

Methodist University Community Oral History Project
Methodist University
Fayetteville, NC

Garvin Ferguson

Interview Conducted by
Abigail R. Weisler
April 25, 2017
Davis Memorial Library

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Descriptive Table of Contents:

- 00:00 -introductions
- 00:19 -Ferguson's childhood
 - Grew up in the Bahamas and went to an Anglican Church
 - Mother's influence was large in going to Church
- 03:02 -Attended boarding school in Florida and University in New York
- 06:08 -Wife brought him to North Carolina
- 07:03 -While searching for a Church in North Carolina Ferguson saw a shift in his church practices from Anglican to Episcopalian, also, how he found Holy Trinity
 - Also, when he began to look for a job before moving to NC permanently
- 13:06 -Chose Holy Trinity for comfort and the connection to God he found there
- 14:34 -Describes what he thinks is the difference between different churches, especially Anglican V. Episcopal
- 16:34 -The Episcopal Church is like an extended family
 - Holy Trinity community outreach
- 20:14 -became a member of Holy Trinity in 1998
- 20:39 -Changes in the church
 - Structure, a new building was constructed for a larger size and more versatile use. However, many had a hard time letting go of the old building.
- 22:21 -Ferguson really felt like Holy Trinity and the Episcopal Church was Family
- 23:17- No matter what was going on, the church has stayed steady in community outreach
 - Vestry and Clergy have done extremely well in his opinion and differentiate grandly from Anglican Church in the Bahama's
- 28:41 -Member size of Holy Trinity, approximately 600-700 members
- 32:29 -Issues within the Church such as controversy over Gay Marriage
 - Openness to this issue comes from a younger generation beginning to steer the church.
- 41:14 -A majority of Episcopal churches are very open in Ferguson's eyes but there are varying degrees of this openness, which is caused by the individualities of varying congregations.
 - Community outreach is a big example of openness for example Holy Trinity's Food Pantry
- 44:54- Inter-church relations

47:03- Youth Group leader and interchurch relations showed Ferguson how open all Episcopal Churches and faith can be

49:48 -Women in the Church

- A major driving force in the Church.

- Ferguson feels that women do more work in the Church but get less credit for it

51:43- More information on the Youth groups

- Pilgrimage trips

55:28 -Military Families in the church come and go often but, dive in quickly to community outreach and always have a family to come back to

-Last couple of years has been a highly transitional time from women to gay rights to military families.

1:04:02- Ferguson was a member of the search committee that recommended the new rector.

- Long, hard process but worth it for the sake of the church in the long run.

- Transition and youth in the church played a strong role in who to ask to become Holy Trinity's new Rector

1:16:32- Closing Remarks

Interview of

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[Begin 16:43]

16:43

WEISLER: So you talked about how Holy Trinity is like an extended family. How do you think that family outreaches to the community?

16:50

FERGUSON: One of the things, one of the very big things is they have something called a Mayfair, which is basically like a flea market. But people--members of the Church—they bring their stuff they no longer need and they donate it to the Church. But then that allows people from the community to come in and buy it at a reasonable price, and I remember we had a priest say one time that there was this gentleman. He was looking for, basically, a suit for an interview that he was gonna have the next week. And he was able to get that at ten dollars.

17:32

WEISLER: Oh, wow.

17:33

FERGUSON: Yeah. Yeah, the one other part of the story that we don't know is that, hopefully, maybe he got that job.

17:38

WEISLER: Let's hope so.

17:40

FERGUSON: Yeah, but, something like that for ten dollars—you can't get a suit anywhere, and it just affords the community to get certain things they may not be able to afford at a reasonable price. But also, the other side is, the funds that are raised from there, 100 percent of that goes back to the community. So, they may send it to, like, a school. Right now I know we partner with the Margaret Willis school [Margaret Willis Elementary School in Fayetteville, North Carolina] and, like, during Christmas time we'll pick a couple of families from that school and then we'll have, like, a Christmas list that we'll check off and donate, you know, like, clothing or just gifts that even something that the mothers would want, you know. I remember we helped out—in one of the things she just wanted cleaning supplies, you know, as a Christmas gift. It's like, wow, okay, if we can give something as basic as that.

18:38

WEISLER: Yeah, just to be able to give those little things.

18:38

FERGUSON: Right, exactly, exactly, but—. And then, sort of the, like I say, the Rector decides, you know,

the other organizations, but I know Margaret Willis is one of the major ones of recent years, and then, like I say, just the outreach in that and, you know, those organizations. And it's true, the members, you know, that we find out, oh, "this is a really worthwhile, needy organization that could benefit from some of the funding that we raised from Mayfair," you know.

19:15

WEISLER: Yeah.

19:16

FERGUSON: And I want to say that—I'd say that it's, like, maybe five thousand dollars for the entire year.

19:21

WEISLER: That's pretty good, though.

19:22

FERGUSON: No, that is. Did we time out? [I touched the tablet screen to make sure we were still recording and Mr.Ferguson thought we timed out of the voice recorder app]. Okay, but, it's—, like I say, that's five thousand dollars that gets spread out through various organizations, so maybe it's a thousand for an organization or something, however they decide.

19:39

WEISLER: Yeah, it's still a pretty generous donation to everybody.

19:42

FERGUSON: Yeah, yeah. No, I mean, every little bit helps, especially when you get nothing, you know.

19:48

WEISLER: Especially when cleaning supplies is, I mean, what you want for Christmas and stuff like that.

19:49

FERGUSON: Well, and that wouldn't really be part of the Mayfair five thousand, but that would be, like, one of the things we do, in terms of like picking a family to help—

19:56

WEISLER: Ah, okay.

19:56

FERGUSON: —during Christmas time or during Thanksgiving time, something like that, you know, turkey—

20:01

WEISLER: So, coming together as a group, to share for everybody.

20:04

FERGUSON: Yes, yes yes. You know, you've been fortunate enough and blessed by God to have a good

life, a roof over your head and food, and so just pass it on.

20:14

WEISLER: Yeah. So you said you came to the church—well, to North Carolina around 2005, right?

20:19

FERGUSON: Yes.

20:19

WEISLER: So is that when you joined the Church?

20:21

FERGUSON: No, actually, I joined before. We maybe made about three visits, and then I became a member, so, what I would say is that probably, like, '98 I was a member.

20:37

WEISLER: Oh, okay.

[Skip to 41:14]

41:14

WEISLER: So, earlier you talked about, like, the openness of the Episcopal Church. Do you think that Holy Trinity stands alone in that or, like, in your experience the whole faith and a majority of the

churches that fall under it?

41:26

FERGUSON: I feel it's a majority of the Episcopalian Churches. We went to—and what I'm going to say is that there are degrees in the churches depending on—I think it more or less depends on the congregation. And I think that, sort of how your rector is—especially, like I said in the Bahamas I was from the faith where at the end of the day, the Anglican faith, they're saying “the bishop sends John Smith to your parish or your church”—versus here, you're searching. And what that group—the Vestry or whoever the search committee is for the new rector—what they're doing, I feel, is searching to find someone that's gonna fit with our church community. And what I would say is that that person fits with the community and continues with the beliefs of the community, you know. If that person is more outreach-minded and the Church is outreach-minded, then yeah, you're going to continue with your outreach. If that Rector potentially may not feel that all the outreach or all the funding that happens to come into the Church needs to go towards outreach, then potentially there could be conflict and an issue. One of the other good outreaches that I feel that we do is—it's not a big food bank but it's a food bank that they provide—what we call a food pantry. You know, I think there are, like, maybe eight or ten volunteers that fill bags with basic food to survive off of, you know, crackers, peanut butter, and all that stuff. And then we give that out to certain people that come in and know that we have the food pantry there.

43:33

WEISLER: Some is better than none.

43:34

FERGUSON: Right, right, right and that's sort of one of the outreaches that, like I say, makes me feel good that our Church does. Yeah, it's not a big food bank, like, "oh yeah, we're feeding thousands and thousands of people," but it's our little bit that we can do based on the little bit that we have. And, like I say, stuff like that that I know my Church does, it makes me feel good knowing that yes, when I help to contribute to do whatever, it's helping other people in the community that are less fortunate than me. Because, you're not—I like the saying "you're blessed to be a blessing." You're not blessed to have all that stuff and keep it to yourself, you share it and I feel the more you share it, the more God gives you and the more responsibility He gives you and the more you're supposed to give back and share again. Because the saying is "you can never out-give God," and I thoroughly believe that. He makes the little bit that He gives you stretch longer than you can imagine, and I feel that what He does is He changes your heart. "Oh, man, I've got to have this," and then all of a sudden it changes and "No, I can live without it."

44:54

WEISLER: So, I know a couple other Episcopalian churches, and there are a whole lot of churches in Fayetteville, but do you guys do any outreach to other churches in the area?

45:02

FERGUSON: Yes, we do, we do. And I want to say one of the churches, we just had something at Christmas time, and I can't remember the name and it may have been, like—I know there was like a joint denominational gathering at Easter time. And then also, I want to say one of the Episcopalian Churches, about two years ago, they had a fire and they couldn't use their Church or worship area to

worship, and basically some of them ended up coming over to Holy Trinity to worship during that time period that their church was pretty much closed off because it just being a hazard for them to worship in. And that was nice to know that we would do something like that, as opposed to saying to someone “Oh no, you can’t use our church,” I mean granted, they worshiped with us, but then also I know it was a normal service that we normally did, that our Rector, and I feel rightly so, he said, “oh, you know, we’re not going to have this service so that they can have their service and do what they would normally do,” since they didn’t have a Church at that time. I thought that was good. And that’s why I say it’s not just the people but it’s also the structure being open and inviting to whoever, be it another church or just another organization in the community to just reach the community.

[End at 46:39]