



Pastor in Charge at Christ Church Parish Episcopal, Rev. Stuart C. Wood, holds the set of 'Maundy Money' given to the church by Nigel Mac-Fall of Middlesex, England, whose ancestor was a rector of Christ Church Parish from 1683 to 1690. (Photo by Larry Chowning)

# Ancient coins represent a Maundy Thursday tradition

by Larry Chowning

Today, April 13, Maundy Thursday, is a day that commemorates the Last Supper of Jesus Christ with his apostles, as described in the holy gospels. Several Maundy Thursday traditions have developed over the years and one related to a unique set of coins has been rekindled at Christ Church Parish Episcopal in Middlesex County.

Christ Church Parish pastor in charge Stuart C. Wood said maundy is derived from the word mandate. Religious beliefs are that the tradition of Maundy Thursday came from Jesus's last mandate, or commandment, to his disciples. After he washed the disciples' feet at the Last Supper, he said in John 13:34: "A new commandment I give unto you, That you love one another. As I have loved you, so you also must love one another."

A later Holy Week tradition that grew from the Last Supper was that kings and high clergy washed the feet of the less fortunate on Maundy Thursday.

Charles II, king of England from 1660 until his death in 1685, was not so inclined. He created another tradition of having coins minted from the royal mint and distributed to the poor on Maundy Thursday.



A 1673 four-penny coin. (Courtesy of Christ Church Parish)

Christ Church Parish has a set of the coins.

The coins include a one cent piece that is very small, a larger one worth two pennies, a little larger one worth three pennies, and the largest coin worth four pennies. The coins were distributed to the poor in small bags, often when large crowds had gathered, said Wood.

There is a profile of King Charles II on the front of each coin and the back bears the date 1673, a crown and C's for Charles II. The front of

the coins include, in Latin, Carolus II for the name Charles II and Dei Gratia, meaning "By the Grace of God."

The coins were given to Christ Church Parish last July by Nigel Mac-Fall of Middlesex, England, whose ancestor, Duell Pead, was the rector of the church from 1683 to 1690, when it was an Anglican Church. Mac-Fall is the great-grandson, five generations removed, of Pead, who was the church's third minister.

Mac-Fall came to Middlesex last July and presented the coins, a copy of a childhood portrait of Pead, and an inscribed silver plate to the Christ Church congregation, which was celebrating its 350th anniversary.

Christ Church was formed in 1666 when Middlesex County was a part of Lancaster County. Middlesex citizens broke away from Lancaster in 1668 to create their own county, named after Middlesex in England.

When Mac-Fall was researching his relative, he came across a reference stating that Pead was rector at Christ Church in Middlesex. He assumed it was Middlesex, England, but upon further research found that his ancestor had ministered to the people in Middlesex County, Virginia.