

ST. LUKE'S CANDLE FESTIVAL SIXTY YEAR HISTORY- by Caroline Hussman



Some years ago, candles for decorative home use were not easy to buy, usually requiring an excursion to a downtown department store. And so it was, that the women of historic St. Luke's Episcopal Church in Brighton planned a Candle Festival in the Fall of 1960, featuring an attractive assortment of commercial bayberry, beeswax and colorful seasonal candles provided by a New England manufacturer.

(Early Candle Festival Watercolor by Pat Wilson)

Soon, parishioners perfected the making of candles, pouring the hot wax into intricate molds, as well as beeswax into antique forms. In subsequent years dried flowers and greens were grown and prepared to display the candles in arrangements, artfully constructed by members of the local garden clubs. This proved a most popular community attraction and the event grew to include a bake sale with the usual pies, cakes, breads and cookies and the signature Raspberry Tarts, which remain a specialty. Freshly shucked oysters on the half shell, country ham sandwiches, a steaming, fragrant cauldron of chicken soup ladled into bowls or Mason jars to take home, a barrel of cider decanted into cups or jugs, as well as local apples and pumpkins were also sold; not to mention local handcrafts including handwoven placemats from the loom of Deborah Iddings Willson who continued her contributions until she was nearly 100 years old! Over time, as restrictions for serving food to the public were enacted- and as candles became more widely available, the Fall Bazaar went in a new direction, though still referred to as "The Candle Festival" with only a few hand-rolled beeswax candles offered. A substantial yard sale, known as "Attic Treasures" was subsequently introduced.

Additionally, the women of the church neighborhood gathered at the instigation of Jan Byroad to make a quilt, which was then raffled for the benefit of the church and community. Over the years, more than twenty quilts have been designed, cut, hand-pieced and quilted.

Although we were not able to hold St. Luke's 60th Candle Festival, this year's quilt, as pictured here, will be raffled virtually on Zoom on March 14, 2021 at noon. When you buy a ticket, we will email the Zoom link to you. Raffle tickets may be purchased by visiting www.stlukebrighton.com. On the homepage, click Quilt Raffle Tickets and you will be taken to the order form. The cost is \$5.00 per ticket and may be paid by credit card or PayPal. If you prefer to pay by check please mail the check to St. Luke's, P.O. Box 131, Brookeville, MD 20833, write Quilt Raffle in the Memo Line and provide your email address to be included in the Zoom drawing. Mail must be postmarked by March 6, 2021.



St. Luke's will share the proceeds of the Quilt Raffle with the Sandy Spring Museum and Olney Help, with the expectation that this long-time event may again be celebrated in years to come.