

A PAGE FROM THE LONG AND
AMAZING HISTORY OF ST. STEPHEN
AND THE INCARNATION EPISCOPAL CHURCH

Women's Ordination

Until 1976, women were not allowed to be priests in the Episcopal Church.

But pressure to allow women to be ordained had been growing for a decade.



On July 29, 1974,
**eleven women were
irregularly ordained**
in Philadelphia. Among
them was Alison Cheek.

On September 7, 1975, four
more were ordained —
**at St. Stephen
and the Incarnation.**

4 WOMEN BECOME EPISCOPAL PRIESTS

Ordained in Unsanctioned
Service in Washington
Led by Retired Bishop

By KENNETH A. BRIGGS
Special to The New York Times

WASHINGTON, Sept. 7 —
Four women were ordained to
the Episcopal priesthood today
in an unsanctioned service that
appeared certain to intensify
the protracted conflict over
the issue of women's ordina-
tion.

The Right Rev. George W.
Barrett, retired Bishop of Ro-
chester, officiated at the two-
hour rite at St. Stephen's and
the Incarnation Parish here.
The service was conducted out-
side the requirements of canon
law, lacking the approval of
the Bishop of the Washington
Diocese.

A jammed sanctuary heard
Bishop Barrett read from the
liturgy: "I ask you now to de-
clare your will that the mini-
stry be conferred on them. Are
they worthy?"

"They are worthy," the con-
gregation shouted, then broke
into loud, sustained applause.

Shortly after the 1975
ordination, the House of
Bishops banned Bishop
Barrett from acting as a
minister for a period of
time.

"It took the greatest
of courage," said the
Rev. Lee McGee, one of
the four women Barrett
ordained. "He stood in
very small company at
that time and **endured
censure for years.**"

On November 10, 1974,
The Rev. Alison Cheek
celebrated the eucharist at
St. Stephen's Church.



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"In a service that
ranged from solemn
prayer to joyous
hugs and bursts
of spontaneous
applause, **a woman
celebrated holy
communion in
an Episcopal
Church here
yesterday for the
first time in the
history of the
denomination.**"

-Marjorie Hyer,
The Washington Post



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Because the ordination of women had not yet been approved by
the Episcopal Church, the then-Bishop of Washington, William F.
Creighton, wrote Bill Wendt five days prior, directing him to not
allow Alison Cheek to celebrate the eucharist.

**Bill Wendt was charged with violating church canons
and his ordination vow to reverently obey his Bishop.**

WIDENING THE CIRCLE THE CAMPAIGN FOR ST. STEPHEN'S