



Notes from the Archives

June: Storytelling

As part of our celebration of the 125th anniversary of St. Mary's, we will feature "Notes from the Archives" on the third Sunday of each month for the rest of 2016. These fascinating and delightful snippets from history have been thoughtfully prepared by Mary Morganti, our Parish Archivist.

June. It is a month of endings and beginnings: the close of the school year, the promise of growth, and of summer rest as well as adventure.

In June 1956, St. Mary's purchased the home next door at 2949 Steiner Street per an agreement signed January 25, 1956, secured with a \$500 deposit. The vestry considered calling it Parsons House (after the Bishop) or Olhoff House (after a previous Rector), but in the end chose Pixley House. The balance of \$29,500 due on the property was paid off within 18 months.

In June 1966, The Rev. Richard P. Fowler began as St. Mary's 19th Rector, and guided the parish in new directions, calling each member to serve God through ministering to others. His vision expanded outreach within San Francisco and far beyond, including, in the summer of 1979, parish-wide sponsorship of the entire Tang Family, refugees from Vietnam. Two of Richard's summers were later spent in pilgrimage, seeking "solitude & community," first on Iona, an island off the coast of Scotland, and then joining the Taizé Community in France and bringing back to St. Mary's the Taizé tradition of chanting.

Under Fr. Fowler's leadership, both worship and music in services began to expand. In 1968, Dale Wood was hired as Organist/Choirmaster, and the choirs grew to include children and English handbells. He was succeeded by Michael Secour in the summer of 1976, and Catherine Secour took over as Children's Choir Director in September 1977. After 33 years of service, Michael retired at the end of summer 2009, while June 14th marked Catherine's last day with the Children's Choir. A celebration of the Ministry of Michael and Catherine Secour included a chant written in 1986 by Tom Svenson for Michael's 10th anniversary as Director of Music.

A few selected verses follow below:

*O come, let us sing of the family Secour, let us heartily rejoice in their presence here among us.
Let us acknowledge their talents with Thanksgiving, and show ourselves glad in them with songs.
For they are our inspiration, and we are their friends and students of their guidance.
As it was ten years ago, is now, and will be many years hence, music without end.*