

## History Written in Cookbook Published \_\_\_\_\_

St. Mark's Episcopal Church at 137 West Pepper Place is the realization of a dream in the hearts of a small group of devout Episcopalians who met at the home of Mrs. Ruth Lee Huber beginning in 1905 when Mesa, now the third largest city in Arizona, was little more than a village. Services were conducted by Major L.F. Brady, lay reader.

The nave of the church at its present location was built in 1913, the rectory and Guild Hall soon afterward. The Guild Hall was the gift of the Swift family, and was used not only by the church but as a community meeting place, especially by service clubs.

The bell tower and porch, the sanctuary and choir stalls and vesting rooms brought the church to its present size.

St. Mark's has served the community well. It has served the men and their families at Williams Air Force Base, and has been served by them. It was the church home of the young men from the Church of England who trained as members of the Royal Air Force at Falcon Field during World War II.

New dreams are coming to fruition with the purchase of property on East Fourth Street for a new church plant. Although leaving St. Mark's on West Pepper Place will be a tug at the heart strings of all communicants, it is time new horizons were conquered in the service of and the worship of our Lord who in His infinite wisdom makes all things possible to those who believe.

*This page printed in 1961.*

Records from the Missionary District of New Mexico and Arizona mention that Episcopalians were living in Mesa as early as 1889. Most were listed as members of the only area Episcopal Church, Trinity Parish in Phoenix which was 17 miles away. A "Mr. Evan Boys' School" (which later became the Mesa Ranch School) had been established around the turn of the century. (A son of President Theodore Roosevelt was one of its students.) Headmaster H. David Evans, an Episcopalian, later became a member of St. Mark's first Bishop's Committee. Trinity's Archdeacon Julius Walter Atwood (soon to be Bishop of the Missionary District of Arizona) stated the need for an Episcopal Church in Mesa to provide support for the Boys' School. A delegation from the newly formed Mission of St. Mark's was recognized and accepted by the Convocation. John W. Hagerlund was listed as the Warden. Mr. Evans, James E. Drain Sr., James Drain Jr., John Lowell

Jr., Dr. Alexander J. Chandler, and Dr. R.F. Palmer were listed as the Bishop's Committee. A quote from the *Journal of the 1909 Annual Convocation of the Missionary District of Arizona* states: "Archdeacon Atwood has organized St. Mark's Mission and has held Sunday evening services. A genuine interest prevailed. The church has appealed to man of the leading professional men in the community. The work is important on account of Mr. Evan's school in the neighborhood, which is of high order. Lots have been given for a church in Mesa and \$1000.00 is in sight for a building." This establishes St. Mark's as being accepted as a Mission on April 14, 1909. In 1910, St. Mark's had 30 communicants. The 137 West Pepper Place church was built at a cost of \$2500.00 on lots donated by Dr. Chandler. Surviving World War I and the depression era, St. Mark's stood but financially suffered and lost parochial status in 1935 and reverted to the status of an organized mission. The end of WWII found Mesa prospering as never before. St. Mark's population grew as well, and in 1953, they regained its Parish Status. In 1961, the present location (about 1 mile from the Pepper Place Church and in a rural area) for St. Mark's was purchased. The Sunday School buildings and Parish Hall (which was used as the Church for 20 years) were built in 1962. A new church building was completed in 1982. This building has won numerous prizes for its use of "natural lighting," a green feature of the times.

Today, St. Mark's finds itself one of the only two Episcopal Churches in Mesa. St. Mark's is recognized for its "outreach" to the community through its Loaves and Fishes Food Bank and adopting and supplying to the needs of neighboring schools and families. St. Mark's "in reach" continues to grow as well as dedicated parishioners give of their talents and time in serving God through the training of God's Word to adults and school children, through events harvesting camaraderie, through activities and committees working towards unity, and through the recognition of our heritage of 100 years of loving God and country and how proud we are to serve both.