

Lengthy Pastorates in the Diocese of New Jersey

This study grew out of a question that was asked of me: "Who was or is the longest continually serving cleric of a congregation in the Diocese?" After considerable digging quite a list began to emerge of pastorates of thirty years or more continuous service. Some lengthy incumbencies were interrupted by the Revolutionary War and will be noted below. For example, Thomas Chandler of St. John's, Elizabeth, served 39 years as rector of St. John's, Elizabeth, and much of his long pastorate was spent in the more hospitable confines of England during the Revolution. The actual number of years of each pastorate is rounded off to the calendar years involved.

Those clergy cures of 40 years or more include:

Alfred B. Baker, Trinity Church, Princeton, 1866-1914, 48 years
George Y. Morehouse, St. Andrew's, Mount Holly, 1815-1859, 44 years
Alfred Stubbs, Christ Church, New Brunswick, 1839-1883, 44 years
William L. Shelton, St. Barnabas', Villas, 1960-2002, 42 years
Robert G. W. Williams, Christ, Woodbury, 1918-1960, 42 years
George H. Boyd, St. Peter's, Perth Amboy, 1935-1976, 41 years
Thomas A. Conover, St. Bernard's, Bernardsville, 1899-1939, 40 years
William S. McKay, St. Augustine's, Camden, 1927-1967, 40 years
Harold J. Sweeney, Grace, Elizabeth, 1916-1956, 40 years
John M. Harper, St. Luke's, Gladstone, 1905-1945, 40 years

Those clergy cures of 30 to 39 years include:

Edward Vaughn, St. John's, Elizabeth, 1708-1747, 39 years
Thomas Chandler, St. John's, Elizabeth, 1751-1790, 39 years*
Martin Stockett, Our Savior, Camden, 1906-1945, 39 years
Robert MacKeller, Trinity, Red Bank, 1892-1931, 39 years
Clarence S. Wood, St. Luke's, Roselle, 1904-1943, 39 years
William Schmaus, Trinity, Woodbridge, 1942-1980, 38 years
Walter H. Stowe, Christ, New Brunswick, 1929-1966, 37 years
Charles Wharton, St. Mary's, Burlington, 1796-1833, 37 years
Parker Fish Auten, Trinity, Swedesboro, 1941-1977, 36 years
Lyttleton E. Hubbard, St. John's, Elizabeth, 1913-1949, 36 years
William Skinner, St. James', Edison, 1722-1758, 36 years**
Wm. V. Rauscher, Christ, Woodbury, 1960-1996, 36 years
James Chapman, St. Peter's, Perth Amboy, 1809-1844, 35 years
Harry J. Knickle, Grace, Plainfield, 1937-1972, 35 years
Morton A. Barnes, St. James', Long Branch, 1914-1949, 35 years
James L. Moore, St. Peter's, Medford, 1967-2002, 35 years
Bruce A. Weatherly, Trinity, Moorestown, 1959-1994, 35 years
Laurence D. Fish, St. David's, Cranbury, 1968-2002, 34 years
Thomas Higgons, St. Andrew's, Bridgeton, 1959-1993, 34 years
E. Vicars Stevenson, Grace, Plainfield, 1902-1936, 34 years
Elisha B. Joyce, Christ, New Brunswick, 1883-1916, 33 years
C. Canterbury Corbin, St. Augustine, A.C., 1924-1957, 33 years

Samuel Steinmetz, Sr., St. Michel's, Trenton, 1920-1953, 33 years
 Harry Finch, Christ, Shrewsbury, 1830-1863, 33 years
 Lloyd G. Chattin, Trinity Cathedral, Trenton, 1960-1993, 33 years
 Wm C. Heilman, St. Simeon's, N. Wildwood, 1931-1963, 32 years
 Erskine Rodman, Grace, Plainfield, 1870-1902, 32 years
 Charles P. Johnson, All Saints, Navesink, 1930-1962, 32 years
 Bernard Garlick, St. Peter's, Freehold, 1942-1974, 32 years
 William Lockwood, All Saints, Lakewood, 1943-1975, 32 years
 Harry R. Sorensen, All Saints, Navesink, 1962-1993, 31 years
 John F. Fenton, St. Luke's, Metuchen, 1899-1930, 31 years
 John Croes, Christ, New Brunswick, 1801-1832, 31 years***
 H.E. Durell, Ascension, Atlantic City, 1919-1950, 31 years
 Harry Ruth, St. Barnabas', Burlington, 1930-1961, 31 years
 W.W. Ridgeway, St. Wilfrid's, Camden, 1930-1961, 31 years
 William Ayers, St. Peter's, Freehold, 1767-1798, 31 years ****
 John Morrow, St. Luke's, Gladstone, 1965-1996, 31 years
 Fred Schultz, St. John's, Salem, 1952-1983, 31 years
 David Stowe, St. John's, Somerville, 1965-1996, 31 years
 Thomas V. Wingate, St. George's, Pennsville, 1931-1961, 30 years
 Robert Elliot, Holy Comforter, Rahway, 1908-1938, 30 years
 Rudolph Brestell, St. Paul's, Camden, 1905-1935, 30 years
 Gerald A. Reiss, St. Peter's, Clarksboro, 1964-1994

* Some years spent in England during the Revolution

** This is remarkable considering that he looked after St. James', Edison, St. Peter's, Perth Amboy, and St. Peter's, Spotswood, at the same time.

*** The first two bishops were Rectors of a church as well as Bishops of the Diocese. John Croes was rector for fourteen years and bishop/rector for another seventeen.

**** William Ayers served both Freehold and Spotswood during his 31 years. Mr. Ayers suffered from bouts of insanity, an inherited trait and one passed on to two of his daughters. The Revolution caused him to retreat into madness and, although technically still affiliated with the two congregations, he was often missing for long periods of time.

Fifty-two clergy are on our list and they represent 42 different congregations. Twenty-two of the congregations are in Trenton or south while twenty are north of Trenton. Several of the congregations have produced multiple long-term pastorates. Christ Church, New Brunswick, had four; Grace, Plainfield, and Elizabeth (St. John's) had three; Woodbury, Gladstone, Camden (St. Paul's), Freehold, and Navesink each had two.

The Rev. Canon Laurence D. Fish
 Historiographer
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