

Sunday, October 29th, 1989

Call to Worship

Choral Introit: "All people that on earth do dwell" - 12

Prayer of Invocation

Reflections on our Presbyterian Heritage

From your reading of Pictou county history you may remember that the Hector arrived at Pictou from Scotland with its many passengers - men, women and children, on September 15, 1773.

In 1774, five of these same families took up residence on East River, from Reudas to about River Street.

In 1786, twelve years after their arrival, the residents of Pictou county appointed a committee to secure a minister. A letter was sent to Scotland and was read at the General Associate Synod meeting of the Presbyterian church. As a result, the Rev. James MacGregor, then only 27 years of age, accepted the invitation and set out almost immediately for Pictou. He arrived in Halifax and then came on to Pictou arriving July 21, 1786.

The records speak highly of this young man, of his dedication and commitment to Christ and the Church. In one place it says that he was a good scholar and a sound theologian. His knowledge of

Gaelic was accurate and his mastery of the language complete, as may be seen from his Gaelic poems and hymns.

Mr. Mac Grege preached his first sermon at East River, a little below what later became Albion Mines (Stellarton), July 30th, 1786. For nine years he was the sole minister in Pictou County, preaching, visiting, travelling on snowshoes in winter and by canoe in summer.

During the month of July, 1787, a log church, 40 x 30, without a pulpit or heat, was built on the site of the Old Duff Cemetery. It was replaced in 1803 by a large frame building at Irishtown or Thymouth as it is known today. It was here that Dr. Mac Grege built a house made of brick and lived until near the end of his life.

For 44 years, James Mac Grege lived and worked in Pictou County. He died March 3, 1830, forty-five years after he arrived here from Scotland. He lived to see the congregation of which he originally was the sole pastor grow and develop into six congregations with settled pastors.

For tonight we want to think especially of two churches that have greatly impacted the Pictou County area, particularly Stellarton.

St. John Presbyterian Church

St. John Presbyterian Church, the Kirk, had its origin when it was organized at Albion Mines (Stellarton)

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It was an "offshoot" of St. Andrew's church in New Glasgow, and was located on the East side of Food street near what is now Kirk avenue. The first minister, the Rev. William Phillips, was inducted in 1863. The people of St. John Presbyterian Church continued to worship in that building until 1898 when the decision was made to move to a new location further up Food Street.

It was in 1926 that the Methodists of Stellarton joined with the St. John congregation to become St. John United Church. They continued to worship in that building until 1934.

Nine ministers served St. John Presbyterian Church from 1863 to 1934

Sharon Presbyterian Church

Sharon Presbyterian Church was formally organized February 19th, 1866 by the Rev. Alexander Ross. The first minister to be inducted into the church was the Rev. Andrew Mowatt, on June 15, 1866. Incidentally, the Rev. Andrew Mowatt is the grandfather of Mrs. Ruth Boothroyd whose husband was minister of Sharon from 1954-1963. Sharon Presbyterian was a "child" of James Presbyterian (called after James MacKays) in New Glasgow. The original Sharon Church was built on the lower side and north end of MacKay Street and was dedicated October 2, 1864. It was about where Mrs. Maizie Cummings house is now. The congregation continued to use that building

until 1889 when the decision was made to relocate on Acadia Ave. It was here that the second Sharon church building was erected.

Unfortunately, this beautiful, stately building was destroyed by fire on February 24, 1924. A number of people here in our service tonight can remember to the night the second Sharon church burned.

It did not take the congregation long to come to the decision to build the third Sharon church.

So in 1925, the third Sharon church, a brick building was built on this site and dedicated February 21, 1926. This is the building we continue to worship in today.

Six ministers have served Sharon Presbyterian church from 1866 to 1934.

Hymn: "Up gates, lift up your heads on high" - 4
 (A hymn commonly sung by Presbyterians)

Scripture 1 Peter 2: 1-10

Anthem: The Lord is my Shepherd

Reflections on our Methodist Heritage

The history of Methodism in Pictou County began with the opening of the coal mines in 1798. At first the spiritual requirements of the English coal miners were met by itinerant ministers from Wallace, River John or from Truro. In 1845 at the request of the mining company the Rev. Richard Weddall came to Albion Mines. At first services were held at homes or halls and not until 1862 did they have a church building. It was built on Ford Street near Allan and the first minister was the Rev. John Cassidy. It is interesting that until 1889 the New Glasgow Methodists came here to worship. The original Methodist church building was destroyed ^{by fire} but the manse - a very beautiful building - still stands.

In 1925 the Methodist congregation joined with the St. John Presbyterian Church to become St. John United Church. The Methodist Church was then used as a church hall. It later burned.

It is difficult to think of the Methodist church in Stellarton without thinking of the Mission Hall. It was built by the Methodists near Kirk Ave. in 1919.

The work actually began about 1916 to fill

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The needs of the French and Belgian people employed by the General Mining Association. Many of them could speak little or no English so they were deprived educationally and culturally. Miss Susan Sylvester was the first deaconess.

In the ensuing years the Mission Hall served as a social centre for both men and women of the area, as well as a Sunday School for their children. Records show that in 1918 as many as 100 children attended Sunday School. The children "looked forward to the annual picnic when merchants of the town would transport the children to the seashore in their cars and treat them to ice cream."

For many years the Mission Hall was used as a Kindergarten. Its last use was a day care centre for children. It was in 1970 that one of the Sunday School teachers, Mrs. Verne Gass, realized a need for pre-school training for 4-year olds, so she, assisted by Mrs. Betty McKenzie initiated a head start program which became the "Happy Times" Pre-School.

In 1975 the Mission Hall was damaged by fire and later sold.

14 ministers served the Methodist Church from 1861 to 1926.

Hymn: Rejoice the Lord is King — 44
Solo: Going Home — Hilary Fraser
(a hymn from the Methodist tradition)

Reflections on our Congregational Heritage

Though the Congregationalists were the least numerous of the three partners in the Church Union of 1925, their influence has been felt as individual congregations have developed, and strong traditions and lay participation has increased.

There were no Congregational Churches in Pictou county and only two in Nova Scotia. They had been the main Protestant church in Western Nova Scotia ever since the coming of the Planters from New England who took over the farms of the Acadians expelled in 1755, and of the Loyalists who had come because of the American Revolution. The term General Council comes from the Congregational Church.

Hymn: "Jesus Where'er Thy People Meet" - 65
(a hymn from the Congregational Church)

Duet: How Great Thou Art - H. Ray Fraser, Roy McKinnon

Reception of Offering

Choir: "Thou wilt keep him in Perfect Peace"

Reflections on the United Church of Canada 1925-1934

Years of planning and negotiating culminated on June 19, 1925 when the United Church of Canada was born. A ceremony and Communion Service in Mutual Street arena, Toronto, attended by 7,646 persons marked the Union of the Methodist Church of Canada, the Congregational Union of Canada and about 62% of the members of the Presbyterian Church in Canada. It was the culmination of many years of discussions among the writing churches.

The minister of Sharon Presbyterian Church at the time of Union in 1925 was the Rev. C. C. MacIntosh. The minister of the Methodist Church in Shelburne at that time was the Rev. Harry I. Jones. The Rev. D. M. Matheson was the minister of St. John Presbyterian Church.

It was in 1934 that Sharon United ~~Presbyterian~~ Church and St. John United Church amalgamated to become Sharon St. John United Church with Rev. Dr. George M. Lacey the minister.

10 ministers have served Sharon St. John United Church from 1925-1989

Hymn: "The Church's One Foundation..." 146
(This hymn was sung at the time of Church Union in Toronto in 1925)

LK

Solo: Prayer Perfect - Hilary Fraser

The Church Today

The Church works on a few, very basic, very fundamental principles that come out of the Bible. They are the heart and essence of Jesus' teaching.

- God has revealed himself in Christ.
- The Church is the arm or the body of Christ in the world.
- God loves everyone. Every single person of the world. We all need that love, as we need the love of other human beings.
- We need freedom and a sense of dignity so that we can grow to be the people that God intends us to be. Jesus called that the "abundant life". The "abundant life" is our birthright. It is the birthright of all God's children - wherever they live, whatever part of the globe.
- Our Christian calling is to struggle to fulfill God's promise. There is enough for everyone.

LITANY FOR ANNIVERSARY

Antiphon: All Hail the Power of Jesus' Name.

Response: Lord God Almighty 354

Benediction