An Outline History of the Episcopal Diocese of Long Island

Canon Charles Lee Egleston, Historiographer
November 2018
Garden City, New York

Welcome to the Diocese of Long Island—The Episcopal Church in Brooklyn, Queens, Nassau and Suffolk.

As we celebrate 150 years of ministry to the people of God, I invite you to absorb the faithfulness and care of Episcopalians who have come before us captured in the pages that follow. I invite you to regard An Outline History of the Episcopal Diocese of Long Island in a manner reminiscent of the Prayer Book collect, “read, mark, learn and inwardly digest” these words.

The celebration of a significant anniversary, like a 150th anniversary, can merely be left as a storytelling of the past. But for us today, this anniversary is both a grateful remembrance of the past and an enthusiastic catapult to the future. From the foundation of our past faithfulness and history, we launch into the adventure of all that God is calling us to be in the name of Jesus Christ in this time, in this place, and with the ever-growing population of our diocese.

This anniversary comes at a time in which the Church’s presence, its teaching, and its sacramental life are an essential but little appreciated factor in the lives of God’s people. As our ancestors in faith accomplished, as told in the history of our diocese, we today are being called to a vigorous and faithful witness to the Gospel message of Jesus Christ.

I offer my congratulations to Canon Charles Egleston, Diocesan Historiographer, for his extraordinary work on this outline and offer the gratitude of the entire diocese for his hard work and dedication in this process.

So, sisters and brothers, read, mark, learn and yes, inwardly digest this history that together we might propel forward into the future the Trinity has prepared for us.

Faithfully,

The Right Reverend Lawrence C. Provenzano
VIII Bishop of Long Island
The roots of the Church on Long Island go back more than 300 years to the late 17th century. The Rev. Samuel Eburne was the first known person directly associated with the Church of England on Long Island. He was active in Brookhaven in 1685-1688. William Vesey was a lay reader for Anglicans in 1693 in Sagg (now known as “Sagaponack”) and in 1694-1695 in Hempstead, in a nondenominational chapel. In Jamaica, Anglicans worshipped in a nondenominational chapel erected in 1699, and may have worshipped previously in another chapel erected by the Dutch around mid-century.

On 22 September 1693 the legislature of the Province of New York passed “An Act for Settling a Ministry, and Raising a Maintenance for them in the City of New York, County of Richmond, Westchester, and Queens County”. For then royal governor Benjamin Fletcher, the purpose of the act was to establish the Church of England in New York City and contiguous areas.

Regular Anglican services on Long Island began in 1702 for two reasons. Edward Hyde, the Viscount Cornbury, the royal governor of the Province of New York from 1702 to 1708, was both determined and able to enforce the establishment of the Church of England in areas around New York City, and the province began to be served by clergy sent over by the Bishop of London through the Society for the Propagation of the Gospel in Foreign Parts (SPG). Documented in SPG correspondence with internal discipline), all of whom resented being taxed to support a Church of which they were not members.

On 27 July 1703, Cornbury ordered his attorney general to inquire into a riot in Jamaica that had resulted when Presbyterians had ejected Anglicans worshipping in the nondenominational chapel there. He subsequently insisted that the space be shared because the chapel had been built with public funds. Cornbury, or his representative, inscribed the title page of a 1701 Book of Common Prayer “to the Church in Jamaica” in October 1703. The prayer book is the oldest document in the Episcopal Diocese of Long Island Archives.

The Church of England in British North America was disrupted during the American Revolution, as would be expected with a denomination so closely allied with the crown. On Long Island some of the presbyteries and congregations were loyal to the mother country, such as those in Hempstead, and others were supportive of the revolution. After the August 1776 Battle of Long Island and during the remainder of the war until 1783, the British occupied New York City and its environs, including all of Long Island.
Following the battle, Sir William Howe, Sir Percy Clinton, Earl Cornwallis, and Prince William are said to have attended Sunday services at St. James', Newtown, in a church building that still exists. The present Caroline Church of Brooklyn was located in the crossfire of the 22 August 1777 Battle of Brooklyn. The churches in Huntington and Oyster Bay became derelict during the war, which accounts for the 19th century dates of their re-organization. In Grace Church, Jamaica, there is an 18th century Book of Common Prayer with paper taped over the name of the king of England in the prayers for the ruler.

An unintended benefit of the war in Kings County was that it marks the beginning of the Church of England in Brooklyn. Although it is said that as early as 1766 Anglican clergy would come over from New York City to Kings County for occasional services, the area was predominantly Dutch until the end of the 18th century. Both the British and their Hessian mercenaries burned Fairfield, Connecticut, in July 1779. Afterward, the Rev. James Sayre, who had been serving in Fairfield, took refuge in Brooklyn. In the sacramental registers for St. Ann's Church, Brooklyn, in the Diocese of Long Island Archives is the record of a 1780 baptism of a child by the Rev. James Sayre of the “Episcopal Church at Brooklyn Ferry.” The Rev. George Wright, St. Ann's rector from 1784 to ca. 1789, recorded the service in the registers, stating here that he copied it from a document that Sayre had certified.

The Episcopal Diocese of New York was organized in 1786 and the Rev. Samuel Provoost was elected its first bishop. Provoost and the Rev. William White of Pennsylvania were consecrated as bishops in Lambeth Palace in 1787. For Anglicans three bishops are necessary to consecrate a bishop, so the consecration of Provoost had certified.

An Outline History Of the Episcopal Diocese of Long Island

Appendix 2 of the Journal of the Primary Convention of the Protestant Episcopal Church in the Diocese of Long Island in the United States includes a list of 63 “Churches of the Diocese of Long Island, with the date of their Admission into Union with the Convention of the Diocese of New York.” Of these churches, 38 were in Kings County — four there noted as already “extinct” i.e., dissolved, and one “not in union with the Convention of Long Island,” 17 in Queens County, and 10 in Suffolk County, three of which were also “not in union with the Convention of Long Island.”

In 1868 in Kings County active churches included, St. Ann’s, All Saints’, Park Slope (organized 1867); Ascension, Greenpoint (organized 1846); Atonement, 239 17th Street (organized 1864; closed ca. 1983); Calvary, Williamsburg (organized 1849; merged with St. Cyprian’s in 1960); Christ Church, Cobble Hill (organized 1835);
1827); St. John’s, Cold Spring Harbor (organized 1825); Christ, Manhasset (organized 1802); Grace, South Jamaica; St. George’s, Oyster Bay; Grace, Whitestone (organized 1858); Redeemer, Oyster Bay (now known as “Massapequa”; organized 1848); St. Paul’s, Patchogue (organized 1844).

In Kings County the four disolved churches listed are Ascension, 3rd Place and Smith Street (organized 1852; dissolved before 1868); Calvary, Pearl Street and Concord Street (organized 1840; dissolved ca. 1861); St. Thomas’, Bridge Street, near Myrtle Street (organized 1843 or before; dissolved before 1868); and St. John’s, North 4th Street and 6th Street (organized 1853; dissolved before 1868). The church site for Ascension with the Convention of Long Island is St. James’, St. James Place (organized May 25, 1868; closed ca. 1955).

In Suffolk County the three churches “not in union with the Convention of Long Island” are St. Paul’s, Chapel East (likely a misprint for “St. Luke’s, East Hampton,” which was organized in 1840); Holy Trinity, Greenport (organized July 1865); and St. Paul’s, Patchogue (organized February 9, 1814).

Appendix 3 of the primary convention journal gives the total number of communicants in the diocese in 1868 as 9,014; 6,917 in Kings County, and 243 in Suffolk County.

Bishop Littlejohn laid out the goals of his episcopate in his address to the second convention of Long Island held 29 September-1 October 1869 in the Church of the Holy Trinity. For Queens County and Suffolk the directive was to establish churches. The need in Kings County was ministry to the poor. Brooklyn was the fourth largest city in the United States with a population of 330,000 inhabitants. There was no public assistance of any kind, save an incipient public school system and almshouses. Disease, death, and dire poverty wracked the community. It is intended, as the ability shall be given to, to shelter and care for friendless childhood and hopeless old age, for married couples near the close of life, and for the poor, for the sick who shall be gathered into institutions and hospitals. It is also part of its comprehensive design to create a training school for nurses of the sick, a home for those who shall desirous its lives to work of mercy, and a dispensary for the inside sick poor.

The three churches were included in the Bishop’s diocesan address of 1868 in the Church of the Holy Trinity. For Queens County and Suffolk the directive was to establish churches. The need in Kings County was ministry to the poor. Brooklyn was the fourth largest city in the United States with a population of 330,000 inhabitants. There was no public assistance of any kind, save an incipient public school system and almshouses. Disease, death, and dire poverty wracked the community. It is intended, as the ability shall be given to, to shelter and care for friendless childhood and hopeless old age, for married couples near the close of life, and for the poor, for the sick who shall be gathered into institutions and hospitals. It is also part of its comprehensive design to create a training school for nurses of the sick, a home for those who shall desirous its lives to work of mercy, and a dispensary for the inside sick poor.

Of the three clerical members of the Church Charity Foundation committee listed at the 1869 convention, two were from Brooklyn. The other, the Rev. Thomas Cook, was an assistant at Grace Church, Jamaica, who had been a missionary to Jewish immigrants on the Lower East Side of Manhattan. He was soon sent to Riverhead in Suffolk County as a missionary by Bishop Littlejohn; by the time of his death on 1 May 1884, Cook had founded three churches in Suffolk and at least six churches in Suffolk County, as well as building up other churches in Suffolk.

For the first nine years of its existence, the Diocese of Long Island was based in Brooklyn, where the Church of the Holy Trinity was its pro-cathedral, serving as the bishop’s seat until a cathedral could be built. The diocese moved to the Village of Garden City because of the Cathedral of the Incarnation.

The history of the cathedral begins with the department store magnate A. T. (Alexander Turner) Stewart, who from 1869 had been developing a planned community, the Village of Garden City, on the Hempstead Plains in Eastern Queens County. At the center of the community there was to be a church that would be in keeping with the place. Bishop Frederick Burgess mentions Stewart in his address to the May 1901 convention of the Diocese of Long Island saying, “he proposed to have a mausoleum and what he would, in effect, have called a non-sectarian church.” Unfortunately, Stewart died unexpectedly on 10 April 1876. His substantial fortune and the fulfillment of his plans were then left to his wife, Cornelia Clinic Stewart. She and Stewart’s executor, Judge Henry Hilton, continued the project, and work began on a church designed by architect Henry G. Harrison. In a letter dated 9 June 1877, Cornelia Stewart formally offered to Bishop Littlejohn the church for use as the cathedral for the Diocese of Long Island, and he accepted. The original of Mrs. Stewart’s letter is in the Diocese of Long Island Archives. It is not known why Littlejohn chose “incarnation” as the name of the diocese’s cathedral, but it relates to the motto be chose for the Episcopal Diocese of Long Island: “I Will Set His Dominion in the Sea,” a phrase from the Psalm for Christmas in the Prayer Book use in at the formation of the diocese.

Cornelia Stewart shortly afterward expanded her Garden City gift to the Diocese of Long Island to include a See House, a residence and office for the bishop, and two preparatory schools – the Cathedral School of St. Paul for boys and the Cathedral School of St. Mary for girls. She also committed funds to an endowment for the continued support of the Cathedral Building which was the bequest required the bishop to live in See House, he moved then to Garden City. The Remsen Street building then became the diocesan offices in Brooklyn.

From 1871 the Bishop of Long Island’s residence was at 170 Remsen Street, Brooklyn, but because Mrs. Stewart’s bequest required the bishop to live in See House, he relocated to Garden City in 1884. The Remsen Street building then became the diocesan offices in Brooklyn.

With the expansion of suburbs, the development of roads and highways, and the extension of the Long Island Railroad Road in the 1870s and 1880s, more of the island became accessible, and while the charitable works of the diocese increased in Kings County, the city continued to grow, and new churches were built throughout the diocese.

In Brooklyn, St. Augustine’s, the diocese’s first African-American church, was organized in 1875 and Bishop...
Littlejohn opened St. Peter’s, a settlement house and home for social workers, on 8 February 1882. On 24 May 1883 Bishop Littlejohn led the innovation at the opening of the Brooklyn Bridge.

By the 19-20 May 1883 convention of the diocese, the convention reports of the Church Charity Foundation and the Missionary Committee fill 10 and 15 pages respectively. The journal of this convention lists 42 churches and chapels with 14,153 communicants in Kings County (and also 4 missions for which no communicant numbers are listed); 31 churches and chapels, with 2,735 communicants in Queens County; and 28 churches and chapels in Suffolk County, with 903 communicants. In total there were 17,789 communicants reported to that convention, 80 percent of who were communicants in Brooklyn churches. All of the Suffolk churches listed in this May 1883 journal of convention are still in existence.

The Cathedral Chapter was incorporated on 20 April 1885 and the Cathedral of the Incarnation was consecrated on 2 June 1885, when Mrs. Stewart presented the deed to the bishop. At the service, all of the ushers were transitional deacons, persons who had been ordained to the diaconate and who were shortly to be ordained to the priesthood. The ushers wore silk scarves on which were figured the seal of the diocese. In the Diocese of Long Island Archives holds one of these scarves. With the opening of the cathedral, Brooklyn’s Church of the Holy Trinity ended its status as the pro-cathedral of the diocese.

Mrs. Stewart died in Saratoga Springs on 25 October 1886. She was interred in the Crypt Chapel of the Cathedral beside her husband on 28 October. Shortly after her death the diocesan sued Judge Henry Hilton for having withheld funds to build the Cathedral School of the Diocese of Long Island. The suit concluded successfully in 1889 and the buildings for the Cathedral School of St. Mary opened in 1892. The population of Brooklyn at this time stood at almost one million. The journal of the 19-20 May 1891 convention reports 49 churches and chapels, with 10,164 communicants in Brooklyn; 31 churches and chapels in Queens, with 3,534 communicants; and 24 churches and chapels in Suffolk County, with 1,354 communicants. In total there are 25,072 communicants in the Diocese of Long Island reported to the 1891 convention; seventy-nine total there are 23,072 communicants in the Diocese of Long Island.

During Bishop Littlejohn’s episcopate, from the establishment of the Diocese of Long Island in 1868 to its May 1901 35th convention, not including the cathedral, 57 new parishes and missions had been organized on Long Island: 21 in Brooklyn, 18 in Queens and Nassau, and 18 in Suffolk. Newly organized in Brooklyn were Guaion Church (organized 1869; now known as St. George’s Church, Marcy Avenue); Holy Apostles (organized 1892); Holy Comforter, Deboisoe Street near Humboldt Street (organized 1889; closed ca. 1920); Holy Communion, Cypress Hills (organized 1869; closed ca. 1869); Holy Cross, St. Nicholas Avenue (organized 1896; closed ca. 1908); Holy Spirit, Bay Parkway (organized 1897); Mediator (organized 1869; closed ca. 1876); Nativity, Ocean Avenue (organized 1896; St. Alban’s, Canarsie (organized 1896); St. Andrew’s, 4th Avenue (organized 1889); St. Barnabas’, Bushwick Avenue (organized 1870; closed 1903); St. Bartholomew’s, Pacific Street (organized 1891); St. James, 55th Street and 14th Avenue (organized 1890; closed ca. 1929); St. Matthias’, Sheepshead Bay (organized ca. 1895; closed 1913); St. Peter’s, Woodside Avenue (organized 1872; and St. Timothy, Howard Avenue, near Atlantic Avenue (organized 1889; closed ca. 1921). Newly organized in Queens and Nassau were St. Andrew’s, Astoria (organized 1901; closed ca. 2006); All Saints’, Bayside (organized 1892); St. John’s, Far Rockaway (organized 1881; in 1874 merged with Trinity, Rockaway to form “Trinity-St. John’s, Hewlett”); St. John’s, Flushing (organized 1894); All Saints’, Richmond Hill (organized 1897; in 2010 merged into the former St. Matthew’s, Woodhaven and now known as “All Saints’, Woodhaven”); St. Thomas’, Farmingdale (organized 1872); a U. S. Army chapel at Willets Point (organized ca. 1897; closed ca. 1903); St. Matthew’s, Woodhaven (organized 1900; closed ca. 2010); St. Paul’s, Woodside (organized 1873); Transfiguration, Freeport (organized 1892); Holy Trinity, Hicksville (organized 1895); St. Christopher’s, Massapequa (organized 1894; closed ca. 1917); Nativity, Mineola (organized 1899; in 2010 merged with St. Andrew’s, Williston Park, the merged church now known as “Resurrection, Williston Park”); St. Stephen’s, Port Washington (organized 1892; Trinity, Roslyn (organized 1899); and St. Michael and All Angels, Seafield (organized 1899; newly organized in Suffolk were St. Mary’s, Amityville (organized 1886); Christ Church, Babylon (organized 1869); St. Peter’s, Bay Shore (organized 1888); Christ Church, Bellport (organized 1896); St. Luke’s, Bohemia (organized 1884; closed ca. 1995); Christ Church, Brentwood (organized 1872); St. James’, Brooklyn (organized 1873); St. John the Baptist, Center Moriches (organized 1906); Messiah, Central Islip (organized 1889); St. John’s, Fisher’s Island (organized 1887).
By 1901 the Church Charity Foundation managed five institutions: a home for the aged, an orphan house, St. John’s Hospital, a training school for nurses, and a home for the blind. Although directed by men, women, in particular the Sisters of the Order of St. John the Evangelist, did much of the work of the foundation. In the years leading up to Bishop Littlejohn’s sudden death of a stroke on 3 August 1901, there had been an undercurrent of criticism that the diocese had grown too large to be properly led by one person who was clearly becoming impaired by age, but he had refused to call for a suffragan or a coadjutor.

The rector of Grace Church, Brooklyn Heights from 1898, the Rev. Frederick Burgess (born 1853), was elected bishop just before 18 and 21 November 1901 on the tenth ballot at a special convention that had begun on the previous day. Bishop 204 in the American Episcopate, and the second bishop of the Diocese of Long Island, Burgess was consecrated 15 January 1902 at Grace, Brooklyn Heights, by Bishops Henry C. Potter (New York, consecrator), William C. Doane, and John Scarborough.

The first convention of the Diocese of Long Island addressed by Bishop Burgess was on 20-21 May 1902. In his address, he proposed to support the Garrison City buildings, to provide needed funds for the upkeep on the buildings of the many charitable enterprises the diocese had erected in Brooklyn, and to provide a fund for the purchase of land for new foundations of churches and chapels. The 1902 journal reports 56 churches and 25,075 communicants (21 of which had 300 or more communicants); 48 churches and chapels in Queens and Nassau, with 5,847 communicants (only two of which had more than 500 communicants – Redenem, Astoria (625) and St. George’s, Flushing (700)); and 274 churches and chapels in Suffolk with 2,103 communicants, including three, 9,923 communicants in 78 churches and chapels the seventy-six percent of whom were communicants in Brooklyn churches. The total of contributions was $857,195.46.

Bishop Burgess’s appeal for funds began successfully, as the total contributions reported to the next convention was $941,496.25. The Rev. John Davis, author of *The Dominion is the Sea*, a 1917 history of the Episcopal Diocese of Long Island, credits Burgess not only for selling these appeals, but for his “ability to sell the issue of churches falling into excessive debt. Burgess insisted on the property prerogatives granted him by recent amendments to the Religious Corporation Law of New York State that made it mandatory a bishop to guaranty the diocese’s financial future. This issue would come to the fore with the near-default of the mortgage of St. Barnabas’ Church in Brooklyn. The 170 Rensou Street property in Brooklyn was renamed “Diocesan Mission House”, and Burgess decided to include an apartment for the bishop in 1902. Burgess opened it with a benefaction service on 6 January 1903.

Bishop Burgess had to deal with some major shifts in society during his episcopate to include the temperance movement, the growing clamor of African-Americans and women for rights, the increase in divorce, and the disruptions of World War I.

The open-church movement advocated allowing ministers from other denominations to preach from Episcopal pulpits. Progressives and evangelical Episcopalians were in favor of the policy, but conservatives and Anglo-Catholics were not. A policy was created at the General Convention of 1907 by which rectors wanting to open their pulpits were required to obtain the permission of the bishop of the diocese. Bishop Burgess’s refusal to allow the Church of the Holy Trinity, Brooklyn, permission to have guest ministers preach in the coming season of Lent is recorded in the yearly minutes of Holy Trinity of 20 September 1907 in the Diocese of Long Island Archives.

The Woman’s Board of the Church Charity Foundation was created in 1902 to support the work of the foundation. Until the early 1950s, in the absence of funds and land to site churches in Queens and Nassau for the Home of St. Giles the Cripple, and he removed the issues that would come to the fore with the near-default of the mortgage of St. Barnabas’ Church in Brooklyn. The 170 Rensou Street property in Brooklyn was renamed “Diocesan Mission House”, and Burgess decided to include an apartment for the bishop in 1902. Burgess opened it with a benefaction service on 6 January 1903.

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work had begun with a groundbreaking for the hospital’s Walter Gibb Memorial Chapel on the day after Ascension Day 1925. Stires served as chairman of the board of the hospital and oversaw the construction of the hospital’s new building, which was dedicated in 1948. The total number of communicants in the diocese of Long Island at the time of Stires’ death was 61,642, with 16,670 communicants in the Archdeaconry of Queens and Nassau, 16,670 in the Archdeaconry of Suffolk, and 2,697 in the Archdeaconry of the city of New York. The total number of communicants in the diocese has since increased to 98,347 in 2018.

During his episcopate, Stires called for two suffragans. Bishop Stires had some success in expanding the church’s outreach by supporting the establishment of new churches. In 1926, he organized the first of two new churches, St. John’s Chapel, in the city of New York, and in 1927, he organized the second, St. Thomas, in the Archdeaconry of Queens and Nassau. In 1928, he organized the third, St. Anne’s, in the Archdeaconry of Suffolk. In 1929, he organized the fourth, St. Mark’s, in the Archdeaconry of Queens and Nassau. The total number of communicants in the diocese of Long Island at the time of Stires’ death was 61,642, with 16,670 communicants in the Archdeaconry of Queens and Nassau, 16,670 in the Archdeaconry of Suffolk, and 2,697 in the Archdeaconry of the city of New York. The total number of communicants in the diocese has since increased to 98,347 in 2018.

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It was the height of the Cold War, and politicians, the public, and the media all involved themselves in the struggle which is in the Church interior taken in January 1956 showing two priests conducting services at the same time made the national news. A copy of a newspaper with this photograph is in the Archives.

DeWolfe died in office on 15 February 1966. Bishop Jonathan G. Sherman was elected the fifth bishop of Long Island on the first ballot at the convention on 19 March 1966.

Bishop Sherman first addressed the diocese at the convention of 17 May 1966. Like DeWolfe in his first address, Sherman’s emphasis was on spiritual renewal rather than on programs and finance. At this convention it is reported that there were 73,816 communicants in the diocese: 15,805 in the Archdeaconry of Brooklyn; 43,144 in the Archdeaconry of Queens and Nassau; and 14,867 in the Archdeaconry of Suffolk. Sixteen churches: 12 in Brooklyn, 22 in Queens and Nassau, and eight in Suffolk have 500 or more communicants.

Sherman’s next address to convention offers more detail about his agenda and it is clear in retrospect that he was too optimistic that the growth of the diocese would continue at the pace seen during DeWolfe’s episcopate. He speaks of expansions for both the cathedral schools, and planning for a new Episcopal high school to be built at the former Mitchell Field in Garden City. Bishop Sherman’s plans for the schools were ill-considered.

The housing incentives given to returning World War II veterans had resulted in strong growth in the wealthier areas of Long Island, and although Roman Catholic high schools on the island had flourished, Episcopal education was not as robust. Economic recessions in the mid-1970s and mid-1980s underla the idea of the school at Mitchell Field and resulted in diminished enrollments in the cathedral schools.

St. John Smithtown Hospital was erected by the diocese beginning in 1966, a fact Bishop Sherman mentions with pride in his convention address. The plant was sold to Catholic Health Services of Long Island in 2000. In July 1979 the Church Closed Fund took over a failing hospital in Far Rockaway, which was renamed St. John’s. The foundation changed its name to Episcopal Health Services in 1986.

The only parish began during Sherman’s episcopate was St. Catharine’s, Nelders (organized 1967), in Suffolk County.

The Venerable Richard Beaumont Martin (born 1913), the Archdeacon of Brooklyn, was then the rector of St. Philip’s Church, McNamara Street, was elected suffragan on 8 October 1966. Bishop 620 in the American Episcopate was consecrated in the Cathedral of the Incarnation on 2 February 1967 by Bishops John Ehrlich Himes (Presiding Bishop, consecrator), Jonathan G. Sherman, and Lauriston Livingston Safft.

Bishop Sherman called for a coadjutor in 1974. The Rev. Robert Campbell Witcher (born 1926) was elected coadjutor bishop of the Diocese of Long Island on the 11th ballot of the convention on 15 October 1974, after the Rev. George Hill, nominated from the floor, had withdrawn his name. Bishop 273 in the American Episcopate and the sixth bishop of Long Island, Witcher was consecrated in the Cathedral of the Incarnation on 7 April 1975 by Bishops John Maury Allin (Presiding Bishop, consecrator), Jonathan G. Sherman, and Iowsen Bacheelor Nolze.

Bishop Witcher became diocesan on Bishop Sherman’s retirement in 1977. Witcher was installed, installed, and enthroned on 25 June 1977. Bishop Sherman died 27 October 1985 and was interred in Hawleyville, Connecticut.

Bishop Witcher first addressed the diocese at the convention of 18 February 1978. In his address he says that he will try to govern as an executive. His goal is good corporate stewardship and efficiency: “for the years that God has given me to serve among you as Bishop, I conceive of three stages: The first will be a time for re-evaluation of what we have been doing and setting goals for our future life and work together. The second stage will be focused on program development to ascertain the needs of the people and to extend God’s Kingdom to them through his Church. The final phase will be the operational stage with constant evaluation during this time.” He continues, “Our present effort is to make us re-evaluate the way we raise money, the way we spend money, and the things we spend it for.” He also said that he would emphasize small group meetings with clergy and laity for evangelization and spiritual renewal. The 18 February 1978 journal of convention reports 41,846 communicants in the Archdeaconry of Brooklyn, 33,514 in the Archdeaconry of Queens and Nassau, and 17,173 in the Archdeaconry of Suffolk, for a total of 65,533 communicants. Of the churches reporting 500 or more communicants, six were in Brooklyn, five in Queens, 17 in Nassau, and 13 in Suffolk.

The former Bishop of Botswana, the Rt. Rev. C. Shannon Malory, served as assistant bishop from 1979 to 1980.

The Rev. Henry B. Houches (born 1928), rector of St. George’s Church, Brooklyn, was elected suffragan bishop of the Diocese of Long Island on the convention on 14 March 1981. Bishop 760 in the American Episcopate. Henry B. Houches was the only allosed to consecrate bishops, because he had addressed the complex situation in an extensive letter in the September-October 1991 issue of the diocesan newspaper, Tidings, a copy of which is in the Diocesan Office of Long Island Archives. There are no parochial statistics in the 1991 journal of convention.

In the journal of the 14 November 1992 convention of the Diocese of Long Island the total number of communicants given is 45,534; 9,461 in the Archdeaconry of Brooklyn; 8,879 in the Archdeaconry of Queens; 14,923 in the Archdeaconry of Nassau; and 12,291 in the Archdeaconry of Suffolk. In his address to the convention, Bishop Walker speaks of his “Master Plan,” which he urges the delegates to approve. Through this plan, the trustees of Mercers and Episcopal Charities respectively would function independently of the Standing Committee. Bishop Walker identifies a newly-erected parish house at the Church of St. Alban the Martyr and a new church building for St. Gabriel’s, Flatbush, as accomplishments. He addresses in some detail the merger of St. John’s Episcopal Hospital and Brooklyn Jewish Hospital, called Interfaith Medical Center in Brooklyn, as well as a newly-established drug treatment center at St. Cyprian’s, Brooklyn, and mentions Bishop Sherman Nursing Home in Smithtown, and a ground-breaking for Bishop Henry B. Houches Nursing Home, scheduled for February 1993. He alludes to the severing of a relationship between a priest and parish, without naming either, and he announces that both he and an archdeacon in his diocese had been sued, without referring to the nature of the suit. He makes no reference to a developing situation with the cathedral schools.

On 9 April 1993 the Cathedral of the Incarnation filed for bankruptcy protection, and that year the New York State Supreme Court agreed that the Village of Garden City could take by eminent domain the Cathedral School of St. Paul, which they wanted for playing fields. With the 1996 dismissal of a suit by the Garden City Company, the Cathedral Corporation emerged from its legal problems. The buildings of the Cathedral School of St. Mary were demolished in 2001.

The Rev. Rodney R. Michel (born 1943), then rector of St. Peter’s, Bay Shore, was elected suffragan on the third ballot on 2 November 1996. Bishop 928 in the American Episcopate, Michel was the Cathedral of the Incarnation by Bishops Edmond L. Browning (Presiding Bishop, consecrator), Orris G. Walker, Jr., and Robert C. Witcher.

In June 2008 Holy Spirit Church, Flushing, a union of St. John’s, Flushing and Trinity-St. Anthony, was organized. This institution appears to have lapsed, as the name is no longer used by 2005. The journal of the 16-11 November 2006 convention reports 39,799 communicants: 11,647 in the
Archdeaconry of Brooklyn; 6,790 in the Archdeaconry of Queens; 10,051 in the Archdeaconry of Nassau; and 11,311 in the Archdeaconry of Suffolk.

Suffragan Bishop Michel retired in 2007, the last publication year of a printed journal of convention for the Diocese of Long Island to date.

The Diocese of Long Island received much unsavory publicity during Bishop Walker’s tenure for certain events that pre-dated his tenure and others over which he had little or no control.

Bishop Walker called for a coadjutor at the convention of the diocese in November 2007. The Rev. Lawrence C. Provenzano (born 1955) was elected bishop coadjutor on the second ballot on 21 March 2009. Bishop Walker retired in early 2009 and died on 28 February 2015. His ashes were interred in the Crypt Chapel of the Cathedral of the Incarnation during a memorial service on 21 March 2015.

The Right Rev. David Joslin, retired Bishop of Central New York, led the Diocese of Long Island as interim bishop from May 2009 until the consecration of Bishop-elect Provenzano. Bishop 1,037 in the American Episcopate and the eighth bishop of Long Island, Provenzano was consecrated 19 September 2009 at the Tilles Center for the Performing Arts, Long Island University, Greenvale, New York, by Bishops Katharine Jefferts Schori (Presiding Bishop, consecrator), Gordon Paul Scruton, and George Edward Councell.

Bishop Provenzano first addresses the Diocese of Long Island in convention in November 2009. In his address he downplays the role of the archdeaconries in the diocese, indicating his intention “to allow parishes to cross deanery and archdeaconry boundaries to provide support, resources, and learning to each other.” Elsewhere in his address he says, “the use of funding will shift from diocesan directed endeavors to parish/mission directed endeavors. We will plan to spend dollars where mission is happening and where mission is possible.” He recommends increasing the use of Camp DeWolfe as a diocesan conference center.

Matters of social justice, particularly concerns for immigrants and the empowerment of women and sexual minorities, have been emphasized during Bishop Provenzano’s episcopate to date. Bishop Provenzano is a member of Bishops United Against Gun Violence. At the General Convention of the Episcopal Church in 2018, he co-authored a resolution proposing the right of parish clergy to officiate at same-gender marriages in their local church without requiring the permission of the diocesan bishop.

One church or mission been organized during Bishop Provenzano’s episcopate, Bushwick Abbey, St. Nicholas Avenue, Brooklyn (organized ca. 2013).

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The Right Reverend Ernest Milmore Stires  
Third Bishop of Long Island  
1925–1942  
Born, May 20, 1866, Norfolk, Virginia  
Married, Sarah McKinne Hardwick, January 11, 1894  
Died, February 12, 1951, Palm Beach, Florida  
University of Virginia, 1888  
Ordained deacon, June 26, 1891  
Ordained priest, June 24, 1892  
Rector, St. John’s, West Point, Virginia, 1891–1892  
Rector, Church of the Good Shepherd, Augusta, Georgia, 1892–1893  
Priest-in-Charge, Grace, Chicago, Illinois, 1893–1895  
Rector, Grace, Chicago, Illinois, 1895–1901  
Rector, St. Thomas, New York, New York, 1901–1925  
Consecrated Bishop, November 24, 1925, St. Thomas, New York, New York  

The Right Reverend James Pernette DeWolfe  
Fourth Bishop of Long Island  
1942–1966  
Born, April 7, 1895, Kansas City, Kansas  
Married, Elizabeth Spitler Owen, June 28, 1916  
Died, February 6, 1966, Brooklyn, New York  
St. John’s University, 1919  
Ordained deacon, June 1919  
Ordained priest, December 1919  
Rector, St. Peter’s, Pittsburg, Kansas, 1919–1922  
Rector, St. Andrew’s, Kansas City, Missouri, 1922–1934  
Rector, Christ, Houston, Texas, 1934–1940  
Dean, Cathedral of St. John the Divine, New York, New York, 1940–1942  
Consecrated Bishop May 1, 1942, Cathedral of the Incarnation, Garden City, New York  

The Right Reverend Jonathan Goulbue Sherman  
Suffragan Bishop 1949–1965  
Fifth Bishop of Long Island 1966–1977  
Born, June 13, 1907, St. Louis, Missouri  
Married, Frances LeBaron Cassedy, January 1, 1938  
Died, October 27, 1989  
Yale University, 1929  
Ordained deacon, June 1933  
Ordained priest, June 1934, St. John’s, Bridgeport, Connecticut  
Fellow and Tutor, General Theological Seminary, New York, New York, 1933–1935  
Rector, St. Thomas’, Bellmore, New York, 1938–1949  
Consecrated Suffragan Bishop of Long Island, January 6, 1949, Cathedral of the Incarnation, Garden City, New York  
Elected Bishop, March 19, 1966  
Installed as Bishop, June 10, 1966, Cathedral of the Incarnation, Garden City, New York  

The Right Reverend Robert Campbell Witcher  
Bishop Coadjutor 1975–1977  
Sixth Bishop of Long Island 1977–1991  
Born, October 5, 1926, New Orleans, Louisiana  
Married, Elizabeth Alice Cole, June 6, 1957  
Tulane University, 1949  
Ordained deacon, July 6, 1952, Christ Cathedral, New Orleans, Louisiana  
Ordained priest, June 1, 1953, St. James’, Baton Rouge, Louisiana  
Curate, St. James’, Baton Rouge, Louisiana, 1952–1953  
Priest-in-Charge, St. Andrew’s, Clinton, Louisiana, 1952–1953  
Priest-in-Charge, St. Patrick’s, Zachary, Louisiana, 1953–1957  
Priest-in-Charge, St. Augustine’s, Baton Rouge, Louisiana, 1953–1954  
Rector, St. Augustine’s, Baton Rouge, Louisiana, 1954–1961  
Canon Pastor, Christ Cathedral, New Orleans, Louisiana, 1961–1962  
Consecrated Coadjutor Bishop, April 1, 1973, Cathedral of the Incarnation, Garden City, New York  
Installed as Bishop, June 25, 1977, Cathedral of the Incarnation, Garden City, New York
John Insley Blair Larned
Suffragan Bishop 1929-1947
Born, October 5, 1883, Chicago, Illinois
Died, December 6, 1955
Ordained deacon, June 1911
Ordained priest, June 1912
Consecrated Suffragan Bishop February 11, 1929, Cathedral of the Incarnation, Garden City, New York

Frank W. Creighton
Suffragan Bishop 1933-1937
Born, December 3, 1879, Philadelphia, Pennsylvania
Died, December 23, 1948, Washington, D.C.
Ordained deacon, December 1914
Ordained priest, June 1915
Consecrated Missionary Bishop of Mexico, St. Ann’s, Brooklyn New York, January 12, 1926
Elected as Suffragan Bishop of Long Island, January 24, 1933

Charles Waldo MacLean
Suffragan Bishop 1962-1975
Born, June 28, 1903, Lincoln, Nebraska
Died, March 22, 1985
Ordained deacon, May 1928
Ordained priest, February 1929
Consecrated as Suffragan Bishop, February 14, 1962, Cathedral of the Incarnation, Garden City, New York

Richard Reamonn Martin
Suffragan Bishop 1967-1974
Born, February 23, 1913, Peak, South Carolina
Died, April 11, 2012
Ordained deacon, June 1942
Ordained priest, February 1943
Consecrated as Suffragan Bishop, February 2, 1967, Cathedral of the Incarnation, Garden City, New York

Henry B. Hucles, III
Suffragan Bishop 1981-1988
Born, September 21, 1923, New York, New York
Died, August 4, 1989, Gloucester, Virginia
Ordained deacon, June 1942
Ordained priest, September 1943
Consecrated as Suffragan Bishop, June 20, 1981, Cathedral of the Incarnation, Garden City, New York

Rodney Rae Michel
Suffragan Bishop 1997-2007
Born, February 7, 1943, Petersburg, Nebraska
Ordained deacon, June 21, 1970, St. Mark’s-on-the-campus, Lincoln, Nebraska
Ordained priest, December 1, 1970, St. Mark’s, Gordon, Nebraska
Consecrated as Suffragan Bishop, April 12, 1997, Cathedral of the Incarnation, Garden City, New York

Shannon Mallory
Assistant Bishop 1979-1980
Bishop of Botswana 1972-1979
James H. Otley
Assistant Bishop 2007-2009
Bishop of Panama 1984-1985
Bishop of El Salvador 1983-1992
Assistant Bishop of South East Florida 2001-2004
Bishop of Honduras 2000-2001

David B. Johlin
Interim Bishop 2009
Assisting Bishop of New Jersey 2000-2003
Assisting Bishop of Rhode Island 2004-2015

Chilton Knudsen
Assistant Bishop 2014-2015
Bishop of Maine 1998-2008
Interim Bishop of Lexington 2011-2012
Assisting Bishop of New York 2015-2015

Geralyn Wolf
Assistant Bishop 2015-present
Bishop of Rhode Island 1996-2012

Daniel S. A. Allotey
Assistant Bishop 2015-present
Bishop of Cape Coast, Ghana 2003-2014

The Right Reverend Orris George Walker, Jr.
Seventh Bishop of Long Island 1991-2009

The Right Reverend Lawrence C. Provenzano
Eighth Bishop of Long Island 2009-2015

Born, November 5, 1942, Baltimore, Maryland
Married, Norma Eley McKinney Dixon, June 12, 1971
Died, February 28, 2015, Detroit, Michigan

University of Maryland, 1964
Ordained deacon, June 18, 1968
Ordained priest, May 1, 1969
Curate, Holy Nativity, Baltimore, Maryland, 1968-1969
Minister, St. Mark’s, Kansas City, Missouri, 1968-1971
Pastor-in-Charge, St. Alban’s, Highland Park, Michigan, 1974-1976
Rector, St. Matthew and St. Joseph, Detroit, Michigan, 1972-
Consecrated Bishop Coadjutor, April 9, 1988, Cathedral of the Incarnation, Garden City, New York
Instituted as Bishop, January 5, 1991, Cathedral of the Incarnation, Garden City, New York

Born, January 25, 1955, Brooklyn, New York
Married, Jeanne Marie Ross, January 8, 1983, Calvary, Stonington, Connecticut

State University of New York, Albany, 1980
Ordained deacon, June 11, 1981, Cathedral of St. Patrick, Norwich, Connecticut
Ordained priest, May 22, 1982, Cathedral of St. Patrick, Norwich, Connecticut
Received from the Roman Catholic Church as a deacon December 24, 1981, and named a priest in April 1985 by Bishop George Nelson Hunt
Assistant, St. Paul’s, Waterford, Connecticut, 1982
Assistant Rector, Christ, Westerly, Rhode Island, 1984-1987
Rector, St. John’s, North Adams, Massachusetts, 1987-1994
Rector, St. Andrew’s, Longmeadow, Massachusetts, 1995-2009
Consecrated as Bishop, September 19, 2009, Long Island University, Greenvale, New York
Instituted, November 14, 2009, Melville, New York

The Right Reverend Lawrence C. Provenzano
Eighth Bishop of Long Island 2009-
150th Anniversary of the Episcopal Diocese of Long Island Planning Committee

Birdie Blake-Reid
St. Augustine’s Church, Brooklyn

Stuart Chamberlain
St. Mark’s Church, Islip

The Rev. John E. Denaro
St. Ann & the Holy Trinity Church, Brooklyn

Marjorie Kulesa
St. Paul’s Church, Patchogue

Kathy Mendall
Trinity Church, Roslyn

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Episcopal Church of St. Alban the Martyr, St. Alban’s

Mary M. Castro
Episcopal Church of St. Mary, Hampton Bays

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