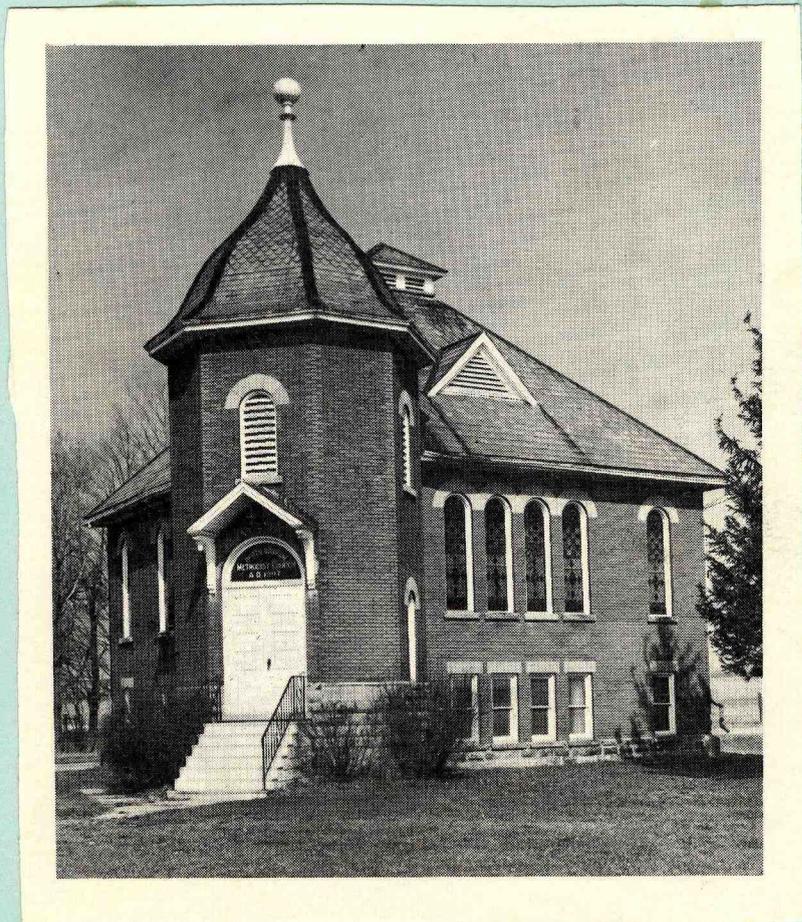


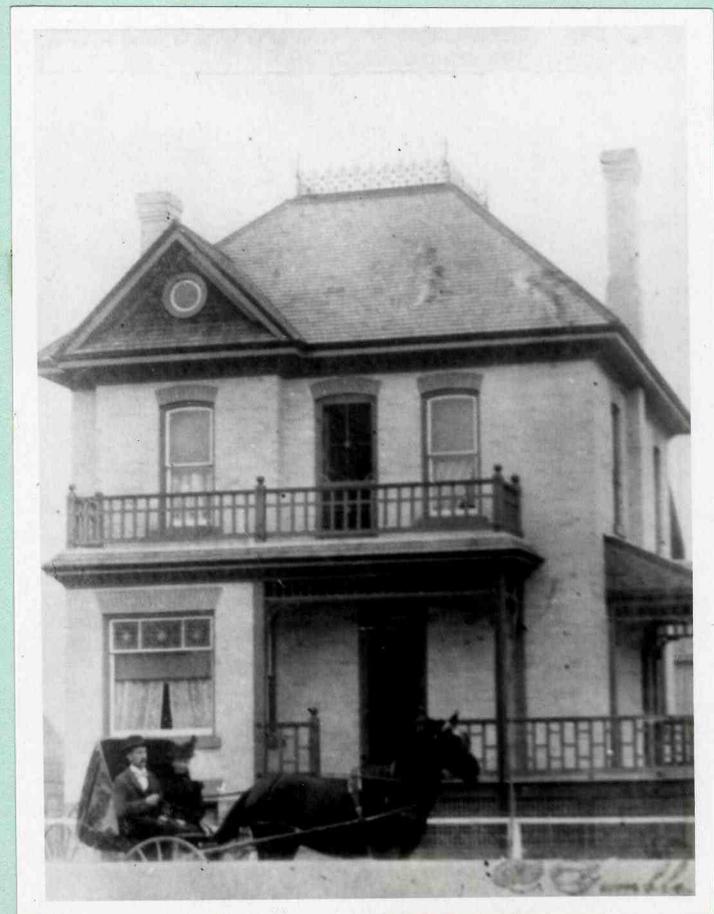
NORTH BAYHAM UNITED CHURCH



The history of the origin of Methodism in North Bayham indicates that there were organized congregations in the district as early as 1843.

Brownsville, Tillsonburg and Richmond were first organized and North Bayham, being in line with them was served by their leaders. According to an early historian, the services at North Bayham were held in homes or in the school house in the evening, in the winter and in the open air on Sunday afternoons in the summer.

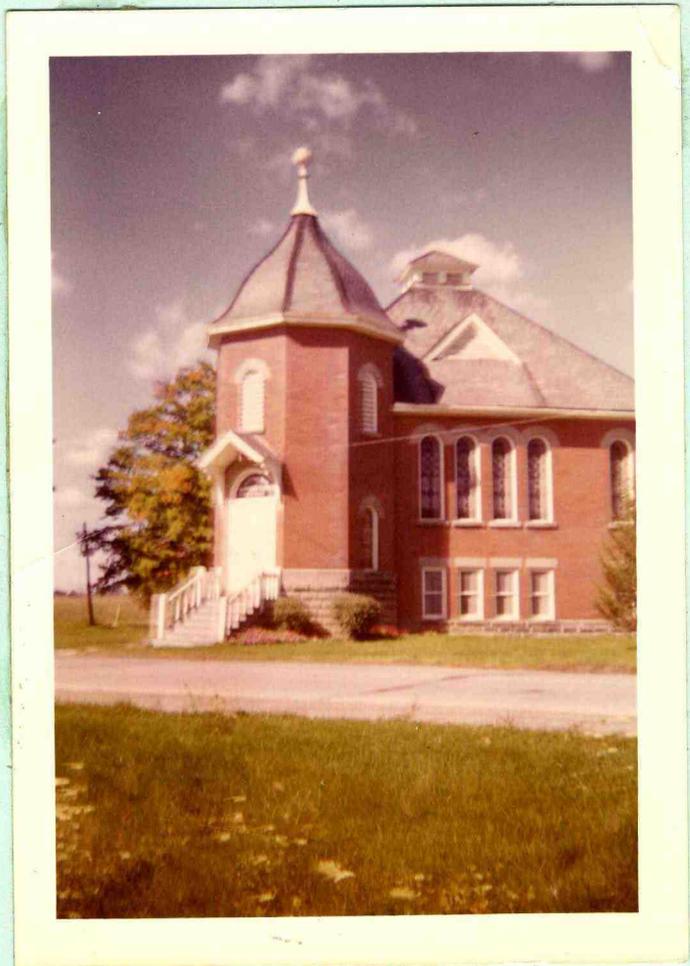
The first church was erected on Lot 16, Concession 11, Bayham Township about 1866. It was a white frame building and served the community for 42 years. The ministers serving in that church were Rev. W. F. Morrison, Rev. John Saunders, Rev. William Birks, Rev. Thomas Jackson, Rev. Walter Rigsby, Rev. Thomas Crews, Rev. George Jackson, Rev. John Veale, Rev. George H. McAllister, Rev. Orville Alexander, Rev. James Snell, Rev. L. W. Reid, Rev. Madden, Rev. A. E. Lloyd and Rev. R. A. Miller. This Building served the people until 1907 when plans were finalized for the new building.



Rev. & Mrs. L.W. Reid - in front of the parsonage at Corinth



Rev. R. A. Miller & family
Minister when brick church
was built



The brick Church

Rev. R. A. Miller was in charge of the circuit at this time. It was decided to change the location to a site adjacent to the North Bayham school where the concession line joins No. 3 Highway. The members of the building committee were James A. Scott, Andrew L. Scott, Conrad Swance, William H. Scott, James Elliott and W. D. Robertson. The Ladies Aid pledged \$500.00 and the Epworth League pledged \$100.00 and a canvass of the community raised the total of pledges to \$5,000.00. The contract to build the church was let to the Tillson Company of Tillsonburg.

The work of building began about midsummer of 1907 and the foundation was completed on the last day of August with the laying of the corner stones. This was a great event in the history of the community. Dinner was served on the school grounds by the ladies and a football game was played in the afternoon. Then followed the ceremony of the laying of the stones. Rev. R.A. Miller, Rev. J. Phillips of Aylmer and Rev. A.E. Lloyd a former minister, of Port Stanley, were the officiating clergy. The stones bearing the names of James A. Scott, Thomas Butler, W.B. Hogarth, and David Marshall were laid by them. The erection of the building was completed by the following spring and the dedication service was held on March 8, 1908.

The dedication of the church was another great day in the history of North Bayham. The Rev. George H. McAllister, whose father had preached the dedication for the frame church, was the minister for the morning and the evening services, while the Rev. Tonge of the Tillsonburg Methodist Church preached in the afternoon. A tea meeting put on by the Ladies Aid, the following night completed paying their contribution to the building fund. In December 1908 the pastor conducted three weeks of evangelistic services and in the spring of 1909, a great many were added to the church membership on profession of faith.

The balance owing on the church, equipment and furniture- about \$1,200.00 - was paid in 1909.

The pastorate of Rev. R. A. Miller ended in June 1910 and with his wife and their 22 month old daughter, Margaret, moved to Auburn.

Rev. John Hart and family came to the charge in July 1910. He had served the Methodist Church for 40 years and his preaching, like those before him was typical of Early Methodism. Dancing, cards, drinking, tobacco and the theatre were strongly condemned. Things were either right or wrong, there was no half way allowed. He was a great preacher, but, due to the ill health of his wife, he retired from the circuit

after a year, and after another year he superannuated.

Rev. James Elford came to the charge in 1911 and served until June 30, 1915. It was during his pastorate that the question of church union came to the voting stage in the Methodist Church. The Methodist and Congregationalists accepted the basis of union and voted for union. It was a very controversial issue in the Presbyterian church and the Presbyterians, as a church came in 10 years later, but left the continuing Presbyterians outside. It was not until them that church union actually came into being as the United Church.

In 1915 the First World War was in its second year and as in all other phases of life, it disturbed our church life. Rev. L. C. McRoberts tried to assist the war effort in different ways - by assisting farmers, cropping on shares, recruiting and other work which took him away from his preaching and pastoral work. It brought him small gain and much criticism. The circuit boundaries changed at the beginning of his term. Richmond was set off, and Culloden taken on. This lasted for a year and then Culloden was set off and we became a three point charge - North Bayham, Corinth and North Hall, The minister lived in Corinth.

Rev. W. Fagan became minister in 1919. He was young, athletic, and very much interested in Young Peoples work. During his stay a great evangelistic campaign was held in Brownsville, with neighbouring appointments participating. The Brownsville church shed was converted into a tabernacle for the occasion and an evangelist, Ernest DeWill Johnston, and a musical director, were secured. A massed choir drawn from the surrounding charges and trained by the director of music led the singing. The services were quite successful and at the close, all expenses were paid and \$1,500.00 was paid to the evangelist for his services. In the second year of Rev. Fagens ministry a campaign for more money to carry on a more active ministry in the church, was held by the leading Protestant churches with a good response. It was in this year that many of the members first met Rev. J.N. Gould, who exchanged pulpits with Rev. Fagan on an anniversary occasion.

Rev. Fagan was followed by Rev. A.D. Whaley in 1921. He was a solid preacher and a good manager on the circuit. He reorganized the parsonage board and considerable work was done on the exterior

of the parsonage, North Bayham representatives on the board were Seymour Ronson, Alfred Green, and James Green. During Rev. Whaley's ministry the long contested church union became a reality.

Rev. P. E. James became our minister in 1925. He was a good minister and organized teacher training classes on all the appointments. It was during his stay that hydro was installed in the church and parsonage.

In 1927 our next minister was Rev. A. R. Kellam. As a young man he had felt the call to the ministry but had not responded. Later after he had established himself on a farm he felt the call of the Spirit again and resolved to follow it. He offered himself as a candidate for the ministry and as there was a shortage of ministers at this time, he was promised a place to preach. He sold his farm and stock and was given his first charge - Pelee' Island. He pursued his studies along with his preaching and pastoral work and finally became an ordained minister. The members of the Kellam family were a great asset to the community socially and spiritually. Rev. Kellam's health failed in the third year of the ministry here and services were taken by supply as it could be obtained. Daniel Gaynor, who was being ordained in June and Lawyer Livermore of Aylmer, a layman, were two who helped out at this time. Later, Rev. Kellam was in improved health and was able to resume his duties.

The whole United Church was experiencing a difficult time in the early thirties, partly because of the depression caused by the crash in 1929, and partly due to the after effects of the Union. Where two congregations joined one minister was released. Because of the financial depression and uncertainty older ministers were reluctant to superannuate. Graduating ministers often were faced with a prospect of no charge. Rev. Fred Davies came to the charge in 1931 with no promise of a stated salary and the charge collected as much as they could and paid that amount. In the second year of his ministry here, Rev. Davies was given a call from another charge and was very glad to accept it.

At this dark time in the church history a newly ordained minister was put in charge of the circuit. North Hall was about ready to close but agreed to stay open another year. Rev. Leslie was on the circuit for a month, going from place to place on his bicycle or borrowing a car when it rained, which it did on his first Sunday on the charge. During his second month on the

charge he was married, and then with his bride, brought new life to the circuit and things began to improve. Meanwhile the circuit boundaries committee were busy and during the year the Richmond - Corinth circuit was formed and Rev. Leslie was called to be its first minister with the head of the circuit at Richmond. At the conference in June Rev. J. L. Blair was appointed assistant, and he was to occupy the Corinth parsonage.

These two young ministers and their wives were a real boon to the circuit. Study groups for the older people were held on all points and quite interesting discussions were held. At North Bayham and Corinth they studied *The Transforming Friendship* by Leslie Weatherhead. New and interesting ideas grew out of these studies.

Rev. Blair received a call to the Putnam circuit and so was only with us for a year, but he made a great impression on the people of the circuit. Rev. George Down, a superannuated minister, came to supply.

At the close of his second year at Richmond - the third year on the field - Rev. Leslie accepted a call to Ruthven and so we lost both of these fine young couples.

Rev. C.C. Strachan was called to be our minister in 1936 and stayed four years with a different assistant each year - Rev. Down, Rev. George Barnard, Dr. Baker and a student Aubrey Edworthy. Rev. Strachan was a good preacher, a good manager on the circuit and got along well with the people. For quite a while his wife was sick, which made his work extra hard. He was much liked by the people and very welcome later on when he became assistant minister.

In 1940 the Richmond parsonage was sold and Corinth again became the head of the circuit with Rev. J.L. Foster in the parsonage. He had a difficult time. All his sons were in the war, his wife had a serious operation and so at the end of the year he resigned from this charge, and was given the Wroxeter charge.

Rev. H. E. Wright was stationed here by Presbytery in 1941. Our organization had fallen behind in some ways and at the first annual official board meeting Rev. Wright made some sweeping changes. The books for all departments had to be audited. The minister's salary had to be paid monthly. A central treasurer was appointed and all money was to be paid to him and disbursements made by him. It was a very

much needed change. Donald Handford was his first assistant followed by Gordon Pickell and Robert Thompson. In spite of the war years and difficulty to keep supplies, as these young men all did a turn in the army, there was a steady growth on the circuit.

In 1942, Olive Culp and Maurice Raymond were married in the church. This was the first wedding to be performed in the church.



Rev. & Mrs. J. N. Gould

In 1947 Rev. Wright went to Arva and Rev. J. N. Gould was placed in charge of the circuit. This was tentatively arranged before conference but could not be finalized until conference met and approved it. Rev. Gould came to the charge July 1947. He was a good preacher and a good manager and radiated the spirit of good will.

The Pension Fund Capital campaigning, began while Rev. Wright was on the circuit, had never been completed. This was completed and we met the allocation set by Presbytery. A Brotherhood was formed by the men of the circuit under the leadership of Rev. Gould. A supper was held at one point of the charge then a sing song and a good speaker was heard. These meetings were held twice a year, alternating the place of meeting. These interesting and educational meetings were carried on to the end of Rev. Gould's term as pastor.

For about five years, Rev. Strachan was assistant pastor and in one of his speeches refers to these years as the "happiest years of his life."

Rev. Gould superannuated in 1955 and Rev. A.M. Manson was called to be our minister. Mrs. Gould moved to Aylmer but came back as assistant minister until his failing eye sight made it unwise to continue. Mrs. Manson then took two services each Sunday until the end of Rev. Manson's pastorate.



Rev. Blair & Rev. Gould

The fiftieth anniversary of the dedication of the church was held in the church on May 4, 1958. Rev. J.L. Blair, a former pastor, was guest speaker for the morning service. The theme of his address was "The Church Marches On." The Straffordville choir and male quartet supplied the music. Following the morning service Mrs. Ben Curtis of Hamilton rendered a solo, "Prayer Perfect" after which the anniversary cake was cut by Mrs. A.E. Green, and Mrs. G.B. Tupper, two of the older members of the church. Rev. Blair offered a prayer of dedication. A buffet luncheon was served by the Women's Association of the church assisted by the young people. Rev. Manson conducted the afternoon service. James Elliott read letters from former members who were unable to be present. Former ministers who addressed the service were Rev. A. E. Lloyd, who had been minister of the congregation immediately preceding the building of the church and who took part in the laying of the corner stones, Rev. J.N. Gould, Rev. C.C. Strachan, and Rev. Gordon Pickell. The history of the

church in North Bayham was read by Alex Scott, Harold Mannell, of Tillsonburg, with Mrs. Mannell at the piano, sang "Building for Eternity" and Harold and Mrs. Lloyd Hurley sang "Waiting for Jesus." The hymn "Blest be the Tie that Binds" concluded the afternoon service. There were about 325 persons present on this occasion.



50th Anniversary

Rev. Manson received a call from Drumbo and moved there at the end of June 1958.

The churches needing ministers in 1958 found that the pendulum had swung the other way and the surplus of ministers in the thirties was matched by the short supply in the late 1950's. Not nearly so many were being ordained and not nearly so many were studying to become ministers. Richmond - Corinth was unable to secure an ordained minister.

With the help of Rev. George Shields of Springfield church, we were able to contact a prospect in the person of Dwight Hinton. He was in charge of the Salvation Army in Ingersoll and when interviewed he promised to come to Corinth to look the field over, and then to let us know. He agreed to come to the charge by the last of July, having to give a month's notice to the Salvation Army of his intention of leaving. Having become a candidate for the ministry in the United Church, he was sponsored by the Trinity United Church in Ingersoll.