

A Mighty Fortress

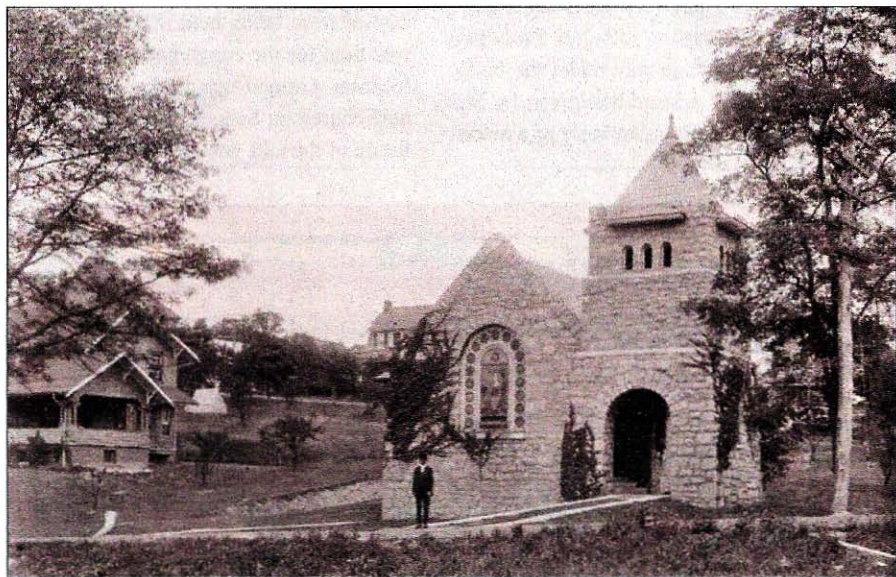
Skip Booth, Linthicum Historian

Less than fifty miles from Linthicum on the banks of the Susquehanna River lays the town of Port Deposit. In 1816 a quarry was established there, to mine blocks of a coarse grain igneous rock for the abutments of a bridge across the river. Port Deposit Granite became the choice building stone for many buildings in Baltimore and Philadelphia. Fort McHenry and Fort Carroll made use of the stone. In 1911, this material was selected for the construction of a new Methodist church in Linthicum.

With the focus of the area's residential development centered around the Linthicum Heights Station on the B and A Railroad, the members of Holly Run Church looked to this part of town to build a new church. Attendance had dwindled at the little brick

church and it was decided that a new church would revitalize the congregation. The last regular service at Holly Run was held in 1911 with only Mrs. Wade Hampton Linthicum in attendance. After a wait for additional parishioners to arrive, it became evident that no one else was coming. Reverend J. B. Jones said to Mrs. Linthicum, "Sister, I'll preach if you will sing." The good reverend preached a fine sermon while Mrs. Linthicum sang and played the organ. That same year on December 3, the cornerstone of Port Deposit Granite was laid for the new church.

In June of 1908, four sons of the late Sweetser Linthicum, Congressman J. Charles Linthicum, Seth Hance Linthicum, Dr. Milton Linthicum and Wade Hampton Linthicum, formed the Linthicum Heights Company. In 1910, the Linthicum Heights Fire



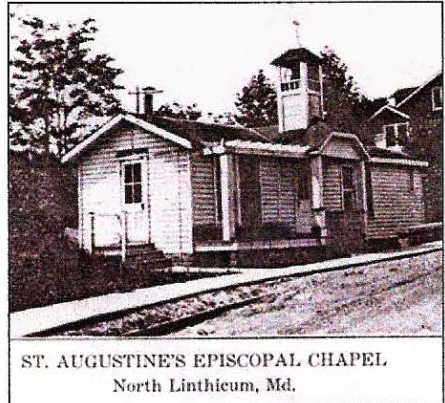
View from 1919 shows the carriage way and the English Ivy beginning to creep over the granite walls.



The Good Shepherd

plotted, albeit unknowingly, by a group of eighteen people who met in May of 1950 with an Episcopal Archdeacon to discuss the possibility of organizing a mission in Linthicum. There had been an Episcopal Chapel in North Linthicum in 1931 called St. Augustine's Chapel. There is a photograph of it in the 1931 Linthicum Heights Carnival Program. In 1950, the Diocese did not feel the time was right for a new chapel. The determined group persisted and on September 30, 1951, the Reverend Gilbert Hill, the rector of Glen Burnie's St. Albans Church, conducted an evening prayer service for a group of twenty people. The service was held in the clubhouse of the Women's Club. On December 2, a regular schedule of Sunday services began. The congregation grew and developed.

The Diocese recognized the Mission of St. Christopher in March of 1952. The Reverend George Laedlein accepted the invitation to become the priest for the new congregation and arrived on Labor Day in 1952. The



From the 1931 Linthicum Heights Carnival Program. Does anyone recall this church?

goal now was to move from the temporary facilities of the Women's Club to a permanent home. The Old Stone Church, left vacant by the Methodists' move to their new church, was seen as a suitable solution. The congregation embarked on a fund raising quest which included several very successful horse shows held off Old Annapolis Road where Arundel Hills is now located. With a loan from the Diocese, the Church and the house next door that had served as



St. Christopher's Cooperative Nursery School

as the parsonage were purchased. The first service in the new St. Christopher's Church was held on Christmas Eve, 1953. It was quite a Christmas present.

St. Christopher's continued to grow. Initiatives such as hosting the Hungry Ear Coffee House provided an outlet for teens during the folk scares of the sixties and seventies. More significant for many in the community was the establishment of the Cooperative Day Nursery. Originally occupying the old Linthicum Train Station, this effort has benefited many 3 and 4 year olds in the community. One highlight of the community parade this September was seeing the group of nursery school alumni march past.

In 1973, the Diocese granted independent status to St. Christopher's. In the 1970's,

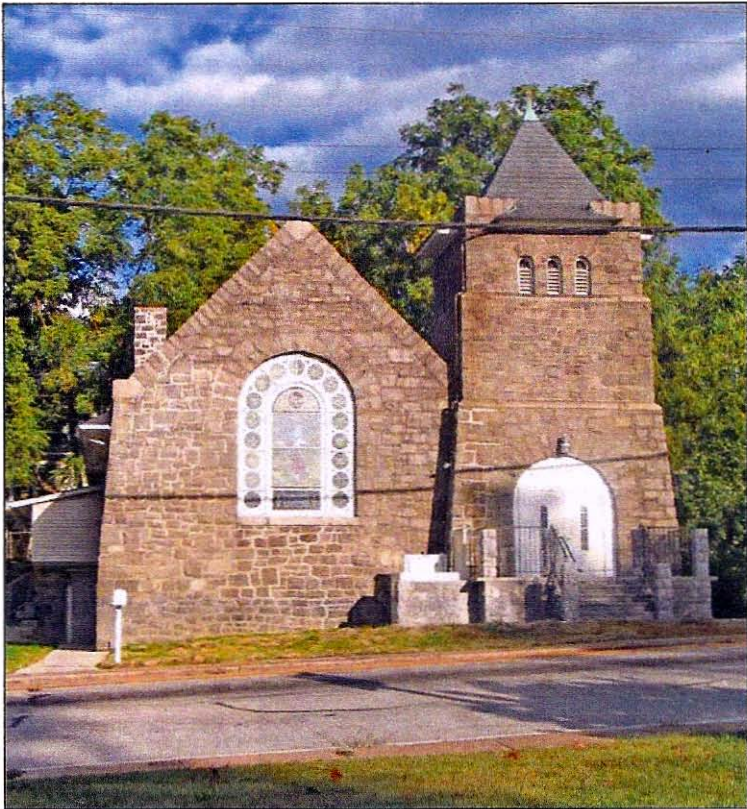
Sarah Louise Linthicum Moore made a gift of her home, High Gables, and property to the church. Located on Sweetser Road behind Turkey Hill, High Gables was an impressive Victorian home. After Mrs. Moore's death in 1976, plans were begun for the new church, the Church on the Hill as it was called. Mrs. Moore's sister, Eleanor Linthicum Woodruff, donated money for the new church. The cornerstone was laid on September 12, 1982. A month prior to this, the Vestry approved the sale of the Old Stone Church to the Chesapeake Baptist Church. The Baptists had been meeting in the Brooklyn Park High School. The price recorded at settlement was \$90,000.00. The terms included a dual occupancy of the Old Stone Church until the Church on the Hill was completed. In March of 1983, the new St. Christopher's Church was completed and on March 23, the building was dedicated.

The Chesapeake Baptist Church remained in the Old Stone Church for a relatively short span. In 1993 it was sold to the Full Gospel Mission Church, which was a Korean Church.

In 1997, the building was purchased by the Holy Cross Antiochian Orthodox Church. This active congregation celebrates the Orthodox Christian faith. The church began in 1993 in the Catonsville area with just six families. The church currently has over 150 parishioners. Most of the members came from some flavor of Christian Orthodoxy. Services are held in English but



Inside the church today.



Holy Cross Antiochian Orthodox Church

preserve the values, character and faith found in the Orthodox Church. Because the congregation generally stands through the service, there are no pews. There are chairs for those who want or need to sit. The sanctuary is adorned by the icons of saints. An impressive brass chandelier hangs in the center of the church. Across the front of the church is the iconostasis or icon screen that holds several icons in front of the altar. The church's web site is loaded with information about this denomination. The address is <http://www.holycrossonline.org/>.

A wheel chair lift and new stairs have replaced the long gone carriage way entrance

under the belfry, so that the Old Stone church continues to provide a viable home for the faithful in Linthicum. The strong stone walls have stood for almost one century. There is no reason a building of such substantial construction should not endure centuries longer.

Sources: Eloise Vaughan provided several articles, a typed history and a lot of recollections.

Early Photo ca. 1919 is from the Howard S. Kuehn Collection.

Train Station / Co-op Picture from Jo Anne Zoller's article in the Linthicum Library Pamphlet File.

Sweetser Linthicum's History of Linthicum.