

# The Colonial American Historical Significance of St. David's Church

## Maximus Marlowe

### Abstract and/or Background

#### Background:

Being a local of the southeastern Pennsylvania area St. David's became an area of interest for me in understanding the history of my town.

#### Methods:

Using primary sources from both the archives and the internet as well as interviewing the current rector of St. David's, Rev. Frank Allen, I began to gather information useful to my research.

#### Results:

Ultimately, I identified that St. David's contains immense historical significance to the Colonial American era and to the history of Southeastern Pennsylvania

#### Conclusions:

My goal in conducting this research is to highlight the historical importance of this church and its relation to Colonial America. My hope is that eventually, students of colonial American history understand the importance of this small church and can be inspired to discover the history of their local towns.

### Introduction and/or Research Question

Being from southeastern Pennsylvania the history of the region always fascinated me. I also am of Welsh descent and have family members who settled in northern Pennsylvania. These factors motivated me to conduct research on the region and I eventually stumbled upon St. David's Church. Located only two miles from my home this church was practically in my backyard, and I began to connect with members of its community in my desire to highlight the importance of the history of the church.

In the fall of 2022, I took Colonial American history taught by Dr. Samuel Smith. Through taking this course, I learned more about the era and realized how important St. David's was to this era. Thus, I began to conduct serious research into St. David's and arrived at my research question: **How did St. David's church impact Colonial America?**

### Methods



Figure 1. St. David's Church  
(Photo by Maximus Marlowe).

Living only a few miles from the church, I have personally visited the grounds and interviewed the parish priest and members of the community. In addition, using primary sources and archives at the church has contributed to my research.



Figure 2. St. David's Church  
(Photo by Maximus Marlowe).

The graveyard at St. David's is the final resting place of several historical figures and many parishioners from the colonial era



Figure 3. St. David's Church  
(Photo by Maximus Marlowe).

Built in 1715, St. David's is one of the oldest churches in southeastern Pennsylvania

Above the door to the church contains a stone gifted to the parish in the late 18<sup>th</sup> century. From St. David's cathedral in Dyfed, Wales, this stone carved into the shape of a cross is from the 9<sup>th</sup> century and was included in the original construction of St. David's Cathedral in Wales

Figure 5. Interior of St. David's Church (Photo by Maximus Marlowe).

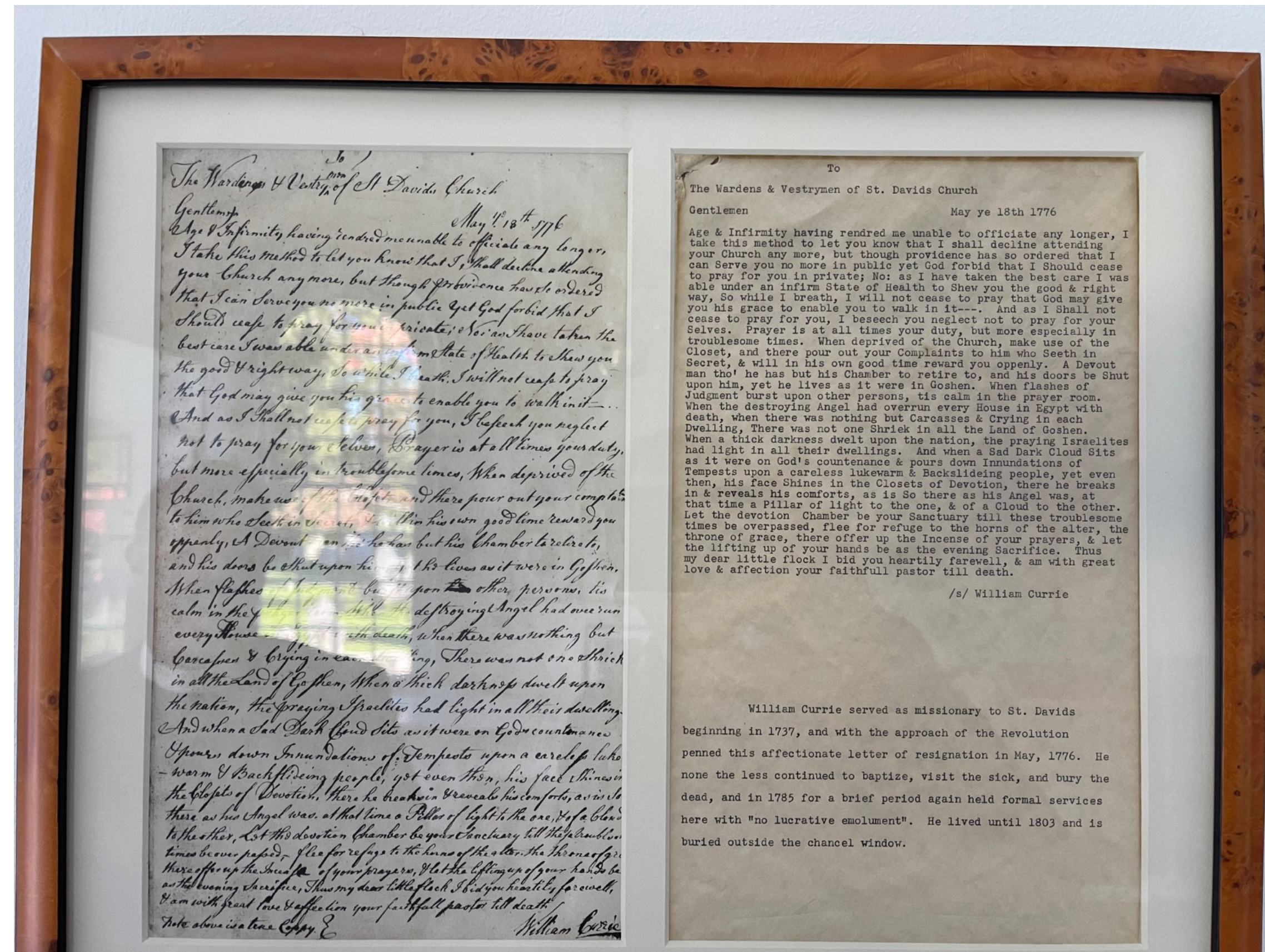


Figure 4. Interior of St. David's Church (Photo by Maximus Marlowe).

The altar at St. David's emulates a Puritan style and emphasis. Notice the pulpit being higher than the alter as the congregation held scripture as being more important than the sacraments

A letter of resignation from Rev. William Currie during the start of the American Revolution. Rev. Currie was a Scottish Anglican priest who helped expand the church. Rev. Currie was at St. David's during the Great Awakening and was strongly opposed figures such as George Whitfield and Gilbert Tennant

Figure 6. Interior of St. David's Church (Photo by Maximus Marlowe).



### Results and/or Conclusion



Figure 7. Interior of St. David's Church  
(Photo by Maximus Marlowe).

In my research, I discovered a possible error in the archives of St. David's. In the church is a newspaper article describing the theft of church items in 1742. While there existed records of theft of church items in the summer of 1742, these were instead listed in *American Weekly Mercury* article.

### Future Work

- Determine the importance that St. David's had in the American Revolution
- Determine the importance the church still has on the Radnor community
- Determine the prominence of Dr. Henry Y. Harter and his relation to Adm. Horatio Nelson

### References

- Celebrating 300 Years of Mission and Ministry: St. David's (Radnor) Church.* Exton, PA: St. David's Episcopal Church, 2015.
- Currie, William. "A Sermon Preached in Radnor Church, On Thursday, the 7th on January 1747." Sermon. 1747.
- Marlowe, Maximus, and Frank Allen. "Interview with Fr. Frank Allen." Personal, October 10, 2022.
- Pleasants, Henry. *The History of Old St. David's Church: Radnor, Delaware County, Pennsylvania.* Philadelphia, PA: The John C. Winston Company, 1907.
- St. David's Episcopal Church. 1715. Radnor, Pennsylvania
- "The American Weekly Mercury," *The News Media and the Making of America, 1730-1865,*