

St. Stephen's Church

Latonia



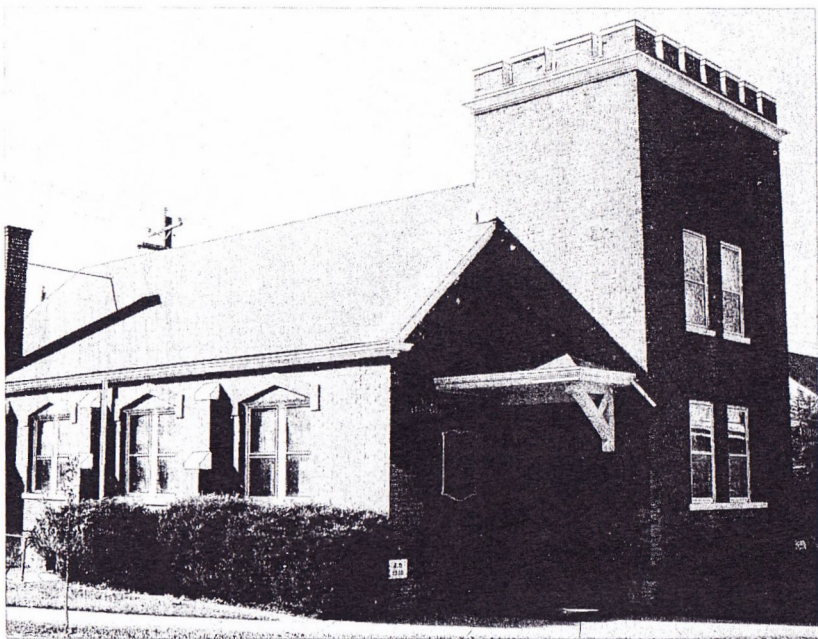
ST. STEPHEN'S CHURCH, LATONIA, in suburban Covington, was founded in 1907 by the Rev. Custis Fletcher, priest-in-charge of St. Andrew's Church, Fort Thomas.

A triangular lot of ground at Thirty-Ninth, DeCoursey and Lincoln Avenue was purchased for twenty-five dollars, and a trim church building of brick construction resting on a stone foundation was completed and dedicated in 1911. Designed by local architect Lyman Walker, its dominant visual element is a rectangular, two-story crenelated tower centered on the front of a gabled, story-and-a-half nave. The main entrance is to the side of the tower.

For forty years the mission was under the care of northern Kentucky clergy on part-time assignment from other churches and of lay readers. Rectors of Trinity, Covington; St. John's, Covington; St. Paul's, Newport; St. John's, Bellevue-Dayton; and St. Andrew's, Fort Thomas, were in charge of the mission from time to time.

In spite of hard economic conditions during and following the years of the Great Depression, progress was made under the direction of several rectors of St. Andrew's, Fort Thomas, including the Rev. J. Wilson Hunter, who placed special emphasis on youth work, bringing many young people into the mission, and the Rev. Allen Person, who encouraged lay participation, forming strong men's and women's groups.

On one occasion parishioners had worked long and hard to refurbish the church building in preparation for a visit by Bishop



Abbott. When he entered the church the bishop was overjoyed and exclaimed, "And to think I had been advised to close this place!"

The Rev. Morris W. Derr, a native of Allentown, Pennsylvania, who had completed thirty-one years in the ministry before coming to Latonia, became vicar in 1956. A Bible scholar and translator, this dedicated clergyman remained at St. Stephen's for nearly ten years. During his incumbency, the longest in the church's history, the congregation celebrated its golden jubilee in March 1958, and two months later attained parish status.

Upon Mr. Derr's retirement in 1965 there followed a succession of seminary graduates who served from one to three years as vicars. One of them, the Rev. Robert Horine, served as vicar for three years (1969-72). He introduced a ministry of healing, along with efforts to aid poor families in the community and to support the institutional work in the area.

During the rectorate of the Rev. Robert Hufford two celebrations of the Holy Eucharist on Sunday became the norm, and there were several mid-week celebrations. During Lent, services such as the Stations of the Cross, the Benediction of the Blessed Sacrament, and a Maundy Thursday foot washing were observed. Lectors, lay readers and chalice bearers were added, giving laymen a chance to serve in various capacities. Fr. Hufford resigned in 1992 to become chaplain to the Sisters of the Transfiguration in Glendale, Ohio. The Rev. Sarah M. Stanton became rector of St. Stephen's in 1993.

CLERGY

The Rev. Custis Fletcher, Jr.	1908-1910
The Rev. James Mitchell Magruder	1912-1913
The Rev. William Heilman	1914
The Rev. Joseph Edmund Thompson	1915-1916
The Rev. Peter Langendorff	1917
The Rev. Joseph Howard Gibbons	1918-1921
The Rev. Lorenzo Davenport Vaughan	1924-1925
The Rev. Frank Earl Cooley	1926-1929
The Ven. James Davis Gibson	1930
The Rev. J. Wilson Hunter	1933-1938
The Rev. William Gibson Pendleton	1939
The Rev. Allen Person	1944-1946
The Rev. Francis W. Kephart, Jr.	1953-1955
The Rev. Morris W. Derr	1956-1965
The Rev. Robert W. Planck	1967
The Rev. Robert B. Horine	1969-1972
The Rev. James L. White	1973-1975
The Rev. William E. Stark	1975-1976
The Rev. Christopher D.F. Bryce	1978
The Rev. James Gerhart	1979-1982
The Rev. Robert A. Hufford	1983-1992
The Rev. Sarah M. Stanton	1993-