong musical tradition and youth program continued. Father Horle also helped the parish begin to deal with financial challenges related to a large mortgage and the departure of longtime members. During that time Rev. Karen Henwood began to serve as a Deacon.

In the fall of 2006, Rev. Michael Carney was called to serve as rector, the first ever chosen from outside Colorado. With his background in Children's and Youth Ministry many young families were attracted, and he initially focused on developing the leadership gifts of our staff and members. Rev. Carney also chaired the Camp and Conference Task Force that prepared the diocese to purchase the Cathedral Ridge facility in Woodland Park. Rev. Sandy Blake was called as Associate Priest in 2008, and Deacon Cammie Houpt joined the staff a year later.

Building on a parish profile written during the search process, the congregation's leaders developed a Purpose Statement to guide its ministries: "St. Timothy's embraces all people with the love of Jesus through joyful worship rooted in tradition, ministries for all generations and reaching out to those in need." Once this had been adopted, the rector, vestry and staff members began to set goals for each program year and evaluate their progress.

Former Senior Warden June Hahl summed up her sense of the congregation:

For half a century St. Timothy's Parish has beckoned Christians to join them in a spiritual journey which has led many to a closer relationship with the Lord and lifelong friendship in the church family. The people here have respected and honored their Anglican traditions, while they have adjusted to changes, both in the Church and in the world. The result is a Jesus-centered worship with a beautiful liturgy, brought alive with inspired preaching and joyful music.

Long-time organist Gene Culwell concurs:

I am in awe of the spirit of St. Tim's which has survived intact through decades of change—some of it incredibly blessed and spiritual, and some of it ever so difficult! There were times of immense challenge—the spawning of two new parishes (both still alive and strong today), Diocesan and older National Church issues, which we all remember still today, and even more issues currently. Throughout all of this, a common thread remains—the amazing strength of the people who make up the parish in all its diversity and its inclusive nature! I'm sure there are few Episcopal churches anywhere this accepting, or this generous.

St. Timothy's has been blessed by the prayers, service, generosity and love of decades of faithful members, making it a place where people grow closer to God and each other.

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