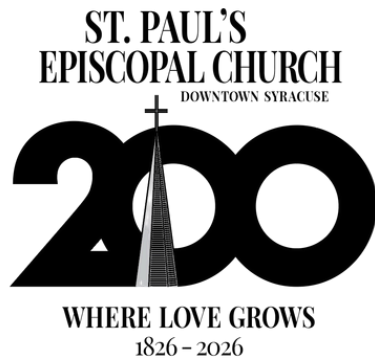


How it Began



Watercolor by Betty Munro

On May 22, 1826, in a small District School House on Willow Street, a determined group of Episcopalians gathered to take a defining step for their community. Led by Deacon John McCarthy, they elected the first wardens and vestry of what became St. Paul's Church—the first Episcopal parish in the young Village of Syracuse. That simple meeting marked the beginning of a spiritual home that has now stood for two centuries.

The village around them was changing rapidly. Just a year earlier, in 1825, Syracuse had been incorporated, and the Erie Canal had opened, transforming the region overnight. The population had surged from about 250 residents in 1820 to more than 1,100 by 1824. In the midst of this growth, local Episcopalians realized they were finally strong enough in number to form a parish of their own. Their conversations in 1825 led directly to the founding meeting the following spring.

Many of the people present that day were already shaping the civic life of the village. John Dunford, elected the first Warden, was Syracuse's first newspaperman and its treasurer. Amos Granger and John Roger, both among the village's earliest trustees, joined the vestry. Their commitment to building a church was inseparable from their commitment to building a community.

Two hundred years later, we continue to stand on the foundation they laid. A foundation built from faith, courage, and a belief in what Syracuse could become. As St. Paul's celebrates its bicentennial, we honor their vision and the enduring church that grew from that hopeful evening in 1826.

