The Rev. J. Albert Dalton – ECM’s first Chaplain

The Reverend J. Albert Dalton was the first chaplain for Episcopal City Mission (ECM) beginning in 1953 – prior to Dalton, ECM’s mission did not include the youth in St. Louis juvenile detention facilities, but it took merely a year following his arrival for ECM to take on, as its sole mission, ministering to children in detention. Dalton worked both as a chaplain at various detention centers in the St. Louis area, as well as the executive director for ECM until 1961.

Originally from Elmira, New York, Dalton led an eclectic life before settling in St. Louis, having served as a captain in the Church Army, attended the University of Cincinnati, and served as rector for two parishes, one in Cincinnati and one in Louisville. While in Cincinnati, he also served as the chairman of the diocesan department of youth and worked with a summer camp and neighborhood programs, claiming that “working with teenagers was what I was meant to do all along.” While living in Cincinnati, Dalton became very involved with the “troubled” youth in the court system. His belief was that “working with the youngsters [was] the ‘most hopeful kind of institutional work.”

The ECM Board decided to honor Reverend Dalton in 2014 and established the Dalton Legacy Society to ensure that Dalton’s invaluable work with the youth of the St. Louis area would continue.