



# THREE

## A SHARED MINISTRY

The first few years were not easy. The enthusiasm over building a new church was followed by the practical problems of “supply”. Anglicans, like other Christians, can gather together to worship without the services of a priest. The Weeks family often gathered in one another’s homes for Morning Prayer. The central act of worship, however, and that which constitutes a baptized

Christian, is the Holy Communion and a priest is necessary for the celebration of the Eucharist. Hearing sermons from an ordained preacher was also a priority to mid-19th century Anglicans.

The Yaphank congregation was rather small, and often consisted of the Weeks family and a few others. This presented a problem because preachers must be supported and their travel expenses paid. Although there are many examples of real generosity, that is not to say that the family easily parted with money, or were tempted to spoil their clergy!

The Rev’d Charles A. Gardiner, a descendent of Lion Gardiner of Gardiner’s Island, was the first priest-in-charge of St. Andrew’s and the fifth priest to serve St. Paul’s, Patchogue. He was followed by three more clergymen assigned to both congregations. Mr. Gardiner mentions “Woodhull” in his “horse & buggy letter” to James Weeks. He was referring to Brewster Woodhull who, with his family, was instrumental in establishing St. Paul’s. A justice of the peace, Woodhull donated a small lot on Main Street and built a basement; the congregation completed the building and they shared its use; on Sunday it was church, and on weekdays a courthouse. That building served as St. Paul’s Church for 40 years, up to 1883 when the present church was built. Coincidentally, that first building stood on the spot where Suffolk County erected a new Fifth District courthouse in the mid 1980’s.

Although the “chapel” of St. Andrew was not listed in the Journal of the Diocese of New York until 1871, missionary priests had been assigned to St. Paul’s, Patchogue since 1843, so the diocese added Yaphank to their cure. The Rev’d Mr. Gardiner began holding services in the new church on July 14, 1854. It wasn’t long, however, before problems surfaced. The first of several letters is quoted here in full because it is typical of a long line of correspondence, ranging from polite to angry, between various clergymen and the Weeks family, involving controversies over stipend. Each original letter is included in our archives.

*Patchogue, Oct. 16th 1854*

*James H. Weeks, Esq.*

*Dear Sir:*

*I write briefly this A.M. on business. My first quarter’s salary as clergyman at Yaphank was due the 1st of this month. I was not then in immediate need of the amount, but if I go to N.Y. to the “Consecration” I shall soon require funds. Am therefore constrained to ask for such sum as may be conveniently collected. This [St. Paul’s, Patchogue] being a regularly organized parish,*

*the Clerk of the Vestry had attended to this matter & paid me when due. I trust the same course will be followed at Y. when the parish there is once regularly organized.*

*Very truly & respectfully*

*Your friend and Pastor*

*Charles H. Gardiner*

*The quarter's salary amounts to \$25.-*

*N.B. Paid the above Oct. 23rd 1854 JHW*

*Patchogue, Jan. 10th, '55*

*James H. Weeks Esq., Yaphank*

*Dear Sir:*

*"I do not think the result of my enquiries about "Livery" are very satisfactory, but will state them, & you may decide about the matter. Robinson can get Sell's covered one-horse "Rockaway", & bring me over regularly for \$1.50, (12/) a week. He will bring me, as last Sunday in an open buggy for \$1.25. Rainor will send a boy & do the same, for the same. This is the best we can do. They won't engage for less, but extraordinaries excepted, (& when these occur will try to let you know Saturday's), can do as above. Father will give \$3.00 toward the whole amount. The rest I fear must be raised at "Yaphank", as no one here is disposed to give anything: unless it may be Mr. Hawkins, who does not say what he will do definitely. Woodhull is away. Perhaps with the alms at Holy Communion at Yaphank, reserved for 3 months for this object, I might get on with it, without its costing me more than a few shillings out of my own salary."*

*Yours truly & respectfully,*

*(s) Charles H. Gardiner*

## **RUFFLED FEATHERS**

Later the same year a misunderstanding occurred over Mr. Gardiner's resignation. Addressed to Susan Weeks, the May 7th letter reads:

*Dear Madam;*

*I regret exceedingly that there should have been any misunderstanding in regard to my position in relation to St. Andrew's Ch. Yaphank. Still more do I regret that it should have caused you the vexation and uneasiness which your letter of the 1st inst. leads me to suppose. If you remember, I distinctly & decidedly declined continuing [as] the Missionary of your "small Parish" at the terms proposed. I expressed to yourself a decided aversion to the "most suitable boarding place" which could be procured, & said, in as plain language as I could command, that "the salary would not support me." I wished at the time, that my resignation should take effect on Easter Monday; but stated that I would continue to officiate, (at your request, & on the same salary,) until our family removed to Brooklyn. (May 1st).*

*"How then such a misunderstanding as the one you have mentioned, could have occurred is most strange to me. I stated to members of the Mill's family & also I think to Mrs. Hawkins, "that Sunday before last was the last day I intended to officiate...". If therefore they assembled at Ch. expecting to hear me, on Sunday last, they simply forgot my notice. I was too ill, with ague & fever, as Father's note stated, (or ought to have done) to be with you a week ago & take a formal leave. My health however is not "so feeble" but that I can officiate among a people who can appreciate my services. I need not surely remind you of my troubles at Patchogue. In view of all these matters may I ask then that this note be understood as my formal resignation of St. Andrew's Parish, Yaphank. If Mr. Weeks would address me on business, please direct for the present 'Box 94 Brooklyn City Post Office.'*

*Very truly & respectfully your friend and former Pastor,*

*(s) Chas. H. Gardiner"*

Although controversies tend to prevail in the correspondence which survives, they were not continual. William's diary records: Sun., Nov. 25, 1860 "Cold high northwesterly wind -froze hard last night. I went to the church about 10 o'clock & made a fire. Mr. Statham soon arrived, after a cold ride from Patchogue." Wed., July 21, 1869: "Isaac Robbins went to Patchogue for Bishop Littlejohn...we had service in the church at 4 1/2 o'clock...baptized our youngest child...& then preached... After the service the bishop called at our house & sat awhile." There were periods of various length between the visits of the clergy, during which the family continued their usual practice. Sun. April 27, 1851 "Father & Mother came in and we read the morning service & a sermon." Early records show that on July 5, 1855, The Rt. Rev'd Horatio Potter, Provisional Bishop of New York, visited Yaphank, confirmed James, William and Mary Weeks, and baptized William, the infant son of William and Mary.

## **POVERTY AS A VIRTUE**

Parish priests and missionary clergy were not alone in having trouble with inadequate income. When the parishes on Long Island reorganized as a diocese in 1868, separating from the Diocese of New York, their first act was to choose and consecrate Abram Littlejohn as the first Bishop of Long Island. The second act was to find housing for him; only two parishes contributed to an appeal for housing funds, so the bishop and his family had to live in a Brooklyn hotel for the next two years. Within the first year, the diocese fell behind \$1,217.02 on his salary. Though the details have changed over the years, many clergy have been able to rely on the consistency of the problem.

After several attempts to supply clergy, including Walter Stirling, Francis Statham and Charles Douglas, Rectors of St. Paul's, the diocese appointed William Weeks Lay Reader-in-Charge and he served in that capacity for at least ten years with the archdeacons and other clergy visiting occasionally for Baptism, Holy Communion and preaching. For at least 25 years after that, he served as treasurer and, throughout the combined periods, was the person with whom the bishop and archdeacons regularly corresponded regarding the visits of clergy and diocesan assessments.

As clearly as the records show, there were no more official connections between Patchogue and Yaphank excepting the diocesan journal listing of E.A.W. Hannington Wilson as priest-in-charge for the year 1918. Margaret Grove Cosier, who was our senior member for many years until her death in 1995, remembered traveling to Yaphank occasionally with Fr. Wilson and a choir of young people for Evensong, but there were, so far as we can determine, no weekly services during the war years. Fr. Wilson officiated at baptisms during 1918 and there is a record of the burial of a child on a Sunday after church.

We know from an unidentified 1934 newspaper report that: "The first organ which was used in the church was a small melodeon, not more than three feet in length and 30 inches high. It is now in the Weeks homestead, and still gives forth sound, though it was thought inadequate for the church and was replaced by a more modern instrument." In 1880 the melodeon was replaced by a larger one purchased from Mr. Woodhull of Riverhead. It was first used on Whitsunday, May 15th. In the same year a new baptismal font was dedicated in memory of a niece of James Weeks.

According to the official history of the Diocese of Long Island, Bishop Littlejohn proposed strategies for missionary growth in his first annual convention address in 1869. For eastern Long Island, that strategy took effect in 1872 with the appointment of the Rev'd Thomas Cook as itinerant Minister of the "Associate Mission", living in Riverhead and in charge of all rural work in the area. Although the plan was to assign six deacons to assist him, the help usually averaged three deacons or priests and a few lay readers. Within the first year, they had established six wayside missionary stations, and, in the process, had found Yaphank. Mr. Cook remained in his position for eleven years, traveling from Farmingdale to Mattituck, literally working himself to death by 1883. During that time, he visited St. Andrew's frequently, baptizing, celebrating Holy Communion, preaching, visiting and burying the dead; it was he who read the burial office for James and for Mary.

### **PROMISING YOUNG PRIESTS AND SOME NOT...**

Among all the clergy assigned to Yaphank during that period, one deserves special attention. The Very Rev'd Ingram Nathaniel Washington Irvine, D.D., an immigrant from County Kerry, Ireland in 1866, must have been a remarkable person. His biography appeared in a 19th century book of notable Long Islanders and, because of his preaching skills, he was called "the Spurgeon of Long Island" by historian Beecher Homan in "Yaphank As It Is and Was". In addition to having been singled out for praise by local historians, he succeeded in baptizing 39 infants, children and adults during his two year tenure. The congregation was more than doubled in size! Although living in Brookhaven and also serving St. James', he and his wife, Emmalena Wilson, buried their infant son in St. Andrew's churchyard, September, 1875; the small gravestone, missing its footing, is located just outside the old sacristy, but may have been placed there following the hurricane of '38 or the building of the parish house in '60.

Later, as Dean of the Cathedral of St. John, Quincy, Illinois, 1883 to 1885, Fr. Irvine served under the Rt. Rev'd Alex Burgess, D.D., known as the "First Catholic Bishop of Quincy". St. Andrew's has had more than one connection with the Diocese of Quincy. After the devastating flood in the Illinois River Valley in 1993, for example, St. Andrew's sent a Venture in Mission contribution to Bishop McBurney. When Fr. Chapin retired in 1994, he transferred his canonical membership to Quincy and its new bishop, the Rt. Rev'd Keith L. Ackerman, SSC.

In 1877, the Rev'd Mr. Irvine was followed by The Rev'd Thomas B. Fulcher who in 1888 became Canon Precentor and Chancellor of the Cathedral in Albany until his death in 1922. It was probably Canon Fulcher who, in later years, invited Clara Weeks to be a guest at the diocesan convention of the Diocese of Albany. Family records state that she was the only woman in attendance. Clara would have been eighteen years old when Mr. Fulcher left St. Andrew's in 1878. Again, we do not know the connection, but the old Bible on our pulpit was a gift from a parish in the Diocese of Albany. The June 14th, 1922 Albany Times-Union ran a glowing article about Canon Fulcher. "All felt in him they had a friend and little children put their trust in him instinctively."

St. Andrew's is not listed in many annual diocesan journals for years after 1854; we can assume that annual reports were not filed. In one of his letters to William Weeks, dated May 21, 1880, we find the Rev'd Mr. Brush asking for the

treasurer's report within the week so that the parish might be represented in the journal. Since Mr. Brush and Mr. Weeks were engaged in a heated and unpleasant exchange of letters, it is doubtful that the report was forthcoming. In that year, Mr. Brush reported that "the interest of the church has been much improved by suitable and tasteful decorations. A new organ and a font have been given by friends of the church." By the time the next report was due, Mr. Brush had moved on to greener pastures.

## KEEPING RECORDS

In 1881, the Rev'd Mr. Tragitt reported that services were held on 46 Sunday afternoons, with 4 Eucharists, and on Ash Wednesday and Good Friday. Morning services were held at St. James, Brookhaven. Some of the family lists and records of baptisms are recorded in the 1886-1914 parish register of Christ Church, Bellport (page 27 ff., and page 59). Also, the confirmations performed at St. Andrew's on June 23, 1935 are recorded in the 1935-1944 Bellport register. A few excerpts from annual diocesan journals: In 1878, we were listed in the Sunday School statistics as having 2 officers, 4 teachers, and 26 scholars with a gain of 6 over the previous year. Classes were held at 2:00 p.m. There were 50 volumes in the church library, worth \$10.00, and weekly offerings \$6.22 for the year. At the time, there were 27 communicant members. In 1879, there were 22 scholars, 22 families and 60 individual members, and an annual parish budget of \$162.08; Out of that, an assessment of \$4.00 was paid to the diocese and \$3.00 was contributed to aid Yellow Fever sufferers.

During the later part of the 1870's, George S. Lord served as treasurer. One subscription list, 1876-77, records the names and annual pledges of the members as follows:

James H. Weeks	\$25.	W. J. Weeks	\$10.
Mrs. J. H. Weeks	\$15.	A. Floyd	\$10.
J. H. Hawkins	\$15.	Rebecca L. Hawkins	\$5.
George S. Lord	\$10	E. W. Bellings	\$1.

"...one third of the subscription payable in three months, another third within the following three months and the balance on or before Easter, 1877."

In a contract, dated Jan. 10, 1881, the officers of St. James, Brookhaven and St. Andrew's listed their respective parish responsibilities toward the \$400. annual salary of the Rev'd J. Tragitt. The Yaphank share was \$140. and William Weeks signed for St. Andrew's. Five men signed for St. James, including William Swezey. A few years later, Wm J. Weeks was paying a "Mr. Swezey" \$2. a week for Sunday services; we do not know whether or not they were the same person.

Following the tenure of the Rev'd Mr. Cook, the Rev'd Robert Weeks became Rector of Greenport and Head of the Associate Mission at Riverhead, putting him in charge of St. Andrew's beginning in 1885. In 1888, Mr. Weeks became the first Archdeacon of Suffolk, and continued in that office until the turn of the century. A cousin of William J. Weeks, the archdeacon supervised at least six of the clergy and lay readers assigned to St. Andrew's from 1884 to 1899.

On December 29, 1884, Robert wrote to William requesting that he arrange with Brookhaven to take on a promising young deacon, the Rev'd Charles Penney for at least \$700., reminding him that if he chooses to wait until the following

spring, that “Brookhaven will have to wait too, and the while, all the religious privileges they enjoy are the ministrations of a Methodist preacher.”

In a letter dated August 21, 1889, at “400 A.M.”, we find William Weeks writing to “My dear Cousin” to clarify the matter of payments to the currently officiating lay reader, Mr. Swezey, and priest, Mr. Stoddard. He explained that the weekly offerings averaged \$1.00 and that he had paid Mr. Swezey \$2.00 a week and Mr. Stoddard \$5.00 whenever he visited. In other words, he had advanced the money himself and apparently Mr. Stoddard was under the impression that there was a surplus. William concluded that he hoped his cousin would visit the following Sunday and inspect the ledger himself.

The last letter we have, at the hand of William Weeks, is again addressed ‘My dear Cousin’ and dated Oct. 13, 1891. This letter is full of indignation and might well have been written on another sleepless night. In the first place, he bristled at the statement in the archdeacon’s letter to the effect that he was trustee of St. Andrew’s by appointment of diocesan authorities. William reminded Robert that his service was voluntary and rendered for a church which had been given to the diocese by his father. The ensuing observations regarding the character and attitude of the incumbent, Mr. Swan, have to be read in full to be appreciated. Our venerable patriarch was not only a remarkable man, but was gifted with the ability to turn a phrase!

Yaphank, Oct. 13, 1891

*Rev’d Rob’t Weeks.*

*My dear cousin: Your favor of the 9th inst. was duly rec’d Other engagements have prevented an earlier reply.*

*In the first place, I was not aware that I was (as you state) “appointed by the authorities of the diocese “trustee, etc.” I have voluntarily acted as treasurer for the past sixteen years and with my family have taken care of the church and property which my father gave to the diocese.*

*As to Mr. Swan, he has behaved in a very arbitrary and dictatorial manner, and has failed to fulfill the arrangement made with him. He stated to me on the 26th of July that he was employed by the diocese, and such being the case, he must look to his employer for pay. There are no surplus funds in my hands for paying anyone & there is not likely to be for the present.- If the diocese insists upon keeping him here much longer, he will preach to empty seats. I hear that he is in disfavor also at Brookhaven, and the sooner he is transferred to some other station, the better it will be for all concerned. I don’t know what he may have said or written to you, and when I do, I may have something further to say.*

*Yours truly,  
(s) W. J. Weeks*

In the fall of 1872 the national temperance movement was in high gear. There is no record of any meetings in St. Andrew’s. A local group did meet for a year in the Presbyterian Church, moving then to private homes, and finally to the Baptist Church. That building was later relocated north of this area.

Nathalie Lawless Dickieson (1887-1986), who visited St. Andrew’s every year until her death and supplied so many documents of our history, wrote in 1980: “I remember well grandfather and old Nellie and the many rides with them, in the summer with the buggy, and in the winter in the old sleigh and the sleigh-bells jingling. Those were happy times.”