

## History of St. John's Presbyterian Church

Rodney 1877 - 1975

Almost one hundred years ago in the small village of Rodney a Presbyterian Church was built on Monroe Street on land purchased from Mr. William Stinson. The first church was a white frame building with a tall spire. For almost a century this church has been an important centre in this community for the worship of God.

Prior to 1877 those of the Presbyterian faith worshipped in Knox Church, New Glasgow. They made the long, wearisome trek over the sand covered trail which served as a road. In the spring and autumn this road became a sea of deep mud and during the winter huge snowbanks often blocked the way. The method of travelling was slow and wearisome. These worshippers came by horse drawn wagons or carts in the summer and by sleigh in the winter. Many of them walked the five miles to church services which often lasted all day.

Reverend George Frances, who was minister at New Glasgow, became the first minister of the new church in Rodney. The two churches, being linked, became known as the New Glasgow-Rodney charge, an arrangement which continued until the end of 1959 when Kintyre joined the charge.

In 1888 Rev. Mr. Frances was authorized to secure money to build a manse in Rodney on land purchased from Mr. Samuel Patterson. This large, white brick house (now known as 227 Monroe St.) served as the minister's residence until 1965 when it was sold. A modern manse at 235 Monroe Street replaced the former one.

During the years many changes and improvements took place. In 1902 coal oil lamps gave way to gas lights which were installed in the church and the manse. In 1916 these were replaced by electric lights. In 1903 a hymn board was placed at the front of the church. By 1911 the need for a

larger church was realized and the building was remodelled. It was raised on to a cement foundation, thus making a large, airy Sunday School room. The auditorium was enlarged, stained glass windows were installed, and red brick replaced the white wood siding. A pump organ was used for many years, being replaced by an electric organ in 1945. The present Hammond electric organ was purchased in 1970.

The interior of the church today is quite attractive with oak pews which seat about three hundred people. At the front is the choir loft separated from the chancel by a brass railing with red velvet drapery. Red carpet covers the floor of the choir loft, chancel, and aisles of the church. The massive dark oak pulpit, chairs, and communion table give an impressive appearance. A magnificent brass cross centred on the communion table adds to the beauty of the sanctuary. An oak cabinet, dedicated in 1972, holds the communion set as well as the original chalice. The latest renovations to the sanctuary were completed in 1973 and included the installation of a modern stained glass window in the front wall of the church as well as the addition of a lectern and a new hymn board. The Presbyterian Women provided a public address system in 1973 also.

St. John's has had almost a century of giving to Rodney and surrounding area sound Christian doctrine and contributing to the good of the community. Although St. John's lost many of its members at the time of church union in 1925, it has never faltered, pressing onward.

Throughout the years it has given Christian fellowship and instruction to many who have made worthy contributions to their country and fellow men. Many of its boys served in World Wars I and II.

St. John's is especially proud of the five men who began their Christian education in its Sunday School and became ordained ministers, and another who became a medical doctor

and spent some time as a medical missionary in Formosa.

They are: Rev. Dr. Harold Lowry  
Rev. D. St. Clair Campbell  
Rev. Dr. Dillwyn Evans, past moderator of  
the Presbyterian Church in Canada  
Rev. Dr. D. Glenn Campbell  
Rev. Dan D. Gaynor, retired United Church  
minister

M. G. Graham M.D.

Anniversary services are held each year on the last Sunday of October. Many former members return to renew old acquaintances and to reaffirm their faith. The service in 1958 was a very special one as our four Presbyterian ministers originally from St. John's were in charge.

1975 was Centennial Year of The Presbyterian Church in Canada. St. John's celebrated this event the first Sunday in January. Worshipping with St. John's was the congregation of Calvary United Church. Rev. G. W. Lewis, a former minister of St. John's and Rev. James Van Slyke of the United Church conducted the service. Every seat in the auditorium was taken with many seated in the Sunday School room where loudspeakers broadcast the service. On the first Sunday of August, 1975, the mortgage on the manse was burned, leaving St. John's free from debt.

We look backward with gratitude to those who through the years worked so faithfully and contributed so much. We look forward with hope that in the coming years, the members of this church may emulate the fine Christian example of those who have gone before.

Ministers of St. John's Church, Rodney

Mr. Munroe	1877-1878	J. P. Falconer	1908-1922
David Mann	1881-1884	E. J. Wolland	1922-1925
G. A. Frances	1886-1889	G. L. Evans	1925-1928
J. F. Scott	1893-1908	G. W. Connors	1929-1931

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A.S. Oliver	1932-1936	A.J. Cook	1957-1958
Chas Carnegie	1937-1941	Walter Kutcher	1959-1963
Neil Smith	1942-1944	D.R. McDonald	1963-1968
A.D. MacLellan	1945-1947	G.W. Lewis	1969-1974
T.E. Kennedy	1947-1953	William Scott	1975-
H. Pritchard	1953-1955		

## ALBOROUGH EVANGELICAL CHURCH

The Alborough Evangelical Church had its beginning as early as 1860. When the German Settlers of the district felt keenly the need of a church in which their mother tongue was spoken. Henry Sauer, who was grandfather of Mr. Arlie Plyley and Uncle of Michael and Adam Baker, traveled from Willowby Township on Horseback and on foot to speak and teach in the homes where these sincere people gathered to hear the word of God taught.

In 1861 a little church was constructed by Solomon McCall of Brock's Creek with Adam Baker as Mason. The interior appointments included Altar, Pulpit and seats all made by hand.

The land consisting of 10 Acres of Woods and thicket, was donated by The Canada Land Co., and was located at the cross roads of Middle St. and Kerr Road, 4 miles from the village of Rodney and 3 miles from No. 3 Highway. The land was cleared by the staunch God fearing pioneers and a parsonage was built behind the church. This house still stands and is owned by Mr. Willis a new Canadian.

At the time this church was built, forty members joined, and Rev. Wildfang was the first Pastor. He also walked and rode horseback against many difficulties to bring the Word of God to this settlement.

In 1862 Rev. Holtzman followed and in 1863 Rev. S. Krup served with a change in Hay of Huron Co. also. The following Ministers served later:

1864 - 66	-	Rev. T. Hauck
1866 - 67	-	" M. Roderman
1868 - 69	-	" G. Barnhart
1870 - 72	-	" G. Groff
1873 - 74	-	" Sharfa
1875 - 77	-	" Holtzman for a second term during

which a new church was built, with J. J. Mistele as contractor, and the men of the church doing the hawling, at a cost of \$1,690.00

The old building was moved west on Silver Street and was occupied by Mr. Watson, father of Mrs. Jennie Schliehauf.

Rev. Allis delivered the dedication service in this new church in German (1876) while Rev. Lecter of West Lorne delivered a sermon in English. Later Pastors were:

1878 - 79	-	Rev. Steinogel
1880 - 82	-	" H. Werner
1883 - 85	-	" Finkbeiner
1886 - 88	-	" John Stabler
1889 - 91	-	" Levi Witting
1892 - 93	-	" E. H. Bean
1894 - 96	-	" J. K. Devitt
1897 - 99	-	" G. H. Wagner
1900 - 02	-	" E. D. Becker
1903 - 06	-	" Fred Meyer
1907 - 10	-	" W. M. Sippel

On June 26, 1910 during the leadership of Rev. Sippel the Alborough Evangelical Church celebrated its fiftieth Anniversary. Rev. Wildfang, organizer and Pastor of 60 years back and now a man of 84 years of age, was the special speaker on this occasion. Also Rev. Bucks, Editor of the Evangelical Messenger, Cleveland, Ohio. The Choir excelled themselves under the leadership of Rev. Sippel and Emma Zoller as organist.

Rev. A. W. Sauer, nephew of the afore mentioned Henry Sauer, was Pastor from 1911 - 15

1916 - 21	-	Rev. J. C. Morlock
1922 - 23	-	" A. Clemens
1924 - 28	-	" J. G. Burns
1929 - 30	-	" N. Reibling
1931 - 35	-	" F. B. Meyer
1935 - 38	-	" W. O. Hayne

In September of 1935 the beautiful large church which had been improved on down through the years celebrated its 75th Anniversary. Rev. J. P. Hauch of Stratford was Guest Speaker and delivered three sermons (morning, afternoon and evening). The church (the largest in the District) was filled to capacity. The Choir and Octette with Mr. Arlie Plyley as leader and Marjorie Plyley as pianist, sang at all three services.

At the morning service Rev. Hauch spoke on Col. 3-11 and 1 Tim. 1-1. Christ our Supreme and Unfailing Hope. A Communion Service followed. The Young people had charge of the afternoon service, when Mr. Fred Schmeltz, Supt. of the Sunday School and Reeve of Alborough Township, welcomed the audience. Rev. Donald Stewart of the Rodney United Church gave an address on the theme "Christian Helpfulness" and Rev. Hauch spoke on "Josiahs Early Piety". At the evening service Rev. Hauch took his text from Psalm 104-24, "The Earth is full of Thy Riches". The Pastor Rev. Hayne gave a sketch on the founding of the work, and two Veteran members Mr. J. J. Mistele and Mr. J. Zoller also gave short talks, and were later presented with flowers.

In the old records are found such names as Baker, Braun, Hessenauer, Hux, Hauser, Kriter, Mistele, Miller, Plyley, Schmelz, Schell, Streib, Strom and Zoller. This church has made a worthy contribution to the Christian Ministry, also, and the following have been active men in the ranks. Edwin Baker, Jacob Brawn, C. R. Kauth, Albert Plyley, Elliot Zoller and Dr. John Zoller of Radio fame was carried to this church in his mothers arms.

In 1938-45 Rev. Chas. Kauth (a native son) was stationed here and served very favourably always willing to help in any way. It was seven years of mutual service and the people were gladdened to have Chas. and his wife (Edith Mistele) who was also born and reared in our midst.

Rev. W. T. Brown was sent here in 1945. Although not an ordained minister, he studied and passed all tests and exams, and at Calvary Evangelical Church at Kitchener, at the 1946 Conference Session he was ordained by Bishop George Epp, who was Bishop over our Canada Conference. It was under Rev. Browns youthful and untiring efforts that the church made some extensive improvements. The basement was deepened and a new Oil furnace installed, also a lovely kitchen with cost of over \$4,000, which was raised and paid off by members of the congregation and by

the manual labor of the men of the Church. Special mention should be made of Martin and Milton Miller and Reuben Kriter. These men led the others in bees, and spent many hours in labor in the church with the Pastor by their side, doing all he could to help, and when finished, we were humbly proud of our lovely large church with its towering steeple pointing Heavenward. And for the many Souls down through the years that had found Christ as their Savior at its Altar. Rev. Brown served three years with us. Then the Conference saw fit to move him to a Hamilton charge.

Rev. F. Paul Erb also a young and very talented man took Rev. Brown's place here in 1948. He came in May and we enjoyed his ministry but a short time in this lovely white Church by the side of the Road. On Saturday evening, September 19, 1948 during a severe electrical storm our church was struck by lightening and in a few hours was in ashes.

After serving a community for 88 years. It is needless to say, that it was a very saddened congregation that gathered beside the ashes and held their morning worship, led by their Pastor Rev. Erb. Though they were overshadowed by a great cloud, yet the Voice of Him who doeth all things well was heard "Lo I am with you always".

At the kind invitation of the sister Church in Rodney we all went to hold our regular service at 10 a.m. the next Sunday. But it was not until April 1949 that a new congregation was organized and called Calvary Memorial with Harvey Miller, Martin Miller and Milton Baker as trustees. Harvey Miller serving as organist and Arlie Plyley as Choir leader.

A fine Junior Sunday School was held after the morning service with Harold Baker as President and Mrs. Chas. Ludy as pianist. In 1950 a Mission Band was organized with Mrs. Walter Miller as leader. This is a splendid group, and the children all have prayer partners, and have brought home the Efficiency Shield for three years.



In the fall of 1949 renovation was made in the church and decorating done. In February 1950, a Wurlitzer Church Organ was placed in the church as a permanent Memorial of the former Alborough Congregation.

Rev. Erb served for five years until 1953, when an older man was sent to us. Rev. J. N. Wettlaufer has proven himself to be a faithful and earnest Pastor, willing to serve in any capacity of the church. Both he and his family are very talented in music, and are always ready to oblige. There are between 90 and 100 active members on our Church list at the present time.

As I write this History of the Alborough Emmanuel Evangelical Church, I feel very unworthy to fulfil this task, because there were so many who served before I was born. But today as I look back, I see a great multitude who have washed their sins in the Blood of the Lamb. Some lived longer than others, but all did their best and pages could be written of their noble efforts. But we are not going to spend our time looking back, but rather "looking up" and "looking forward".

At present all the organizations of our Church are active. The "Youth Fellowship" meets Sunday eveing in the homes. Arthur Hux is the President at this time and the Alborough Church was never without a Young Peoples Society.

In May 1923 in the home of Mrs. Rebecca Baker located on Highway #3, a Womens Society of World Service and Ladies Aid was organized. Mrs. Rebecca Baker was first President and Mrs. Reuben Kriter first Secretary. This has been an active group and is a strong organization of the church today. Mrs. J. Hessenaur, Mrs. Margaret Miller, Mrs. Henry Miller and Mrs. Barbara Hux are our oldest members, who are 80 years and over, but who are active and our prayer warriors, and never miss a meeting, which are held the first Wednesday of each month in the different homes. Our books show excellant financial reports. During the year of April 1954-55