



## A Brief Chronology of Epiphany Episcopal Church, Forestville, MD

### Rectors Serving the Parish

The Rev. Henry J. Kershaw	1862 - 1878
The Rev. William C. Butler	1878 - 1879
The Rev. Meyer Sewin	1879 - 1881
The Rev. William Brayshaw	1881 - 1888
The Rev. John C. Anderson	1888 - 1891
The Rev. Frank Hallam	1891 - 1892
The Rev. H.P. Chapman	1892 - 1895
The Rev. James B. Craighill	1895 - 1904
The Rev. William C. Shears	1904 - 1926
The Rev. Aubrey C. Gilmore	1927 - 1930
The Rev. James Valliant	1934 - 1941
The Rev. Gerald H. Catlin	1941 - 1950
The Rev. Benjamin J. Ridgley	1950 - 1979
The Rev. John F. Crist	1980 - 1984
The Rev. Ralph Evans	1984 - 1993
The Rev. Robert Gribbon	1998 - 1999
The Rev. James Andeson	1999 - 2005
The Rev. Allan Taylor-Johnson	2005 - 2011
The Rev. Canon Prince A. E. Decker	2015 - 2024

**1862** Epiphany Church had its beginning as a mission. The Rev. Henry J. Kershaw, the Rector of Trinity Church, Upper Marlboro, was responsible for the development of the Epiphany mission.

**1862** A small box-like wooden structure was erected.

**1869** The first confirmation service was held.

**1871** Epiphany Church became an independent parish. Epiphany sponsored, as a mission, Christ Church, Clinton, Maryland. It also served the Addison Chapel (St. Mathews), Seat Pleasant, Maryland.

**1887** A bell tower was added to the church building.

**1888** During the tenure of Rev. William Brayshaw, the vestry authorized the construction of a rectory, with an adjacent stable and carriage house. The construction was completed within two years.

**1937** Mr. W.W. Griffith purchased acreage for the expansion of the cemetery. Subsequently, a Superintendent's House and a caretaker dwelling were erected.

**1960** The parish hall was constructed.

**1981** During the tenure of Rev. John F. Crist, the parish had 237 communicants. Epiphany Church participated in a partnership with Episcopal Churches to develop the Collington Life Project. This project evolved into the Collington Retirement Community in Prince George's County, Maryland.

**1998** Following a period of steady decline in members and mounting expenses, Epiphany Episcopal Church joined with the Holy Redeemer Mission on Easter Sunday 1998. The joining of the two congregations was facilitated by Bishop Jane Dixon, who helped break-down barriers and build new bridges.

**1999 – 2005** During this period, Rev. James Anderson served as the first African American Rector of Epiphany Church. Rev. Anderson, who formerly served as the Episcopal Chaplain at the U.S. Air Force Academy, devoted himself to rejuvenating the youth programs of the parish. Christian formation programs were started, including Vacation Bible School and a thriving Sunday School Program.

**Mid 2000s** Following the departure of Rev. Anderson, the parish entered a period of reliance upon supply priests. This period allowed the church to examine its mission and to set new goals, with an emphasis on relationship building and community engagement. Book workshops and rotating dinner sessions were conducted by the parishioners. Partnerships were explored with the community public schools, including Longfields Elementary School.

**2008 – 2011** The tenure of Rev. Allan Taylor-Johnson brought a continuation of the parish's community engagement efforts as the Friday Night Jazz Program was initiated. Epiphany quarterly newsletters were circulated, and a more formal partnership was established with Longfields Elementary School. Rev. Johnson deployed his financial

management skills to minimize the impacts of the 2008 nationwide Financial Crisis on the church's financial resources. He brought more rigorous oversight of our financial systems and helped plan for future contingencies. The focus on the youth of the parish continued during this period as the Journey Toward Adulthood program was initiated and thrived.

In 2011, the congregation undertook a new program of Building God's Kingdom through a new dynamic model of leadership called Orpheus. Under this model, leadership of ministries and projects flowed seamlessly between volunteer parishioners and appointed leaders to ensure that our operation continued to move forward to new heights.

**2011 - 2024** With the departure of Rev. Johnson the church once again found itself relying upon supply priests, but now had the added ministry tool of the Orpheus project. In the midst of the Orpheus project, Rev. Prince Decker was called to serve as the next Rector of Epiphany Church.

During Pastor Decker's tenure, the church became more globally focused with increased participation from members of the West African communities in the Washington, D.C. region. In addition, Epiphany and other Episcopal Churches in the region, were awarded a grant which provided greater support for the Friday Night Jazz programs. Epiphany also received a grant from Prince George's County Historic Society and Parks and Planning to paint the exterior of the church building. During this period, Epiphany also leveraged the parish hall (as Canterbury Hall) to serve as an event site that significantly enhanced the resources of the parish. Finally, this period served as an immense challenge for the parish as the Covid Pandemic caused losses associated with the Canterbury Hall program and dramatic declines in church attendance. The church is still coping with the impacts of the Pandemic.

Epiphany Vestry  
October 24, 2024