

## *William Lawrence – Patron Saint*

If there is one, William Lawrence could claim the honor of Patron Saint of St Paul's.

Born to the powerful and hugely successful Lawrence family, he was well positioned for success. His grandfather Amos Lawrence teamed with his brother Abbott in the early 1800's to form A and A Lawrence, a successful Boston mercantile business. While Amos withdrew from the family business due to poor health, Abbott built it up, and eventually was the guiding light for the founding of The Essex Company, the developer of "the new town on the Merrimack", later named in his honor Lawrence MA. Significant wealth followed the family.

Amos' son, Amos Adam Lawrence continued the family business but had a greater persuasion to social causes. Educated in that liberal nest at Harvard, he became a devoted abolitionist and deeply engaged in influencing the formation of Kansas as a free state, sponsoring Free Staters to settle there. The city of Lawrence Kansas is named for him. He likewise funded the University of Kansas and assisted in founding Lawrence College in Appleton WI—a school to promote religious education in the new wild west. More significantly his contributions built the Episcopal Theological School at Cambridge, closely affiliated with Harvard and front runner of the Episcopal Divinity School.



William Lawrence, son of Amos Adam had a good blood line, a good history line, and a good financial line. Graduating from Harvard in 1875 he was miraculously called—perhaps with some forethought-- to Grace Church Lawrence as curate, to assist the ill health Dr Packard, who died within the year, and William Lawrence succeeded him as rector. It was about this time that the first Episcopal services were attempted at North Andover, but the effort didn't take—nothing happened. But in 1880, William Lawrence, with a little more experience and his eye on the Harvard graduating class sought out and recruited Augustine Heard Amory to be his assistant, with the prime assignment "to do some mission work in South Lawrence and North

Andover". It appears that he expected Amory to devote about 80% of his time to mission work—and help him with services at Grace Church with the other. \

William Lawrence attended the founding meeting of the new mission in North Andover on Sept 13, 1880 with Amory at his side. A collection of interested people from all levels, including some significant and well established parties attended, and the spark lit the flame. From that point forward, the mission took root, grew, built its church, and developed into the parish of St Paul's. At the laying of the cornerstone on Oct 9<sup>th</sup>, 1881 Lawrence and all of Grace Church turned out to support the effort. Throughout its organization William Lawrence was in the wings coaching the effort on. But he also gave Amory a wide berth to be the hands to accomplish the job. His picture hangs with the three first rectors in the French Memorial.

In December 1883, William Lawrence resigned at Grace to become Professor of Homiletics and Pastoral Care and in a letter of acknowledgement St Paul's Executive Committee wished the best

to “our beloved friend”. This was the beginning of the road for Lawrence. In 1893 he was elected Bishop of Massachusetts a position he held for remarkable 34 years, retiring in 1927. His notable achievement was the founding of the Episcopal Church Pension Fund, which using his extensive contacts and power of persuasion was able to raise a remarkable \$8 million to fund the program and earned himself the moniker of “the bank bishop”. He lived to an incredible 91 years—a long life well spent.