

Cathy Nell's History of St. Elizabeth's Bazaar

Historiographer's Note: Cathy Nell was a member of Holy Trinity for many years prior to retiring to North Carolina. Among her many activities, Cathy was a vital member of St. Elizabeth Circle and a participant in its annual bazaar. Prior to leaving Gainesville, Cathy created a two-volume scrapbook, "The Notebook," chronicling the history of the St. Elizabeth's Bazaar with documents, clippings, and pictures. She has generously donated these to the Archives. In a subsequent email note to former Parish Administrator Mary Hitchner, Cathy contributed a history of bazaars at Holy Trinity, from inception through the acquisition of the Flower Shop, since transformed into "The Shop at Holy Trinity."

In Cathy's words:

"Here's what I remember.

There were fund-raising events/bazaars at Holy Trinity in the late 1800's. These are referred to in Ben Richards' history.

There were also bazaars in the early part of the 1900's. The Notebook has a Gainesville Sun photo of a "Bazaar Committee" from Holy Trinity around 1935-40?

The current holiday bazaar started in 1989. For several years prior to that St. Elizabeth Circle (composed mostly of young mothers at that time) had organized a Children's Market, which offered Church School children the opportunity to buy inexpensive gifts for family members, secretly. The market was set up in a classroom, with all gifts in the under-\$5 range. The youngsters were escorted by their teachers, who helped them select and package small gifts. (Parents were notified several weeks ahead to send the kids with shopping money).

In 1989, St. Elizabeth Circle decided to open up the "market" to the parish, and held a Saturday morning bazaar in the old Parish Hall. This bazaar was very modest by today's standards, with a table for children (like the old Children's Market) and a table for higher priced items (small gift baskets, etc.) and a flea market/collectibles area. I don't remember a lot about that event, except that we almost sold out and made very little money (\$600?), which went to sponsor summer camp scholarships at Camp Weed.

When the church burned in 1991, St. Elizabeth Circle held its first major bazaar, in a First Union Bank on University Avenue. Parish artists were invited to contribute pieces (which they very generously did). This was the first year Mary Crummer made fabric ornaments from pieces of the damaged vestments and altar hangings (which were de-consecrated prior to their use), and we sold crosses made from pieces of the salvaged altar wood. The Bazaar was successful (\$10,000 or so) and St. Elizabeth pledged a \$30,000 unrestricted gift to the Building Fund.

The next two Bazaars were held at First United Methodist Church. These bazaars relied heavily on the sale of relics from the burned church. Dot Sterling made plates, bowls, and angels using pieces of the stained glass. There were fine jewelry items (pendants, earrings, tie clips) made from the salvaged stained glass. Pieces of charred wood were made into Christmas creches, Episcopal shields and birdhouses by Chuck Moore. Sheets of music from charred hymnals were matted for framing, some of them hand-painted by Sharon McGinley-Nally. Similarly prayers from the Book of Common Prayer were matted for framing. Some of the charred wood pieces were sold "as is". Embroideries from the vestments and altar hangings were framed. That year, the Bazaar also included fresh greenery and plants (Judy Brashear), an expanded antiques area (Wayne Jamieson), bake sale, needlepoint kits based on the Children's Chapel kneelers (Cathy Nell), and more arts/crafts. At one of these Bazaars, there was a raffle

for a quilt contributed by the local quilters' guild to support the rebuilding effort. Goering Book Store had a book corner, with a percentage of the proceeds going to St. Elizabeth Circle. (After this bazaar, someone commented that if we could have bottled the smoke from the fire, we could have sold it!)

About this time, St. Elizabeth Circle began to issue a "catalog" to members of the Parish, so that they could pre-order items for holiday gifts. We did this for about four or five years. The \$30,000 pledge was satisfied, and St. Elizabeth pledged money to re-install the Ascension Window in the new church...\$13,000?

When the new parish hall was completed, the Bazaar was held there. Wayside Antiques and Christmas House had donated a warehouse full of new and slightly damaged ornaments and decorations to HT, which we sold for several years, and repurposed onto wreaths, etc. Martine Oakley Cox headed up a coffee project; collectible mugs bearing angel images from the Sharon McGinley kneelers were issued for each of four years in four different colors. Gift boxes included two mugs and a bag of Sweetwater Coffee. This project was very successful. The plant sale continued, as did the bake sale, pottery, art and jewelry tables. The Circle commissioned several original angel designs by Sharon McGinley, to be used on t-shirts, sweatshirts, and tote bags. A Silent Auction to benefit the Church School was added.

The \$13,000 pledge was paid off and St. Elizabeth Circle then used \$10,000-\$15,000 refurbishing the Lillycrop Room and history corridor. This involved commissioning a portrait of Bill Lillycrop, acquiring/framing pictures of the bishops, as well as purchasing/reupholstering furniture for the area. Proceeds were also used to design and install the garden between the Parish Hall and Church, and to finance the creation of needlepoint kneelers and chair cushions for the church. At this point the Bazaar was routinely clearing \$20,000, and the Committee decided to look beyond the needs of the Parish to the community at large. Gifts were made to the Child Caring Center (at least one scholarship annually to the preschool), to Duval School (to purchase items not covered by the budget), to Hospice of NC Florida (to purchase a large-print Bible), and many other smaller gifts I can't remember, but which you can find in The Notebook. The decision was made to commit 10% of the net proceeds each year to the Rector's Discretionary Fund.

As the Bazaar expanded, St. Elizabeth Circle found it difficult to continue workshops in homes, and had trouble storing items and supplies. There was a small closet on the second floor of the Education Building allocated for this purpose, but it proved insufficient. And it was very difficult to move items stored in the attic. **About 2002 the HT Foundation acquired the Flower Shop on the corner of NE 2nd and Main Streets, and allowed St. Elizabeth Circle the use of the building throughout the year to produce and store bazaar items. AT LAST!! a place to work. Having the Flower Shop made it feasible to collect and paint furniture, particularly small children's furniture and play kitchens, which became a trademark of the Bazaars that followed.** And the committee had space to make large floral pieces and small Christmas trees, using recycled materials acquired at garage & estate sales, as well as after-Christmas sales. The Preview Party was begun during this time, and proved extremely successful.

In recent years, St. Elizabeth Circle has partnered with the Vestry to host the Preview Party, and with the Brotherhood of St. Andrew to assist with staffing, set-up and clean-up, making the Bazaar a true Parish event. The art community within HT has supported the Bazaar from the very beginning, donating artwork, designing pieces such as the 10th Anniversary Commemorative print (Sharon McGinley) and annual posters, participating in art shows/sales. Ellie Blair has been a featured artist at many Bazaars. Souza Talbot and the late Ken Kerslake also contributed pieces. (I know there were others who I can't recall). The Director of Music provided entertainment for the Friday Preview Party for many years, and members of the folk and chancel choirs participated in creating a festive atmosphere for shoppers. Most recently, the Child Caring Center began to prepare and sell lunch on Saturday.”