

“These are They”

A History of the Church of the Atonement

by

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Westfield, Church of the Atonement

Founded as a Mission in 1863

Founded as a Parish in 1920

	<i>from</i>	<i>to</i>
Rev. John F. Mines	June 1863	December 1864
Rev. Andrew Mackie	1864	1868
Suspension of Activities	1868	1873
Rev. John F. Winkley	1873	1878
Rev. Benjamin F. Cooley	1878	1879
Rev. Henry J. Sheridan	1879	1883
Rev. H. N. Cunningham	1883	1886
Rev. Allan C. Prescott	1886	1893
Rev. Henry Tarrant	1893	1895
Rev. Norman S. Boardman	1895	1899
Rev. Frederick A. Wright	1899	1902
Rev. James F. Bullitt	1902	1905
Rev. Robert Keating Smith	1906	1927
Rev. Wolcott Coit Treat	1927	1935
Rev. Stanley C. S. Shirt	1936	1946
Rev. Paul T. Schultz, Jr.	1946	1956

Rev. William M. Hale	1957	1976
Rev. Robert W. Anthony	1976	June 1, 1988
Rev. Marilyle S. Page	August 1, 1989	November 10, 1994
Rev. Richard S. Bellows	January 11, 1998	May 31, 2007
Rev. Nancy Webb Stroud	October 1, 2009	current

Westfield was visited by English fur traders as early as 1648 and the village was settled and a Puritan church organized within twenty years. However, almost two hundred years were to pass away before the Episcopal Church found a foothold here.

The Puritan church as the only church in Westfield until the middle of the Eighteenth Century. As all residents in Massachusetts at that time were taxed for the support of the established ministry, it was, of course, difficult for any church body, other than the Congregational church, to survive. A Baptist meeting house was, however, erected in the neighborhood of Little River in 1753 by the Separatists, as they then were called. At the turn of the century a circuit rider of the Granville Circuit of the Methodist church began preaching in Hoop Pole, now known as Mundale, and the first Methodist meeting house was erected in that part of town in 1829. The first Methodist meeting house in the center of town was built shortly after that on Main Street.

A Universalist Society was organized in Westfield in 1853. The members of the Society purchased a large lot on Elm Street, opened a street, which is now know as Chapel Street, and built their chapel on this property well back from Elm Street. The Universalists worshipped for only a little over eight years in this chapel.

These three early Protestant churches in Westfield are of particular interest to the parishioners of the Church of the Atonement because in houses of worship belonging to these three groups were held some of the first formal Episcopal services conducted in Westfield.

In this hasty sketch of the early days of Westfield's religious life it will be plainly seen that there was no place in the little Puritan village for the services of the Church of England. Fortunately for those few Church people who came to live here in the years immediately preceding the Revolution, however, there were occasional church services in Southwick, which was then a part of Westfield. A Church of England priest, the Rev. Roger Veitz, was at

that time Rector of St. Peter's Church in Granby, Connecticut. Until Mr. Veitz was imprisoned for his Tory sentiment, he held services from time to time in Southwick and in this way those few church people who lived in Westfield were kept in touch with the liturgy and sacraments of the church. Some time later a church was built in Southwick in conjunction with the Methodists, but by that time, Southwick had been divided from Westfield.

In 1799 "The Protestant Episcopal Society of Blandford and Towns Adjoining" was organized and incorporated by legislature. This church, which was called St. Mark's stood on North Street in Blandford. There were over one hundred and fifteen male members and the district covered Granville and Westfield. To avoid paying toward the salary of the Congregational pastor, Westfield churchmen registered in St. Mark's Church and attended services there. The Rev. H. H. Bates was the Rector during the forties and he sometimes held services in the homes of church people in Westfield.

Mr. Edward Jessup, a Westfield man who was Rector of Grace Church in Chicopee, frequently held services on week-days in the homes of Westfield people at this time. One home in which services were held was Dr. James Holland's house which stood where the Methodist church now stands at the corner of Holland Ave and Court Street. Mrs. Holland, a Bridgeport and New York woman, so longed for her church that she offered land if an Episcopal Church might be built in Westfield.

In 1856, Mr. Bates, who had been Rector of St. Mark's in Blandford, became Rector of Trinity Church in Tariffville, Connecticut. Benjamin F. Cooley, a Westfield man, was organist of this church and he urged Mr. Bates to hold services in Westfield on weekdays. Such services were held in the vestry of the Methodist church, which then stood on the North corner of School and Elm Streets. The upper part of this old building has very recently been removed but the two lower floors are still standing**. A year later M. Cooley persuaded the Rev. William Child, the Rector of Christ Church in Springfield, to come to Westfield, but after two services, Mr. Child realized that the long drive to Westfield was too fatiguing and services were discontinued.

In 1860 Mr. Edward Jessup, who was then Rector of the Church of the Redeemer in Brooklyn, spent his vacation with his family in Westfield. He and his brother Emerson, a lay reader, with Mr. Benjamin Cooley held a service in Westfield on a September Sunday of that year. The Second Church, a group made up of worshippers who had left the old established Puritan church to support a new Society, had been recently organized. These Congregationalist were at that time worshipping in Whitman Hall which was upstairs over the store at the South corner of Elm and Church Streets. The

Second Church people united with the Episcopalians and a service with a large choir was held in their hall.

Mr. Benjamin F. Cooley shortly afterward entered Deacon's Orders and began to hold weekly evening services in the Universalist Chapel in Westfield. He induced various priests to hold services there from time to time and finally on July 7, 1863, the parish was organized as Church of the Atonement, with the Rev. John Mines as Rector. The new church was named for the Church of the Atonement in Philadelphia with which the Jessup family was connected.

It is not known now just what names may have appeared on the first church register for, unfortunately, the early records were burned in the Johnson Organ Company fire. Mr. J.E. Wetmore, a later Senior Warde, was a cabinet builder at the organ factory and he had kept the records in his toolbox which was destroyed in the fire. We do know that the Wardens of that first parish were F.J. Viner and Edwin Tobey. The vestrymen were H. S. Wright, George Fowler, H.T. Levi, J.E. Wetmore and William Knott. The clerk of the parish was Frederick Fowler 2nd.

In November of that first year of the little Church's history a brown stone font was presented to the church by Harry Prescott, Esq. of New Haven, and a communion service was presented by Mrs. Jessup of Philadelphia. This old font has, since 1911, been used in the Church of the Atonement as a piscina.

The first strawberry festival was held on June 17, 1863. It was held in Whiman Hall and the price of admission was fifteen cents. A Christmas Fair was held in Whitman Hall just before Christmas, 1863. On Christmas Day of that year there was a service at ten in the morning, and at seven in the evening there was a Christmas tree for the Sunday school.

Mr. Mines, the first Rector, proved unsatisfactory and was deposed by the Bishop early in 1864. Mr. Andrew Mackie came as Rector in March 1864. The Bishop made his first visit here on October 2, 1864, and twelve persons were confirmed. In writing of this visit, the Westfield News Letter for October 5, 1864 reports:

“The Rt. Rev. the Bishop of this Diocese visited this Parish and preached in the chapel of the Church of the Atonement last Sunday, October 2, administering confirmation a preaching both morning and evening. The Bishop appeared well and in fine spirits, possessing a vigorous, outspoken style. His utterances, clear and distinct and to the point, were instructive, commanding the attention of the congregation. The singing was good and although raining, the house

was filled. This is the first Episcopal Visitation in this town; our impressions are such that we shall welcome his visits to our midst.”

On St. Stephen's Day in 1864 another Christmas Tree Festival was held for the children of the Sunday School. At this time the records show that there were 28 Communicants on the register, that 28 families were listed in the church and that 42 children attended Sunday school. In spite of this good beginning, however, interest in the new church dwindled and services were suspended when Mr. Mackie resigned in 1868.

For the next five years there seems to have been no Episcopal services held in Westfield. Through the prayers and efforts of Miss Fanny Helen Greenwood, the Rev. John Frank Winkley finally came to Westfield in 1873. Miss Greenwood, a young girl of twenty-two, the daughter of Thomas and Ann Schuyler Greenwood, lived at that time on the south side of Church street. Brought up in the church, she longed for its services and finally journeyed to Adams to urge Mr. Winkley to come to Westfield. It is sad to think that Miss Greenwood died of tuberculosis and was laid to rest in Pine Hill just twenty days before Mr. Winkley took up his work here.

From 1873 the Parish records have been carefully kept. On the fifth Sunday in Lent, March 30, 1873, Mr. Winkley began services in Union Hall over the Post Office. This hall was in the old Baptist Church on the North corner of Elm and Church Streets where Grant's store now stands (**insert current location**). It is interesting to note that the services of the church in Westfield were held at various times in the Vestry of the Methodist Church, in a hall belonging to the Second Congregational Church, in an abandoned Universalist Chapel, and, finally, in an abandoned Baptist Meeting house.

At a meeting held shortly after Easter in the year 1873 it was voted to accept the Senior Warden and one Vestryman of the old organization, which dated back to 1863. It was also voted to elect two more Vestryman and to endorse the election of the Rev. John Frank Winkley as Rector. A Sunday school was started and a Ladies Aid begun. There were at that time about fifty Communicants in the church. This number was very soon increased to seventy.

Mr. Winkley served the church in Westfield for a little over four and one half years. He was followed by the Rev. B.W. Atwell of Springfield who took charge of the Parish for six months.

The Rev. Benjamin F. Cooley followed Mr. Atwell in September of 1878 and worked hard here until June of 1879, when because of mutual

antagonists, the Board of Missions withdrew the appropriation. Mr. Cooley, who, it will be remembered, was a musician and organist, had trained a choir. He had also begun a subscription for a new church and fitted up a planning mill for use as a temporary place of worship.

On July 11, 1979, a young man in Deacon's Orders, Henry James Sheridan, came to take charge of the Parish in Westfield. At this time the congregation was worshipping in a lumber planning mill or carpenter shop which Mr. Cooley had secured on Main Street on the spot where the offices of the H. B. Smith Company now stand (**insert current location**).

Mr. Sheridan was ordained in 1880 and, as Mr. A. D. Jessup of Philadelphia had given a lot of land on King Street, work was at once begun to raise money to build a church.

A notice in the Springfield Daily Republican for May 15th of that year read:

“The corner stone to be laid for the Church of the Atonement at four today is the gift of C. L. Brown, the stone cutter ... The choir are requested to meet at the chapel on Main Street at 3 p.m. Bishop Paddock will preach at the chapel tomorrow morning.”

The corner stone of the church o King Street was laid on May 16, 1880. The Springfield Daily Republican for the following Monday contains this account of the ceremony:

The corner stone of the Episcopal Chapel on King Street was laid Saturday afternoon in the presence of a considerable audience. The services were conducted by Bishop Paddock assisted by Clergyman from Westfield, West Springfield, and this city. A novel feature to the assemblage was the West Springfield boy choir in vestments who aided materially in the singing. The church is to be of the Gothic style of architecture and will be rapidly pushed to completion except the tower which will be left until bricks are cheaper.”

The first service was held in the new church on Good Friday of the year 1882 and in May of the following year the church was consecrated. The Springfield Daily Republican for Thursday, May 25, 1882, describes the consecration service as follows:

“The consecration the tasteful little Episcopal Church occurred yesterday morning and a good sized audience gathered to witness the exercise. Bishop Paddock officiated and preached the sermon, and was assisted by Rectos Foote of Holyoke and Sheridan and Jessup of

Westfield. The church was occupied a year ago, but consecration was delayed till it was free from debt. The society is so small in numbers that when Rector Sheridan broached the subject of building a church it seemed an almost hopeless task, but he went to work earnestly and his congregation have supported him well in his efforts. The lot upon which the church stands was given by the late A. D. Jessup of Philadelphia. With his children he also gave one of the handsome windows in memory of his wife ... The chancel window is five feet in diameter and represents Christ blessing little children. It is a memorial of the late Edward Jessup of Northampton, presented by his cousin, Mrs. Bloomfield H. Moore of Philadelphia ... The church is in the Gothic style known as early English, the chancel eighteen by twenty two and transept fourteen by sixteen. Now that the labor of building and securing funds to pay for the church is off Rector Sheridan's hands, he will take up with renewed vigor the work among the young men that he has successfully been carrying on in connection with his Parish and St. John's Guild."

Unfortunately, Mr. Sheridan was not to go on with his work in Westfield. He was called to take part in the work of building up the Church in the newly opened West. On May 10, 1883, he left to do mission work in the Dakotas. Dr. Sheridan was to return to his flock in Westfield, however, for after a busy life in the mission field in the West, he suffered a serious illness, which brought him back to New England. Residing in Malden, he frequently visited Westfield and during the summer of 1906 took charge of the Parish during the vacation of the Rector. He died in 1907 and his funeral service was held in the church, which he had built in Westfield. He is buried in Pine Hill Cemetery.

The Rev. H. N. Cunningham was elected Rector when Mr. Sheridan left the Parish. Mr. Cunningham also worked in the Parish in Easthampton, holding alternate Sunday evening services in the two town. a small monthly paper, name unknown, was published by the church at this time. Mr. Cunningham left in 1886 to accept a call to Christ Church in Watertown, Ct.

Dissension between the high and low factions both locally and in the diocese seems to have marred the tranquility of the Rectorships during the late eighties and early nineties. Mr. Cooley had been high church. After leaving Westfield he was active in the Oxford Movement in the West and in Canada. Mr. Sheridan and Mr. Cunningham swung toward a simpler form of services. The Rev. Allan Prescott who followed Mr. Cunningham restored the Eucharistic candles and installed a surpliced choir. Mr. Prescott instituted a Parish organization called St. Andrews Guild and urged the women of the Parish to do Altar work. Under Mr. Cooley's tutelage the women embroidered superfrontals and a set of stoles. A rood screen was added to the

church in 1890. In 1892 an altar cross and brass vases were presented to the church by the Sunday school. A Johnson pipe organ was installed in 1893. This organ is still in use in the Christian Science Church. A new furnace was installed the same year and a brass alms basin was presented by St. Andrew's Guild. At this same time a processional cross was presented to the church by Mrs. Harry Prescott. Mr. Prescott urged the women of the Parish to work together for the church and they put on church suppers in their own homes. Baked beans, cabbage salad, hot rolls, coffee and a dessert were served for ten cents. After the supper the people sang hymns and old songs together.

The Rev. Henry Tarrant, who followed Mr. Prescott in 1894, continued what were then considered high-church practices. Mr. Cooley helped him train a choir and with Mr. Cooley as organist the Rector had choral celebrations with extreme ritual. The Board of Missions did not approve and Mr. Tarrant resigned one short year after his coming to the Parish.

The church then wished to call the Rev. George F. Degan, but the Board of Missions considered him too high church and the Rev. Normand S, Boardman was put in charge of the Parish for a few months.

The Rev. Frederick A. Wright came to the Church of the Atonement in the Fall of 1899. Mr. Wright was a low churchman. He also seems to have been a strict disciplinarian for he stopped both dancing and the selling of chances at the church fairs. During his short rectorship Mr. Wright worked hard to get the church out of debt and helped to raise money by giving lectures. He also started a group called the Parish Aid and an organization called the Junior Auxiliary. This organization was later known as St. Margaret's Guild. Mrs. Wright was the daughter of the novelist George W. Cable and as Mr. Gable lived in Northampton at that time, he was a frequent visitor at the rectory at 45 Broad St. Mr. Wright remained only two years, resigning on account of poor health in the Spring of 1902.

During Mr. Wright's rectorship the Diocese was divided and the Rt. Rev. Alexander Hamilton Vinton became the first Bishop of Western Massachusetts in 1902. The Rev. Herbert Grantham supplied until the next Fall when the Rev. James F. Bullitt was nominated by the Bishop and called by the Parish. Mr. Bullitt before entering the priesthood had been a lawyer in Philadelphia. It will be of interest to Westfield church people to know that Ambassador Bullitt is a nephew of this former Westfield minister.

It was during Mr. Bullitt's rectorship that the old house at 53 Court Street was purchased by the church. This large house had been an old inn which one stood on the corner of Elm and Court Streets where the Athenaeum now stands. It was moved to its present site when the Fowler

home, the present Boys' and Girls' Library was built in 1838. The garden behind the old house at 53 Court Street adjoined the rear of the church property on King Street. The house was used as a Parish House and Sunday school for five years, but in 1908 it was said because the church found the expense of its upkeep too great a burden. During this time the dearly beloved former Rector, the Rev. Henry J. Sheridan, often supplied in the church, which he had built almost twenty-five years before.

In January 1906 Bishop Vinton elected for the Church of the Atonement a man whose rectorship was to be longer than that of any of his predecessors. Robert Keating Smith was born in Brooklyn in 1865. Graduated from Stevens Institute of Technology in 1889, he entered Harvard and received his B.A. in 1893. He was graduated from the Cambridge Episcopal Theological School in 1895.

Mr. Smith served as choirmaster of Trinity Church, Woburn, Massachusetts, for two years and as lay reader at Grace Church, Newton, for three years. After his ordination, the young priest was married to Bertha Helena Wiles of Albany and assumed the Rectorship of St. Paul's church in Kansas City, Missouri. Five years later ill health forced him to give up this church and he returned to Newton as Assistant Rector of Grace Church. He left this position to come to Westfield.

When Mr. Smith came to the Church of the Atonement, he was suffering from serious eye trouble, which his physicians feared would result in total blindness. Faith and prayer helped the Rector to overcome this malady and for over twenty-one years he was able to serve his people faithfully and well.

Mr. Smith was keenly interested in boys. He held the signal honor of organizing the first troop of Boy Scouts in this section of New England not long after the organization was given its inception in England by Sir Robert Baden-Powell. This troop - Troop 101 - still continues to be sponsored by the Church of the Atonement. Mr. Smith represented the American Boy Scouts at a World Scout Conference in England in 1920. For many years Mr. Smith also took groups of boys camping on the shores of Little River near the old Marble quarry.

The rector's interest in local civic affairs is evidenced in his participation in various town and city endeavors. He served as chairman of the Westfield School Committee for several years and for many seasons was a director of the Young Men's Christian Association. As Director of the Hamden County Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Children he made a canvas of adjoining towns, assisted by several young women who were trained to become deaconesses.

Mr. Smith served as Protestant Chaplain at the Westfield State Sanatorium for many years and as Civilian Chaplain at Camp Bartlett during World War One. During the influenza epidemic during the first World War this active clergyman endeared himself to scores of men and women who were not of his faith, for he worked tirelessly in stricken homes throughout the city.

It was Mr. Smith who extended the parish work into surrounding towns, reclaimed the old church property at Blanford, and gathered what data the parish now possesses concerning the history of the church throughout this section of Massachusetts.

During Mr. Smith's rectorship many of the higher church practices came into use once more. The Eucharistic candles were again lighted, the Pascal candle was placed in the chancel, the Eucharistic vestments were used, and the Blessed Sacrament was reserved for the sick.

Mr. Smith had in his church choir several young boys who were Czechoslovakians. His interest in these boys led to a thorough study of the religious history of these people, and in 1920 the Rector was sent as a special deputy of the Presiding Bishop and National Council and of the Archbishop of Canterbury, to Czechoslovakia when the National Church was being organized there after its release from papal authority as a result of World War One. Mr. Smith spent much of his time for the next three years in Czechoslovakia and becoming fascinated by the centuries, which lay behind these peoples of Central Europe, delved deeply into their early history. He was the author of numerous pamphlets and articles on the Czechoslovakians and also wrote a book on "The Medieval History of Bohemia." While the Rector was abroad on this mission the parish was in charge of the Rev. Alfred D. Snively who has since served for many years in the Diocese.

In November 1923, the Parish purchased of Mrs. Francis L. Miller the property at the corner of Court and Pleasant streets. The three story, mansard roof house which stood on this property had been built by Henry J. Bush in 1876. The money in the building fund and in the treasury of St. Margaret's Guild was needed for this purpose and the balance of the purchase price was covered by a mortgage. Work was immediately begun remodeling the house so that the first floor could be used as a church auditorium and the two upper stories turned into parish and Sunday school rooms.

The first services were held in the church on the Feast of St. Michael and All Angels, Sept. 29, 1924. The church on King Street had been sold to the First Church of Christ, Scientist, but the altar, the rood screen and the reredos, the pulpit, the old corner stone and the cross from the roof were all brought to the new building. Many of the church furnishings were also added

at this time. Mr. Smith designed the black walnut reredos, the rood screen and the baptistry and these were executed by Mr. James E. Martin, a local cabinetmaker who was a dearly loved Deacon in the Second Church. The wood with which he worked was largely supplied by parishioners from their household furniture. The two small stone angels which adorn the rood screen were presented to the church by the former rector, Mr. Cooley. These angels were placed on the reredos of the Chapel of Eton College when it was built in 1450. Removed by the Puritans in 1643, they remained in obscurity in England until they were rescued by Mr. Cooley and brought to Westfield just two hundred years after the incorporation of this Puritan town.

In June 1926 Mrs. Louisa E. Keep, a former member of the Parish, died in France bequeathing the Parish \$10,000 and a third of the residue of her estate.

Mr. Smith resigned on the twenty-seventh of June 1927. From that time until the first of the following November the Parish was in charge of Arch-deacon Marshall M. Mott.

The Rev. Wolcott Coit Treat assumed the duties of Priest-in-charge of the Parish of the Atonement on the first of November 1927. Mr. Treat, who was a graduate of Harvard University and General Theological Seminary, came here from St. Barnabas Church in Springfield. Mr. Treat was married and had two children one of whom was born in Westfield. Having served in the Navy during World War One, Mr. Treat became Chaplain of the American Legion. He also served as Chaplain at the Westfield State Sanatorium. An able preacher, the young minister soon attracted many new people to the church and social activities throughout the various parish organizations became much more alert.

In 1928 the Keep legacy, an amount well over \$200,000 was received by the parish and was placed in the Diocesan Trustees. At the Easter season in that year, St. Margaret's Guild presented the church with a new reed organ in memory of Mrs. Louisa E. Keep.

In November 1928 it was voted to request the consent of the Bishop and Standing Committee for admissions as a Parish. New by-laws were adopted and the Parish was put on a budget basis.

The Rector Emeritus, Robert Keating Smith, died on October 2, 1931. Seats were placed outside the church to accommodate the throng that attended Mr. Smith's funeral. People of all faiths and from all walks of life came to pay final tribute to this beloved Rector and neighbor. Bishop Davies and Mr. Treat read the service, assisted by Mr. Arthur Chase, Mr. Franklin Knight and Arch-deacon Mott. The casket was followed to the hearse by the

clergy and choir and by Westfield's three remaining Civil War veterans. The bearers were all men who as boys had gone on camping trips with Mr. Smith. The body was taken to Albany for cremation and burial.

During the years of Mr. Treat's rectorship the church services assumed a more ritualistic character. A votive light was placed on the Altar, red cassocks were used by the acolytes, daily mass was celebrated, and the Rector had regular hours in the sanctuary for confessions.

In January 1932 the Parish voted to purchase the house at 13 Pleasant Street for a rectory. In September of that year the Rev. Robert Ray Read was engaged as Associate Priest, organist and choirmaster. During the school year of 1933 and 1934 a kindergarten and pre-school was conducted in the church building by the Rector. Under his leadership the Behavior Study Institute, a group of teachers and parents, was organized at that time and several outstanding speakers on child psychology were brought to the meetings.

During the following year Mr. Treat studied at Harvard, returning on weekends to hold services in Westfield. On June 30, 1935, he resigned and Mr. Read remained in charge until January 1, 1936, when he left to take up work in Chico, California. At his own request, Mr. Treat was deposed from the ministry by Bishop Lawrence for cause not affecting his moral character on November 12, 1935.

The Reverend Stanley C. S. Shirt came to the Parish on January 1, 1936, from Dalton, Mass. where he had been in charge of the missions Grace Church (*illegible address*).

A native of England, Mr. Shirt had come to Connecticut in 1908. While working for the International Silver Company in Meriden, he prepared for Holy Orders under private tutors at Berkley Divinity School. He was married and had three daughters.

Mr. Shirt's business training made him exceptionally able to take over the rather muddled financial affairs of the parish. During the ten years of his rectorship Mr. Shirt struggled to pay off the mortgage and to make the church building a place of beauty and comfort. He worked hard among his people, visiting the sick and those in trouble, and reached out to church members in the far-flung confines of the parish. He had found the people his church divided and upset by the unhappy circumstances attendant upon the resignation of their last rector and he struggles to join his people together once more in one happy and harmonious group.

Under Mr. Shirt's rectorship the church returned to a simpler form of service. There was an excellent choir trained by Miss Doris C. Griffin. The

organist was Mrs. Roy Marcoullier. There was also a large and active Sunday school at this time, and Mr. Shirt gathered many of the younger women of the church into a Guild, which was called the Eliza Rust Moseley Group. This Guild took its name from a dearly loved churchwoman who had taught in the Sunday school for over forty years. Mrs. Moseley's funeral was the first funeral, which Mr. Shirt conducted when he came to Westfield.

Soon after Mr. Shirt's assumption of the duties here the United States was plunged into war and one hundred and thirty four stars quickly appeared on the service flag of the Church of the Atonement. During these trying times, however, the rector was able to accomplish many things. The Parish celebrated its seventy-fifth birthday with an anniversary service on Sunday, the twenty-fifth of September 1928. A children's altar was installed in the Church school in 1941, a new Priest's chair and a new Bishop's chair were placed in the chancel, folding chairs were purchased for the parlor a new organ was installed in the church, a small Estey organ placed in the church school room and the chancel and nave of the church were redecorated.

On January seventh, 1944, the mortgage on the church building was burned by Mrs. Robert Keating Smith at the annual meeting. On Sunday, October first of that year, the church building was consecrated by Bishop Lawrence.

At the annual parish meeting in January 1946, a supper for the whole parish was held and excellent reports were given by the many active church groups. Less than a week later the Parish was plunged into sorrow when the beloved rector died early on the morning of January seventeenth with a sudden heart attack. The funeral was held in the church on Saturday, January nineteenth, with Bishop Lawrence officiating. The crowd of mourners which attended the service was so large that many people had to be seated in the upstairs rooms where the service was carried by loud speakers. The members of the Vestry served as bearers and cremation took place in Springfield.

During the following months services were held by lay readers and by Canon Marshall E. Mott and Raymond M. Kendrick. The Rev. Edward J. Day of Lenox School also took some services and Bishop Lawrence held the Holy Week services and the Easter service.

The Reverend Paul T. Shultz, Jr., rector of Emmanuel Church, West Roxbury, accepted a call from the Vestry in July and was instituted by Bishop Lawrence on the first of October 1946.