

Dear Congregation of Trinity Episcopal Church,

Thank you for inviting my Introduction to Archaeology class from Wilson College to work on a project at your church. It has been an amazing experience for myself and my students, and we greatly appreciate your support.

Over the past month, students have worked to complete research related to the church, and in particular, the Parish House on South Second Street. Research topics included the history of the lot on which the church is built (Lot 100), the Underground Railroad, what typical houses of the late eighteenth century looked like, and what was going on in Chambersburg in 1870. Other students worked to answer questions posed by what we found – namely, what was going on with all of these oyster shells? Yet another group interviewed members of your congregation, to preserve their stories and memories. This insert shares with you the results of our project.

At the same time, we have done some preliminary archaeological investigation in the basement of the Parish House. When Sharon initially pulled the floorboards up in the front room, she found oyster shells, animal bones (probably cow or possibly horse), and a corn cob on the top of the dirt floor. We dug two test pits in the area of the dirt floor, which yielded a number of finds – including many more oyster shells. We also dug a small test pit in the back corner of the tunnel in the back room, where we found a tin can covered in insulation. Additionally, we drilled holes in both the well and the walled-up section of the tunnel, with the hopes of using a camera to see what was inside. Sadly, neither produced results – the well appears to have been thoroughly filled with dirt before it was bricked over. Finally, we worked to clean, organize, and store the finds from the project.

The next few pages include the results of our project. I can not thank you enough for the welcome that you as a congregation have given us– it has been an amazing experience for students to get to leave the classroom and work on a project that so clearly means so much to so many. Over the past few days, many students have mentioned to me in passing what a great experience this has been, and how happy they are to have had this opportunity.

Again, thank you from the bottom of my heart for your support of our class and Wilson College. Enjoy reading the results of our project, and be sure to look for a forthcoming article about it in the Wilson Magazine.

Go Boldly,

Bonnie Rock-McCutcheon, PhD

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