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One Hundred Years  
at  
The Church of The Holy Communion  
1846 = 1946



Church of the Holy Communion  
SIXTH AVENUE

December 8, 1946

PRELUDE: Choral et Variations  
HARP AND ORGAN

PROCESSIONAL HYMN 458

VENITE

PSALM 24

LESSON

TE DEUM

CREED AND PRAYERS

ANTHEM:

My soul doth magnify the Lord:  
For mine eyes hath seen Thy glory.

HYMN 480

SERMON—THE REVEREND WORCESTER PERKINS, Rector

OFFERTORY ANTHEM

Praise the Lord, O Jerusalem, praise the Lord.  
Sing unto the Lord with thanksgiving: sing praise upon the harp  
unto our God.  
He casteth forth His ice like morsels: who can stand before His cold?  
He sendeth out His Word and melteth them: O great is our God,  
and great is His power.  
He lifteth up the meek: He casteth the wicked down to the ground.  
He covereth the heavens with clouds: He maketh the grass to grow  
upon the mountains.  
He causeth His wind to blow, and the waters flow.  
He giveth snow like wool: He scattereth the hoar-frost like ashes.  
He maketh peace in thy borders: and filleth thee with the flour of  
wheat. Amen.

F128

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Church of the Holy Communion

SIXTH AVENUE AT TWENTIETH STREET  
NEW YORK

December 8, 1946

PRELUDE: Choral et Variations

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Saint-Saëns

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DOXOLOGY

SEVENFOLD AMEN

Stainer

RECESSIONAL HYMN 542

POSTLUDE: Thanks be to Thee

Handel

HARP AND ORGAN

THELMA VOTIPKA, *Soprano* (Metropolitan Opera Association)

NORVEL CAMPBELL, *Tenor*

MACK HARRELL, *Baritone* (Metropolitan Opera Association)

BETTY PARET, *Harapist*

ALFRED BOYCE, *Organist and Director*

WORCESTER PERKINS, *Rector*

LEWIS HAMMOND WEBSTER, *Curate*



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NEW YORK

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LITTLE CHURCH IN THE FIELDS  
1844



# HISTORICAL SKETCH

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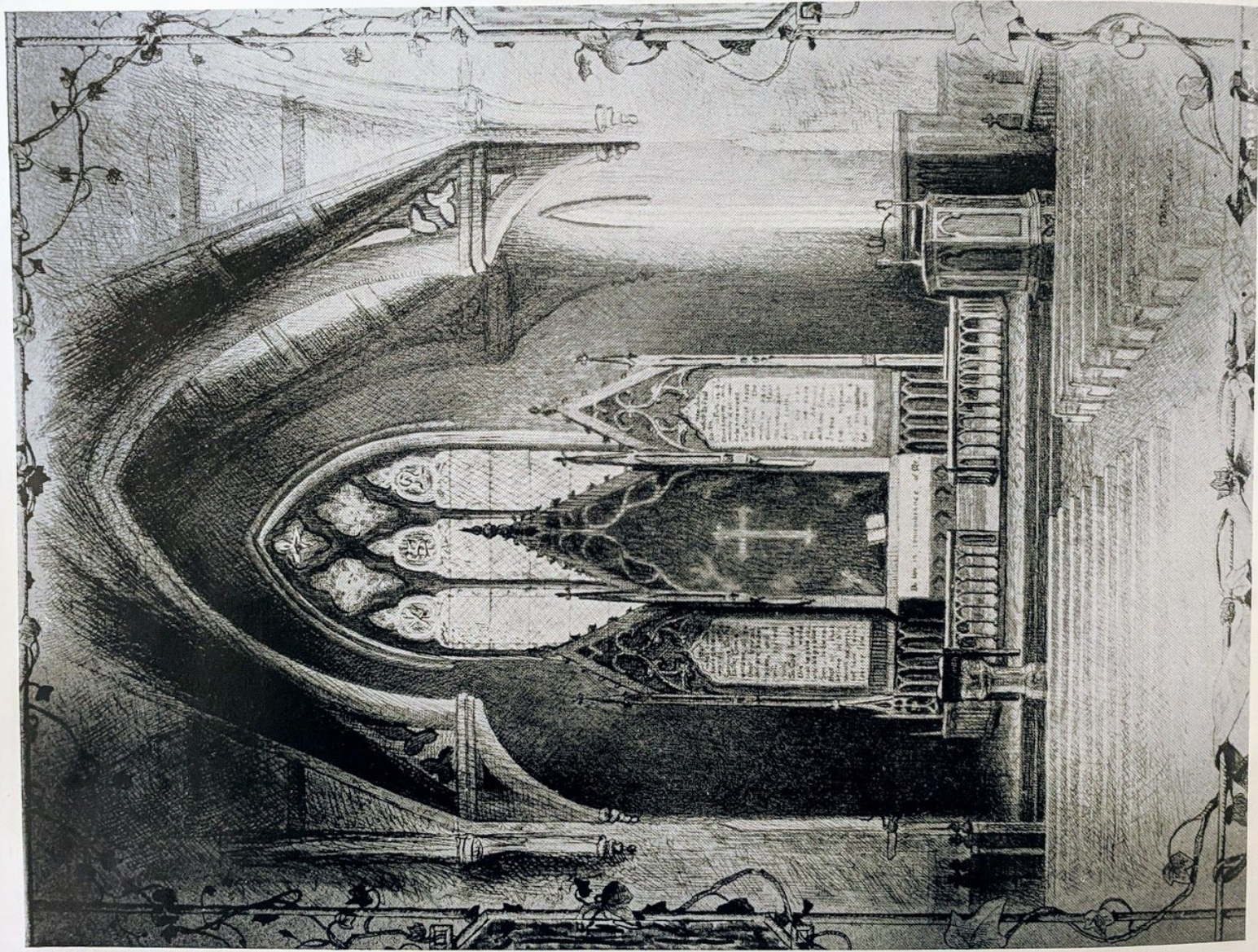
IN 1844, Mrs. Mary A. C. Rogers, widow of John Rogers and sister of the Reverend William Augustus Muhlenberg, fulfilled her husband's intention to build a church. The whole plan was entrusted to her brother. The cornerstone was laid on St. Luke's Day in 1844, and the church was consecrated on the Third Sunday in Advent, 1846. It was begun as "A House of prayer for all people free and open and dependent for its maintenance on voluntary contributions." Services were held on Sundays and weekdays and were characterized by their frequency, shortness and earnestness. The choir was composed of boys and men, and it was said to be the first boy choir in America.

As the city grew up, the district from Washington Square northward became a strong residential community. Many of its families were parishioners. Until it changed into a business district, the parish was large and flourishing, a real neighborhood church. In spite of those drastic changes the Church of the Holy Communion has continued in the work and concept of its Founder.

Dr. Muhlenberg was first and foremost a man of God; he believed that service to mankind should stem from the Church. Into the Church of the Holy Communion, its Rector poured vision prophecy and tremendously daring activity. Conspicuous was his conception of building a great Christian hospital powered by the love of God for those in suffering and pain. He commenced his plans to this end as early as 1846. His report of 1871 on St. Luke's Hospital cites the following: "On St. Luke's Day, 1846, the want of a Church hospital in this city was laid before the congregation of the Church of the Holy Communion. The Festival happening on a Sunday, it was proposed to them on the afternoon of that day, that half the morning collection, usually appropriated to the support of the Church, should be consecrated as an initiatory offering towards supplying this want. Accordingly, thirty dollars were laid aside for the purpose, the smallness of the sum provoking a smile from the clergyman who preached for me on that afternoon, with this question, 'When do you expect your hospital to be built?' 'Never,' I replied, 'If I never made a beginning'." On two subsequent Festivals of St. Luke, further offerings were taken for the Hospital.

Dr. Muhlenberg believed that the sick should always be cared for by Christian volunteers whose character and love would follow the example of the Lord in all things. To this end, after much study, he sowed the seeds which gave birth to the Sisterhood of the Church of the Holy Communion, whose cardinal obligation was to reveal the love of Christ to the sick and needy and serve them faithfully.





THE ORIGINAL CHANCEL



In 1849, cholera broke out in the city, and the Church's first Sister ministered nobly among the stricken. On St. Luke's Day of that same year offerings of thanksgiving were made for deliverance from the plague and for the creation of a House for the Sick.

Dr. Muhlenberg reports that the Sisters entered upon their work with the sick in two apartments of a rear building on Sixth Avenue, near the church, whence before long, they had the pleasure of transferring their patients to a commodious house on the Avenue, fitted up for them with seventeen beds and designated, "The Infirmary of the Church of the Holy Communion." This house had been the residence of the Sisters and became free for the purpose of the Infirmary by their removal to the dwelling erected in 1854 expressly for them. This building was of the same architecture as the church, and immediately adjoined it on the Avenue. It was the gift of Mr. John H. Swift, and was built on ground donated for this purpose by Mrs. Mary A. Rogers.

Meanwhile, the notion of a large Christian hospital had been so favorably received that the whole matter was laid before the Episcopalians at large, throughout the city. Great strides were made in 1850. The incorporation of St. Luke's Hospital was on May First of that year with Robert B. Minturn as its president. Several of the incorporators were members of the parish of the Church of the Holy Communion. The conception of St. Luke's had far outgrown its original parochial idea. It was decreed that the Hospital be of interest, not merely to our parish, but to the Church throughout the city. Truly, the Church of the Holy Communion was the cradle in which St. Luke's Hospital was born.

Gifts of larger amounts than hoped for came in, totaling \$100,000 and made possible the commencement of building operations on the chosen site, Fifth Avenue from 54th to 55th Streets. The cornerstone was laid by Bishop Wainwright in May of 1854. In due time, another \$100,000 was raised and "The Hospital was opened for the reception of patients with religious services and a sermon on Ascension Day, May 13, 1858. The Sisters, with the sick that had been under their care in the Infirmary, took possession of their new quarters."

Dr. Muhlenberg was also deeply interested in general education. Early in his pastorate he established a Parish Library of such scope and excellence that it was accepted by the New York Public Library for the basis of the Muhlenberg Branch Library, located at No. 213 West 23rd Street.

By 1852, the work of the Church and the plans for the Hospital were becoming increasingly heavy, and Dr. Muhlenberg asked a former St. Paul's School boy, the Reverend Francis E. Lawrence, D.D., to be his Curate. When St. Luke's was opened, Dr. Muhlenberg assumed charge as its first pastor and superintendent, gradually relinquished his pastorate here, leaving its administration more and more to Dr. Lawrence, who was chosen Rector in 1859. He served here twenty-seven years and followed in the footsteps of Dr. Muhlenberg with a loyalty, zeal, and consecration that left an undying impression upon the Church.





THE PRESENT CHANCEL



"It was in the year 1869 that the second Rector of the Church of the Holy Communion, the Reverend Dr. Lawrence, saw the opportunity of caring for a number of the aged women in the Parish, and he realized that many a communicant of the Church might be forced to spend the last years of her life deprived of those conditions which lend so much to happiness and comfort. To meet this need he determined to found a Home for the Aged and associated the Sisterhood of the Holy Communion with him in this undertaking." Later, Dr. Lawrence established the Babies' Shelter, which was incorporated May 4, 1881. In 1866, Dr. Muhlenberg founded St. Johnland to care for old couples, old men and children. This institution occupies a 400-acre estate on the North Shore of Long Island and was incorporated in 1870. Latterly, in 1904 and 1905, the Home for the Aged and the Babies' Shelter were moved out to St. Johnland and placed under its care.

The Church was incorporated under an act of 1854 for "Incorporation of societies to establish free churches." The purpose of its incorporation is: "To maintain a house of worship of Almighty God, according to the Catholic faith whole and undefiled, and to be forever used as a free Church. Such Church to be and forever to remain and continue a Protestant Episcopal Church in communion with and subject to the jurisdiction, constitution, laws and canons of the Protestant Episcopal Church in the state of New York, United States of America." Among the seven signers were Willam Augustus Muhlenberg and Francis E. Lawrence. Dr. Muhlenberg in behalf of his sister, Mrs. Rogers, presented to the Trustees the deed of the property of the Church in 1872.

Dr. Muhlenberg died in 1877. The Minute Book of the Trustees, dated April 30, 1877, contains this minute of Dr. Lawrence's tribute to Dr. Muhlenberg. "... Here was realized successfully the true idea of the Church as the Spiritual Home of all believers—Where rich and poor meet in the enjoyment of common privileges, and God's House is a House of prayer for all people—To its services his exquisite taste, and truly reverential spirit gave a fervor and beauty hitherto unknown in the services of the Church in this country, and made this little Sanctuary, a centre of wide spread and abiding influence in the Church at large—Here were introduced in this country—the Daily Service—the Weekly Communion—Division of the Services—Boy Choirs—Chanting of the Psalter—and many customs opposed at the beginning but now generally adopted, which add beauty and solemnity to the Christian Year ..."

Dr. Lawrence laid down his task as Rector in 1879. At a regular meeting of the Board of Trustees, November 3, 1879, the following resolution to the memory of Dr. Lawrence was adopted:

"Two years ago the Church of the Holy Communion commemorated with thankful joy the completion of twenty-five years of service at its altar by the faithful Priest, the devoted Pastor, the loving friend, whose ministry we hoped might be spared to us for another quarter century. And now, when the veil of death hides from our longing sight the form of him whom Paradise could no longer spare to earth, we thank God for his grateful rest, no less than for his noble life and bright example. To his sound judgment, untiring zeal and unwearied effort amid great physical weariness and pain, the Church, the Home and the Shelter bear

*Seven*





ARCHITECT'S DRAWING OF ST. LUKE'S HOSPITAL  
FIFTH AVENUE AND FIFTY-FOURTH STREET  
1856



witness; no words of ours can add to the lustre of his record, whose departure for the better land leaves us orphaned. May the place of waiting be to him refreshment, light, endless growth of divine beauty, the Face of God transforming him more and more into the likeness of Himself—and may we, who wait the summons to join the greater host, so follow this blessed saint in all godly and virtuous living, that in the final Easter every one of his earthly flock may rise to join him in the life immortal.”

Dr. Mottet, who had already been Dr. Lawrence's Curate, was elected Rector of the Church of the Holy Communion on November 3, 1879. One of Dr. Mottet's first undertakings as Rector was to provide for the Endowment of the Parish. At a meeting of the Board of Trustees, November 7, 1881, Dr. Mottet pressed consideration of this matter, and the Board of Trustees passed the following resolution:

“Whereas, in view of the rapid encroachments of business upon this vicinity the time seems to be drawing near when the moneyed constituency of this Parish will have moved far uptown, and when few worshippers may be left in the Church of the Holy Communion but those of small means who may be unable to meet its expenses upon a liberal basis; and

“Whereas, we deem it our duty to make provision for such a contingency so long as we are able; therefore,

“Resolved, that in recognition of this fact and for the purpose of meeting, so far as we can, the future needs of this Church, the Treasurer of the Board of Trustees be requested to set aside each month five per centum of the gross receipts, given for the support of the Church, and that he transfer this amount to the Pastor who shall deposit it in a Savings Bank, until the accumulations are such as will enable the Trustees to convert them into some permanent Trust Fund: and, in order that this Trust may never be used otherwise than in accordance with the intention of the Board,

“Resolved, that the principal never be encroached upon and that the interest be added yearly to the principal thus becoming part of the above said Trust, and that this interest be not used until the ordinary receipts of the Church actually fail to meet the current expenses,

“Furthermore, in order that all interested in the Communion may be informed of our action and thereby stimulated to second our efforts by increased offerings, by special gifts, by bequests and otherwise—

“Resolved, that the Pastor be and is hereby authorized to make use of all whereby these aims and ends shall be advanced.”

At a meeting of the Board of Trustees on November 11, 1895, Dr. Mottet presented the following resolution: “That it be referred to a committee of five including the members of the Finance Committee to complete if possible the first \$100,000 of the Church Endowment Fund at the time of the semi-centennial.” Dr. Mottet records that the Golden Jubilee of the Church was marked by the completion of this first \$100,000 of the Endowment Fund, the income of which was intended to strengthen the Church in the attainment of its ideal mission.





ST. LUKE'S HOSPITAL  
AMSTERDAM AVENUE AND ONE HUNDRED THIRTEENTH STREET  
1946



In this immediate connection, Dr. Mottet "commended to the Board on November 12, 1900, a plan for raising a second amount of \$100,000 for the endowment of the Church." The Church of the Holy Communion would not have its solid foundation today were it not for the indefatigable inspiration and work of Dr. Henry Mottet in the creation of this Fund. He made possible the continuance of this Parish for all future years to come.

Another way of increasing revenue by the Rector was embodied in a resolution of March 18, 1897, which stated: "That as a means of increasing the revenue of the Church the envelope system be adopted for the individuals who are not already annual subscribers for the support of the Church."

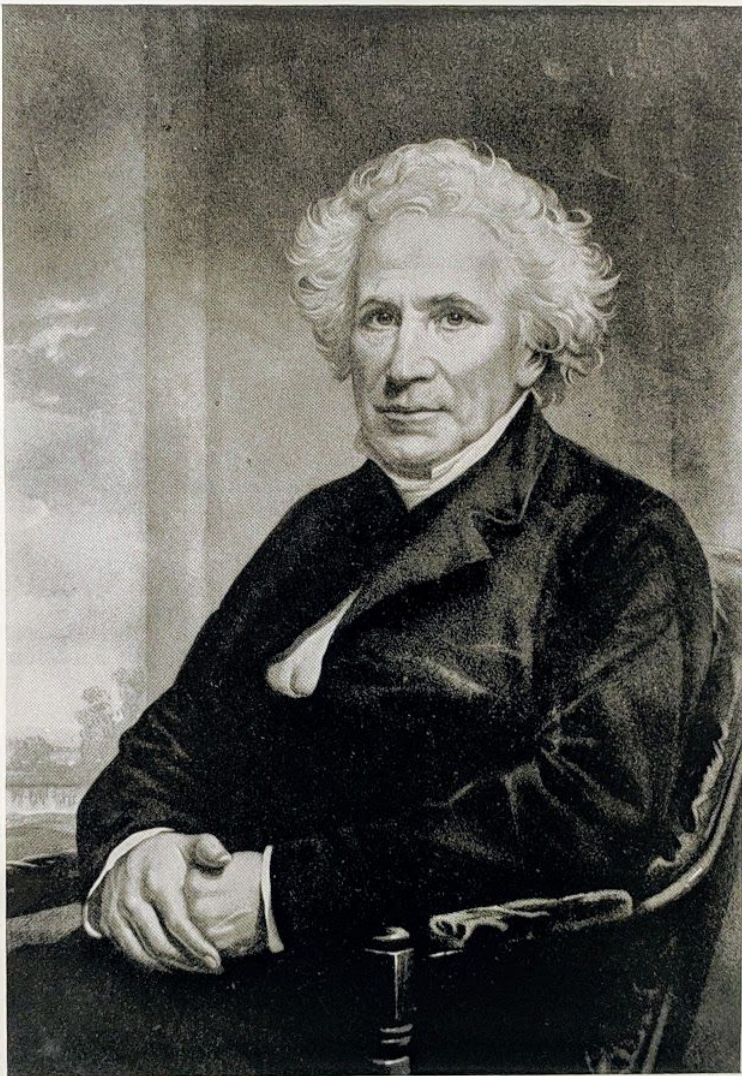
On February 3, 1886, there was a fire in the Church which did considerable damage to the roof and interior. For a time the Parish held its services at Masonic Hall, 23rd Street and Sixth Avenue. On February 5, 1886, the Trustees held a special meeting to take steps to repair the damage done. Out of the fire grew the realization that additional insurance should be placed upon all the Church properties. The fire served to inspire a number of fundamental changes, such as, the erection of a porch to the west entrance, and the building of a robing room for the choir in the yard adjoining the north transept.

The fresh air work, begun by Dr. Muhlenberg, was immensely helped in its development when in 1882 this Church received a deed from Mary Griffin of 75 acres of land situated in the town of Greenburgh, Westchester County, New York, known as the Ashford Hill Retreat, dedicated to fresh air work and for temporary rest and recreation for poor children and mothers and other deserving persons. These premises always were devoted to those uses either by the Church itself or by its lessees, first The Tribune Fresh Air Society, and then the Salvation Army. In 1928 the Board of Trustees of this Church executed and delivered to the Salvation Army a proper deed for this property with their agreement to take care of such poor of this parish as are sent to it for fresh air service, free of charge.

The United Thank Offering of the Episcopal Church held its first presentation service in the Church of the Holy Communion on October 3, 1889. The purpose of this offering was for missionary activities, and it amounted to \$2,188.64. This organized effort on the part of the women was heartily sponsored by the Church and reveals how the Rector reached out to the women of the Church at large to inspire them in their noble effort.

On August 5, 1890, there was a special meeting of the Trustees called to act upon a proposition made by a member of the Parish, "To place the organ on the north side of the chancel in a chamber properly constructed for it over the old vestry-room. Two openings to be made in the wall, one into the chancel and one into the transept, both openings to be filled with pipes; the keyboard to be placed wherever convenient." The offering was accepted. This change of the organ involved change of the choir stalls, pulpit, font, keyboard, stairway to organ gallery, and seating alteration in the gallery. This was a radical physical change in the interior of the church.





WILLIAM AUGUSTUS MUHLENBERG, D.D.  
RECTOR, 1844-1859



One of the earliest notations by the Church on the transportation problem is cited in the Trustees' Minutes of May, 1895, to the effect that the Metropolitan Street Railway Company asked "Leave to change its motive power on Sixth Avenue from horse to cable traction."

In 1910, the west gallery was removed, and plans were recommended to remove the transept gallery. This same year plans were under way for new windows. Dr. Mottet visited window makers in London to confer about designs. On October 2, 1911, the Bishop of the Diocese dedicated some of these windows, the chancel, the new memorial porch, and other improvements, and he also blessed the new altar. The same year there was a gift of a new organ during the summer.

It should be recorded that in 1911 the rapid replacement of residences by lofts in this area was going on, hence the Rector had an idea of a great parish house to serve as a place for the activities of poorer persons moving into the neighborhood. Although much interest was aroused in many quarters in the building of this parish house, latterly it proved to be impracticable.

The last of the glorious windows given to the Church was placed in July, 1912. The windows were so beautiful that a professor of Art at Columbia University recommended that his students visit the Church and see these windows, which represented the finest stained glass of the period.

At a special meeting of the Board of Trustees held April 1, 1913, the Rector offered plans for the completion of various furnishings in the church. These plans were carried out during the summer. They included a new pulpit, lectern, choir stalls, structural changes connected with the three main entrances, and renovation of walls and ceilings. These were given by a most devoted parishioner of the Church. At the same time other parishioners presented the porch and doors of the south transept as a memorial. A new front porch on Sixth Avenue had already been erected as a memorial some four years earlier. In addition to these magnificent gifts of 1913, the Endowment Fund was built up beyond the half-million-dollar mark by bequests.

As a matter of interest, weekday religious education began in this parish in 1917. This was a unique departure to supplement Sunday School work and since then has spread all over the country.

Dr. Mottet was intensely interested in bringing about unified effort toward the religious development of the neighborhood. In 1919, he helped create "The Council of Associated Episcopal Churches of Central Manhattan," representing the Ascension, Calvary, Grace, St. George's, St. Mark's in the Bowery, and the Holy Communion, to promote efficiency and enthusiasm in changing neighborhoods. A union peace jubilee of these parishes was held on December 15, in the Armory of the 69th Regiment, with appropriate music and addresses.

During the first World War the parish provided club rooms for men in service and other social activities. At various times Dr. Mottet provided space for worship of Japanese, Greek Orthodox, Italian-French Protestant, and Colored congregations. This parish initiated the policy of the "open door" which influenced all other Episcopal Churches.





FRANCIS EFFINGHAM LAWRENCE, D.D.

CURATE, 1852-1859

RECTOR, 1859-1879



In 1924, a devoted friend of Dr. Mottet offered to present an altar cross, two candlesticks, two vases and two candelabra for the altar steps as a memorial to her husband. This was given in grateful appreciation of the Rector's Golden Jubilee. To commemorate the semi-centennial of the Reverend Dr. Henry Mottet, his wife presented a handsome altar frontal of filet lace rich in Church symbolism, under which hung a beautiful golden brocade. The lace was made by Mrs. Mottet.

In May, 1925, there was a celebration of Dr. Mottet's eightieth birthday. A luncheon was given him at the Hotel Astor by the New York Federation of Churches. In the evening, a thanksgiving service was held at which Bishop Shipman, acting for Bishop Manning, read a formal appreciation presented by the Trustees.

Dr. Mottet died on June 20, 1929, and the following resolution was presented by the Board of Trustees:

"The Board of Trustees of the Church of the Holy Communion express their profound grief at the death on June 20, 1929, of one of their members, the President of their Board, the Reverend Doctor Henry Mottet, and they here formally place on record a minute of the great loss alike sustained by them personally and by the Church.

"Doctor Mottet, a communicant of the Church of the Holy Communion for more than sixty-six years, and its Rector also for fifty years, until his death, rendered to the Church, as well as to the whole community in which he was a citizen, invaluable, loyal, self-sacrificing and continuous service.

"Entirely devoted to the Church and its interests, the creator of its endowment, he ever placed at its command his rare judgment, his large experience, his whole time and life.

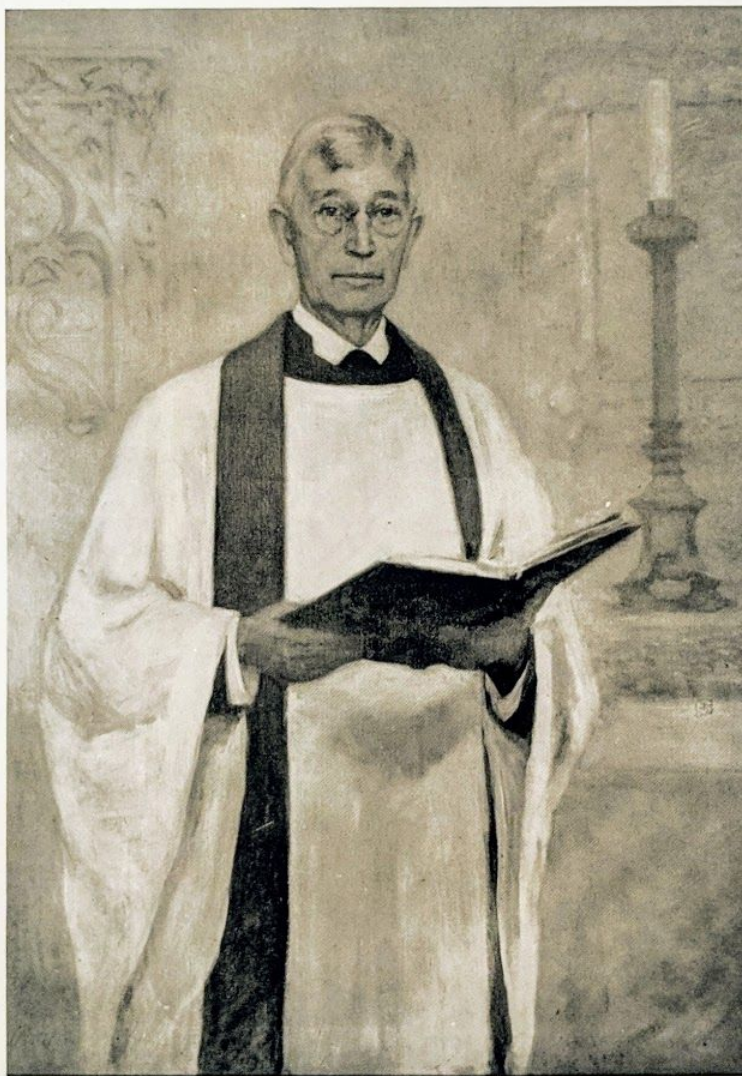
"A distinguished and cultivated gentleman, an eminent preacher, an unqualified servant of his Church and its parishioners, a great Christian, he takes equal place with his great predecessors, Doctor Muhlenberg and Doctor Lawrence.

"Resolved, that this token of appreciation of his eminent greatness be spread upon the minutes of this meeting, and that formal record be here made of the irreparable loss sustained by all in his death."

The Reverend Worcester Perkins came to the Church of the Holy Communion as Rector May 1, 1930. The money, which had been collected for the large parish house that was never built, with the approval of the donors, was used to put the rectory and church in working order. The rectory itself needed a great deal of basic repair.

The neighborhood was at very low ebb because of the character of business around it. The elevated, which had been put into operation on June 5, 1878, was a real handicap to overcome. To a great extent it hid the Church from the view of passers-by and increased the confusion of an already very busy neighborhood. The Rector's outstanding conviction, however, was that the Church of the Holy Communion should keep the Cross of Christ alive in a definitely business section of the city. To this purpose, he dedicated





HENRY MOTTET, S.T.D., D.D.

CURATE, 1873-1879

RECTOR, 1879-1929



his greatest faith and courage, and through dark days the services in the church maintained their tradition with dignified worship and excellent music.

The first change for the better was on December 4, 1938, when the operation of the elevated ceased and its demolition was concluded on April 20, 1939. During the period of several years when the subway was under construction, the effect on the work of the Church was unfortunate; but at the conclusion of all this renovating by the city, Sixth Avenue with its new pavement turned into a more attractive thoroughfare. Finally, a change in the character of the surrounding lofts took place and a better grade of business entered the neighborhood. This provided a much safer and lighter area for people to come to the Holy Communion both day and night.

About this time, a great service was held to commemorate the life and work of our first Rector, when a plaque to the memory of the Reverend Dr. William Augustus Muhlenberg was placed on the chancel wall next to one given in memory of his sister, Mrs. Rogers.

Later, to create an adequate memorial for the Reverend Dr. Henry Mottet, a substantial sum of money was raised and the Mottet Memorial Chapel was built in the south transept of the church. This Chapel was dedicated to the memory of Dr. Mottet by the Bishop of the Diocese and fittingly represents his devout spirit.

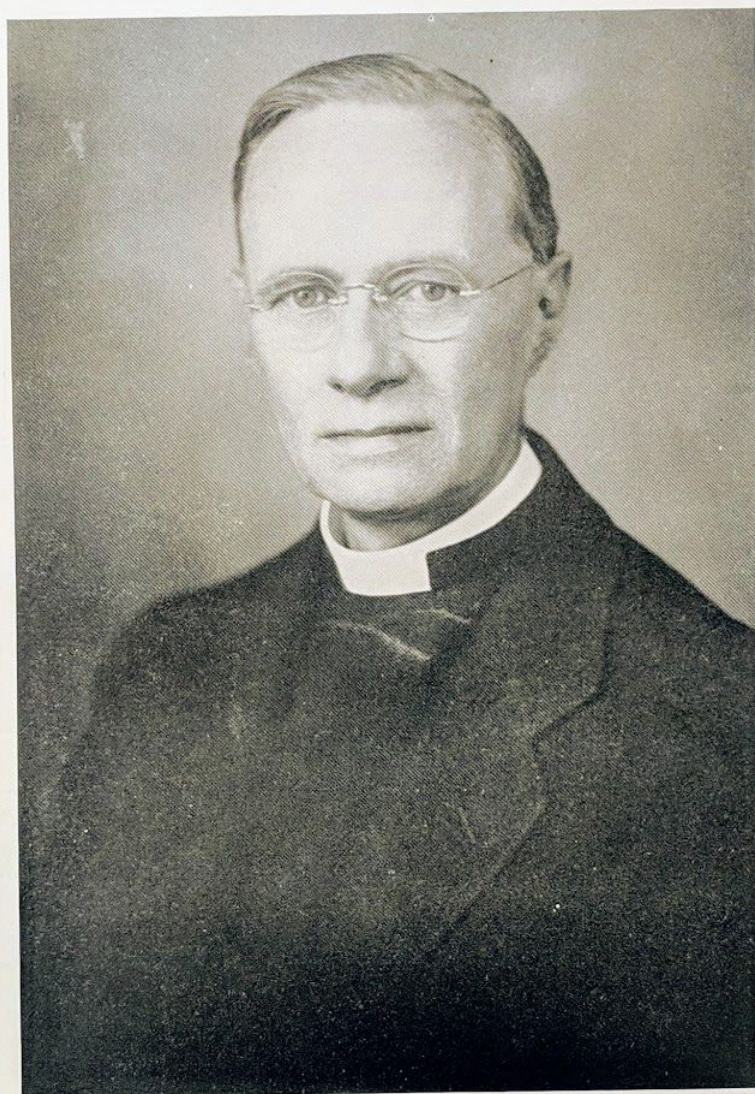
The creative work of the Employment Society and St. Monica's Guild from the days of their inception, and especially during the war years, redounds to their credit and is of great help to the Rector as it always has been to his predecessors.

Among other things in his pastoral and spiritual work of the Church, the present Rector has been intensely interested in ministering to those who are mentally and emotionally ill. Many people come to discover a better understanding of how religion can help their lives, and to make them feel that they are needed in the great social fabric of our modern day. One of the outstanding difficulties of people is a lack of self-confidence, a fear for the future, and a singular absence of self insight.

One of the most fervent convictions of the Rector is the belief, laid down by Dr. Muhlenberg, Dr. Lawrence, and Dr. Mottet, that there should be a unity of spiritual and religious forces between all Protestant churches to effect the utmost in the community. All of our Protestant neighbors have a great wealth of help to offer, and it is our bounden duty to share with one another implicit confidence in the labor of all for the spirit of God's Kingdom on earth. It is especially necessary that preaching should be plain and simple and deal with the guidance of the spirit in problems of human relations.

In preparation for our One Hundredth Anniversary, the Rector felt that it was necessary to make our physical plant more compact. The central heating system, which had been put in shortly after he came, made it possible to change the use of the rectory so that the Rector and his family could live on the upper





WORCESTER PERKINS, M.A.

RECTOR, 1930-



floors and devote the first floor to official church business. Here is the Rector's study, with an adjacent waiting room. The whole interior of the church was redecorated; roofs were repaired and a considerable amount of stone work on the outside of the church put into condition.

With an eye to the future we need a "Repair and Improvement Fund," the money of which shall be allocated to the repair of our buildings and the care of our physical properties. Because of the age of these properties, no one knows when a break-down may take place. No institution can ever meet the increasing responsibilities of the future unless its properties are guaranteed to be kept in good working order. This is essential. With the hearty approval of the Board of Trustees and the Rector, we will establish such a "Fund," to mark our One Hundredth Anniversary.

Throughout the sixteen years that the present Rector has been at the Church of the Holy Communion, he has had the support of a Board of Trustees, composed of Messrs. Charles W. Ogden, President, Francis McNeill Bacon, E. Coster Wilmerding, Howard Hildt, Rogers H. Bacon, and E. Donald Jerome, that cannot be surpassed for loyalty, conscientiousness, and faith, in any Church in the country. To them he owes a very great debt for their patience and understanding, and most especially for their confidence in him during the most trying period through which this Church has ever passed. We went through a depression in which our Endowment Fund was skillfully handled by wise men. We passed through a World War that shook the faith and confidence of many, but never the faith of this Board, who with the Rector look forward toward productive uses and a glorious future.