

REV. JOSEPH V. CLARKE — A TRIBUTE

In 1947 nothing strenuous was expected of the Rev. Joseph V. Clarke when he was called from his family home in Yarmouth to the Sparta-Union pastorate. Illness had forced him to spend some time learning to relax, and neither congregation contemplated any large project to tax his strength.

Yet it was strength that he did bring. From the old church he saved more than the dishes! He saved the "faith of our fathers living still, in spite of . . . fire"; he saved the congregation. In the planning and rebuilding he worked at every meeting, at every bee. There was the myth that he hovered over every job with his feet twenty-four inches off the ground. There are no photographs to prove that, but every detail of the building which we see today is a tribute to his insight, his drive for completion.

Mr. Clarke, affectionately known by all as "Joe," responded to greater challenges than the "Joe" jobs. The task of planning and building a church demanded diplomacy, and here Mr. Clarke succeeded.

On September 2, 1951, when the Rev. Joseph V. Clarke preached his farewell "Finally Brethren" sermon, he left a congregation that had learned to work hard and to work harmoniously. His prayer was that we might continue with "whatsoever things are good."

Thank you, Joe. Well done!



REV. J. V. CLARKE

*From a book - "Commemorative Anniversary" of the Union United Church, Oct 4, 1959.*

*Rev Clarke was the guest speaker for the 25th Anniversary of new structure Nov 3, 1974*

*Rev. Joseph Vernal Clarke passed away at Simcoe on the 8th Jan 1977 in his 67th year.*

*His parents, Mr + Mrs Charles V. Clarke were residents of St Thomas. His mother was living at the time of his death. His wife, the former Roberta Ruth Hicks, resides in Simcoe. Rev Charles Daniel (Danny) Clarke followed in his fathers footsteps. He was a resident of Edmonton (1977) Patricia married Brian McKnight and lives in Ancaster (1977).*

# Union congregation celebrates 25 years in present sanctuary

Rev. J. V. Clarke of Simcoe will be the guest speaker Sunday, Nov. 3, at the 25th anniversary services of the present sanctuary of the Union United Church. Mr. Clarke was pastor of the church when it was rebuilt following a fire in 1948.



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Special music at the 11 a.m. and 7:30 p.m. services will be under the leadership of organist and choir director Ron Medlyn. The choir will be augmented by some of the former choir members of 25 years ago.

Following the morning service, there will be a smorgasbord dinner served in the church hall. At the conclusion of the evening service there will be a social hour and time of fellowship.

All former members and associates of the congregation have been invited to attend.

The origin of the Union congregation dates back to 1820 when services were first begun in the home of David Burgess. Later, meetings were held in

the school house, one mile north of the Burgess home.

The first Methodist church in Union (built on property now owned by George Shelley) was a frame building with square family pews similar to those of the old Anglican Church in St. Thomas. It is not known when this church was built nor when Union's first became a preaching appointment, but in

1836 when the St. Thomas Methodist circuit was formed, regular services were held soon afterward in Union.

In 1850, 1.5 acres of land were bought for church and burial purposes where the present cemetery is located and the church building was moved to that location.

In 1876, land was purchased where the present sanctuary now stands and the following year, a brick church was built, which served the congregation until it was destroyed by fire, Feb. 6, 1948.

Services were held at the South Yarmouth Institute Hall until the present building was completed in October of 1949.

Rt. Rev. Willard E. Brewing, moderator of the church, was present for the dedication service, Oct. 7.

Ministers who have served the congregation since then include Mr. Clarke and Rev. E. J. Robertson, Rev. S. A. Selby, Rev. W. H. Carnes, Rev. D. S. Mannell, and the present Rev. E. B. Mordeh.



1949

1974

The Congregation of  
UNION UNITED CHURCH

invites you

to join with us on our

SILVER ANNIVERSARY



CLARKE—Rev. Joseph Vernal Clarke, suddenly at Norfolk General Hospital, Simcoe, on Saturday, Jan. 8, 1977, in his 67th year; beloved husband of Roberta Ruth Hicks Clarke; dear father of Rev. Charles Daniel of Edmonton and Mrs. Brian (Patricia) McKnight of Ancaster; and son of Mrs. Charles V. Clarke and the late Mr. Clarke of St. Thomas.  
Resting at the Marvyn M. Veale Funeral Home, Norfolk Street South, Simcoe, for prayers on Tuesday at 1:30 p.m. Thence to St. James' United Church, Simcoe, for funeral at 2 p.m. Interment Elmdale Memorial Park, St. Thomas, Wednesday at 10 a.m.

50th. Anniversary of Church Union at Union.

June 26th, 1975.

Mrs. Francis (Bert)Olde had charge of the programme celebrating 50th, Anniversary of Church Union. I have prevailed on good friends to give us a little "I remember when", and I am sure you will appreciate them and their contribution to-day.

We were taken back over the years as we heard of the labours of love in the old and the new churches which was indeed a challenge for the future. It's pleasant to remember the days of "Way back when". To reminisce and dream and bring them back again. The happy golden hours of days of long ago. Hold a place within our hearts reflecting a warm glow. The mirror of the mind and heart all our memories dear. That we may see the past again and have it always near.

Scripture; Short verse Rev. Joe Clarke used when the rebuilding of the new church in 1948, Nehemiah 2-20, part of verse "The God of heaven, he will prosper us; therefore we his servants will arise and build". Isaiah 9-10, part of verse "The bricks are fallen down, but we will build with hewn stones".

Bert read a poem, " Memory's Door.  
Old homes, old towns, old friends,  
Old ties we all hold dear,  
All binds us closer to the past  
with every passing year.  
The far horizons lure  
And beckon us; in youth  
We journey forth for fortune, fame,  
or maybe, search for truth.

Thr hours, the days, the years  
Speed blithely on their way  
And all material things in life  
So quickly fade away;  
But, memory holds the key  
To joys we gladly share,  
The hallowed scenes of childhood days  
And loved ones dwelling there.

Old homes, old towns, old friends,  
Old ties we all hold dear,  
All locked within our memory  
Grow dearer every year;  
And when we use the key that opens memorys door,  
We see old homes, old towns, old friends  
We loved long years before. Dora P. Fortner.

First speaker Mrs. Cliff (Edna) Ingram, read by MRS. Laura Beattie. Edna's mother Mrs. T. H. McComb was our first president (1926) served as pres. until 1934. I am so happy Edna consented to recall for us those old days. It is hard for her as her health is not good but I hope it will not harm her in anyway but help bring back the old spirit she to has had.

History of the village of Union as I remember very distinctly. In 1910 there was the old store owned by Ralph Steele on <sup>NORTH</sup> ~~South~~-east corner of main street run by Mr. & Mrs. Steele. The old Temperance House on South West corner that Mrs. Drew sold to Joe Vincent. The stage coach drawn by team travelling from St. Thomas to Sparta which stopped at Union P. O. driven by Billy Butterwich of Sparta.

This coach was a large surrey with a fringe around the top. There was a blacksmith shop owned by Frank McPhail, a harness shop run by Gonzella Hannan, a grist mill run by Joe King, who made flour and ground up grain for stock feeding, a large evaporator owned & run by Geo Doolittle which employed about 50 people from in & around Union, and a carriage shop owned & run by John Gliddon.

A beautiful pond was here where everyone had a great deal of fun, swimming & boating in summer & skating in winter. At the top of the hill stood the old white brick church, with us grand old Christian stalwarts where I was taken as a babe in arms every Sunday morning to Sunday school, at 2 years of age I was put in the primary class room which held about 30 little ones, and Mrs. Geo Colley with bible pictures taught us our beliefs in faith, hope & charity of the old Methodist Religion. At the age of 7 we moved into another class of girls which consisted of girls 7-14 years taught by Grace Steele. Grace left us to go in training for a nurse at German Deaconess hospital in Buffalo in 1912. The class was then taken over by Violet Jennings who also departed one year later in 1913 for the German Deaconess hospital in Buffalo.

Our class of about 14 was taken over by Miss Emma Matheson who was a much beloved teacher who taught us Gods commandments for over 10 years, who then took over the Bible Class after failing health of my Grandfather George Evans, who filled that office for over 25 years.

I can well remember moving to Union when I was 12 years old in 1912. The church was full both morning & night on Sundays, and a prayer meeting every Wednesday night with personal testimonies of Christian Leaders like, Thomas Olde, George Evans, Eli Green, Dan Burgess, Josiah Long, Christopher Moore, John Sutton, & many many others.

Christopher Moore was also care taker of the church

and lived across the road from the church. John Pearce followed Mr. Moore, then Ed. McPhail who lived in Christopher Moores house & later by Harry Oke who carried on for many years & also lived at top of the hill.

Union Church was also noted for good leaders & singers. I was in the choir about 1912, of those I remember were Lorne & Luella Whaley, Gladys & Cora Doolittle, Bertha & Vera VanVelzor, Katie Chapman, Margaret Graham, Arthur Graham, Lorne Black & his brother Cliff, Katie Lloyd as organist & her husband Lee Lloyd as choir leader. Audra Fulton & Bertha Olde joined a bit later. Laura remembered when Eli Green walked over 4 miles to an old school beyond White Station to preach & teach there.

I was born one mile south of Union & lived in & around for 25 years, Rev. Gould was minister who christened me, married me & christened my baby. I believe he must have been here between Sparta, Union & Pt. Stanley, about 10 years, when he took over his ministry in Grace United Church I followed him there joining that church in 1926 & still belong there while my heart still belongs to Union where I was borne, married & hope to be buried.

Our wonderful heritage from our grandparents, parents, aunts & uncles seem to make it sacred ground as so many of the families were mixed relatives perhaps to 32 cousins. All of whom were good living people worthy of special praise in their church work. How times & things do change, those were the good old horse & buggy days. When my father bought the store from Mrs. Steele in 1914 there were only 4 people in Union who owned a car, our own family, Dr. Jackson, Joe King, & Walter Johnson. I had an old newspaper clipping of the death of Ella (Long) Kipp, there were 192 horses with buggys in the funeral procession because of her faithful services to the old Union Church.

Arthur Olde was Supt. of the S. S. before & after for a total of nearly forty years & was unsurpassed in dedication and management. T. H. McComb served on the Trustee Board of the church & cemetery & was also postmaster of the village from 1914- until his death in 1936, a period of 22 yrs. He was also elected to drive the Ladies Aid women to their monthly meetings when it was too far to walk of which his wife was President for some years. He often remembered after getting her there that her hat was the last one left on the hostess bed. She was Vice-Pres. with Mrs. Gould for 5 years & Pres. for 8 years after.

Union was also known for good & young ministers. Some found their life mates such as Preacher Hicks marrying Iva Haight

Preacher Longford marrying Nina Matheson, Rev. J.E.Millyard married Bertha Bigham, Preacher Moore married May Swaffield. Of course all those dear ones are all gone but I can remember them still & always will. For many changes you see Union is & always be like the empty pocket you see, but you find no change in me. But here I must mention that Bertha Olde joined the choir when she was 15 years old as you all know is still a faithful choir member.

Second speaker Mrs. Gord (Laura) Beattie. We moved as a family to Whites Station in 1906. My first recollections of Sunday School was at the River Road S.S. where Mr. Eli Green was superintendent. He travelled the 4 mile between use by bicycle. We all came to Union S.S. about 1907.

Being closely associated with the S.S. & choir my fondest memories are here. Miss Matheson who took over our S.S. class around 1915 was such a good teacher. In the class she taught us Teacher training work including Old & New Testaments. We joined the church about 1914 or 1915. Beside this she carried on a mission band which we all attended. Miss Matheson gave me music lessons for a Xmas gift. I learned enough that I could play for the mission band.

In 1915 I was assistant pianist for the S.S. Later she became Pres. of the W.M.S. & I was sec'ty & pianist for about 8 years. The lessons she gave me was a start in my life that enabled me to give a greater service not only on this church but later on in other churches. We always held a class reunion with Miss Matheson as long as she was able to attend.

I certainly couldn't forget Mrs. L.D. Lloyd who was organist of the choir & taught a class for many many years. She told me she joined the church at the age of 8 yrs. Her father Josiah Long never let anything stop him from attending S.S. every Sunday morning. At the age of 16, she either taught or played I don't remember which. She was well thought of by everyone of her boys that passed through her class.

One time she told me the story of her sister Ella (Long) Kipp. She had played for over 40 concerts put on the year before she passed away. I think she was just married to Harry Kipp for 1 month before she passed away & Harry had to carry her up the stairs to have her picture taken. At one time Dlia taught this same class.

Miss Zella White had a class of girls a little older than our class, Miss Ed Binns had a class of girls a little older than our class. Mrs. Elva Burgess a class of girls, Mrs. (Dr) Jackson a class of boys. One Rally Sunday Mrs. Jacksons boys went out in the yard in place of taking their place with her in the church.

I can see Mrs. Jackson yet as she came creeping up into the choir & during that service she sang "Where is my wandering boy to-night".

I had a letter from my sister Violet about a week ago, a minister a Rev. Murray Stewart had preached in the U.C. in Petrolia for the 50th anniversary occasion, he said he preached in Union Church at one time. I didn't remember him but Delia said she did. She knew him quite well.

Other ministers I know were Rev. Lloyd, Rev. McTavish, Rev. Kitchy, Preacher Page, Rev. Gifford, Rev. Durant & Rev. Fred Kingham who left our church for overseas in 1916. There was so much associated with his services at that time one doesn't forget. In 1916 so many of the boys from this part went overseas with the 91st battalion. As I stood only a few rods from the train I could see Rev. Fred Kingham standing on the steps waving good-bye. He was going with them. As we know some came back & some didn't, his wife followed to Ireland & didn't return either. A memorial service was held at Sparta for him, our choir sang "If ever I loved Thee my Jesus tis now". It was one of his favorite pieces.

Through this trying time memorial services were held for those who didn't return & home coming parties for those who did. Then I think Rev. Gould came at this point & was here for many years.

I don't know whether there were more than 2 boys went out from this church to be ministers or not but Rev. Walter Donnelly was one.

He married Edith VanVelzar and they went to the Western Provinces to serve their church & most of you knew Rev. Frank Burgess who retired here.

I joined the choir in 1915 & helped in that capacity off & on until 1944. Other names we missed were Teresa (McComb) Johnson, Mrs.

Orvel Burgess, Mrs. Annie Pearce, Jack Olde. I could go on on such as The Marlatt Family, Steele family, Burgess family, Talman family, Pearce family, Dufty family & many many others helping with church activities in any way they could with dinners, plays, lawn socials, etc.

I hope that Edna & I have helped to refresh the memories of some & interest others about some of the things that happened in Union before the United Church came into being & I can assure you we both are real proud to belong to this Church

"The United Church of Canada".

Bert, Note in minute book of Ladies Aid for that year 1925-1926 tells us the ladies held carnival, 2 food sales, canadian dinner in Oct. 50¢ & 25¢ children over 6-12, bazaar in Dec. Paid ½ cost of rug for parsonage \$55. Paid share of taxes on parsonage \$17.55 gave men \$50. on note they were carrying, quilted 2 quilts for Mrs. Ralph Marlatt @ \$1.50 each she gave generous donation of \$5. for same &

Secty instructed to write her a note of thanks.