

## **Gathered into Thy Kingdom by Thy Son Celebrating 275 Years of Gospel Witness and Mission**

The title of Roger Warlick's excellent history of Christ Church, *As Grain Once Scattered*, comes from the hymn text by Bland Tucker, "Father, we thank thee who hast planted...", celebrating our 250th anniversary as an expression of the Body of Christ in Savannah. It is only fitting that we choose the closing line of that same hymn as a tribute to our 275th anniversary:

"As grain, once scattered on the hillsides, was in the broken bread made one, so from all lands thy Church be **gathered into thy kingdom by thy Son.**"

Christ Church seeks to be a "gathering" church, following our Lord's Great Commandment to love God and our neighbor, and our Lord's Great Commission to go into all the world and make disciples. We invite people to *come* into His house and worship, to be fed and equipped as His servants. We also invite people to *go* into the world in His name, offering the Good News of the Gospel of Jesus Christ through the clear proclamation of God's Word and the offering of service in His name. Our history has been a history of "coming" and "going" for the sake of Jesus Christ.

Our 275th year will be an opportunity to be **thankful for our past**. We cannot take for granted the wonderful heritage that is ours at Christ Church: Being the Mother Church of Georgia, John Wesley's only American congregation, the parish of George Whitefield, the thunderous voice of the Great Awakening in the American Colonies, the spiritual home of Juliette Gordon Low, founder of the Girl Scouts of America, and the flock of Dr. F. Bland Tucker, pastor and hymn-writer *par excellence*. In addition to these historic heroes, we are thankful for thousands of faithful parishioners who have worshipped, served, evangelized, and taught as members of Christ Church, being the light of Christ in their generations.

Our 275th year will also be an opportunity to be **faithful in the present**. We recognize ourselves to be a "hospital for sinners", not a "museum for saints". Christ Church remains an active and vibrant parish in the Savannah community, feeding the homeless through our Emmaus House kitchen, offering grace and hospitality through our Annual Tour of Homes, and reaching out to all through worship, evangelism, and service. Our anniversary year will see a youth-adult mission to Mexico as well as a bell-choir tour to Charleston. We will welcome our bishop, the Rt. Rev. John Guernsey, for a teaching mission on prayer as we celebrate our Founders' Day Weekend. On May 17th, we will enjoy a special Concert of Historic Hymns and Worship, highlighting a number of Christ Church voices and musicians.

Our 275th year will also encourage us to be **hopeful for the future**. In the midst of today's unsettling world, we nevertheless see the hand of God bringing about spiritual renewal and revival around the world. We are excited to join our brothers and sisters of the developing nations in a spiritual awakening that continues to gain momentum. We are particularly honored to join our fellow Anglicans in Uganda in their on-going experience of revival that started almost seventy years ago. Through the emergence of small groups, the development of Christian leaders, and an active and effective youth ministry, Christ Church looks forward to the future with committed and expectant hearts.

Thankful for our past, faithful in the present, and hopeful for the future, Christ Church celebrates 275 years of Gospel witness and mission, praying for and working toward that Day when people from all lands will be "gathered into Thy Kingdom by Thy Son."

– Marc Robertson, Rector