

THE CHURCH OF OUR SAVIOR.  
EPISCOPAL. 1869 - 1905.  
Rock Hill, S.C.

Until the years just preceding the Civil War the "Episcopal" church was not represented in or around what was then the little village of Rock Hill.

In 1857 North Carolina yielded to her Southern sister the family of Col. Cad. Jones. And this family, from which have sprung many of South Carolina's noble men and women, were devoted pioneers of Catholic church worship in eastern York County.

The first clergyman of the church to conduct divine services in the community was the Rev. J. D. Gibson. From his lips the historic Liturgy was first heard by the few Rock Hillians assembled with the Jones family.

By 1869 four or five church families had moved to Rock Hill. They decided to request the Rev. Robert P. Johnson rector of the "Good Shepherd", Yorkville S.C. to assume pastorship over them, giving a monthly service. Up to that time the sacraments were administered when ever clerical services could be secured. But through the persistent piety of the devout few, the church's appointed worship had been constantly heard in lay reading.

On Easter, 1870, the present parish was canonically organized as the "church of Our Savior". The present Edifice was consecrated on Sept. 15, 1872, by the Rt. Rev. W. B. W. Howe, bishop of the diocese. The consecration sermon was preached by the Rev. Ellison Capers, now the Right Reverend and beloved Bishop of the Diocese.

The architecture of the church, humbly executed in wood, yet shows in its unassuming dign<sup>N</sup>ity, its churchly appointment and its reverent tone the gradual, but general return from puritanic barrenness to traditional, historic and aesthetic lives.

The Rev. R. P. Johnson died in May 1882. His devoted ministry had kept together the few and, with the co-operative zeal of the laity, had added several members to the Parish.

In July 1882, the bishop sent Rev. Augustus Prentiss, deacon, who labored faithfully and successfully until his ordination to the priesthood in 1888, when he shortly accepted a call to Indiana.

The Rev. Edmund M. Joyner was then called from North Carolina, and gave his earnestness to the work. The Rev. Theo. D. Bratton, now the beloved bishop of Mississippi, served his deaconate in Rock Hill, S.C., Yorkville, S.C., Chester, S.C. and Lancaster, S.C. were associated. Rev. Joyner has since 1889 served diligently as archdeacon of the colored work in the diocese, until his resignation last year. His missionary interest in the negroes was shown by the inauguration under the leadership of the present St. Paul's Mission for colored people on West Black St. At present Dr. Clark, colored, lay reads; his wife, with assistance, teaching the parochial school. The rector of "Our Savior" gives on monthly service and celebration of the sacrament.

After Rev. Joyner's departure, the parish suffered from prolonged lapses of pastorships and two short rectorships - Rev. Gordon Bradley and Rev. Dr. George L. Sweeney. During the latter's rectorship the present property on Elm street was bought by the Ladies Guild and a rectory built.

It was in these trying years that the mettle of the parochial laity was tested, and it proved true. The Services were weekly read and all matters attended to by the universally lamented Mr. John London, supported by the vestry.

In October, 1895, the bishop sent Rev. J. W. <sup>N</sup>Ca<sup>N</sup>ty Johnson,

deacon. He was raised to the Holy Priesthood the following year, and, as rector, started the work of building up the parish. After a rectorship of six years, Rev. Johnson left for St. Mary'-on-the-Heights, Birmingham, Ala.

He was followed in July, 1902, by the Rev. John C. Johnes, whose rectorship of three years is as fresh in our minds as was his personal popularity general.

We shall close this sketch with the statement that at present the parish of "Our Savior" is small in numbers, but strong in christian influence, in churchly zeal and in Missionary interest. We have lost many families during recent years by removal, and many individuals <sup>by</sup> ~~of~~ the call to the church Expectant. But with those who are here we shall labor earnestly and prayerfully.