

**CHRIST'S CHURCH:  
CHARTER OF INCORPORATION**

NOVEMBER 27, 1822



**GREENSBURG, PENNSYLVANIA**

## A BRIEF INTRODUCTION

The first Episcopal church service in Greensburg, Pennsylvania was held on September 19, 1813, at the Westmoreland County Courthouse with The Reverend John Curtis Clay and The Reverend George McIlhenny as Celebrants. Both men were missionaries sent from Philadelphia by the "Society for the Advancement of Christianity in Pennsylvania."

From 1814 to 1822, The Reverend Moses Bennett also sent by the Diocese of Philadelphia held services in the Greensburg area; he was tasked to organize members of the church into a congregation. On March 29, 1822, an announcement was placed in the Westmoreland Republican that read, *"Christians of the Episcopal denomination, of Greensburg and its vicinity, are informed that an election of vestrymen and Church Wardens will be held in the Courthouse in Greensburg on Easter Monday at 12 o'clock. As this is for the purpose of organizing a congregation, it is highly desirable that as many will attend as conveniently can."*

The first official record of Christ's Church is the Parish Charter signed and dated November 27, 1822. The Reverend Moses Bennett served as the Parish Rector since he had been active in Greensburg eight years. Two months later on January 31, 1823, the Parish Charter was signed and granted by an Act of the Pennsylvania State Legislature and signed by Governor Joseph Hiester along with three judges of the Supreme Court of Pennsylvania.

In May 1823, Christ's Church was admitted to the Protestant Episcopal Church of the United States by Convention. Early in that month, the cornerstone for the first church building (there have been three) was laid. By the next year, the first church was completed at a cost of \$1,683. The Reverend John Henry Hopkins crafted the church's design.



# Charter of Incorporation of Christ's Church

**Whereas** *the following named persons citizens of this Commonwealth, viz:—*

The Rev. Moses P. Bennett, Rector  
Alexander Johnston and Benjamin Prather, Wardens

*have together with other citizens, associated for the purpose of worshipping Almighty God, according to the faith and discipline of the Protestant Episcopal Church of the United States of America, have for that purpose formed a Congregation at Greensburgh in Westmoreland County and are now desirous to be incorporated agreeably to the provision of the Act of the General Assembly of Pennsylvania, entitled "An Act, to confer on certain associations of the citizens of this Commonwealth, the powers and immunities of corporations or bodies politic in law." They therefore declare the following to be the objects, articles, and conditions of their said association, agreeably to which they desire to be incorporated, viz.*

First. *The name of the Corporation shall be "The Rector, Church Wardens and Vestrymen of Christ's Church in the Borough of Greensburgh.*

Second. *This Church acknowledges itself to be a member of and to belong to the Protestant Church in the state of Pennsylvania, the Protestant Episcopal Church in the United States of America. As such it accedes to, recognizes, and adopts the Constitution of that Church, and acknowledges its authority accordingly. Any member of this Church or Corporation who shall disclaim or refuse conformity to the said authority, shall cease to be a member of this corporation and shall not be elected or vote in the election for Vestrymen or exercise any office or function in, concerning, or connected with the said Church or Corporation.*

Third. *The rents and revenues of this corporations shall be from time to time applied to the maintenance and support of the Rector, Ministers and Officers of the said church and in the election and necessary repairs of the church and church-yard, and parsonage house and other house which now do, or hereafter shall belong to the said corporations, and to no other use or purpose whatsoever.*

Fourth. *The said corporation shall not by deed, fine or recovery, or by any other means, without the assent of convention of the Protestant Episcopal Church in the State of Pennsylvania, or of the Standing Committee of the Diocese, previous had and obtained grant alien, or otherwise dispose of any lands, messuages, tenements, or hereditaments in them vested, nor charge, nor encumber the same to any person or persons whomsoever.*

Fifth. *The Rector of this church shall be elected by the Church Wardens and Vestrymen, in such manner as the statutes and by-laws shall ordain. The Vestry of the said church shall consist of eight persons, members of the said church, who shall in continue in office for one year and until others be chosen, and the election of such Vestry shall be made every year on Easter Monday, by a majority of such members of the said church as shall appear by the Vestry books to have paid two successive years immediately preceding the time of such election for a pew or sitting in the said church; provided, that until the next Easter, Monday after the expiration of five years from the date of this charter, members of said church who shall in any way have contributed to the election of the church, or to the support of the Rector or Ministers thereof, shall be entitled to vote at the election of the Vestrymen. And provided that in case of the failure to elect Vestrymen on that day, the corporation shall not on that account be dissolved, but the election shall be holden on some other day in such manner as the by-laws prescribe.*

Sixth. *No person shall be the Rector or Assistant Minister of this church, unless he shall have had episcopal ordination, and unless be in full standing with the Protestant Episcopal Church of the State of Pennsylvania and of the United States, and recognized as by the Bishop of this diocese, or in case of a vacancy, by the Standing Committee of the same.*

Seventh. *The said Vestry shall full power to choose their own officers; and to Election choose one of their own number to be one Church Warden, and the Rector for the Men to be the other Church Warden of the said church. In case of a vacancy, in the office Church Warden shall also be chose by the Vestry, to remain until the election of a Rector Vacancy, the Church Wardens for the time being and Vestrymen, shall have the same power rents and revenues of the said corporation, as are hereby vested in the Rector, Church Warden be the duty of the said Church Wardens and Vestrymen to elect another Rector to supply.*

Eight. *The members of this association have appointed the following named persons to be the Church Wardens and Vestrymen to continue in office until the election on Easter Monday next, and until others be chosen, viz.*

Alexander Johnston, Benjamin Prather, Jacob Eichar, John Cust, Frederic A. Wise,  
Thomas Gallagher, Arthur Carr, and Abram Horbach

Ninth. *In case of dissolution of this corporation for any cause whatever, the lands, tenements, and other estate real and personal belonging thereto, shall rest in the Bishop of the*

*Protestant Episcopal Church in whose diocese this church may at the time be, and his successor to be by him and them held in trust for the benefit of a future congregation of members of the Protestant Episcopal Church which may be formed in the same neighborhood, and upon the same principles as the present church and this corporation.*

Lay Members

Jacob M. Wise  
William Johnston  
James H. Baker  
William Jack  
John Henry Wise  
James Armstrong

John Wells  
John Porter  
John Kuhns, Jr.  
George Singer  
William Mackey  
James McLaughlin

*I, the subscriber, Attorney-general for the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania, do certify that I have perused and examined the above Instrument, and am of opinion, that the objects, articles, and conditions therein set forth contained are lawful.*

*We, the subscribers, Judges of the Supreme Court of Pennsylvania, do hereby certify, that we have perused and examined the above instrument, and we concur with the Attorney General in his opinion, that the objects, articles, and conditions therein set forth are lawful.*

December 18, 1822

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*Pennsylvania*

*By the authority of the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania, Joseph Hiester, Governor of said commonwealth, to Andrew Gregg Jay, secretary of said commonwealth, greeting*

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*Whereas it has been duly certified to me by the Attorney-general of this commonwealth, and by the Judges of the Supreme Court of Pennsylvania that they have respectively perused and examined the above instrument for the incorporation of the Rector Church Wardens and Vestrymen of Christ's Church in the Borough of Greensburgh, concur in opinion, that the objects, articles, and conditions therein set forth and contained are lawful. Now know ye, that in pursuance of an act of the general assembly of this commonwealth, passed on the day of April, A.D. 1794, entitled, "An Act to confer on certain associations of the citizens of this commonwealth, the powers and immunities of corporations or bodies politic in law." I have transmitted the said instrument of incorporation unto you, hereby requiring you to enrol the*

*same at the expense of the applicants. To the intent that, according to the objects, articles, and conditions therein set forth and contained the parties may become and be a corporation and body politic in law, and in fact; to have continuance by the name, style, and title, in the said instrument provided and declared.*

**GIVEN** *under my hand and the great seal of the state, at Harrisburg, this thirty-first day of January in the year of our Lord one thousand eight hundred twenty-three.*

*By the Governor, Andrew Gregg Jay*

**ENROLLED** *in the office of the secretary of the commonwealth in book No. 3 page 482 which contains a record of acts incorporating diverse religious charitable, and literary societies under the authority of the act aforesaid.*

**WITNESS** *my hand and the lesser seal of the state at Harrisburgh, this thirty-first day of January in the year of our Lord one thousand eight hundred twenty-three.*

## CONTACT INFO



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